

# Letters on the Michael Jackson case

3 December 2003

*Below we post a selection of letters on David Walsh's two recent articles, "Michael Jackson's tragedy" and "The Michael Jackson case: the New York Times piles on"*

Excellent article! Thank you!

I am deeply disturbed by how Michael Jackson is being treated in the media and by his fellow Americans. Why people are unable to see what Michael Jackson has been through—starting at an incredible young age—is beyond me. Does no one possess empathy anymore?

I don't know if he's innocent or guilty. But I do know that no matter what his verdict, he has already received more punishment than any man should have to endure. All any human being wants is peace, happiness, a sense of contentment within their lives. Michael Jackson will most likely never know those things. He'll know success beyond any measure, but success alone is so cold.

I hope the man, the person inside, can somehow find some help through this horrible ordeal. And I hope this somehow brings him to finding the help he needs to find some true happiness in his life. I loved his music (although I was never a big fan). But I care about the human being more. What we are doing to Michael Jackson is wrong. And it hurts to watch it happening.

VS

1 December 2003

I had the same reaction when watching the CNN coverage of the raid on Neverland interspersed with coverage of the war in Iraq. In the last 10 years, my disinterest in Michael Jackson, who seemed to represent a very shallow type of artist, has changed to pity. It has become impossible not to recognize the extent to which he has internalized the demands of the show business industry and the terrible toll this has taken on him. When I saw the raid on Neverland, I thought that it made a lot of sense. As the folly and insanity of the culture that Jackson is a victim of becomes apparent in his aging appearance, the need to criminalize him increases; only then it will be possible to explain his freakishness as an outward manifestation of sexual deviation and not the sins of society expressed in one frame.

David Walsh started it, so I might add another quote from the Bible,

"He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, One of those from whom men hide their faces, spurned, and we held him in no esteem. Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured."

Thanks again for the brilliant commentary,

AT

1 December 2003

Dear Mr. Walsh,

Thank you for the caring and un-condemning article on Michael Jackson. I cannot believe all of these so-called liberal media salivating on the story of a man not even convicted. In America, obviously, you are guilty until proven innocent. As far as the *New York Times* is concerned, they lost their credibility with me when they did not apologize for publishing the lies of Judy Miller. You are right, they

are trying to get along with the right-wingers. They know which way the wind is blowing and it's a shame that today, you can lie and say whatever you want as long as it benefits those fools who call themselves Christian. And it all makes me sick, when there is news that could be truthfully provided about Iraq and Israel. But, of course, we Americans are so gullible and stupid, that we not only want the true facts, but will disbelieve the truth when it is given to us.

I enjoy reading the truth and hope you continue to stay unbiased in your opinions and your words. Lord knows we need you.

Thanks again,

A faithful reader,

ZG

Texas

1 December 2003

Dear editor,

Thanks for the articles on Michael Jackson. In contrast to the deliberate cruelty and stupidity of official opinion, the WWSW has approached this issue with thoughtfulness and compassion.

Regards

EG

1 December 2003

I believe that David Walsh's arguments in the article, "The Michael Jackson Tragedy" are very strong. Yes, for years Michael has been and remains to be a non-threatening figure. It is certainly true that the media who shares responsibility for creating Michael in the first place now wants to use him to divert attention away from pressing issues like poor health care, joblessness, homelessness, and HIV-AIDS.

But there is another angle that merits our consideration. Consider the fact that racism has always been a tool of diversion and scapegoating, by which white America neglect the ugly sores of capitalist infliction to unite in their hatred against "others," who are artistically framed as "threats" to their "supremacy." Rather the picture is a depiction of African Americans as sexual predators and violent drug offenders, Latin Americans as illegal immigrants "jumping the border" to steal America's jobs, Chinese business people as pirates and intellectual rights offenders, Indians as beneficiaries of exporting American jobs, Middle Easterners as walking time bombs, etc.. The result is to divert and stupefy the conscious of the masses lest they realize what their true enemy is—capitalism.

Racism becomes the glue by which capitalists use to maintain their oppressive infrastructure in America. Throughout history America has always used racial scapegoating during times of economic turmoil. The mass media serves a significant role in this function. Michael Jackson is just one of the victims in this deadly game of diversion. There are others that are used to bombard the minds of Americans with issues that do not matter as much as the outstanding death toll of Iraqis and Americans after the imperialistic invasion of Iraq. Yes, sexual abuse is something serious, but the fact that more than 40 million Americans have no health security is something catastrophic.

The list goes on, as the mass media tries to suppress the mass population from confronting those responsible for their demise.

Two weeks ago CNN spent the entire day bombarding its viewers with the Michael Jackson sexual abuse “allegation” while soldiers and civilians were being brutally murdered in Iraq. This becomes familiar when one remembers how the news media treated Kobe Bryant’s allegation in the midst of Bush’s economic and foreign policy crisis. Instead of questioning the right of multinational corporations to make as much profit despite the consequences that Americans and exploited foreign workers will pay, Lou Dobbs turns his viewer’s attention to “illegal immigrants” whom he treats as our enemies. The story goes on. The true enemy is capitalism, but as long as the masses keep their television sets tuned in to CNN, Fox News, MSNBC and others abetting in oppressive capitalism, they may remain blinded.

MF

1 December 2003

Dear Mr. Walsh,

I read your article on Michael Jackson’s tragedy and, although I am not a fan of his, I thank you for the story and your insight into it. Reading you is like opening a window and letting the fresh air in. It made everything clear to me and I feel I am not alone in my suspicion that some people in the US want to do this kind of harm to someone who has succeeded in the most difficult environment. I heard that they wanted to break up his home, to take his children away from him, and to lock him away.... Mr. Jackson seems to be quite fragile himself and being an eccentric makes him the ideal candidate for a 21st century witch-hunt.

Best regards,

MO

Sydney, Australia

1 December 2003

I wish to congratulate Mr. David Walsh on his accurate portrayal of Mr. Jackson’s plight. I found it to be an insightful analysis of the media machinery behind the selling of news. What Mr. Walsh is saying in his article might not perhaps sound as particularly new or groundbreaking, yet it makes perfect sense in the context of all the media furor concerning the Jackson case. It’s painful to see that such analytical lucidity is altogether missing in the vast majority of media coverage regarding Jackson that one is likely to come across these days.

LR

Roma (Italy)

1 December 2003

David,

You have written an amazing and clear-headed essay. You have redeemed the trivial and made it revelatory. I always felt Jackson was the picture of the Stockholm syndrome—falling in love with his captors and trying to recreate the image of his owners. The artlessness of the execution suggests the portrait of Dorian Gray—almost consciously he allows this mutilation and shows it (as in his mug shot) as if to say “there”—a veiled hostile outbreak; a soft spoken “f--- you”—using his pigment and cartilage as the medium. Like a political figure—neither black or white, male or female, dangerous or benign—an ambiguous creature for the populous to pick over saying more about the culture than the person. He is litmus and it speaks volumes. You have tapped into it brilliantly.

BD

1 December 2003

Dear David,

Thanks for a surprisingly compassionate view of the sensation surrounding the latest Michael Jackson scandal. I agree completely that he is a pathetic figure. I witnessed his extraordinary talent in a live concert during the 1980s when I lived in New York. He did a tour then with the rest of his siblings. On stage, he was electrifying every second. He left the audience breathless. When he left the stage for a break and the rest of the Jacksons did a number or two, the deflation of energy in the crowd was palpable. And when he returned, the crowd was buzzed. A truly talented young man. The dysfunctional persona is a tragedy of ruin.

To be sure, however, the story could not have come at a better time for the Bush administration. Of course, as soon as I heard the news, I immediately wondered what else was going on that needed covering up. The ultimate in farce came on a local TV news station, KRON. Each evening, they have a segment called “News You Choose,” where they air one of three stories selected by viewers on their web site. These are usually varied, with local items vying for prominence with health stories or some other human interest stories. But on the evening the indictment of Jackson was announced, the three choices were all Michael Jackson stories! I sent their editor an email protesting and received a very bland reply.

CZ San Francisco

1 December 2003

Dear Mr. Walsh:

Thanks for the article. Of course, there is much more that needs saying, which perhaps as the story develops you will be able to do.

The oppressed have often been described as child-like and overly sensual. While Jackson became richer, he also became whiter while retaining those qualities which helped make him a popular star, thereby inadvertently betraying those who would promote him—to their obvious contempt. I am reminded of Paul Robeson; the dreadful roles he played; and, the oblivion to which he has been disposed despite being a star perhaps of even greater magnitude than Jackson. While there are obvious differences between the two men, there nevertheless remain common themes in the roles both were forced to play and the way both had their achievements erased from memory.

Keep up the good work,

Best,

TM

1 December 2003

Dear Mr. Walsh:

I just wanted to write an email congratulating you on your article on Michael Jackson. The level-headed and insightful approach you took should be applauded. As a strongly disillusioned, nonbiased and realist fan of Michael Jackson—as an artist rather than a “bubble-gum” figurehead, it was quite refreshing to read similar sentiments. You display true professionalism in your work and I wish you every success in your future endeavors.

PS

A university student

Melbourne, Australia

1 December 2003



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