

WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

How Michael Jackson Let Paul McCartney Down

04/11/21 / Keyword: track

If you haven't heard any of the tracks that Michael Jackson and Paul McCartney recorded together, you might be even more surprised to learn that they used to be good friends.

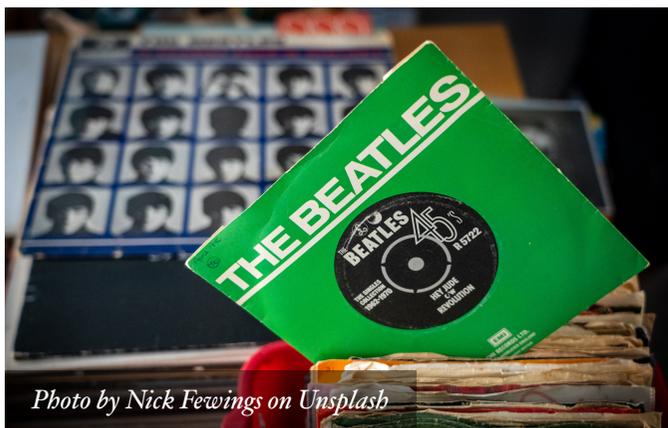


Photo by Nick Fewings on Unsplash

As an 80s baby, it's no surprise that I grew up listening to The Beatles and Michael Jackson on cassette. To this day, two of my all-time favourite albums are *A Hard Day's Night* and *Thriller*, the latter **featuring** a delightful duet between these two superstars: *The Girl is Mine*. Incidentally, the track contains a spoken section where the two men **pretend** to argue. Little did I know, they would fall out in real life only a few years later.

More recently, I found out that *Say, Say, Say*, of which I'd only ever heard a much faster 2015 remix, was another collaboration of theirs, so I headed over to YouTube for a listen. I typed in the two names and the title of the track, eager to hear their voices **mingle** in **flawless** harmony at the song's original speed. However, something else in the search results caught my eye: a video containing a series of interviews with Paul McCartney about the unfortunate demise of their very special friendship.

Some time in the 1970s, Jackson made a personal phone call to McCartney's home address to suggest that the two of them record some tracks together. It was an easy decision for Paul, so Michael flew over to England, and the two of them got to know each other. Having plenty in common, they found each other's company agreeable and struck up a friendship that would remain solid for about a decade, until things took an unexpected turn in 1985, as faroutmagazine.co.uk confirms.

During this time, they worked on more songs together than I'd realised, and in between recording sessions, McCartney gave his friend some business advice that he'd later regret. He encouraged Jackson to get into

music publishing—a lucrative business Paul himself was making money from since he had so few earnings from the Beatles' songs. Buying and selling other artists' publishing rights was a convenient **side hustle**. In agreement with this suggestion, Jackson's reply was: "One day, I'll get your songs, Paul."

McCartney initially took this playful **threat** to be no more than a joke. However, Jackson soon got in touch with lawyer John Branca, who informed him that music publishing company ATV (now Sony Music Publishing) was **for sale**. The company owned the rights to around 4,000 songs, including 251 by The Beatles.

Branca placed a **bid** of \$30 million on Jackson's behalf, but seeing that there was significant interest from other **parties**, the singer asked him to increase this figure on several occasions, before finally **sealing** the deal at \$47.5 million. "You can't put a price on a Picasso, and you can't put a price on these songs," Jackson is reported to have said. "These are the best songs that have ever been written."

The event put Jackson and McCartney's friendship on thin ice, with the former Beatle feeling betrayed that Michael would value money over morals, making a profit from the tracks that he and Lennon had put so much work into. "The trouble is" Paul explained, "I wrote those songs for nothing, and buying them back at these phenomenal sums—I just can't do it."  *Continued on page 2*

Useful vocabulary

track: a song (especially on a CD)

to feature: to include, to contain

to pretend: to act or behave as if something is true when it is not

to mingle: to combine; to blend

side hustle: (side job) an activity to make some extra money in addition to your regular job

threat: a promise to do something unpleasant or to cause harm

party: one of the people or groups involved in an arrangement

to seal: to close permanently; to formally approve an agreement

for sale: available to buy

bid: an offer of an amount of money

undeniable: something which cannot be denied

Let's chat about that!

1. Can you name many songs by The Beatles or Michael Jackson?
2. Have you heard any of their collaborations?
3. How did Paul and Michael first become friends?
4. Why did Paul feel let down by Michael?
5. Why did Michael choose to spend so much money on ATV?
6. In your opinion, what are the qualities of a good friend?
7. Do you agree that Michael Jackson is "a lovely man"?

LIVE! English Events

Come and socialise in English!

Coffee Saturdays

2021-22

11:00-12:30

Panadería Bertiz C/Francia 10

2nd October	5th March
6th November	2nd April
4th December	7th May
5th February	4th June



1. to enter text into a computer
2. to become angry with one another
3. to discover or learn
4. to become interested or involved in an activity
5. to get older

ECP's Cinema Nights

Friday 26th November at 18:30

Send a WhatsApp to John on 657731354

Did you notice?

All of these **phrasal verbs** on the right can be found in the article. Find them in the text on page 1 and match them to the right definition below.

6. to purchase something you had originally sold
7. to disappoint or betray
8. to travel by plane from one place to another
9. to start (a relationship or conversation)

to **let down**

to **grow up**

to **fall out**

to **find out**

1 to **type in**

to **fly over**

to **strike up**

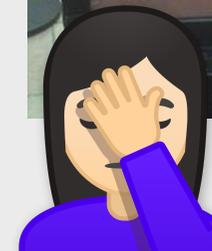
to **get into**

to **buy back**

What's more, whenever McCartney confronted Michael about the move, his answer was "That's just business, Paul." Despite his disappointment with the way things went, McCartney remains an admirer of Jackson's **undeniable** talent, and describes him as "a lovely man".

Written by ECP coach Alison Keable

Watch the interviews here: <https://youtu.be/3jdB7Apk-R4>



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