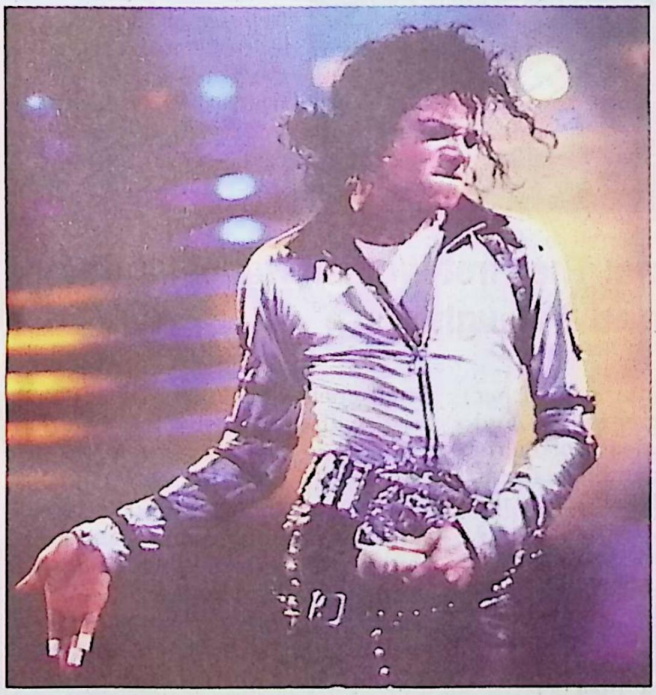
The marriage collapsed nineteen months later, giving further rise to allegations that it was merely a set-up.

Michael did, however, enhance his reputation with a new album called "HIStory - Past, Present and Future, Book 1". One half of the double set chronicled his past hits, but there was the equivalent of a new album forming the second half. Lyrically, the new material was strong, and Jackson very cleverly gave himself a forum to respond to his critics. Although not breaking any new ground musically, the sound was refreshingly varied and, as ever, highly polished. The downside of this return was a sickening display of self-aggrandizement at the 1996 BRIT AWARDS. Controversy surrounded Jarvis Cocker (of Pulp), who invaded the stage in protest while Jackson, dressed in Messiah-white, was surrounded by, among others, worshipping children and a rabbi.



Another marriage was in the cards for Michael Jackson. In November 1996, he announced that his friend Deborah Rowe (an assistant to his dermatologist) was carrying his child. Three months later, Rowe gave birth to Prince Michael Jackson, Jr. A second child, daughter Paris Michael Katherine was born in the spring of 1998. Michael and Debbie divorced in October 1999, but the couple mutually agreed remain friends.

Michael was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall Of Fame on March 19, 2001, along with Aerosmith, Solomon Burke, The Flamingos, Queen, Paul Simon, Steely Dan, and Ritchie Valens.

In November, 2002, Michael again caused a media stir when he appeared with his third child, Prince Michael II, in Berlin, precariously holding the infant out of a third floor window, and draping a towel over the baby's head. It seems that The King Of Pop just can't stay out of the tabloids.

On November 19th, police investigators conducted a criminal probe at Michael's Neverland Ranch. Court TV reporters, who broke the story, cited sources as saying the probe involved a new allegation against Jackson of sexual abuse involving a 12-year-old boy. In a statement, Jackson said he did not know why his Neverland Ranch was the target of a criminal investigation. Jackson's lawyers said that Michael will co-operate fully with any probe. They also pointed out that he has been involved in over 1000 lawsuits. Jackson and his three young children were not at the ranch at the time of the search, but were in Las Vegas, where the pop star was filming a video. More than 20 investigators from the Santa Barbara County sheriff's and district attorney's offices served a warrant as part of an "ongoing criminal investigation", Sgt Chris Pappas said in a statement. The charges against Jackson fall under California Penal Code 288, which carry up to eight years in prison and a $10,000 fine.

Meanwhile, on February 1st, 2004, Michael's younger sister Janet touched off a furor during the nationally televised Super Bowl game, when she bared her chest during a half-time song and dance routine with pop star Justin Timberlake. At the end of a song titled "Rock Your Body", Jackson allowed Timberlake to rip away the leather cup covering her, as they sang: "Gonna have you naked by the end of this song"

CBS television, one of the most watched television programs of the year in the US, apologised for the incident. "CBS deeply regrets the incident that occurred during the Super Bowl halftime show," the network said after the CBS switchboard was flooded with angry phone calls. "We attended all rehearsals during the week, and there was no indication any such thing would happen. We would like to apologize to anyone who was offended," said CBS. Even though both performers said the flash of skin was unintentional, a January 28th story on MTV's Web site promised "shocking moments" during Jackson's performance. The National Football League issued a statement saying the show would likely be the last for the Super Bowl produced by MTV. " It's unlikely that MTV will produce another Super Bowl halftime," they said.

On June 13, 2005, Michael's child molestation trial finally came to a conclusion. He could have received nearly 20 years behind bars if convicted of charges that he molested a 13-year-old cancer survivor at Neverland in 2003. Although he got vindication from the jury, it is no guarantee that Jackson can overcome the worst press ever suffered by a celebrity.

So far, on November 15, 2006, Michael gave his first public performance since his acquittal when he sang a fleeting rendition of "We are the World" at the World Music Awards in London, which was honoring him with an award commemorating the 25th anniversary of his hugely popular album, "Thriller". It is no doubt that the King of Pop still remains a fad for growing teens and his songs continue to be everlasting. Only time will tell if he can reclaim his title of *The King of Pop*.