

MOVIES

RETURN OF THE KING OF POP IN MICHAEL



PHOTO: COLLECTED

AFRA ANIKA NAWAR KHAN

This review contains spoilers.

I have often wondered how someone you have never met or do not know can ever have an impact on you through a television screen. More so if you are considering Michael Jackson's level of fame. Even the Yawalapiti tribe in the Amazon jungle knew who Michael Jackson was. He was that big.

This year, when *Michael*, directed by Antoine Fuqua, was released, every MJ fan knew that they would be getting the first ticket to the first screening in the theatres. The movie was met with a lot of criticism from critics. However, that didn't stop the fans from running to the theatres multiple times, making it the most successful

biopic ever made, with the current record of making USD 217 million at the box office for its global opening, securing the biggest worldwide debut ever for a musical biopic.

The movie begins with Michael (Jaafar Jackson), the global pop star, walking onto the stage—as if the real-life embodiment of Michael himself graced the audience with his presence. And why wouldn't it feel that way when Michael's own nephew played him in his biopic? If anything was excellent about this film, it was Jaafar Jackson's debut performance.

Michael Jackson, the youngest of his brothers, began as the lead vocalist in their family band, The Jackson 5. The movie showcased how difficult it was for the siblings to protest against their father, Joseph Jackson (Coleman Domingo).

Raised in fear at home, as The Jackson 5 rose to fame, a softer side of Michael was shown in the movie.

The film in itself has met with a lot of backlashes, with Fuqua's direction said to be all over the place and one that wasted no time in capitalising on the musical rights he acquired on MJ's music, which seemingly happens to be the director's saving grace. The film perhaps fails to show more of what made Michael who he is, limiting his complexities to only overcoming parental abuse and loneliness.

Despite its loose ends, *Michael's* success is a living testament to who MJ was and still is. His story will definitely continue, because, as it was once said to Michael when receiving an award, "Immortality will cradle you gently in its arms, and you will forever be known."

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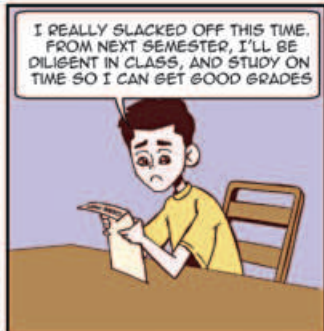
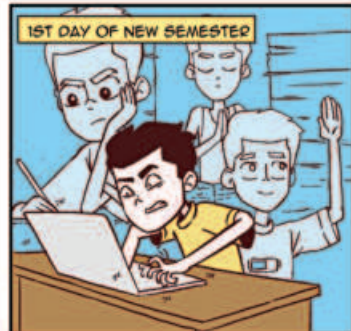
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