



MICHAEL JACKSON

by BRUCE WEBER

**"THRILLER": 25th Anniversary.
The most successful and most sold album
in the entire world**

«I love you», whispered the King to his future Queen, ending the long day events with such beautiful wisdom. Only then, the villagers started celebrating, dancing and shouting hundreds of cheers everywhere in the kingdom of Vogueland. The mighty King had finally found his companion: a beautiful, courageous and magical princess, who, after a long journey saw, all her dreams come true. Even the wizard was respectful and all thumbs up for the king's choice, so much than with few words, he had sealed her fate: "A star is born". Let me introduce myself, ladies and gentlemen, I am the storyteller, and my assignment is to show you step by step L'Uomo Vogue's magical quest in photographing Michael Jackson (The King of Pop), thanks to Bruce Weber (the wizard) and fashion editor Rushka Bergman (the princess), all of it for the 25th Anniversary of the release of "Thriller", the most successful and most sold album in the entire world.

September 14th 2007. From L.A. to New York, here I am. The doorman opens the door and Rushka Bergman – long satin jet-black hair, with 60's old vintage glasses – walks out welcoming me with a strong east European accent: «How are you darling?». I want to know all that happened before my arrival to the Four Seasons Hotel, few minutes away from Michael Jackson. On August 22nd, Rushka talks to her agent, Marek, suggesting him the photo shoot with Michael Jackson, in time for the 25th anniversary release of "Thriller". She prepares a letter for Jackson's agent, Raymone K. Bain. We will see what happens next.

September 2nd. Broadway, right in front of the Angelika Theater. The phone rings. It's Raymone confirming the photo shoot. «Oh my god! Dreams do come true. Michael Jackson will be available on the 14,15, 16 of September. September 5th. Fortunately for us, Weber, booked solid for the next 6 months, is available for those three days. «I was nervous. He is like a god to me, then I thought, who better than him knows fashion photography. It was enough to calm me down». It's up to the fashion editor to line up the photographer, hair&make up, talent & plan the shoot. Sometimes it is more important than the styling itself. «For someone like me, who knows Engels and Marx by heart, this is the easy part. Michael loves the **by Roberto Croci**

Uomo Vogue look, elegant, classy, white shirts, black jackets. His favorite is Roberto Cavalli, they are great friends... but I like to mix & match and it is my job to speak my mind», says Rushka. September 6th-13th. Everybody is confirmed. «I was on the phone the whole week. I got 300 looks from 62 designers, 178 pairs of shoes. Michael loves a military coat, Burberry's. I've got clothes from every designer in the world, Paris, London, New York, Milan. No one said no to us. I even got some incredible sequins shirts that weigh 8 pounds! The King of Pop had the best clothes in the planet!».

September 14th, the Four Season Hotel. The day before the shoot, Rushka is nervous but focused. We are riding a cab. With us, 20 racks of clothes. We got everything, except fur, Michael doesn't like them. We walk through the hotel, everybody stands still. We even passed the jeweler security checks, \$ 2 million worth of diamonds! «I see Michael for the very first time. He's sexy. My heart is beating. After I finished, he says to me: Rushka I like everything you chose, please, help me getting dressed». Michael wears a small size, like a model. Dior is the perfect fit for him. All the others required minimum fitting. «Now it's my turn. I've got to satisfy Michael Jackson, the magazine, Weber, the designers, all without compromising my style, my choices», says Rushka. Once back in her apartment she will focus on the looks for the shoot. But once in bed... it was hard to sleep «all night, I kept waking up. Millions of thoughts in my head. At 8 a.m. I got up and went to the set».

September 15th, 10 am, on the set. While Kabuki applies the make up and Bruce prepares everything else, Rushka starts dividing the clothes: jackets, pants, accessories, shoes. The first look is ultimately the cover look: Dior Homme suit, Prada shoes: everything black! Jacob & Co. necklaces. «It was a complete partnership while, I just gave some clothes and he put them on. I told him that this was the best I could get», says Rushka. 3 p.m. «Mozart music in the background. A positive energy came over the set, everyone was focused but happy at the same time. It's like when you have lots of people who are trying to make something happen... if their energy is true, it will happen, don't matter how long you wait for it. Sooner or later, the magic moment hits you. That's when we put on "Thriller", everybody started to dance and then... all of a sudden... he came in. "Hello". Michael Jackson stepped in front of the camera, looked at us and dance showing off the moves that made him famous! It was miracle magic. After that, he never stopped. Professional, genius, he was him who took us by hand through the whole shoot. He let us in his world. And while Jackson was dancing, Bruce was shooting away. Another genius!». 10 p.m. «After 5 looks and hundreds of pictures, we finished the shoot. He got up and came to me: "I love you baby", he said. Then he shook my hand and thanked everybody, and I mean everybody. We applauded him for what looked like an eternity». September 16th. The day after Rushka feels like a different person. «I felt I learned something, like something happened in my life, something I can never forget. Like I knew what I was gonna do for the rest of my life not bad for a day's work».

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