Michael & Me

July 30, 2009 By Peter Staley

It's definitely the worst picture of me ever taken, but how could I not post it? Can't a blogger try to ride a media frenzy? I would have posted it sooner, but it took me a while to find.

In 1998, I had a short chat with Michael Jackson, and the proof is above. We were both at a small amfAR benefit in LA to honor Dr. Arnold Klein, Jackson's dermatologist (and possibly one of his drug suppliers, or the biological father of some Jackson children?). I had never heard about Klein until this night, but apparently amfAR was founded in his LA home, and his website claims he's raised "over $300 million for HIV research and care."

But this isn't about Klein -- it's about Michael and me. He came with his wife at the time, Debbie Rowe, but for an awkward moment, I saw him standing alone during the cocktail reception. So I walked up and introduced myself. I thanked him for his AIDS charity work, and told him I was amfAR's token HIV positive board member. He was painfully shy. I asked him what he was up to these days, and to be honest, I don't really remember his reply -- something about a casino project I think.

A few seconds later, the amfAR photographer asked for our shot, and my best buddy Michael put his arm around me, with his un-white-gloved hand on my shoulder, and smiled.

Addendum: I just Googled "michael jackson casino," and it turns out my memory was pretty good -- he was planning to open one.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/michael-me