

The MJCast – Episode 064: Vincent Paterson Special

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Q (The MJCast): We got something pretty cool today to share with everyone, haven't we?

Jamon (The MJCast): Yeah, we do. We've got an interview with one of Michael's chief collaborators, an amazing choreographer by the name of Vincent Paterson. He has a documentary that is titled "The Man Behind the Throne", and I think that's a really accurate way of describing him. He's a guy that often isn't in the limelight around Michael's career, but is somebody that had a crucial, crucial role in the in the visual aspects of a lot of Michael's art.

Q: And a huge footprint in pop culture, I believe, so--

Jamon: Absolutely.

Q: Yeah, well, I guess we should just get to the show.

Jamon: Let's do it!

[Intro]

Q: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the MJCast! I'm Q, and I'm here today with my co-host and Jamon Bull. Now, when people talk about Michael Jackson's career, names often mentioned: studio geniuses Berry Gordy, Quincy Jones, and Bruce Swedien. For me, a name that should certainly be mentioned right alongside, and of just as much importance is choreographer and director Vincent Paterson.

Jamon: Yeah, Vincent Paterson began his career with Michael working as an assistant choreographer and lead dancer on the "Beat It" and "Thriller" short films, before continuing on to ideate and choreograph the timeless masterpiece of film "Smooth Criminal". Key to other visual masterpieces, such as "Black or White", "The Way You Make Me Feel", "Dirty Diana", and "Blood on the Dance Floor" was Vincent Paterson. Yet, his collaborative efforts didn't stop with short films. He was also instrumental in Michael's live performances and his iconic status in pop culture, from directing and choreographing the "Bad World Tour", to Michael's iconic Super Bowl performance, and also his MTV 10th Anniversary Special. Vincent was Michael's chief performance collaborator, and today we're here to discuss his story. Vincent, thank you so much for joining us on The MJCast.

Vincent Paterson: Thank you guys, it's a pleasure to be here, and what a nice introduction, that's very sweet. Sort of like my past flashing before my eyes [laughs]

Q: Such a scratch of the surface though, because you've worked with so many incredible artists, we'd be here for two days straight, just listening the people that you've collaborated and worked with.

Paterson: *That* I've had the great opportunity to do. Absolutely, yeah. Maybe a week, who knows?

Q: Really! Feel free to drop a few names out now. So, you've worked with Madonna. I'm gonna say you've worked with Miss Piggy, which is also very cool.

Paterson: It was very true. Oh, so many wonderful people across the board. That's why I enjoy my life, because I get to be in the acting world as much as the dance world, so--crazy, those old people that we remember or see pictures of, like Betty Davis, and Olivia de Havilland, and

Lucille Ball, those crazy women. And to all the pop stars of the '80s, from Diana Ross to Olivia Newton-John, Billy Joel, Lionel Richie, all of the Beatles, except for John. Oh my gosh, it just goes on and on and on. Sometimes I--Antonio Banderas, of course, "Evita" the movie, and all of those crazy people that were in "The Birdcage". Robin Williams, Nathan Payne, Dianne Wiest, Gene Hackman, it's just--I can't believe that it's me, you know? I sort of feel separated from it all, because I was just this kid from kind of "Nowheresville" by the Delaware River, filled with oil refineries, and my life has been so fulfilled artistically, and coming from that environment, I never had any idea that this is what was going to go on in my life.

Q: Now you once received--I guess you could call it a concert review from Pope John Paul II?

Paterson: [Laughs] You know what's funny? On the television the other night--I don't know what film it was on, but it was some horror movie that was coming on, and it was preceded by a quote from Pope John Paul II, and it said something about "Watch out for the Devil because the Devil lives in the world", so you're absolutely right. This man must have been devil crazy, because yes, that was my best review ever from the Pope, in regards to the direction and choreography of "The Blonde Ambition Tour". That I had released Satan back into the world, and I thought, "Oh my God! What kind of power do I have?" [Laughter] It's a guy who was directing shit, and choreographing things, and having a good time, and here, all the while, little did I know I was releasing Satan back in the world... You never know, you know?

Q: I just had to bring that up. I remember seeing that in the trailer to your film, and I was like, "I need to mention that", because that is--not many people can say that as a claim to fame.

Paterson: So true.

Q: Wow, so you mentioned sort of growing up near the river and Delaware, like, what is your story? Where did you begin? What are your earliest memories of dance and dancing?

Paterson: Well, I don't have young memories of dance, because I didn't really dance until I was 24, but--

Q: Wow.

I had a rough young life, and it was quite difficult, so I needed to find an escape. I was the eldest of five kids, and I knew if I didn't find something to do, I was probably gonna kill myself or something, but I happened to get into the theater when I was around 14 years old, and I loved it. I loved being able to act and get into these characters that took me so far away from my own reality. And I did that through high school, and I did very well in high school. I was able to go to college. We were a poor family. My family was never able to pay for it, but I did it through financial scholarships, and because I had high scholastic marks--I'd been a "brainiac" you call it in high school. So, I went there, I was going to be a lawyer for some reason. I thought maybe that would be a good way to make money. But like an idiot, I stumbled into the theater and wound up becoming an actor and a director, and it was after that--I went to school in Dickinson College in Pennsylvania, which was a very beautiful place. Old institution, very beautiful. Then I went on to Arizona, because I had been acting in Philadelphia in a play by Jean Genet, and I decided I wanted to go someplace warm. I hated the cold. The whole time I was a kid, I kept saying, "When I grow up, I'm going to California". Nobody in my family had ever been like 15 miles from where we lived, so everybody thought I was out of my mind. But I got in a car and I started driving, and I wound up in Tucson, Arizona in the summer, and it was like 85 degrees. I don't know what that translates for you guys... 23, or something like that. I don't know, but--

Q: Yeah.

Paterson: It was beautiful, nonetheless, in January, which for us is our winter. So, I stayed

there, and every day as I was going to work, I kept passing this ballet studio, and I thought, "You know, I've just been a theater mole. I've never really exercised. I need to exercise. I need to do something". So, I wandered into this ballet studio, and said, "Do you have classes for adults?", and the lady looked at me and said, "No, we don't, but we have kind of a teenage class." So, I thought, "What the heck? Let me do it". So, I took this teenage ballet class and, having been an actor, I would get these books out of the library of, say, Nureyev or Balanchine, Baryshnikov--think I got Balanchine's work too--and I would imagine when I went into the ballet class, because I was really bad, that I would be this character. And when I approached the movement from the character, because I had been an actor, I started to--my body started to understand the language of movement, and that was kind of how I began. And I was 24 when I started, and by 28, I had decided I wanted to do this for real, and I moved to LA. And that was a big change for my life.

Jamon: Wow, that's amazing. Thank you for walking us through your early history there. Would you be able to talk to us about some of your early inspirations in dance?

Paterson: Well, you know, not coming from the dance world, dance wasn't something that inspired me. Theater was what inspired me. Films were what inspired me. Art inspired me. Going to art museums inspired me. Great photography inspired me. I had already been an adult before I came into the dance world, and having come from where I came from, nobody danced. Nobody even thought about dance. In fact, if you probably said you went to a dance class, you'd have your legs broken, you know [laughs] So, dance was not part of anybody's life where I came from, trust me. Anyway, it was more like working in the oil refineries or working in the funeral homes or the bowling alleys or the pizza parlors. That's kind of where I grew up, but--

Q: A real Billy Elliot.

Paterson: You got it, babe. That's it, it was very much like Billy Elliot, except that I didn't see any dance classes when I was 12 years old. But anyway... the first real dance that I ever saw was Alvin Ailey's company and I saw an exquisite black female dancer named Judith Jamison, [she] performed a dance that Alvin Ailey had choreographed called "Cry", and she wore a white dress, and it was just a solo, and I was in Philadelphia visiting my family, and it was just something that I couldn't believe. It was so beautiful. It touched me so deeply, and that kind of put me on the beginning path of--sort of, "What is this dance thing?" After that, I started looking at some old musicals, 'cause I--my family was never a fan of musicals, or television or anything like that, and we certainly didn't go to the theater. We didn't even know where a theater was. So, I started to watch old movies like Fred Astaire movies, and Gene Kelly movies, and I thought those were really fascinating, a lot of them, and Bob Fosse's work on those films from the '40s and '50s. And I like the stuff that he started to do--he and Jack Cole with Marilyn Monroe and "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes". All of that became very interesting to me, and when I started to take dance classes in LA, I was fortunate enough to fall into some great teachers who gave me a broad variety of movement. So, I studied kind of what's called "contemporary" now, wasn't called that then, from two people called Bill and Jacqui Landrum, a married couple. They were fantastic. I took what was jazz--I mean, the terms are so strange, but jazz, so to speak, from Michael Peters, who we know is a great choreographer, and his mentor, a guy named Lester Wilson, who kind of was the originator of a lot of movement that Michael was inspired by. And Lester also did a lot of things for some famous women: Diana Ross and a woman I never really saw, but her name was Lola Falana. She was a black woman, fabulous, sexy, and did a lot of movement, and along the lines of the Jack Cole, Marilyn Monroe kind of dancing. But, anyway,

these were the teachers that I had. I took modern, I took ballet, I took some flamenco, I didn't take any tap--a little bit of tap, but not much. Street was just starting to come in as I was kind of finishing my dancing and moving into directing and choreography, so I really didn't pick up too much of the street technique, just a very little bit of the early stuff as it was coming in. But by that time I had sort of decided that, "Okay, I'm done doing the dancing thing. I really want to get into the choreography, directing thing". It was analogous to--I didn't really want to be an actor, I wanted to be a director.

Q: Hearing that answer for me, anyway... some things have really clicked into place now. I think, as visual as dance is, hearing that your inspirations also came from theater and film, really, I think now, explain to me why some of your pieces are so memorable and theatrical and different to other things, so thank you so much for that answer. Now it's like things are just falling into place now, so that's incredible to hear.

Paterson: Oh, cool. Cool.

Q: So, how did your career start out? Like, sort of what age were you, and then the process to include some of the biggest names in entertainment? So, from someone that started dancing as an early adult, how did [you] then become the person and the success you are now?

Paterson: Well, when I moved to Los Angeles, I only had a thousand dollars, and that was back in the end of the '70s, so that was like everything I owned.. Some friends of mine from Tucson gave me the name of a guy and a girl who lived out here who said they would put me up at their apartment, because I had no place to stay. So, I came out and it turned out that the guy was like--he was ex-Vietnam vet, but he was like an incredible screaming black queen and phenomenal, just phenomenal, outrageous. I--the most outrageous person I'd ever met in my life, and the girl was a beautiful hooker, white girl who had two French poodles. And I--they were the sweetest people you would ever meet, the most generous. They gave me a corner of the living room in a one-bedroom apartment, they didn't charge me any money. They only told me at certain times when business was going on, I couldn't be there. But, other than that, that was kind of--they were--they saved my life. And I moved here in January. I live in LA. I moved here in January, and I auditioned for every single thing I could for nine months, because I had made a vow to myself that if I couldn't become a dancer, if I couldn't support myself by dancing, it was new enough to me, I was going to get out of the business, and try something else. It was September, I hadn't eaten in a couple days, and a friend took me to have lunch. There was a sign that they were looking for waiters, and I went up to apply. And they said I had to come back in the evening shift and apply. So, I went to take what I thought was my last dance class with Bill and Jacqui Landrum actually, and a phone call came. And I went out to answer it. It was a choreographer who I had not met. He said, "Listen man, I'm doing a television special, and I'm looking for one more guy. And Lester Wilson", who I mentioned to you before, who I had taken some classes from, "Lester Wilson mentioned your name and said I should come to watch you in class. Can I do that?" I said, "Please". So, he came, watched me, pulled me out of class, and gave me my first job. And it was a TV special, and, from there, I just started--I fell into the pattern. I went to a lot of auditions, of course, but I began to know choreographers who--at the time, that's how you predominantly got gigs. If you did a good job, they'd call you and see if you wanted to do the next one. So that's what I did. I danced a lot. I toured the world with Shirley MacLaine. In fact, I came to Australia with Shirley MacLaine as one of my first jobs. And then I did a lot of television, I did a lot of commercials, and then I auditioned for "Beat It".

[Music Break]

Paterson: When I auditioned for "Beat It"--you want to hear that story?

Q: Oh yeah!

Paterson: [Laughs] Okay, well, this is--it kind of, the whole thing is as I'm talking, I'm seeing if it's making sense. But I heard--Michael Peters told me, he said "I can't give you the gig, but you've got to come in and audition, and Michael Jackson's gonna decide who's going to be in it". I said, "That's fine, man, I don't mind". So, having been an actor, I knew it was about gangs. So, I came into the audition sort of dressed similar to what I look like in the video as the white gang leader with the knife fight guy. So, I came in with, like, scruffy beard, and my hair was a little greasy, and I had an earring, and I wore jeans, and I had a little jacket, and all the other guys came in like dancers. They had tight pants on, and tank tops on, and leg warmers on, and little jazz shoes. So, it's very hard to look like a gang guy in a pink tank top and jazz shoes and leg warmers, you know? [Laughs]

Q: Well, it depends what kind of gang, doesn't it?

Paterson: [Laughs] Exactly. I don't think that was the kind of gang they were looking for though, for this shoot [laughs] So, I did notice that when I came in, before we even started dancing, that Michael Jackson's eyes kind of like went towards me, and he spoke to Michael Peters. "Who's that guy?" So, luckily, I could dance, and I could back up the look. So, I got that gig. And that led on to many other things, many other things. Choreographically, before I talk about Michael, that just--the other people that I work for were--as I said, I did a lot of commercials and videos for people. George Harrison, Ringo Starr, Paul McCartney, big people from the '80s. Donna Summer, Pat Benatar, Billy Joel. Oh my gosh, I directed a big benefit for AIDS that had in it Elton John, Billy Joel, Liza Minnelli, Barbra Streisand, Patti LaBelle, Natalie Cole, Kenny Loggins, Wynonna Judd, Sheila E. Oh yeah, I mean it all just opened up somehow with being in "Beat It"... Being in "Beat It". It just opened the door to everything for me. The calls just started coming in, even though I wasn't choreographing. Because of Michael Jackson, now--and because of Madonna, but predominantly Michael Jackson being a guy, everybody in the rock world wanted to move. Van Halen, they called me. I did two projects for Van Halen, "Hot for Teacher" and "California Girls" for David Lee Roth. They wanted to move, they weren't happy enough just standing behind their instruments and playing anymore. So, Michael had opened up a whole new world of opportunity for people like myself and other young choreographers on the scene, who didn't know what the heck they were going to do with their lives. They thought, "Oh, there's only Michael and Madonna" and a very few others, and things started changing, and really opened up. So, yeah, he did a lot. He did so much. And since I'm just talking his praises, let me say one more thing. One of the other things he did, in regards to--as a reaction from his short films, was he brought not only dance back into the world, because--really, since the Fred Astaire time, there wasn't that much, except for, like, I think there was like "American Bandstand" or something and "Soul Train". I can't remember when those happened, but he brought dance back into the world and he destroyed the stigma of the male gay ballet dancer being the only kind of man who could dance and be accepted in society. And because of his short films, men started dancing, and not being ashamed of it. And this is why I believe street dance evolved and hip-hop and everything else that stemmed from that. I really believe that MJ was the catalyst to freeing, liberating men who wanted to move and providing them the opportunity to say, "Yeah, it's okay, and maybe even you can get a gig doing it". So, yeah.

Jamon: Wow, I've got goosebumps just hearing that. That's brilliant historical context. Thank you.

Paterson: Really true.

Jamon: Yeah. Before we continue talking about some of those Michael Jackson projects you worked on, I want to go back a little bit and hear about what your earliest memories are of Michael Jackson.

Paterson: Well, I mean I've always heard him on the radio. "ABC" and when he was a kid with "The Jackson 5" and stuff, but that wasn't really my favorite kind of music. It came at a time when I was a little older than wanting to hear just a young kids voice singing. I liked the groove of all the music, of course, but I was kind of into a lot more of the hippie era music, and those were the people that I listened to, the Grateful Dead and those kinds of bands. But I loved to move, and I loved to dance, and so I listened to The Jackson 5 as collectively as I listen to other people that threw music out, and--including Prince at that time... So, I think that, really, my first real thought of thinking of Michael Jackson as somebody with a voice was in "Billie Jean", because once he left the family and started to make a statement as a solo artist, then, to me, he reached a different kind of validity. Otherwise, they were, in a way, comparable to "The Osmonds", but funkier, you know? A family group who--that's what they did, they were all clean-cut and fun, and had cartoons made up about them, and it just wasn't art to me. It wasn't--I'm an artist... But when he started stepping into his own realm and started to explore finding his own voice and what that sound was, what the truth--his artistry was, beginning with Billie Jean. That's when I started taking notice.

Q: I guess--when you sort of worked first with him in the "Beat It" time, he'd just come off a big tour with his brothers, he just launched the "Thriller" album, which was doing gangbusters, and he had been in the media already at that point. Did you have any perceptions of Michael Jackson before getting to work with him?

Paterson: No, I didn't, and he--even though you say all of those things, there weren't people running around chasing Michael Jackson. During those time periods--we worked at just a big dance studio over in the valley over here, San Fernando Valley, at a studio called Debbie Reynolds. And he would come--I think he would only come with a guy who was kind of--I want to say bodyguard but he was a little older than a bodyguard. And he was kind of just a personal friend. His name was Bill Bray.

Q: Oh yeah, the guy with the hat.

Paterson: Yeah, Bill. And so, to come to these rehearsals, it would just be Michael and Bill Bray. And then Bill Bray would wait out in the car or something, and it would just be Michael in the room with Michael Peters and me, and playing, and working, and hanging, and being crazy... Yeah, it wasn't the "Michael Jackson" that we all sort of think of, you know. He was not followed by stars, there were not people standing out there to sign autographs, you know. And after "Beat It", we went back to the same studio to do "Thriller", and there were a few more people around, and this time Michael would be stopped by people in the hallways, and going out to the car and stuff to sign autographs. But yeah, it was after "Beat It" really, when his star began to really rise and people started to notice him, and really take notice of him and follow him, and the mobs began. You could watch it through the ages, you know.

Jamon: Tell us a bit more about the "Beat It" shoot. Do you remember the first thing Michael said to you on the shoot, and what you guys talked about?

Paterson: Well, uhh, no. I don't remember all that stuff. I mean, come on, this is like 8,000 years ago... The reason Michael and I got along so well, I have to say, is I've never been somebody who's wanted to become super close friends with celebrities, only because so many

people try to do that. And it's usually because they want something. And I never wanted anything from Michael or any of the celebrities I worked with, other than perhaps having the opportunity to create more things together, collaborate on more projects. But one of the reasons that we did work so well together is because we both had a lot of the similar senses of humor, and we're both kind of kids at heart, and we're both basically nice people... Michael would be so shy, he'd want to be in his trailer all the time, and I would go knock on the door and go in, and I'd say, "Come on, let's walk outside. Let's walk in the middle of everything." And he'd go, "Oh, I don't know", and I'd say "No, come on, come on. If you don't like it, if it's horrible, we'll come back." "Okay, okay" So, then we'd go out, and we'd hang out, and we'd talk--and I'll give you one really cool story that happened on "Beat It" set. He and I were standing together, waiting for one of the shots to be set up, I don't remember which one. And I'm talking to him, and we're standing kind of over towards--on the sidewalk, near some buildings. And I noticed there's something dripping on his shoulder, but he has that red coat on. So, I said, "What's that dripping on your shoulder?", and I put my finger in it, and it was blood. And we looked up, and here was this guy who had been shot or stabbed, I don't know, crawling from out of a window onto the fire escape, and crawling up one level of fire escape, and crawling into another window. And before we could even do anything, and it was crazy, we both just looked at each other, and kind of "Oh my God, we *are* in downtown LA". This is not just a short film, this is reality.

Q: We're not in Kansas anymore, Toto.

Paterson: Exactly, you got it. You got it. So, that was an interesting adventure that happened. But the rest was a typical film shoot, you prep yourself, you do your work and you do it again, and you do it again, and you do it again, and you do--25 takes later, and you're still doing the same thing, and every time you do it, you have to pretend like it's the first time. But it was great, and always dancing next to Michael was more than exciting. He just had this unbelievable electricity, I guess I could say, that just flowed, shot off his body, and you sort of were zapped by it if you were anywhere near it, and when you think about--and I'm being honest, I'm not being egocentric, I'm being honest. Now he was not a trained, trained dancer. He trained some stuff with the Motown people, I'm sure. He knew tap well, and he worked every Sunday with a bunch of street dancers as time went on, and perfected his whole personal "street look" choreography, but he was not a trained dancer. He didn't take jazz and ballet and all of those things that the rest of us who surrounded him did in those videos, but if you look at him, and you look at us, it's--there's no difference. I mean, it's as if he has trained every single day for 25 years, like anybody else there. Phenomenal, just phenomenal. And that was the talk, after we did the first run-through of "Thriller", I remember, that everybody was shocked beyond belief that, after just spending two days with Michael, and teaching him "Thriller" with Michael Peters, we came in and we brought the rest of the cast, and after we just did the first rehearsal of it, people were just, like, screaming and freaking out and I remember Michael--MJ being so embarrassed, like a little kid, because everybody was going like "Yes! Yes! Oh my God! Yes!" And he was just so shy and awkward, and I was going up and punching him and hugging him, and [laughs], that's a fun story. I haven't thought about that for a while.

Q: Oh, that's awesome. We are just so excited to talk to you that we're gonna probably jump forward and backwards in time, fast forward and rewind a little bit. I became a true mega fan from the song and the short film "Black or White", and this was the lead single off a new album. It was a huge video, and a concept of a short film that evolved as the film was being shot. Tell us about the dancing featured in the video, and how it's fairly unique compared to a lot of other

MJ dancing, and maybe some of the deeper meaning behind some of the moves, because there's so much in this short film and in the choreography.

Paterson: Well, this is what happened. And--now, everybody remembers a story a certain way, so I have to preface it with that, but I'm 99 and 99/100 percent sure this is what went down. I came in to the first day that Michael was going to be shot by John, and I'm gonna start this off by saying John Landis is a tremendous guy. He's a great director, he's funny, he's talented. So, this is not in any way derogatory towards John Landis. And he shot "Thriller", so he's brilliant. But he--Michael called me in, and I came into his trailer, and he was freaking out, like--not angry, he never did that, he was freaking out nervously. And he said, "Oh my God! Vince, you gotta help me! We can't do this!", and I said, "What?", and he said, "This is what John wants to do. He wants to shoot in honor of this photographer who shot portraits of people only in gray corners, and he said he wants to shoot the entire video of 'Black or White' with me in a corner with just gray walls, and that's it! And I appreciate that he thinks I'm interesting enough to do that, but I can't give that to my fans. I can't do that! I can't do that! I don't know what to do. I'm so upset", so I said, "Well, let's talk about this, let's talk about this". So, we talked about it, and I said, "Okay, look, the song is called 'Black or White', and you're talking about all kinds of nationalities and all people in the worlds," and I said, "what if we took every little section, and we put it somewhere else? We do something here, we do something over here, and we do something over here." It was supposed to start the way it started, in Africa with African dancers, and then it was Michael's off the African set, and he's on a gray set, and that was it, that was the rest of the video. So, I just started throwing out ideas. Mike started throwing out ideas. I said, "What if we have some Thai dancers come in? I don't know". He goes, "Yeah, that's cool, that's cool" "What if we have American Indians?" "Oh yeah, great great, great". "Oh, what if we have a Russian cowboy?" I mean, we just went crazy, the two of us sitting there together, we didn't know where the heck we were going to shoot these things, but we just knew that it was going to make a much more exciting piece. So, John had two other very interesting images in there. He had already had the image of Michael walking against the fire and the Statue of Liberty, so that was how it was all going to end, but the middle whole part was just going to be this gray section. So, MJ and I just kind of went to work and started putting all these--"Okay, on this section, this can happen. On this section, this can happen. On this section, this can happen." So, we called John in and we talked to him, and Michael was real honest, and just said, "I love--" This was Michael. I mean, I've worked with so many people, and so many people would've either just been too embarrassed or thought they were too hot to even talk to John Landis, and had called somebody to fire him or something. I mean, that's how rude it is in Hollywood, can be in Hollywood. But this is Michael's--how sweet he is. He calls him in, he just goes, "John, I love everything that you came up with but, the truth is, my fans expect so much more, and I want to give them so much more, because without the fans, I'm nothing. And I love them all, and they love me. And I just can't do this whole part in front of this gray. I just can't do it". And he said, "Vince and I have been sitting here working--", and I knew John already, so I felt comfortable with him, and Michael said, "Vince and I have been sitting here and coming up with these different ideas, and we wanted to just run them by you", and John looked at them, and he said, "Yeah, that's fine. They look fine." That's the way John is. "Okay, alright. Let's get some location people in here and find some places to shoot 'em. Okay, see you guys later", and he walked out. And Michael just hugged me, he was like, "Oh thank you, thank you!" I said, "No, listen man, I'm with you a thousand percent. I think he was just--you have to look at it, Michael, this

way. He believes in your talent, and, for him, you could dance in a void, and you'd be spectacular. And the truth is for any of your fans, you can stand and dance and sing in a void, and we wouldn't care. But I get it, you'd like to do something huge. You always tell me you want to do something the world has never seen before. This is what you've always said to me, so let's do it." So then that's how it began. We started breaking things down, we called casting directors, and got dancers, and got different things, and then John jumped in, and said, "Oh, with that Russian dance, maybe we could put it in a crystal ball, and then go to kids shaking the ball" and stuff. So, it was so sweet. He just jumped into it, into our world, and the three of us put that thing together. And then, for the second half, we knew that the second half was going to be very loose, and we wanted to shoot it loose. We didn't want it controlled. Michael and I had gone into a studio, and we had created a little dance library of moves, a lot of the moves that Michael liked to do, after I kind of got him into the crotch grab thing. He liked to do that move, and then he liked to do it from starting from his breastbone and moving his hand down... Anyway, and a lot of things we did in "The Bad Tour". He loved the wind on him, Michael was one of those guys. Once he fell in love with something, he was just, like, addicted to it. Like the light shining from below, and the wind blowing from below, he loved that so much. So, we put that in there, and he and I walked around the set and with the production people, and we said, "Let's put a car there, let's put some trash cans there, let's put a pile of water over there", and then he and I just walked through it before we shot it, and said, "Ok, when you come to this part, do this. When you come to this part, do something like this. When you come to this part, just do whatever you want to do. When you come to the car, jump up on top of the car and dance on the top of the car for a while, and do what you want to do. You're gonna wind up coming over to this water, and do whatever you want to do, until you fall down on your knees in front of the water. And eventually, you're gonna get up and move, and morph into a black panther." And that's how it worked. I mean, we did it. It was amazing, it was one of the few times Michael has ever tried to do improv, except for that little crazy one moment in the middle of "Smooth Criminal"... I think that he trusted John certainly, and he really trusted me. When Mike selected someone to work with, he pretty much put his trust in you, and he listened to you, and I just always tried to act as a mirror and say, "This is what I see, and I just want to throw it back to you, and it's your choice, whichever way you want to go, but I'm just gonna throw this back to you". So, anyway, very long story. I'm sorry if I was too long. That was "Black or White".

Jamon: No, beautiful.

Q: No such thing as being too long.

Jamon: Thank you, and that was great hearing that story as well, because we've had Kevin Stea on the show before, who I think you're--

Paterson: Oh yeah, Kevin was in it.

Jamon: Yeah, he was in it, and his version of the story is basically the same as yours, so [laughs]

Paterson: Oh, good [laughs]

Jamon: That was some great depth. Thank you, thank you.

Q: I just want to dig a tiny bit deeper with--and ask, like, did Michael sort of discuss putting into the choreography any dance moves with sort of meaning--I don't want to say political meaning--but sort of--or racial things--but obviously, the video has such a strong message. How did he sort of put the message into some of the moves or some of the choreography? **Paterson:** Well, I mean, we didn't put the message into the choreography. We put the message into the casting.

I mean, we started with all blacks in Africa. We went to Asians in Thailand. I can't remember, honestly, the sequence we went to. We went to the the girl from Bollywood in that section, so we were incorporating Asia in that aspect. We went to the American Indians, and we wanted to incorporate them. And then we went to Russia, and then we went to all the kids on the sidewalk, American kids on the sidewalk. We did it that way. We thought that black or white meant every race possible, and rather than do it in the movement, and then I created the movement to be suitable to each of those ethnicities that we came up with. And the way Michael and I worked choreographically is pretty much like--I would choreograph everything, and leave pockets for Michael to do his own thing, and then--so he would do my work with everybody, and then he would do his own little thing, and then my work, and then his own little thing. That was the best way that we found to work, and he loved to try new choreography. He didn't want to just do his own stuff all the time. So, that was great. And every once in a while, he would change like a beat or an accent in something that I had created, because he always said if he didn't feel it exactly on the beat that he wanted to feel it on, he'd say, "Let's move it over to this beat, because you have to feeeel it, you have to feeeel it." I said, "Okay, Michael, let's feeeel it" [laughs] So we danced and we did it, and we put it on all these beats until we both feeelt it [laughs] He was great, he was so much fun to work with.

[Music Break]

Jamon: "Black or White" was a song that went number one, and is certainly one of Michael's biggest hits of his career. What is it like, as a collaborator, sitting back and watching that video and that song hit number one that you were a big part of? What does that feel like?

Paterson: You know, honestly, and I don't mean this humbly, I just mean this kind of honestly, it's part of my own insecurity, I guess. I love the process more than the result. I like going back after a while, and looking at something that I've created and being appreciative for having had the opportunity to be as creative as I was allowed to be, having that much voice. But I don't really think about the result of things. I only have to trust my instinct as an artist, and believe that what's happening at the moment in the pre-creation process, the actual physical creation process, and then the part where it's going to be extended to the audience, whether that be through film, or through a tour. or through theater, or whatever. Those are the things that I love. Those are the things that feed me as an artist. What happens after that? It's political, it's personal, it has nothing to do with me anymore. It's left my voice, it's gone now, it belongs to the performers. It belongs to the universe, and it belongs to the people that are receiving it, and it's however they perceive it. So, I'm just always grateful that I seem to have opportunities that afford me the chance for a lot of people to see my work, and I'm just really grateful about that. I never think if they're gonna like it or hate it. I can't let that sort of guide my artistry I have to trust my instincts.

Jamon: Well, on that note, with the "Black or White" release, obviously the fan community and and music lovers just absolutely love that song and that film.

Paterson: No, they didn't. No, that's not true. What happened with that was--just the opposite in fact. That was the first time, because of that last section that Michael--that was the first time that the fans and people, and the press had backlashed him. And I came into the trailer one morning and he was crying, because all of this bad press and all of these people who wanted to consider Michael this Peter Pan who never was gonna grow up, and all of a sudden, they saw him as this guy who had a political voice, and was throwing a trash can through a Nazi swastika, and they didn't want to accept that Michael. And he was really, actually heartbroken and crying, and

saying to me, "How can people think this about me? I mean, I didn't say anything mean. I said what I thought was true and what I think other people should believe. I believe there should be peace in the world. I believe that people shouldn't be racist like that. I think this is an important message." So, I'm just disagreeing with you. I mean, yes, it was successful, but if you remember what happened is they had to take that last part off.

Q: I didn't realize that some fans had backlash as well. We were gonna ask about the media backlash and just me personally, as I don't know if I was the target audience, like a young teenage boy, like one of those kids on the sidewalk in the video. I loved it, even the ending--I'd maybe didn't understand it, but, damn, I loved it. And that blew me away, so I definitely didn't have a problem with it. Yeah, I just remember him--and I don't know, I mean, I can't, like, write a term paper on it, but I just remember him telling me that the press and his fans, so many of his fans, had written him and told him, "Why would you do something like that" and "How could you do that?" and he was very, very--he was such a sensitive man, he was very disturbed about this, and truly he was animated by his love for the fans. That--every time we did something, he would always preface it with, "I want us to create something that the world has never seen before, and I want us to know that we're doing it for the fans". So, that was just his philosophy.

Jamon: When I became a Michael Jackson fan, I remember "Smooth Criminal" being the short film that I was watching the most, and going back to see the most. In my opinion, it's an absolute masterpiece, and I know Michael said during his career as well, that it was the short film that he received probably the most comments about--most positive feedback about.

Paterson: Yeah.

Jamon: Talk to us about that process, and what it was like making such a brilliant masterpiece of film.

Paterson: Well, it was so interesting because it was one of the first times really that I'd ever not worked with Michael or with any celebrity where I was left to do such a huge project. Originally, I was supposed to not only conceive it and choreograph it, but direct it. Later what happened towards the end, when it became part of "Moonwalker", "Moonwalker" was going to become a feature film--did become a feature film--and so they had to bring in a director from the Union, the DGA, and he wound up directing that video. But he was very appreciative of all the work that I had done, and the storyboards I had done in the visual video at that time, recordings that I had made and cut together and had a visual storyboard that he almost followed shot for shot for shot. So, his name was Colin Chilvers and he was a great man--is a great man, I don't know what he's doing now. But Michael called me up one day, and funny story. I've said it a thousand times, but I'll say it again. I'm sitting at home, and it was nighttime. The phone rings and I hear this voice, he goes, "Hi, is Vincent there?" I said, "Who's this?" "It's Michael, it's Michael". I said, "It's not Michael, who is this?" "No really, it's Michael, it's Michael Jackson." I said, "Get the fuck out of here, this is not Michael Jackson." He goes, "Yeah, it is Vincent, it's really me, it's Michael Jackson". I said, "If you don't get the fuck off this phone right now, I'm gonna hang up on you". He started laughing. When he started laughing, I knew it was him, right? I said, "Oh my God, Michael, I'm so sorry! I never would have used the word 'fuck', man". He starts laughing more. He starts laughing more. He goes, "Are you busy right now?" He asked me to come over to his recording studio, which was around the corner where I lived fortunately. So, I went over and he had the song, he was playing it, but it only had "Annie, are you okay? Annie, are you okay? You okay, Annie?", and the music. It didn't have any other lyrics. So, we talked for while, he kept playing it. "What do you think of it?" I said, "I love it. I mean, it's great, really inspiring." So, we

talked for a long time about other things too, hung out for a while. So, I was gonna leave, and he said, "Take it with you". I think it was a cassette at that time. "Take it with you and listen to it, and let the music tell you what it wants to be, and I said, "I'm so confused Mike. What do you want me to do? You want me to dance in this video or what?"--this short film--and he said, "No, man, I want you to conceive it, and I want you to choreograph it, and I want you to direct it." Now, I had done "Beat It" and "Thriller" with him, and that was it. So, I was kind of floored and a little blown away but--well, very blown away--but I went home for a week, and I thought about it, I thought about it, I thought about it. And I called him up and I said, "Okay, this is kind of what I see." Now, I knew Michael loved old film, and I knew he loved that kind of era. And I knew he was a huge fan of Fred Astaire, but I was not, honestly--and I want to be really honest about this, people say, "Oh, you took it from 'The Band Wagon'". I really don't believe that I took it from "The Band Wagon", and I don't believe--I mean, Michael may have thought about the white suit and that white hat from Fred Astaire, but we weren't really even making it an homage to Fred Astaire... I was not thinking about that physically or anything, I just created the piece. So, what happened was, Michael was in the studio recording his album and he really couldn't leave, so he said, "Look, I just want you cast it, I'm going to give you a stage. On half the stage, they'll build the set. On the other half, they'll build you a dance floor, and give you a great sound system, and give you a video camera. You create it, shoot it, come see me. Let's look at the stuff, let's talk about it. That's how we'll work." So, that's basically how I worked. And I would create it, I would give everybody a dance class and create, and then I would move them over to the set. I turned them all from dancers to actors. I made them come up with a biography of who they were as this character. I made them come up with names. When they walked onto the set they weren't allowed to just walk onto the set. They had to walk through that green door. And from the moment they walked into that green door, they were only allowed to dress themselves as the character. Once we were done rehearsing, they were allowed to walk out the green door, and as soon as they walked out the green door, they were back to who they were as dancers. So, that was kind of how I got them to be actors, and I thought that was really important for this story. So, I would shoot everything and I would go and see Michael at his Havenhurst house, and we would sit and watch everything, and he would always wind up saying to me, "I think you need more people, don't you?", because it would start out with ten, and I would say, "Yeah." "Well, why don't you get ten more people?" "Ok, cool". So, I'd hire ten more people. Then I come back, and he'd go, "You know, I have a friend Jeffrey Daniels, and he's a street dancer, and he's really good, and I was thinking maybe if you could bring him in with maybe five of his guys or something, that would be really cool". I was like, "Great". So, now we're up to like fifteen. Then I'm shooting, and we're doing more stuff, and then he goes, "Wouldn't you like to have a second story on that place?", and I said, "Yeah, I'd love to have a second story, and I'd love to have a stairway that floats down, so that you can come down to the floor". He goes, "I love that, I love that, I love that! Tell them that's what you want." So, told them that's what I want. "And I think you need ten more dancers". I was like, "Really?" "Yeah, get ten more dancers". By the end, I think we had like 60 dancers altogether, I can't even remember. And also what was wonderful was he would say, "Look, if you think in the musical break or something, we need more music or any way you want to redesign this so we need more music, just talk to me about it, and let's do it". So, I mean, if you think about it, the short film is ten minutes long, and the song is only, what, four minutes long or something, so we added all that extra minute--maybe it's four-and-a-half minutes long--but we added all that extra music just for

the short film. So, that's how I would work. And then eventually, when I had the whole thing down, then Michael and I went into a studio, and we started playing and worked him through every single section that he had to do with everybody, and then gave him time to create all of his own solitary moments. Yeah, and then I put him in the room and we'd all rehearse together, and go step by step, and if something felt uncomfortable, or he had great suggestions, which he always had, then we change it. But basically, it was the first opportunity that anybody had given me on that huge a scale to create something as important as that work. And, you know, to be with an artist who allows your imagination to just go wild is something that you can never ever, ever appreciate as much as you wish you could. I mean, I love this man beyond loving anybody, but I could still love him more. I mean, the fact that I said crazy shit like, "Okay, how about if you flip a coin and it goes across the room and lands in the jukebox, and that's how the music starts?". And he was like, "Yeah, I love that! I love that!" Other people would have said, "You're crazy, man. Are you kidding? I don't have the money for that. You're nuts". But not with Michael. Anything I came up with. The lean, when I came up with the lean, he was like "Yes! Yes, oh my gosh! We gotta do that, we gotta do that!" And that kind of became like the image of the entire short film--is that lean. So, it was a dream project. It was a dream project on many levels. I'll tell you two more thing--three more little things that were wonderful. One was that it was so much fun. Big celebrities came in all the time to watch, because they were all his friends. So, Elizabeth Taylor showed up one day and hung out. Jimmy Stewart, he was so old, but he came in and he hung out. He was great. And Fred Astaire's choreographer, his name is Hermes Pan, came in and hung out with us one afternoon. And he said to Michael and me the words that were the best words that anyone could have spoken. He said, "If Fred were here, he would love this." Michael and I just had the biggest smiles on our faces, like two little kids at Christmastime or something. It was amazing. But that was one thing. The second thing is in film, the producers rarely let dancers, and sometimes actors, but always dancers--they keep them away from the room where they show the dailies. Now, just if your audience doesn't know, when you shoot something, it goes to be printed, and then the next day, they show it to the producers and the director and the director of photography so that, if there's been any mistakes, they can come back and fix it when we shoot during the next day. So, we never get to see that. But Michael insisted that all the dancers and him and everybody who wanted to--craft services, the people in the food--anybody could come down to the room, and as long as the room fit everybody, we could all watch. So, every single day besides shooting this incredible short film, we had a monster party where everybody would get up and scream for each other. It was like a church meeting or something in the South. People were screaming, "Go! Go! You go, girl! Get it! Oh yeah, Michael, you got it! Girl, go, go!" They were screaming, and then we would go back down to the stage, and we would shoot again. And it was great. And that crazy little section where they're all like, "Annie are you okay? Are you okay?" in the middle of it, and then it explodes--I used to give them, as a director, acting exercises, improv exercises, and one of them was just that. "Okay you're a big mass of people and your body language is about confusion and pain and searching, and that's what it's about. And just see what happens". Well, we just ran the cameras and when Michael saw what we did, even though the first time we did it everybody was in rehearsal clothes, it was such a unique experience for him. He had never taken acting class, he had never done anything like that. So, when he did this improv with all these kids, there were all these bodies around him, these artists, and saw how everybody was as into it as he was, he just--it blew him away, and he said to us all, "We gotta shoot that! We gotta shoot that tomorrow!"

That's something that the world has never seen! I want that in this short film, we've got to do it! We've got to do it!" So, we came back, and that's why that crazy thing is in there. It had nothing to do with the short film at all, it was just that Michael loved it, and he wanted it in the middle. So, anyway those are three things about "Smooth Criminal".

Jamon: Oh, my God. I've got goosebumps right now.

Q: I'm on the floor. I'm on the floor. Wow, I've melted, melted into a puddle.

[Music Break]

Jamon: We spoke to Kevin Stea a little bit about the "MTV 10th Anniversary" show, but we've got to speak to you about it as well, because that "Will You Be There" performance is absolutely timeless choreography, just incredible staging. And we've got to ask about this artwork, the imagery in the artwork, the choreography, the symbolism. Talk to us about that piece and your inspiration for that piece, please.

Paterson: Well, Michael's manager at that time, Sandy Gallin, called me and said, "Three people have been chosen to represent MTV's 10th anniversary: Madonna, George Michael, and Michael Jackson. And Michael wants you to conceive and direct something that he can do live that nobody has--that's new and fresh". So, he liked to put--I sat with him and, like we did when we put the Super Bowl together, he liked to smash rhythms and energies against one another, so he thought that "Black or White" smashed up against "Will You Be There" would be a beautiful contrast and would work very well, and so did I. So, I created "Black or White", of course, and we brought back all those things that--in a way, it was our way of thumbing our nose at people who had said bad things about him, by bringing back the car with all the graffiti all over [laughs] We were just being bad, and by having Slash throw his guitar through the window at the end, we thought, "You know what, let's just like say, 'Look, we're happy with what we did, and we're doing it again. So, too bad'". But anyway--and then we go into the second piece, and he didn't talk to me too much about that piece at all. He just said, "Just do whatever you want, make it beautiful". And I said, "Okay, I don't know where I'm gonna go, but let me think about it, and I'll tell you". And then he said, "Okay". I just started with such a beautiful song, and I just thought, at that point in his career, that I knew people who were four years old and I knew people who were 85 years old, and they all loved Michael Jackson. And I thought, "We never see that. We usually see people who are in that kind of teenage MTV video range in all of his short films. So, I really want to bring in this whole universe of people who are, really, his fans. These are the people that love him. So, that's how it kind of began for me. I started auditioning people. I didn't know where I was going to go with it, and I got enough people in all the different age groups, and I brought in a costume designer, and she said, "Well, why don't we kind of make this a little off-center". And I said, "Yeah, I'm fine with that. Let's do it". So, she came up with these ideas of these turbans and these--putting everybody in beige and all these outfits, and I loved it. Then I put him in the front with some dancers, and I did some symbolism. I brought in a globe at one point, which I later used in a big form in Super Bowl. But, again, I wanted to say that this is a good man, and people love him, all kinds of people love him everywhere. So, I introduced that globe for a second as that moment, and then--this is a hard thing for me to say, because I'm not really a religious man. I'm a spiritual man, but I'm not a religious man. I've studied religions emphatically, but I believe that I live a very spiritual life, but not one that's connected to any specific religion. But for some people the Bible represents religion in a great sense. So, all the time that I met Michael, I never believed--I know that this will sound corny to a lot of people, but I don't care, it's my truth. I never really met anybody that,

to me, embodied as many of the characteristics of Jesus Christ, if this man was a man, than Michael Jackson. Kindness, patience, love, understanding, generosity; I could go on and on. So, in a way, I wanted to to just say that this is a good man--in a way, a holy man. This is a really good man. And, at the end--I'm getting teary-eyed now--but, at the end, I wanted to also include the people that can't speak. I wanted to include the deaf community, so I brought the little boy in to do it. And I just thought that Michael was a vulnerable soul, and I wanted the world to see him protected, so I brought this model named Angela Ice in on wings, and ended it with him wrapped in her arms. So, that's what I did.

Jamon: Oh, my God, my hair.

Q: Wow.

Jamon: The hair on my arms is like standing on end.

Paterson: [Laughs]

Jamon: Wow, so much depth to that song and that performance, and there's just absolutely timeless art.

Paterson: Thank you.

Jamon: there needs to be [unintelligible] written about that.

Q: There does. I remember Kevin talking about it, and how some of the poses that you got people to do were like the old religious icon paintings they used to have as little cards in--

Paterson: Absolutely. Holy cards.

Q: Yeah, the holy cards. Yeah.

Paterson: Yeah, they were.

Q: ...I'd never sort of put that together with such an obscure little thing, but you can see it now. I think we could always feel it, but we never knew sort of where it had come from. **Paterson:** Yeah, I'm a research fanatic, and before I did that, I got a lot of books, and I can't--I think it was pre-internet time actually, but I got a lot of books out, and I just went through these religious iconic images of all different religions, and I tried to incorporate them in different places, and whether it was about the forehead in the mouth and the chakras, or whether it came from the Catholic side, or from the eastern side of religion. And I just felt that, honestly, for me, Michael was this kind of artist. He was really, a really good man, and I just wanted to represent that somehow. So, again I never really tried to hit people over the head with images. I look at things and I don't know if they're going to be used, and then stuff comes out and people say, "Oh, what did you mean by that? What did you mean by that?" And I'm like, "I have no idea. I just thought it was interesting". But when I think--well, like now you're asking me these questions and making me really reflect upon it, and I guess I did they did come into my head without me thinking about 'em, much more subconsciously than I realized, but I do a lot of research, homework on every single project I did--do, whether it's small or big. So, obviously, things do live in your head. It's just how they come through your own mental mechanism, and how you spit them out, I guess, into the universe.

Q: Incredible. Well, we know you are short on time. We have been so blessed to have you for as long as we have already, but, my God, we've got to get you back one day. There's so many things to ask you about other big, big Michael events and things like that.

Paterson: Sure.

Q: But we'll finish up with a question, probably like two questions. One we ask every special guest we ever have on the show, and I know you've given [an] incredible answer to that what we just discussed then, and it might be something very similar, but a question we ask everyone

is how should Michael be remembered?

Paterson: I think Michael should be remembered with a smile on his face. That's it.

Q: And what a smile it was.

Jamon: Yeah.

Paterson: That's how I see him. I always see him with a smile on his face, you know?

Q: A smile--you know if you google "the most beautiful smile in the world", it's Michael's picture that comes up.

Paterson: Honest to God? [Laughs]

Jamon: Yeah. Go to Google Images and type it in, you see twenty pictures of Michael [laughs]

Paterson: [Laughs] Well, that's how I think of him. I think of him as this happy guy, who was happy to have had the chance, like me, to do what he wanted to do, and have the success, and I know how hard it was for him, but I--for all the years that I knew him, he always had a smile. He always had a smile.

[Music Break]

Q: Before we say goodbye to you, I wanted to ask one thing that--your film, "The Man Behind the Throne". Do you know if there's any plans underway for a wider release, like Netflix documentary, because I'm looking forward to paying to see that film one day?

Paterson: Well, I wish there were, but the situation is that this was produced by a director from Swedish television, and they had a limited budget, obviously, it was a documentary. And the sad state of affairs is that Michael and Madonna are both sort of owned by their record companies, and those record companies don't really care whether it's a documentary and you have no money, or whether it's a 300 billion dollar feature film. They charge you the same for everything, to show any material that's related to Michael or Madonna. And because unfortunately, or fortunately for me, in the film, there is material with Michael and Madonna. If this television station--t used to be an hour and a half, and it had a lot more stuff in it, but they had to bring it down to an hour. This was another thing that Warner's and Sony made them do, but they're under contract that they could only use it as a television program, and that they could use it in film festivals. But it could be on television programs all over the world, but they weren't allowed to make it bigger. If they wanted to make it bigger, and if they wanted to make it into a feature, I think they were asking like something for--like a million dollars in royalties and a little Swedish television station doing a documentary doesn't have that kind of money. So, sadly, no, but if--have you ever seen it?

Q: No, I remember--I think back in season 1, we spoke about it, because I think even there was--was there a fundraising, like Kickstarter kind of thing?

Paterson: Yes. What happened was this director was trying to get money to be able to make it into a feature, and she never got the money that she needed. I didn't direct it, it's only about me. I kept out of it, and it was this directors work, and I think it's interesting. You certainly learn about me, all the good and--you see a lot of good and the bad. I let them just show anything they wanted, but I think that the important part of the film is it's--the feedback that I've gotten from young artists around the world is that it's very inspirational, and that it lets them know that it's not all easy, as easy as it looks, and that you do have to continue to push and, in a sense, fight every step of the way. It's not just handed to you, time and time and time again. It always seems to start from the beginning, and you have to prove yourself always. And that's just the nature of the business, and if you can't do that, you don't belong in this business. But that's never going to change, and I think a lot of young artists are inspired by this film, this documentary, because

they see me, who has become successful, and I'm in a situation that's quite difficult for me, with a company that's not supportive of me. So, they get to see, for the first time that, "Oh, it's not all a bed of roses. There are problems and, even somebody who is as successful as Vincent, has to go through them. So, you know what, I can go through them." And that's what makes me proud about this film.

Jamon: Just to wrap things up what is next for Vincent Paterson?

Paterson: it's interesting. Right now, there's like 10 very cool projects floating around my head. Four of the big ones are incredible, new musicals that I'm very excited about directing, live theater. I have some great musicals that have happened in the last couple years, I directed "Evita" in Vienna, and it was supposed to run for three months, and it was all sold out and ran for 10 months, so that was great. The musical "Cabaret" I directed and choreographed in Berlin is the first original version of the musical "Cabaret" in Berlin, and it's been running for 14 years. So, now I'm up for--as soon as these pieces are finished--four fantastic musicals, including one with Darren Hayes from Savage Garden.

Q: No way!

Jamon: Oh, woow.

Paterson: Yeah. But I can't talk about that.

Q: Yeah, he can't talk about it either. He drops little hints, and says that he's working on something. Darren was on our show in season one. He's a big Michael fan, of course, and "The Bad Tour" was an awakening moment. Oh wow, ok. There's another piece of the puzzle clipped into place.

Paterson: It is truly--yeah, he called me. First he emailed me and said, "You know, I'm such a fan", and blah blah blah, and I wrote back--I said, "This is crazy. *I'm* a fan. Let's get together". And we got together, and he's been writing this really great musical that I'm so inspired about, and he wants me to direct it. So, I will do that. So, that's coming up within the next couple years, musicals take a while. But I think I'm going to direct my first feature. I've been offered a lot of features, and I keep turning them down. They don't excite me. I have to be inspired, I have to be scared, and I have to feel like I can really also give something to myself. I really like this script, and I am beginning to believe that I could do a really interesting job with it. So, that's what I think is going to be the big project that's going to happen, probably in January, yeah. So, other than that, I'm teaching some workshops around the country, yeah--I'm doing that, and I'm making some personal appearances in a couple places. I'm probably going to Paris again, and doing a "Michael Jackson Weekend". These are--very new thing for me, but I found that what I love is that being one degree of separation away from Michael, makes his fans feel like they're with him, or they touched him, or they've met him, and I feel so fortunate to give them that opportunity, because I see how many people love him to death, and they--if I give them a hug, I know that they feel like, "Oh my gosh, he gave Michael a hug, and now he's given me a hug, so I'm getting a hug from Michael". It's just so thrilling, you know? And also, to have people appreciative of what I've done with him and my other work, and I'm just a grateful guy. So, that's what's coming up.

Q: Well, we are so grateful that we've had the opportunity to hear your story, your incredible experiences. We do hope that you've had a good time, and that you might come back, because we want to ask you about "The Bad Tour", the Super Bowl, and "Blood on the Dance Floor", so many more things in the future, if you would grace us with your time in the future again, that would be amazing.

Paterson: Okay.

Jamon: And where can people find you online, Vincent, as well?

Paterson: At my website, for one thing, which is Vincent Paterson. My last name has one "t". P-A-T-E-R-S-O-N dot com. And I have a lot of video work there, and photos there, and things like that, and also email address if anybody wants to reach me, they're more than welcome. And I'm on Facebook. So, those are two places where I get information and letters and all kinds of wonderful things from people all over the world.

Jamon: Awesome, that's fantastic. Well, thank you very much again for joining us, Vincent. It's been an honor.

Paterson: Thanks, guys.

Jamon: Thank you.

Paterson: Great.

[Music Break]

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