

# Who's Better: Michael Jackson or Shakespeare?

*by* Con Chapman

I was almost feeling better—almost over the pain, the loss and the heartbreak of losing my all-time favorite, all-purpose entertainer. Even though I hadn't actually bought one of his records since, like, the 80's, to me he was still the most sensitive, talented, perceptive and misunderstood human being of all time. And yes, I'm not forgetting Jesus, you turkey.



*Misunderstood genius.*

I was almost back to normal—well, I don't think I'll ever really be *normal* normal again—when a smart-aleck remark by somebody passing by sent me crashing downward again.

This guy was like the goofiest-looking English professor you ever had in college—tweed jacket with elbow patches, face full of hair, stinking up the environment with cherry-scented tobacco in his pipe. I was straightening up the teddy bears and long-stemmed red roses this morning at the Michael Jackson Eternal Moonwalk Memorial on what would have been The Gloved One's 53rd birthday when I heard this guy say “You'd think it was tugging Shakespeare who died—instead of an androgynous black man who overcame racial prejudice by turning himself into a white woman.”



*Michael Jackson, Audrey Hepburn: Curiously, never seen in a room together.*

I looked up “tapping.” It doesn't have anything to do with Tupperware. It's Old English for screwing. Just like a professor—make something harder so you'll get it wrong on the mid-term. I guess Shakespeare used it in a play called “Othello.” We had to read “Julius Caesar” sophomore year. They had salads named after him in the student union.



*Shakespeare: Never had a #1 hit.*

Well, I'm sorry, but I just snapped. “How dare you!” I screamed at him. “How dare you dare to desecrate this holy shrine of stuffed animals and hand-lettered signs by even *suggesting* that Shakespeare was anywhere near as good as Michael! I hate you for hating on Michael!”

The guy started running, but his wife was wearing Uggs so when I threw my Giant Slurpee in the Michael Jackson souvenir drink cup at her I got her good on the back with a lot of ice. Serves her right for hanging out with such a stupid doofus!



*Smokey Robinson Souvenir Drink Cup: King of Pop version currently on backorder.*

But when I got home I flopped down on my bed among the stuffed animals that I hadn't taken to the memorial and started to think. I'm honest that way—if somebody says I'm wrong I check my facts before I tell them they're full of crap.

So I asked myself—is there any reason at all in the whole universe to think that Shakespeare might be even a teensy-weensy bit better than Michael Jackson? I got up and looked at myself in the mirror, and I had to admit that maybe the professor guy had a point. After all, Shakespeare is taught in school, and Michael Jackson is not, at least not yet. I mean, they have a Beatles major at a college in Liverpool—maybe there'll be a Michael Jackson major someday at Northwest Indiana State College in Gary, Indiana!



*The final counts for half of your grade.*

But then I realized—I wasn't being fair to Michael! Shakespeare lived *two whole years longer than Michael!* So it's like comparing apples to orange juice. And anyway, we studied Jacksonian

Democracy in American History, so Michael *is* in the core curriculum, just a more boring part.



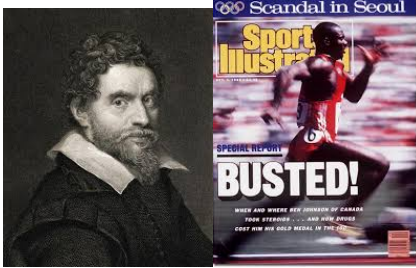
*Andrew, the “lost” Jackson family member*

On a lot of other points, Michael comes out way ahead. For instance, when Michael died he got tributes from Diana Ross, Elton John, and Jeremy Piven.



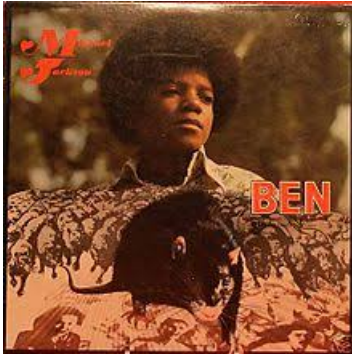
*Jeremy Piven: “Will, work with me okay? I got you a 154-sonnet deal with HBO!”*

What did Shakespeare get when he died? A poem. Seriously—a lousy stinking poem, *To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author, Master William Shakespeare*, by Ben Jonson. Can you believe it? A Canadian sprinter who's been banned for steroids—I looked it up on Wikipedia—wrote him a poem. Not exactly Madonna.



*Ben Jonson, Ben Johnson*

By every other yardstick we use to measure greatness in entertainment, Michael beats the Bard. I'm not gonna list 'em all—it would embarrass Shakespeare “scholars”:



**Theme song to a movie about a rat:** MJ one—“Ben.”

Shakespeare, zilch.

**Grammy Awards:** *Thirteen* for Michael, none for Shakespeare.

**Hollywood Walk of Fame:** Michael, yes. Shakespeare, no.

**Number one singles:** Again, *thirteen* for Michael, none for Shakespeare.



**Patented footwear:** Did you know that Michael held a patent on Anti-Gravity Boots that allowed him to lean forward at a super-human 45-degree angle? I didn't think so.

And Shakespeare? Somebody . . . anybody. Yes—you in the back row. That's right. The Shakespeare Love Quote Funky Womens Lace-Up Keds Shoe.

Give me a tuppung break!

So don't give me this "Swan of Avon" crap. Ben the pet rat could eat him alive.

