

Transcript Michael Jackson - 60 minutes

(CBS) *For most of his life, Michael Jackson has been in the spotlight, most recently because of what has been described as bizarre behavior — bizarre behavior that has now led him to be charged with sexually molesting a 13-year-old boy. If convicted, he could spend 20 years in prison.*

Now out on bail and awaiting trial, tonight Michael Jackson speaks out for the first time about his arrest, his accuser and the charges that have, for the moment, made his life a shambles.

We sat down with Michael Jackson on Christmas Day at a hotel in Los Angeles —one of several cities where he has been in seclusion since authorities in Santa Barbara officially charged him with seven counts of sexual molestation and two counts of using an "intoxicating agent" — reported to be alcohol — to seduce the boy.

ED BRADLEY: What is your response to the allegations that were brought by the district attorney in Santa Barbara, that you molested this boy?

MICHAEL JACKSON: Totally false. Before I would hurt a child, I would slit my wrists. I would never hurt a child. It's totally false. I was outraged. I could never do something like that.

ED BRADLEY: This is a kid you knew?

MICHAEL JACKSON: Yes.

ED BRADLEY: How would you characterize your relationship with this boy?

MICHAEL JACKSON: I've helped many, many, many children, thousands of children, cancer kids, leukemia kids. This is one of many.

Michael Jackson says his accuser is among thousands of children he's invited to his 2,600-acre Neverland Ranch in California to play in his amusement park, visit his zoo, watch movies, play video games, and feast on their favorite foods.

ED BRADLEY: But tell me why you developed Neverland.

MICHAEL JACKSON: Because I wanted to have a place that I could create everything that I that I never had as a child. So, you see rides. You see animals. There's a movie theater. I was always on tour, traveling. You know? And — I never got a chance to do those things. So, I compensated for the loss by — I have a good — I mean, I can't go into a park. I can't go to Disneyland, as myself. I can't go out and walk down the street. There's crowds, and bumper to bumper cars. And so, I create my world behind my gates. Everything that I love is behind those gates. We have elephants, and giraffes, and crocodiles, and every kind of tigers and lions. And — and we have bus loads of kids, who don't get to see those things. They come up sick children, and enjoy it. They enjoy it in a pure, loving, fun way. It's people with the dirty mind that think like that. I don't think that way. That's not me.

ED BRADLEY: And — and do you think people look at you and think that way today?

MICHAEL JACKSON: If they have a sick mind, yeah. And if they believe the trash they read in newspapers, yeah. And — and it's not — what — just cause — remember something. Just because it's in print doesn't mean it's the gospel. People write negatives things, cause they feel that's what sells.

Good news to them, doesn't sell.

And Jackson says his relationship with this boy he first met a year ago was positive. He says he was determined to help him with his battle against cancer.

ED BRADLEY: So when he would come over what would he do? What would you do?

MICHAEL JACKSON: I'll tell you exactly. When I first saw him, he was total bald—headed, white as snow from the chemotherapy, very bony, looked anorexic, no eyebrows, no eyelashes. And he was so weak, I would have to carry him from the house to the game room, or push him in a wheelchair, to try to give him a childhood, a life. Cause I felt bad. Because I never had that chance, too, as a child. You know? That the— and so, I know what it— it felt like in that way. Not being sick, but not having had a childhood. So, my heart go out to those children I feel their pain.

Jackson says he tried to help in the healing process by taking the boy around the grounds of Neverland to Jackson's favorite places.

MICHAEL JACKSON: He had never really climbed a tree. So, I had this tree that I have at Neverland. I call it, "My Giving Tree." Cause I like to write songs up there. I've written many songs up there. So, I said, "You have to climb a tree. That's part of boyhood. You just gotta do it." And — I helped him up. And once he went up — up the tree, we looked down on the branches. And it was so beautiful. It was magical. And he loved it. To give him a chance to have a life, you know? Because he was told he was going to die. They told him. They told his — his parents prepare for his funeral, that's how bad it was. And I put him on a program. I've helped many children doing this. I put him on a mental program.

The boy — whose name and face we're not revealing — has credited Michael Jackson's friendship and support with helping him to battle his cancer. And last February in a British documentary that was filmed before the boy alleged he was sexually molested — he said that he had stayed overnight at Jackson's home many times, and had slept in his bedroom.

JACKSON ACCUSER: There was one night, I asked him if I could stay in the bedroom. And he let me stay in the bedroom. And I was like, Michael, you can sleep on the bed. And he was like, no, no you sleep in the bed. And then he finally said, 'Okay, if you love me, you'll sleep on the bed.' I was like, 'Oh, man.' And so I finally slept on the bed.

That comment — along with Michael Jackson's startling confession that he had shared his bed many times with children — spurred an investigation last February by the Los Angeles county department of children and family services, which interviewed the boy and his mother to determine whether he had been sexually molested by Michael Jackson.

According an agency's memo, "the child denied any form of sexual abuse," and "the investigation by the sensitive case unit concluded the allegations of neglect and sexual abuse to be unfounded." Over the next several months, relations between the boy's family and Michael Jackson deteriorated. According to sources close to the family, the boy's mother had suspicions that Jackson was serving alcohol to her 13-year-old son, who was still suffering from cancer. Eventually she took her suspicions to the district attorney and that led to a full scale investigation by his office and the Santa Barbara County Sheriff.

SHERRIFF JIM ANDERSON: An arrest warrant for Mr. Jackson has been issued on multiple counts of child molestation. The bail amount of the award has been set at 3 million dollars.

REPORTER: If Michael Jackson's watching this right now, what's your message to him?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY THOMAS SNEDDON: Get over here and get checked in.

With that announcement two weeks ago, Michael Jackson's future and his career were in serious jeopardy. He surrendered to authorities and was booked on child molestation charges of lewd and lascivious conduct with a child.

ED BRADLEY: What was going through your mind when you're taken into a police station, in handcuffs, to have a mug shot taken, that you know is gonna be shown around the world?

MICHAEL JACKSON: They did it to try and belittle me, to try and to take away my pride. But I went through the whole system with them. And at the end, I— I wanted the public to know that I was okay, even though I was hurting.

ED BRADLEY: What happened when they arrested you? What did they do to you?

MICHAEL JACKSON: They were supposed to go in, and just check fingerprints, and do the whole thing that they do when they take somebody in. They manhandled me very roughly. My shoulder is dislocated, literally. It's hurting me very badly. I'm in pain all the time. This is, see this arm? This is as far as I can reach it. Same with this side over here.

ED BRADLEY: Because of what happened at the police station?

MICHAEL JACKSON: Yeah. Yeah. At the police station. And what they did to me — if you — if you saw what they did to my arms — it was very bad what they did. It's very swollen. I don't wanna say. You'll see. You'll see.

We were given a photograph said to be taken after Michael Jackson was released on bail. Jackson says the swelling above his wrist is where the police handcuffed him.

ED BRADLEY: How did they do it? I mean, what, physically, what did they do?

MICHAEL JACKSON: With the handcuffs, the way they tied 'em too tight behind my back —

ED BRADLEY: Behind your back?

MICHAEL JACKSON: Yeah. And putting it, they put it in a certain position, knowing that it's going to hurt, and affect my back. Now I can't move. I — I — it keeps me from sleeping at night. I can't sleep at night.

And Jackson says there was more ...

MICHAEL JACKSON: Then one time, I asked to use the restroom. And they said, "Sure, it's right around the corner there." Once I went in the restroom, they locked me in there for like 45 minutes. There was doo doo, feces thrown all over the walls, the floor, the ceiling. And it stunk so bad. Then one of the policemen came by the window. And he made a sarcastic remark. He said, "Smell — does it smell good enough for you in there? How do you like the smell? Is it good?" And I just simply said, "It's alright. It's okay." So, I just sat there, and waited.

ED BRADLEY: For 45 minutes?

MICHAEL JACKSON: Yeah, for 45 minutes. About 45 minutes. And then — then one cop would — come by, and say, "Oh, you'll be out in — in a second. You'll be out in a second." Then there would be another ten minutes added on, then another 15 minutes added on. They did this on purpose.

What about Jackson's allegations? Was he mistreated? Did the police injure his arm and shoulder? Did they lock him in a bathroom for 45 minutes? To get answers to those questions, we made repeated calls to both the sheriff's office and the office of the district attorney. They declined our request for an interview and referred us to the statement on their Web site, which says about allegations of mistreatment: "That is not true." It was the sheriff's deputies who executed the search warrant of the Neverland ranch.

ED BRADLEY: How did you feel when they went into Neverland, I mean, with a search warrant? I mean, what were they looking for? What did they take?

MICHAEL JACKSON: My room is a complete wreck. My workers told me. They said, "Michael, don't go in your room." They were crying on the phone, my employees. They said, "If you saw your room, you would cry." I have stairs that go up to my bed. And they said, "You can't even get up the stairs. The room is totally trashed." And they had 80 policemen in this room, 80 policemen in one bedroom. That's really overdoing it. They took knives, and cut open my mattresses with knives. C — just cut everything open.

ED BRADLEY: Did — did they take anything from Neverland?

MICHAEL JACKSON: A— I'm not sure what they took. They never gave me a list.

ED BRADLEY: But you're saying that they destroyed your property?

MICHAEL JACKSON: Yes, they did. And then they, what they did was they made everybody that work at the property, they locked everybody out of the house. They had the whole house to themselves to do whatever they wanted. And — they totally took advantage. They went into areas they weren't supposed to go into — like my office. They didn't have search warrants for those places. And they totally took advantage. And the room is a total, total wreck, they told me. I don't think I wanna see it. I'm not ready to see it yet.

ED BRADLEY: So, you haven't been back there?

MICHAEL JACKSON: I've been back there. But not in my bedroom. I won't live there ever again. I'll visit Neverland. It's a house now. It's not a home anymore. I'll only visit there. What time is it? Cause I'm hurting. You know what? I'm — I'm hurting. I have to go pretty soon anyway. Yeah. Okay. I don't feel good.

This is not the first time Michael Jackson has been accused of child molestation. Ten years ago, he was accused of sexually abusing another young boy. However, after the boy refused to testify, and after Jackson paid the boy's family millions of dollars to settle a civil lawsuit, Jackson was never charged. Although the family in the current case against him has filed no lawsuit and says it does not intend to, Michael Jackson is still suspicious of their motives.

MICHAEL JACKSON: Somewhere greed got in there, and somebody — I — I can't quite say. But it has to do with money. It's Michael Jackson. Look what we have here. We can get money out of this. That's exactly what happened.

ED BRADLEY: You had helped him with his cancer. What I don't understand is why today and I know you say it's money, but why would he turn around and say, "Michael Jackson sexually molested me," if it weren't true?

MICHAEL JACKSON: Because parents have power over children. They feel they have to do what their parents say. But the love of money is the root of all evil. And this is a sweet child. And to see him turn like this, this isn't him. This is not him.

ED BRADLEY: So, you don't think this comes from him? This —

MICHAEL JACKSON: No.

ED BRADLEY: — Comes from his parents?

MICHAEL JACKSON: No. This is not him. No. I know his heart.

Jackson said that even if he could, he would never settle this case as he did when similar charges were made in 1993.

ED BRADLEY: So — if you were innocent, why would you pay, I mean, to keep you quiet? I mean, why not go into court, and fight for your good name? I mean —

MICHAEL JACKSON: I'm not allowed to talk on that —

MARK GERAGOS: I'm gonna stop you for a second.

ED BRADLEY: Sure.

Jackson's high powered attorney Mark Geragos told me that if I wanted an answer to that question I'd have to ask him.

MARK GERAGOS: I mean remember what happened to him ten years ago. He was humiliated. He was — he went through where somebody — was examining him. Was photographing him. Was having him — humiliating him in the worst way in terms of looking at his private parts and photographing his private parts. And — and he was subjected to some of the most, just intrusive kinds of things that you could ever imagine. I can only try to put myself into that situation and — and say look, if money could make that situation go away, maybe that — that was the calculus then. I don't know and I don't wanna second guess it.

ED BRADLEY: But — but what you end up with is the public perception that this has happened not once, this has happened twice. That young boys have — have come forward to accuse him of — of sexual molestation over the last ten years. And he has made public comments about how he enjoys sharing his bed with children. Can you understand how the public might feel that, hey, maybe there's something here. There's a lot of smoke.

MARK GERAGOS: Well, look. There's a lot of smoke. But a lot of the people who blow the smoke are — are twisting what's happened. I understand when people say, now, there's somebody else who came forward. But I — I think, in all fairness, most people get it. Most people understand that this case is not about anything but money.

We asked the mother of the accuser who made these latest allegations to tell us her side of the story, but she declined and would not authorize anyone else to speak on her behalf.

ED BRADLEY: That British documentary last February — which you didn't like —

MICHAEL JACKSON: Yeah, I didn't like it.

ED BRADLEY: You — you said in that documentary that— that many children have slept in your bedroom.

MICHAEL JACKSON: Yeah.

ED BRADLEY: You said, and — and I'm gonna quote here, "Why can't you share your bed? A most loving thing to do is to share your bed with— with someone."

MICHAEL JACKSON: Yes.

ED BRADLEY: As — as we sit here today, do you still think that it's acceptable to share your bed with children?

MICHAEL JACKSON: Of course. Of course. Why not? If you're gonna be a pedophile, if you're gonna be Jack the Ripper, if you're gonna be a murderer, it's not a good idea. That I'm not. That's how we were raised. And I met — I didn't sleep in the bed with the child. Even if I did, it's okay. I slept on the floor. I give the bed to the child.

ED BRADLEY: But given all that you've been through —

MICHAEL JACKSON: Yeah?

ED BRADLEY: Given the allegations, given the innuendo — why would you put yourself in a position where something like this could happen again?

MICHAEL JACKSON: Well, I'm always more cautious. But I will never stop helping and loving people the way Jesus said to. He said, "Continue to love. Always love. Remember children. Imitate the children." Not childish, but childlike.

That may sound naïve, but Jackson attorney Mark Geragos says they did take precautions.

MARK GERAGOS: They were, at all times during that February 7 to March 10 period of time, whenever Michael was there, there was always a third party around. Always.

ED BRADLEY: What about the allegation that some kind of intoxicating agent, said to be wine, was given to this child to make him more pliable?

MARK GERAGOS: Ludicrous. I mean it's ludicrous on its face. There are in excess of 100 employees at any one time at that ranch. There is full—time security at that ranch. There are people who are there at all times, day and night, 24—7, who are specifically instructed to make sure that people don't do that. The kids are nowhere near alcohol and liquor.

ED BRADLEY: You're a parent. You've got three children.

MICHAEL JACKSON: Yes.

ED BRADLEY: Would you allow your children to sleep in the bed with a grown man, who was not a relative, or to sleep in the bedroom?

MICHAEL JACKSON: Sure, if I know that person, trust them, and love them. That's happened many times with me when I was little.

ED BRADLEY: Would you, as a parent, allow your children to sleep in the same bedroom with someone, who has the suspicions and allegations that have been made against you, and about you today? Would you allow that?

MICHAEL JACKSON: Someone —

ED BRADLEY: If you knew someone, who had the same —

MICHAEL JACKSON: I'm not —

ED BRADLEY: —kind of allegations —

MICHAEL JACKSON: Ed, I — I know exactly what you're saying.

ED BRADLEY: — that were made against you — would you let your children —

MICHAEL JACKSON: My children?

ED BRADLEY: — sleep in that man's bedroom?

MICHAEL JACKSON: Mmm, if I — if I knew the person personally. Cause I know how the press is, and how people can twist the truth, if I knew the person personally, absolutely yes. Absolutely. I wouldn't have a problem with it.

ED BRADLEY: Do you know how this looks to a lot of people? I mean, do you understand that?

MICHAEL JACKSON: How does what look?

ED BRADLEY: How the fact that you —

MICHAEL JACKSON: Know why? People think sex. They're thinking sex. My mind doesn't run that way. When I see children, I see the face of God. That's why I love them so much. That's what I see.

ED BRADLEY: Do you know any other man your age, a 45-year-old man, who shares his bedroom with children?

MICHAEL JACKSON: Of course. Not for sex. No. That's wrong.

ED BRADLEY: Well, let me — let me say, from my perspective, my experience, I don't know any 45-year-old men, who are not relatives of the children, who share their bedroom with other children.

MICHAEL JACKSON: Well, what's wrong with sharing your bed? I didn't say I slept in the bed. Even if I did sleep in the bed, it's okay. I am not going to do anything sexual to a child. It's not where my

heart is. I would never do anything like that. That's not Michael Jackson. I'm sorry. That's someone else.

And the Michael Jackson of today is not the Michael Jackson who at one time was the No. 1 pop star in the world. His "Thriller" CD topped the charts, while his latest didn't crack the top 10.

ED BRADLEY: What — what has this done to your career?

MICHAEL JACKSON: What — what has it done to my career?

ED BRADLEY: What has it done to your career?

MICHAEL JACKSON: In what way?

ED BRADLEY: How has it impacted — you know —

MICHAEL JACKSON: I'm — my album —

ED BRADLEY: — touring, record sales —

MICHAEL JACKSON: — album is number one all over the world. All over the world. America is the only one, because I — I don't wanna say too much.

ED BRADLEY: But it's not number one in the United States?

MICHAEL JACKSON: It's a conspiracy. Yeah. I'm getting tired.

Before Michael Jackson's attorneys stopped the interview, we were able to ask him one last question.

ED BRADLEY: Michael, what would you say to you — your fans, who have supported you through all of this, and — and who today, some of them might have questions? What would you say to them?

MICHAEL JACKSON: Well, I would tell them I love them very much. And I— I— they've learned about me, and know about me from a distance. But if you really want to know about me, there's a song I wrote, which is the most honest song I've ever written. It's the most autobiographical song I've ever written. It's called, "Childhood." They should listen to it. That's the one they really should listen to. And thank you for your support, the fans around the world. I love you with all my heart. I don't take any of it for granted. Any of it. And I love them dearly, all over the world.

Michael Jackson will make his first appearance in court on Jan. 16 when is arraigned. He is expected to plead not guilty.