

1993

Michael Jackson's patent

King of Pop / inventor of magic shoes  
by Chris Wild



A system for allowing a shoe wearer to lean forwardly beyond his center of gravity by virtue of wearing a specially designed pair of shoes which will engage with a hitch member movably projectable through a stage surface.

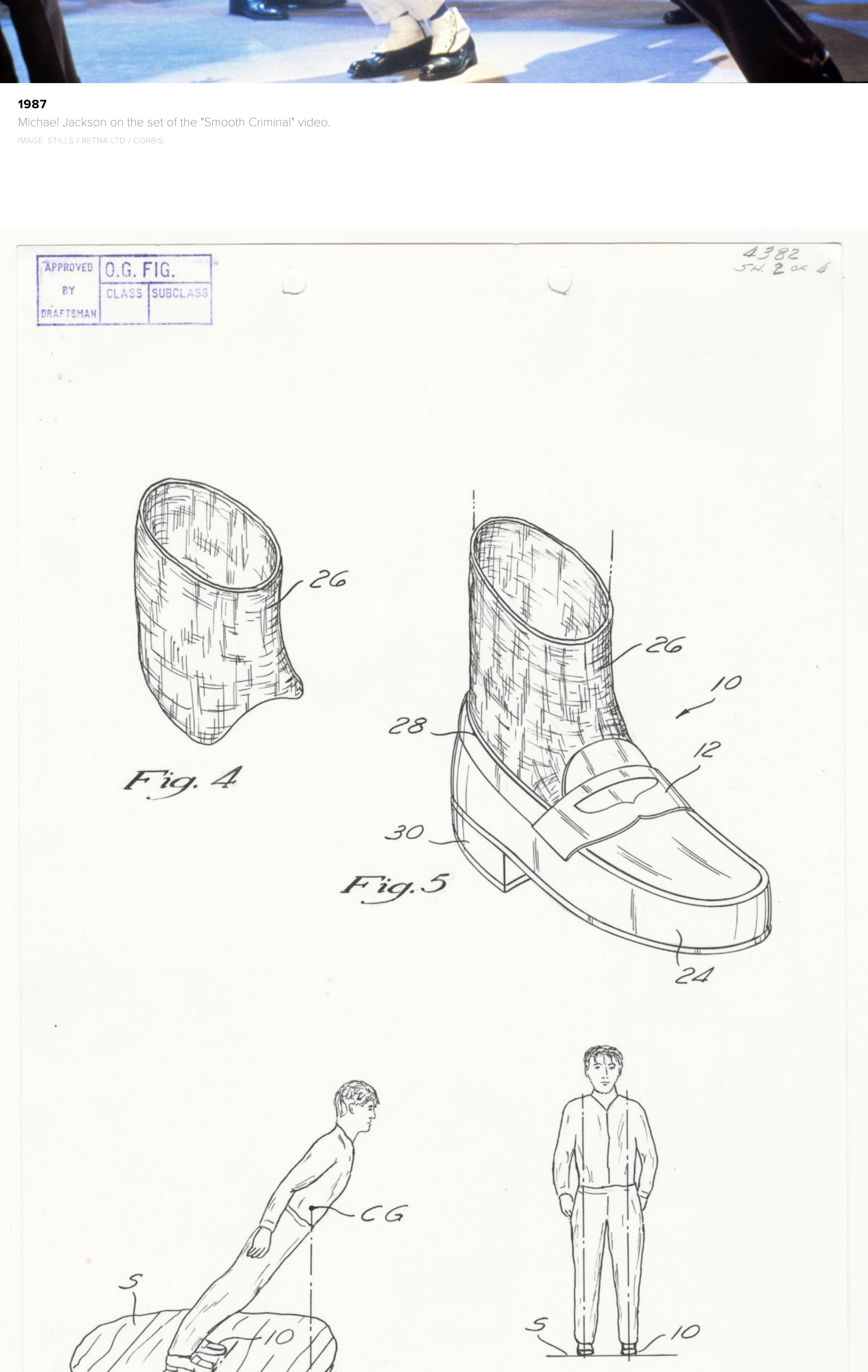
For the video of his 1987 single "Smooth Criminal," pop sensation Michael Jackson devised a dance routine. He leaned forward 45 degrees, apparently defying gravity, and completely blew our minds.

But Jackson wanted to recreate the same dance move in live performances on tour. So, along with two co-inventors, Jackson developed a special shoe. A slot in the heel engaged with a peg, which could be raised and protruded through the stage floor when activated. With the heel fixed, the performer could lean forward into the attached ankle straps. (However, the move would have required some strength in the legs and upper body to achieve and maintain this position.)

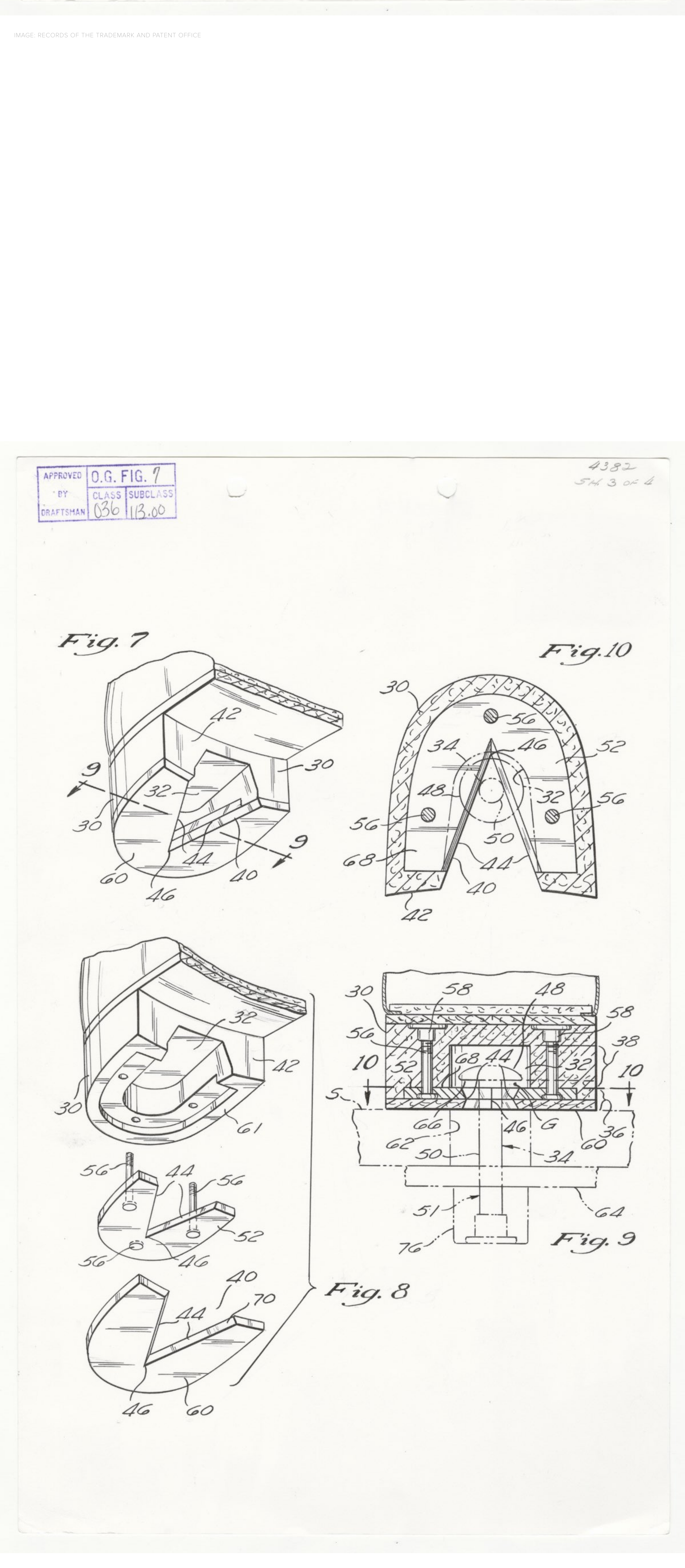
In 1993, Jackson and his co-inventors were granted a U.S. patent for the shoe and its magical heel. The "magic" worked perfectly until September 1996 when, during a concert in Moscow, one of the heels came loose from its peg. Michael went flying, but not in a good way. The result was a hasty reworking of the patented design.

The offending shoe, together with its twin, came into the possession of the Moscow branch of the Hard Rock Cafe, where they remained until after Jackson's death. Auctioned off, the shoes fetched roughly \$600,000.

Even with a faulty heel, it seems the magic remained.



1987  
Michael Jackson on the set of the "Smooth Criminal" video.  
IMAGE: STILLS / RETNA LTD / CORBIS



Dancers come and go in the twinkling of an eye but the dance lives on. I keep on dancing and then, it is the eternal dance of creation. The Creator and the creation merge into one wholeness of joy. I keep on dancing — until there is only ... the dance.

FROM THE INLAY SLEEVE OF DANGEROUS, 1991

Page 2 of 3

(Application Serial No.)

(Filing Date)

(Status)  
(patented, pending, abandoned)

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