

Throwback: Shaggy-It Wasn't Me

Shaggy's "It Wasn't Me" was a funny and catchy take on cheaters that broke his reggae-based sound into the world of pop. Eddie Murphy's *Raw* comedy special had a piece about boyfriends telling their girlfriends when asked about infidelity to simply reply, "It Wasn't Me" and this bit inspired Shaggy's song. Featured vocalist, RikRok asked Shaggy for advice when confronted by his girlfriend about cheating and that's when Shaggy tells him to rely on Murphy's phrase. The hilarious back-and-forth between RikRok and Shaggy made for an entertaining and unforgettable video. Shaggy had his first number-one hit with "It Wasn't Me" in the United States, the UK and Australia. The subject matter and lighthearted intersection of reggae and pop were undeniable to the masses. The liftoff of "It Wasn't Me" almost didn't happen as MCA Records refused to promote and market any of the songs from the album. Hawaiian DJ Pablo Soto downloaded the song from a Napster-like service and started playing it on his radio show. Listeners responded by calling in and asking the name of the artist requesting to hear the song multiple times a day. The record company found out about the song's popularity on the island and decided to take credit for its success. "It Wasn't Me" kept growing organically and made the world recognize dancehall and opened doors for artists like Sean Paul.

Shaggy's *Hot Shot* album was a smash and became the best-selling full-length release of 2001 in Canada and went platinum six times in the United States. Since its debut in 2000, "It Wasn't Me" developed its legend as the "Shaggy Defense" for anyone who denies a crime they obviously committed thanks to Slate writer Josh Levin who used it to describe R. Kelly's 2008 child porn trial. In 2022, Shaggy competed on the seventh season of *The Masked Singer*, received

an honorary doctorate from Brown University and released an album of Frank Sinatra covers called *Come Fly With Me*.

