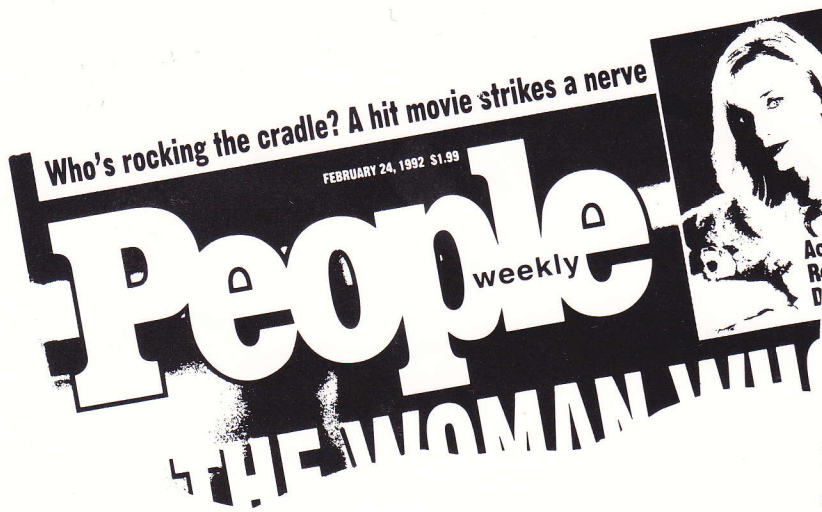


When the media need a source of authoritative information, they call Dr. Robert Kotler, author of *The Consumer's Guidebook to Cosmetic Facial Surgery*.



MICHAEL JACKSON: THE LIGHT STUFF

You've wondered about it, we've wondered about it, and it sure looks like it in *Remember the Time*, Michael Jackson's latest video: Has Michael Jackson's face really gotten whiter?

Here's the dish: Michael has not, apparently, permanently changed his skin color via cosmetic surgery. A source close to Jackson credits the transformation to "a combination of makeup and lighting."

Asked to speculate on whether Jackson might be trying to alter his skin color medically, Dr. Robert Kotler, a noted Los Angeles plastic surgeon who

specializes in working from the neck up, says, "You can't take a black person and make him white." He does say, however, that "acquired pigmentation" on the face, such as acne or discoloration associated with pregnancy, can be reversed by using a prescribed compound of Retin-A, cortisone and a bleaching agent called hydroquinone. Kotler says some blacks seeking treatment have tried to lighten their skin using the compound. "But in all cases the pigment has come back."

The official word from Jackson's rep? He says, "I don't know because I don't ask."

As Seen In The L.A. Times



ROSEMARY KAUL / Los Angeles Times

Dr. Robert Kotler does chemical peel on a patient. He applies a formula that burns away old skin so

new skin will grow, then bandages the areas that need deeper burns so acids can penetrate skin.

COLUMN ONE

A Frenzy of Lifts, Nips and Tucks

■ Celebrity endorsements and better techniques are bringing cosmetic surgery to the masses. In a largely unregulated field, the urge to sculpt the perfect body seems unstoppable.

By ROBERT SCHEER
TIMES STAFF WRITER

"The Phantom of the Opera" is playing softly in the background as a third of the woman's face is flopped over on itself, permitting the electric prod to stem some incidental bleeding. It's a ghastly sight, but there's no need to worry.

Dr. Kotler is available at (310) 278-8721