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Elvis Found Alive

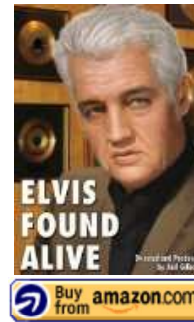
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Review by [Paul Mavis](#) | posted January 10, 2012 | [E-mail the Author](#)

I *knew* Obama had something to do with it. Highway 61 Entertainment, those whack-jobs behind last year's "documentary," **Paul McCartney Really Is Dead: The Last Testament of George Harrison**, have a new one out there for you conspiracy head-cases: **Elvis Found Alive**, the "unauthorized," explosive doc that proves *positively* that Elvis did *not* die in 1977. Produced and directed again by investigative doc filmmaker *par excellence* Joel Gilbert (wasn't he "Joe Gilbert" in the McCartney doc?), **Elvis Found Alive** isn't quite as much fun as Gilbert's deliciously loony McCartney faux-doc, but anything that links a 77-year-old Elvis-in-hiding with The Mafia, Bill Ayers, the Black Panthers, and Barrack Hussein Obama, I'm down with it. As an extra, you get to hear samples from the tracks of Elvis' latest album...which just happens to be on sale at Highway 61 Entertainment's website.



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Here's the official story: in 1977, after decades of a punishing lifestyle that included little sleep or exercise, a horrible, cholesterol-choked diet, a twilight world of pharmacological abuse of almost mythical proportions,

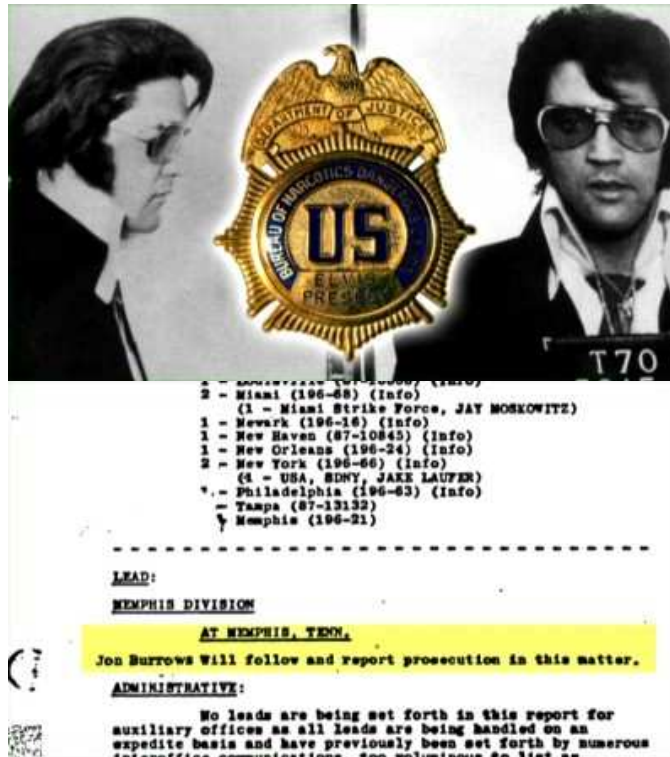
forced viewings of seemingly unending wrestling bouts involving white panty-wearing groupies, and most damaging, the movie **Harum Scarum** on his resume, Elvis suffered a myocardial infarction, most probably brought on by a drug overdose, and died at his home in Graceland on August 16th, 1977.



Now...here's what *really* happened. After a visit to President Nixon, where he was appointed a Drug Enforcement Agency operative after outlining his wish to help crush the hippie rebellion that threatened to consume the America he loved, Elvis Aaron Presley, superstar musician and inventor of rock 'n' roll, moonlighted as "Jon Burrows," a DEA strike force leader setting up drug stings as the U.S. government battled the home-grown terrorist group, The Weather Underground—just as Elvis' comic book hero, Captain Marvel, Jr., battled The Weather Men. Re-assigned to set up similar stings against the leading figures in La Cosa Nostra, and discovering that his manager, degenerate gambler Colonel Tom Parker, had sold half of his contract to mobster Paul Castellano, Elvis and his cohorts executed the 'ol' switcheroo, taken right from *Captain Marvel, Jr., #110*. Elvis' helpful Dr. Nick had a terminal patient—and die-hard fan of Elvis'—who, with a little plastic surgery, could look *just* like Elvis. Roscoe Holloway was moved into Graceland, where everyone waited for him to die, and where Elvis began to eat tremendous amounts of fried peanut butter and nanner sandwiches to more closely resemble "generously proportioned" Holloway. Once Holloway passed, Elvis was free to go completely underground in the Federal Witness Protection program, once he quit hanging out at the Graceland pool house...and, um, well...once he, uh, quit night clerking at a Kalamazoo, Michigan hotel. Then it was back to fighting Bill Ayers (he captured him twice but the FBI let him go), before a desk job at the FBI, retirement in a quiet Simi Valley suburb.

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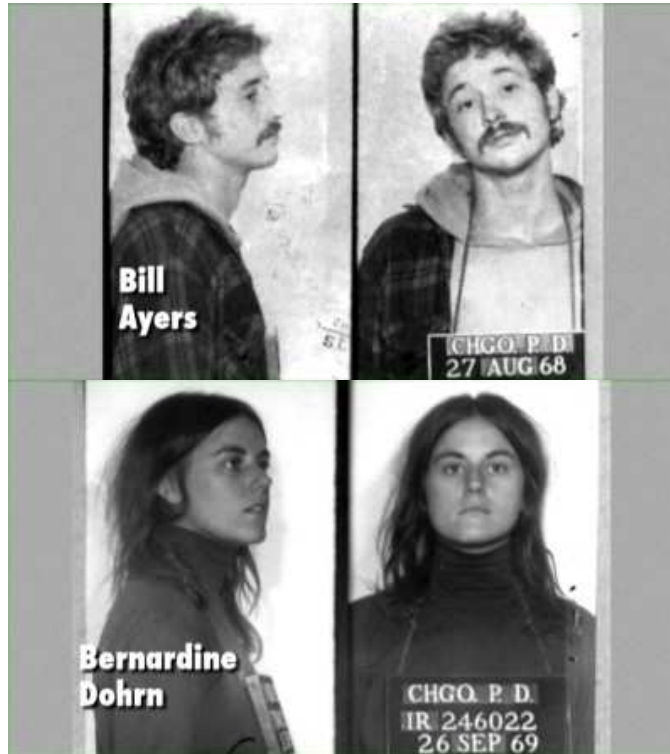
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I've had a disproportionate amount of hits for my review last year of director Gilbert's **Paul McCartney Really Is Dead: The Last Testament of George Harrison** (probably for the screen captures; read that review [here](#)), but a week or two still doesn't go by where I don't receive an angry email either stating I'm a MI-6 stooge in on the "Faul" cover-up, or that I'm scary biscuits for believing such a ridiculous theory in the first place (those emails are actually more fun than the so-called fruitcake ones, because my review makes it obvious I *don't* believe for a second the "Paul is dead" conspiracies). So when I spied **Elvis Found Alive** in the slush pile, I grabbed it immediately, hoping for a whole new crop of squirrely readers (I *live* for those kinds of emails).



Now, don't get me wrong: **Elvis Found Alive** is a lot of fun if you catch it right. But it's no **Paul McCartney Really Is Dead: The Last Testament of George Harrison**. Truth be told, **Paul McCartney Really Is Dead: The Last Testament of George Harrison** scored high on my personal "Whack-O-Meter" because its conspiracy theory was so delightfully dense and convoluted—the work of decades-worth of lunatics, opportunists, and satirists who helped expand and refine the theory with a dizzying array of tantalizing clues that *sound* intriguing...for about two seconds before you laugh at how stupid they are. *That's* the true sign of good 'ol' fashioned urban legend conspiracy con: you *want* to believe it; you *almost* believe it; and then you hit the floor laughing.

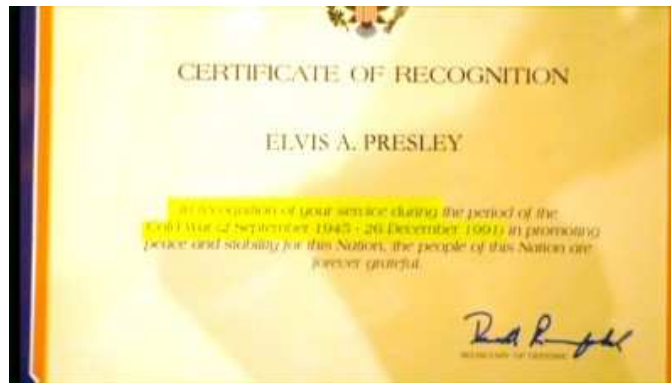


Unfortunately, **Elvis Found Alive's** conspiracy theory, taken from dribs and drabs of silly rumors bandied about years ago (along with all the new Obama stuff), isn't nearly as compelling as the "Faul" hypothesis. Now, if you were around when Elvis died back in 1977—and he *did* die, just in case you're still not sure where I'm going with this review—you'll know that for years afterward, the media had a lot of fun with reported sightings of the King as he seemed to crop up all over America more times than Bigfoot. I can't believe anybody really believed those sightings, though, as so many teens may have fallen for the "Paul is dead" myth, so it's next-to-impossible (no...on second thought, it *is* impossible) to suspend your sense of disbelief for just a *second* to say to yourself, "Hey...what if...." (to help make the experience more fun) before right-thinking prevails. Authors and historians will be writing new conspiracy books on JFK's assassination for as long as books are written, because something just isn't "right" with the story as we officially know it, and more importantly, we'll probably *never* get a definitive answer. But as for poor, sad, Elvis...he O.D.ed and that's that. The story of his ignominious, unnecessary end is all too simple, all too believable, and all too well documented.

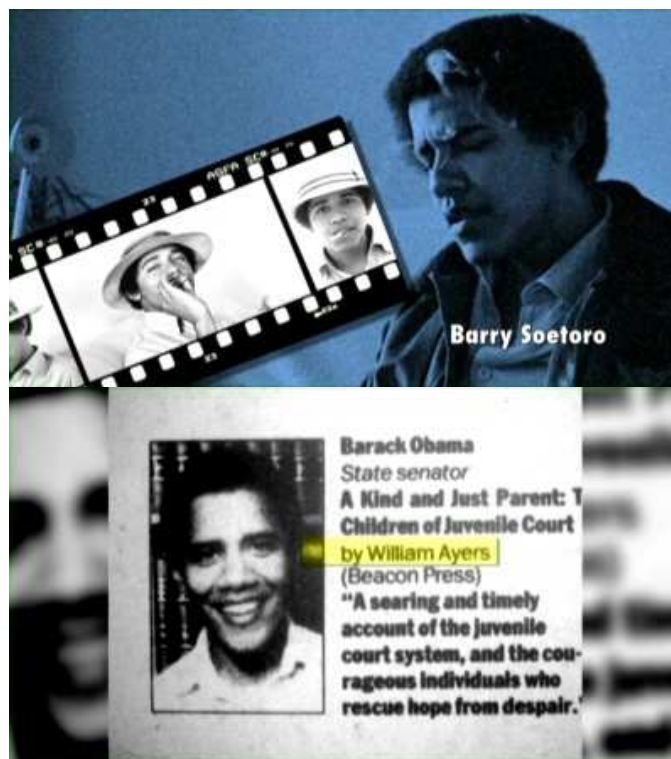


So, lacking a befuddlingly convoluted conspiracy to momentarily bewitch us with, and being saddled with a celebrity death that wasn't all that "mysterious" from the get-go, **Elvis Found Alive** has to be enjoyed purely from a technical standpoint: does Gilbert put together an amusing conspiracy theory that's outlandish enough to hold our attention for two hours? Well...yes, he does, for the most part. If you value straight-up chutzpah, you have to give Gilbert credit for attempting this with a relatively straight face. After all, he films himself "tracking down" Elvis at his Simi Valley residence, and then interviews him, Elvis' face obscured, as he recounts his double life...before Gilbert comes back the next day and *records an album with the King*. If you're going to lie, lie big, I guess. If you're a legitimate Elvis fan, you can probably enjoy **Elvis Found Alive** just from a stock footage consideration alone; Gilbert keeps the newsreels, trailers and bootleg images coming, so much so that at times you're ignoring the nonsense coming over the audio track just to watch the King. I also enjoyed the parallels that Gilbert picks out between Elvis' life and the adventures of his comic book hero, Captain Marvel, Jr.. The connections drawn here are clever and intriguing (if completely coincidental), and visually it's always amusing when Gilbert has Elvis floating around a comic book panel with his pint-sized hero (this potentially fascinating theme should be explored in a real documentary).





The rest is, how you say...*garbage*, but at least it's perpetrated without an ounce of self-consciousness. Gilbert endearingly makes the same mistake he made in **Paul McCartney Really Is Dead: The Last Testament of George Harrison** with this Elvis sound-alike: he's actually quite good...for a 30-year-old Elvis. He sounds *nothing* like what a 77-year-old Elvis would sound like. But that's all part of the fun of **Elvis Found Alive**. Even "better"/worse is the opening sequence that supposedly blows the lid off Elvis' fake death scheme. According to **Elvis Found Alive**, director Gilbert authorized a Freedom of Information Act request for the FBI's files on Elvis that, *ten days later*, yielded a treasure-trove box of pertinent papers to the Highway 61 Entertainment offices (don't those requests sometimes take *years* to fulfill, even to reputable, heavyweight news sources?). Unfortunately, many of the files were redacted...with fresh ink, no less (the sight of Gilbert and crew smearing the wet mess is priceless), so Gilbert gets his crew going on scraping off the ink (I'm not making this up), and that's how they learn all about DEA agent Elvis "Jon Burrows" Presley. Gilbert even has the nerve to hire **Live a Little, Love A Little** co-star honey Celeste Yarnall to "authenticate" this faux Elvis as the real deal; her big dramatic scene comes when she gets to shed a tear as elderly Elvis states she's the one that got away (times must be *real* tough at the Yarnall residence...).



As to any new information gleaned from **Elvis Found Alive**...aside from the fact that he's *alive*, ferchrissakes, lots of funny one-liners and wildly outrageous claims are made without a hint of self-parody (until they get to

Elvis saying he was an extra in **Avatar**—Gilbert overreached badly there). We learn here, straight from the King's mouth, that Colonel Tom Parker was a pimp for the DJs who first played Elvis' records (that may not be so far-fetched...). As for Elvis's time in the armed services over in Germany, he was apparently the victim of several assassination attempts (undeserved, of course, until he made **G.I. Blues**), and the sound of his daddy making love to his new step-mother sounded "like they was killing hogs" upstairs (may be this doc's biggest laugh). Elvis also never took drugs...only prescription medicine for his ailments. He still calls his Mob foes "Eye-talians," and Elvis tricked the paramedics who rushed to his aid at Graceland on August 16th by "slow breathing," something he learned in karate classes. President Ronald Reagan encouraged Elvis to get out of the Witness Protection Program, offering his help to facilitate that...before apparently forgetting all about it (it's a cruel joke, but funny nonetheless). Elvis was aware of Clinton being blackmailed by the Chinese, and he's on the downlow about Obama being a "Manchurian candidate," a "socialist thug...[who] can barely put two sentences together without a teleprompter." (Elvis is an equal opportunity offender here: he calls Republican officials "corrupt and ignorant"). My favorite gag in **Elvis Found Alive** has to be Elvis' last statement, though: he'll gladly come back into public life *if* Obama *isn't* re-elected.

Elvis, honey—I just changed my vote.



The DVD:

The Video:

The anamorphically enhanced, 1.78:1 widescreen transfer for **Elvis Found Alive** looks sharp, with the archival footage sometimes experiencing more grain and formatting changes to accommodate the new ratio.

The Audio:

The Dolby Digital English 2.0 stereo audio track—*completely* free of any of the real Elvis singing—is crisp and clean, with no hiss or distortions. No subtitles or close-captions available.

The Extras:

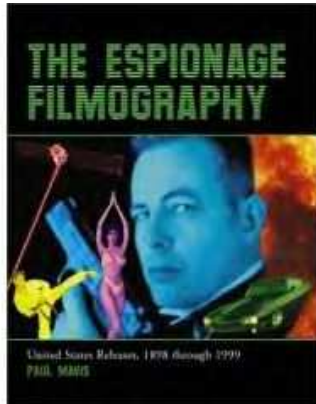
Just to whet your appetite, samples from the tracks of Elvis' very latest raccord are included here, along with a music video for Lisa Marie.

Screams-ville.

Final Thoughts:

Not nearly as goofily twisted as his previous effort, **Paul McCartney Really Is Dead: The Last Testament of George Harrison**, director Joel Gilbert's **Elvis Found Alive** is all too, too obvious in its chicanery...which would be fine if he had been just a little more outrageous in perpetrating the scam. Still...the stock footage is good, and there *are* laughs to be had here, so...I'm recommending **Elvis Found Alive** for all Elvis true believers who need something light-hearted near his 77th birthday this past Sunday—but it's strictly a rental for all the other smartasses out there.

Paul Mavis is an internationally published film and television historian, a member of the [Online Film Critics Society](#), and the author of [The Espionage Filmography](#).



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