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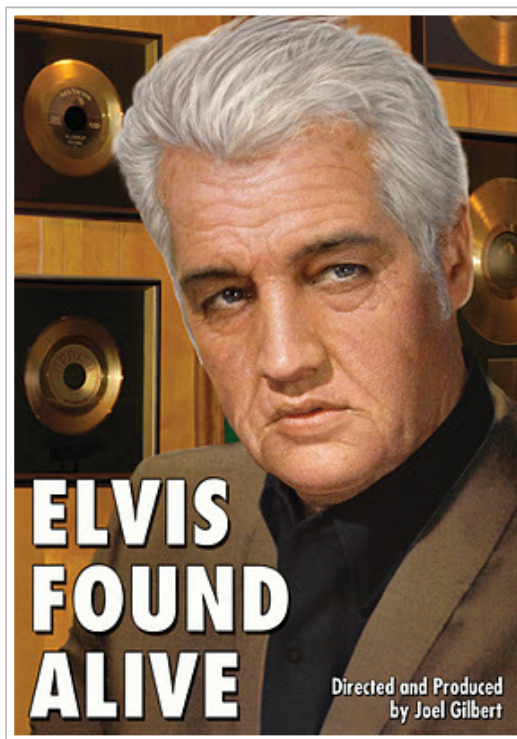
FFanzeen: Rock'n'Roll Attitude With Integrity

Through the writings and photography of Robert Barry Francos, a view of the arts and culture, including everyday life.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2011

DVD Review: *Elvis Found Alive*

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Images from the Internet



Elvis Found Alive

Directed and Produced by Joel Gilbert

Highway 61 Entertainment, 2012

128 minutes, USD \$14.95

Highway61ent.com

Elvisfoundalive.com

MVDvisual.com

Taking an opposite tack this time, Joel Gilbert, who brought you the amusing yet well researched *Paul McCartney Is Really Dead* is back with *Elvis Found Alive*.

The premise is set up after Gilbert visits Graceland on a vacation, Joel and his audio/video crew (who we meet and act pretty stiffly,

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obviously not professional actors) send off for Elvis' file from the US government via the Freedom of Information Act. But when the package arrives in 2012 (I received this DVD in 2011, FYI), the ink on the redacted parts are still wet (!) enough for them to clean off some of it, and find out that Elvis is not only alive, but living in the Simi Valley of California, just a few miles away from Gilbert's studio, under witness protection, using his infamous "hotel registry name" of Jon Burrows! (Actually, just about every sentence in this review probably deserves an exclamation point, so just add it wherever you think it's needed.)

Grabbing Elvis co-star [Celeste Yarnall](#) (from his 1968 film, [Live a Little, Love a Little](#)), they go out to pay him a visit. In front of the suspected house is a 1957 Caddy with numerous Republican presidential bumper stickers, including Nixon (is the one), Reagan, Bush (both), and Dole. The back seat has a stack of Elvis 8-Tracks (hahaha). It just gets better and better (not meant sarcastically in any way).

Gilbert talks to someone at the house's front door while mic'd - his crew starts to freak out because they recognize the voice - and ask if it's okay to interview him. Let me say right here and now that whomever mimicked the voice did a truly splendid job, even though "Elvis" (I'm leaving out the quote marks on the name and the pronoun "his" after this) sounds just like he did in the '70s. Elvis agrees, and the crew comes inside, including Yarnall, who is wearing a cap and stands in the background. Elvis is lit so we cannot see his face at all, which is more likely due to adding the vocal in a studio later. He sits and plays with his rings, as Elvis was - er - is known to do.

As with the Paul-is-Dead documentary, what follows is actually a very meticulously detailed history of Elvis, through his own words in 2012. The chapters are broken down into sections by dates and events (listed below). Except for some biting comments about the Colonel, most of the first half of the story is mostly researched knowledge, such as his deep devotion to his mom, his rise to fame, and his career. But there are also some interesting speculations to keep the viewer on her or his toes, such as Elvis being forced into the Army because the government was afraid that [Jailhouse Rock](#) promoted homosexuality (e.g., "No. 47 said to No. 3 / You're the cutest jailbird I ever did see" - Ed.). Another is after the army, Elvis is introduced to the Vegas mob by Sinatra, and Sammy Davis Jr. privately tells him to *am-scray* for his own good; apparently the only reason Presley would ever play the town is to pay back huge gambling debts owed by the Colonel.

Further, the reason he married Priscilla is because Ann-Margret ("the female *me*," 2012 Elvis states) turned him down. A fun comment though is "The only thing worse than watching a bad movie is being in one." And Elvis definitely had his share of them, thank is large part to the Colonel's misguided direction (though I remember hearing a quote at some time that Elvis wanted to be like Dean Martin).

About Me

[Robert Barry Francos](#)

Currently living in Saskatoon (email at RBF55@msn.com for address). From 1977-88, I used to publish a print version of a music magazine in New York called FFanzeen, which dealt with the wide-ranging independent music scene. I also photographed many bands from the period (and since). Now I write this blog, and have a column at [jerseybeat \(dot\) com \(slash\) quietcorner \(dot\) html](#). And the beat goes on.

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As the lame - and yes, they were - films drag down his career (though *Jailhouse Rock* and *Viva Las Vegas* - especially for the “female me” - are still watchable for me), he tried to resurrect his career with “The Ghetto” and “Suspicious Mind.” However, there was trouble brewing in America that concerned Elvis to the core: the Weathermen Underground and the Mafia were controlling the kids through drugs, and Elvis wanted to put a stop to it, so he famously contacted Prez Nixon and asked to be an officer in the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). Rather, Nixon sent him a badge (Elvis collected police badges, which are on display in Graceland) naming him an honorary agent for the “Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs.” And here is where this film starts to interestingly invent history (supposedly...). For the purposes of this story, he actually *was* made an undercover Marshall, and with the help of the Memphis Mafia (his ironically named posse), he helped bring down the Weathermen Underground and subsequently the Mafia by using hidden and elaborate stings so that they didn’t connect it to him.

Gilbert asks Elvis, “Are you saying the man who invented cool wanted to be a narc?” Elvis calmly answers, “I felt God wanted to use me in a much more important way.”

Another interesting turn of events has Elvis using Bob Dylan (see, I really should be using a lot more exclamation points) to introduce him to mobster Joey Gallo, leading to the latter’s hit. With wiretaps overhearing of Elvis’ Memphis Mafia being suspect, he fires them all (with their blessing) to protect them; but of course, Presley is also suspect.

Here comes the plan to protect his own life by faking his death, and then going into the witness protection program where he worked as a hotel clerk in Kalamazoo, Michigan (one of the famous “Elvis sightings”).

An amusing side-story is the Mafia telling Dylan he better “find Jesus” after Gallo’s assassination, meaning keeping his nose clean, as it were, Dylan misunderstands and pretends to become a born-again Christian. When he learns what was really meant, he goes back to Judaism. Hahaha, that is such a nice touch!

Gilbert researches this tale well, and includes bits about Gail Brewer-Giorgio’s book *Is Elvis Alive?* and a Bill Bixby-hosted speculative television special on the subject.

Being that 2012 Elvis is a big Reagan fan (“He had strong American principles”), there is a great PhotoShop’d picture of a graying Elvis with Big Ronnie, and also completely gray with Bill Clinton (it is posited here that Chinese spies tapped Bill’s phone and learned about Monica, which is why Clinton gave them Most Favored Nations status; oh, and Elvis also states that “everyone killed JFK”). But it stops there, because Elvis apparently is *not* an Obama fan because of his connection to ex-Weather Underground leader Bill Ayres (“Both hate

American values”; Little Georgie W. Bush did? But I digress...)

One of the more imaginative aspects to this pseudo-documentary (again, meant kindly) is director Gilbert’s use of the *Capt. Marvel Jr.* comic books as a thread throughout the entire film. He uses panels that so closely represents Presley’s life, it really is almost like it was based on Presley. It’s known Elvis was a fan of the comic (there are photos of him reading it, and there are stacks in Graceland today that were Elvis’ property; shame they couldn’t work Stan Lee into this...). This theme also used as expressing throughout how much Elvis thought he resembled Marvel Jr., how both Priscilla and Ann-Margret looked like the Marvel’s sister, Ann Marvel (*kinda* creepy), and how Elvis’ arch-enemy Bill Ayres resembles the villain of the comic, Capt. Nazi.

There is a touching moment as Elvis and Yarnall, someone refers to as “the one that got away,” are reunited. Wonder what her husband thinks about that, I ask bemusedly.

So not only is Elvis Presley alive, but he’s *back*. There is a [new CD by “Jon Burrows”](#) available with some of his old songs redone and rearranged, and some new tunes as well, such as “Lisa Marie” (which also has a music video on the DVD).

Believe me, I’m only skimming the surface on what is presented here. The stories are incredibly imaginative, and as one who is not engulfed in Elvismania I’m sure there’s some stuff I’m missing. And yet, this was a fun ride from beginning to end. Sure, it could have been trimmed probably by about 20 minutes rather than its over two-hour running time, but this is definitely for not just Elvis fans, but anyone who is into rock’n’roll history or just the mysteries of the 1960s counterculture.

I sure do look forward to see what’s next for Joel Gilbert and his crew.

Chapters:

Part 1: 1935-1955 - Captain Marvel Jr. Origins

Part 2: 1956-1958 - Elvis the Pelvis

Part 3: 1959-1960 - US Army Intervention

Part 4: 1961-1967 - Hollywood Shlock Formula

Part 5: 1968-1969 - America Under Siege

Part 6: 1970 - Federal Drug Enforcement Agent

Part 7: 1971-1974 - Fighting the Weather Underground

Part 8: 1975-1976 - Battling the Mafia

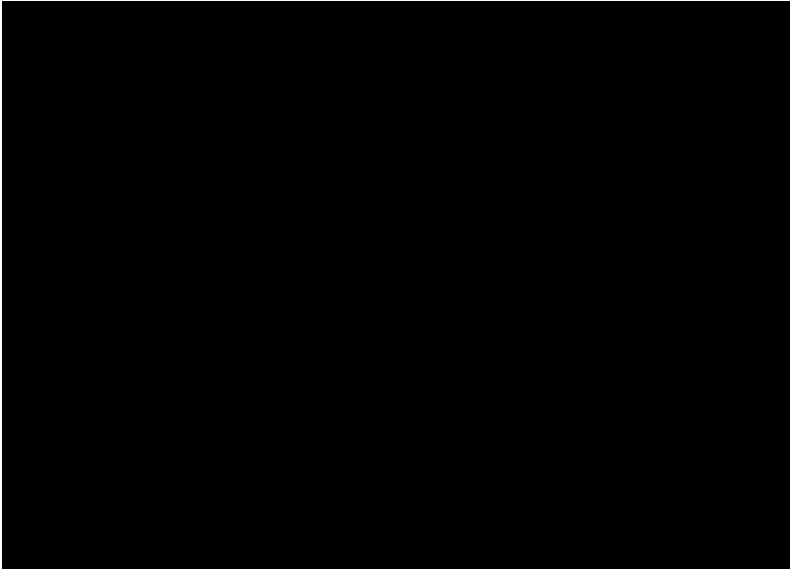
Part 9: 1977 - Fake Death Plot

Part 10: 1978-1979 - Witness Protection Program

Part 11: 1980-2004 - The Struggle to Return

Part 12: 2005-2001 - The Obama-Weathermen Nexus

Part 12: 2012 - Elvis is Back



Posted by [Robert Barry Francos](#) at 12:01 AM 

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