



## [The King and \(F.B.\)I: \*Elvis Found Alive\*](#)

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**By Christian Lipski**

Elvis Presley is alive and well and living in Simi Valley. Or at least that's the claim of *Elvis Found Alive*, a new faux-documentary from Highway 61 Entertainment, who brought you *Paul McCartney Is Really Dead: The Last Testament of George Harrison* (reviewed [here](#)). This time around, they're doing a complete 180, revealing a conspiracy to fake a death instead of a life.

The idea that Elvis didn't die in 1977 is not a new one, but *Elvis Found Alive*'s writer/director/editor/producer/actor Joel Gilbert comes up with a clever way of discovering the truth: pages from an FBI Freedom of Information request arrive with ink still wet on the redacted sections. Quickly wiping away what they can, Gilbert's team uncover startling information about Presley's secret life.

The film crew confronts the elderly Presley (under the alias Jon Burrows) in his home in Simi, where he is part of the Witness Protection Program. The King, resigned to his unveiling, agrees to speak with Gilbert about his hidden past.

Gilbert brings with him former Elvis co-star Celeste Yarnall (1968's *Live A Little, Love A Little*), who produces convincing tears when she hears Presley's voice. Kudos to the director for involving an actress from the real King's life. Unfortunately, the 67-year-old Yarnall provides the only acting in the two-hour film, as Gilbert and crew give exceedingly cringe-worthy performances. Thankfully, these moments are relatively brief, as the main part of *Elvis Found Alive* is composed of historical footage with voiceovers.

The voice actor providing Presley's part is quite good, capturing the King's identifiable accent. It isn't the voice of a 75-year-old, but it's a damn good Elvis. During the interview, both Gilbert and Presley tended to overenunciate as though they were reading

from cue cards, but this minor flaw is ignorable. Certainly moreso than the atrocious Liverpool accent of *Paul McCartney Is Really Dead*.

In addition to the DVD, a CD is also available, featuring the singer reprising classic Elvis tunes as well as taking on contemporary songs such as “Every Breath You Take” and “The Dance.” A new song, “Lisa Marie,” is a tender ballad to a beloved daughter, though I can’t imagine the real Lisa Marie feeling very pleased about the idea.

For the first hour, Presley recounts his life and career, which will be familiar to fans of the singer. Having Presley’s voice explain his feelings about the events that shaped him as an entertainer gives the viewer a fresh take on the singer’s history, much the way that the dramatized portions of *This Is Elvis* did.

An interesting tack that Gilbert takes on the Elvis legend is tying much of the singer’s actions to the comic book hero Captain Marvel, Jr. It has been suggested that Presley took his hairstyle from the dark-haired hero, and *Elvis Found Alive* includes numerous doctored photos showing Elvis with various issues of the comic. The singer constantly refers to Captain Marvel, Jr. throughout the film, citing him as a role model and inspiration. He also identifies the comic as a romantic guide, claiming that he spent his life looking for a partner like Mary Marvel and pointing out the character’s resemblance to many of his love interests, including Priscilla Beaulieu and Ann-Margret.

In addition to talking about his singing and acting career, Presley comments on the negative changes he saw in the late ’60s, focusing on the hippie drug culture (including savage attacks on the Beatles), the Mafia, and the radical Weather Underground organization. The bombings perpetrated by William Ayers and the Weathermen serve as the impetus for Presley to seek out a hidden career in crimefighting, “to help save America.”

It’s easy to believe that Elvis would be disgusted by the new wave of thinking in the ’60s, and enraged by attacks on the country he loved. *Elvis Found Alive* takes the King in logical directions, weaving existing events in with conspiracy elements to make a highly entertaining thought experiment. Gilbert includes popular “fake death” theories and strange facts about Presley’s passing that somehow make more sense in context.

Just as in *Paul McCartney Really Is Dead*, there’s an impersonator brought into play. For McCartney, the ringer was to used to stand in for a living person, and for Presley it’s a corpse. For Elvis has to go into hiding after providing testimony against organized crime, and must watch his legacy and loved ones from the shadows.

President Nixon and newly appointed “Drug Czar,”  
Elvis Presley

Eventually talk turns to President Obama, and this is where the movie goes off the rails. Seizing upon the Ayers-Obama rumors from the 2008 Presidential election, Gilbert uses Presley to expand a casual relationship to one where “terrorist” Ayers meets Obama at an SDS rally and becomes the young man’s mentor, controlling his political development. There is a weird conflation of “Socialism” with “National Socialism” as Presley warns of Obama’s plans for America if he is re-elected. I suppose that if one accepts the fiction of Ayers as mentor, the concept of Obama being influenced by the former radical would make some sense, but it’s all a bit out of proportion and disconcerting. The vehemence that suddenly erupts from the Presley character is uncharacteristic of the rest of the film, and leads one to wonder whether this rage comes more from the writer than his creation. Judging from the title of one of Gilbert’s non-fiction documentaries, *Atomic Jihad: Ahmadinejad’s Coming War and Obama’s Politics of Defeat*, the answer is not hard to determine. He would do well to follow Presley’s lead when the singer refused to comment on the Selective Service Act, saying “I’d just soon to keep my own personal views about that to myself. ‘Cause I’m just an entertainer and I’d rather not say.”

For Elvis fans, *Elvis Found Alive* is a fun journey down memory lane and an entertaining “what if” story. For conspiracy buffs, it’s a treasure trove of clues and secrets. Joel Gilbert has a knack for peering into the shadowy corners of celebrity history and bringing mind-boggling alternatives out into the light.

*Elvis Found Alive*, from *Highway 61 Entertainment*, hit shelves on January 24 in the US, just over two weeks after the King’s birthday. Find out more about the film at [ElvisFoundAlive.com](http://ElvisFoundAlive.com).



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