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FAQ






FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why does the Graceland Mansion tour not include the upstairs area (Elvis' bedroom, bath, office and wardrobe room, Lisa Marie's nursery, etc.)?

Tours of the upstairs have not been available up to now and won't be in the foreseeable future. The part of Graceland we show the world on our tour is the part that Elvis showed anyone who visited him at Graceland. The upstairs was his private area. When Graceland opened, Priscilla and Lisa felt that the upstairs should remain private, that letting everyone go up there would be disrespectful and inappropriate – something the rest of our management wholeheartedly agrees with.

Along with these personal feelings is the matter of logistics. With our volume of visitorship we would be required to put in an extra staircase as an exit, we'd have to do some remodeling upstairs as the hallway connecting the rooms is not large enough to accommodate crowds. This would radically alter the house and no one wants to do that. The issue of privacy and respect is also the reason that we do not publish photographs of the upstairs area. However, we do bring items from upstairs into our exhibits.

Elvis' middle name, is it Aron or Aaron?

Either spelling is right and either spelling is wrong. But, how can that be? Elvis was named after his father, Vernon Elvis Presley, and Mr. Presley's good friend in Tupelo, Aaron Kennedy. Aron was the spelling the Presleys chose, apparently to make it similar to the middle name of Elvis' stillborn identical twin, Jesse Garon Presley. Jesse was apparently named after Vernon's father, Jessie Presley, although the spelling was slightly different. Toward the end of his life, Elvis sought to change the spelling of his middle name to the traditional and biblical Aaron. In the process, he learned that official state records had inexplicably listed it as Aaron and not Aron as on his original birth records. Knowing Elvis' plans for his middle name, Aaron is the spelling his father chose for Elvis' tombstone and it's the spelling his estate has designated as the official spelling when the middle name is used today.

Similarly, there is some slight confusion regarding the spelling of Jesse Garon's name. Most reliable resources have the spelling as Jesse. However, near the graves of Elvis, his parents and his grandmother at Graceland is a marker the family placed in memory of Elvis' twin, but the spelling is Jessie for reasons we have yet to determine. Jesse Garon's actual grave site is in Tupelo, Mississippi, where it has always been, but it remains unmarked by a tombstone. Lack of money in the family's early years was likely the reason. Then, once Elvis became wealthy and famous, the grave, which is in a public cemetery, remained unmarked most likely in the interest of privacy.

Because of the spelling on the marker at Graceland, we tend to use the spelling Jessie to avoid confusion.

Who owns Elvis Presley's music?

RCA Records owned all of Elvis' recordings. The RCA Records Label was bought by BMG in the 1980s and in 2004 BMG merged with Sony Music Entertainment to become Sony BMG. Sony BMG owns Elvis' recordings and they continue to use the RCA Records label for issuing Elvis releases. They also have a special Elvis collectors label, Follow That Dream Records. The various composers/publishers own the songs themselves. People get confused about the ownership of the recordings with that of the songs. Also, they get confused about a deal Elvis and his manager made with RCA in 1973. Here is our attempt to sort it all out for you:

THE RECORDINGS

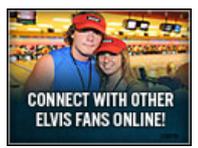
Elvis began his recording career with Sun Records in Memphis in the summer of 1954. Sun Records owner/producer Sam Phillips sold Elvis' recording contract and the catalog of Elvis' Sun recordings to RCA in the fall of 1955. Elvis began recording for RCA in January 1956 and continued under contract with RCA for the rest of his life. Elvis never had ownership in his Sun or RCA recordings. Elvis received an artist's royalty on record sales, per the terms of his contracts with the record company. That's typically how it's done.

THE MARCH 1973 DEAL

In March 1973, Elvis and his manager, Colonel Tom Parker, went to the record company proposing that Elvis get a large lump sum payment in lieu of all his future artist's royalties for ongoing sales of anything he had recorded up to that time. The deal was made. RCA paid \$5.4 million, which Elvis and the Colonel split 50–50. That meant Elvis no longer got (EPE today does not get) his artist's royalties for the ongoing sales of any recordings created before the March 1973 deal. However, Elvis did continue (EPE today continues) to get his artist's royalties on sales of recordings created after the March 1973 deal. Some people misunderstand and think that Elvis had a share in the ownership of his recordings and that this is what he sold to RCA. He did not.

MUSIC PUBLISHING

Totally separate from the ownership of Elvis' recordings is the ownership of the songs themselves. Elvis recorded over 700 songs. Elvis, through his own publishing companies (Elvis Presley Music, Gladys Music, Whitehaven Music and Elvis Music, Inc.) was part owner (typically half or third) of a great many of the songs he recorded and even some songs he did not record. Hill & Range Music,



owned by brothers Julian and Jean Aberbach, was his publishing partner for the most part. Typically, in the deals made with the publishing companies, the composers retain a share. The publishing companies manage the material. Elvis did not sell his publishing interests. EPE still holds those interests and they are one of our major assets.

Thus, the 1973 deal regarding Elvis's artist's royalties had no effect on his publisher's royalties. Elvis continued to get (EPE still gets) his publisher's royalties on sales of recordings of songs he had publishing interest in, no matter what date they were recorded. Elvis also recorded many songs that he did not have publishing interest in. Once in a while, per the contracts signed in Elvis's lifetime, his publishing interests expire on some songs.

LEARN MORE

For the person who wants lots of detail, Peter Guralnick's books "Last Train to Memphis" and "Careless Love" explain the evolution of Elvis' recording and publishing deals rather well. These two books, together with Ernst Jorgensen's "Elvis Presley, A Life in Music, The Complete Recording Sessions," are recommended reading for the person who wants to dive off into the details and complexities of these topics.

Is there a lot of unreleased Elvis performance and movie footage?

The Concert Era 1968-77

The only time there was a film crew around to do any official quality shooting of Elvis' concerts was when there was a specific, official project underway – such as a concert film or a TV special. Otherwise, the only footage of Elvis' shows is the stuff fans captured on home movie cameras they snuck into the arenas (bad picture, bad sound if any), and we know of little to no TV news coverage of the concerts of this era. EPE continually looks for good footage of this type in anticipation of using some of it in future documentary programming and other projects.

TV & Concert Appearances & Films as an Actor – 1950s/60s

While footage from the 1968-77 concert era is what we're asked about most, a closely related topic is the status of footage from Elvis' 1950s/1960s TV appearances and concerts and his films as an actor. Elvis Presley Enterprises, Inc. does not own any of this. The film companies own the films, various companies own the TV appearances, and there was no official shooting of Elvis' 1950s concerts other than newsreels which are owned by various entities. Then, of course, fan home movies of early concerts surface from time to time as well.

What is the status of Elvis' record sales and gold & platinum record award certifications?

It is estimated that Elvis has sold over one billion records worldwide, more than anyone else in the history of the record business. It is estimated that 60% of these sales have been in the United States and 40% in other countries. Not all of Elvis' record sales have been documented, so the one-billion figure is a good faith estimate among the Elvis-knowledgeable. Not all of Elvis' record sales have been recognized with gold or platinum certification by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) or by the appropriate bodies in foreign countries. Still, Elvis has more RIAA certifications than anyone else and his international success is generally regarded as astounding. The subject of record sales and gold/platinum awards is endlessly complex. Here, we attempt to give a basic explanation to respond to the constant flow of inquiries we get about this topic.

American Sales & Gold/Platinum Awards

In August 1992, BMG/RCA Records and the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) posthumously awarded to Elvis 110 gold, platinum and multi-platinum albums and singles, the largest presentation of gold and platinum record awards in history. The idea was to present all at once Elvis' entire American record sales achievement from the start of his career to the present day – recognizing again all the certifications that had ever been made up to that time, recognizing sales during Elvis' lifetime that had not been properly certified, and recognizing sales since his death that had not yet been certified. It was determined that Elvis had, by that date, 110 different albums and singles that had earned gold, platinum or multi-platinum status. One award was presented for each of the 110 titles, with an indication on the award whether title was gold or platinum or how many times platinum. RCA also presented a 9-foot glass sculpture proclaiming Elvis the greatest recording artist of all time. Since then, research has continued into Elvis' past sales and his ongoing sales continue to be documented and certified. Existing gold and platinum award-winners continue to be upgraded as appropriate (upgrades do not change the total number of titles) and new first-time gold and platinum certifications continue to be awarded.

Elvis' RIAA gold and platinum certifications are designated using today's requirements for certification: gold single or album – 500,000 copies sold; platinum single or album – 1 million copies sold. In the era when singles were big sellers, the standard was 1 million copies for a gold single; 2 million copies for platinum single. In the old days, a gold album was awarded for a million dollars in sales, but the current requirements for a gold or platinum album have been the same for many years. Platinum status was created in the 1970s. BackgroundThe RIAA is the official body to which record companies report record sales figures and request the awarding of gold and platinum records to their artists for American sales achievements. The RIAA came into existence in 1958. Elvis had many gold records before that time that were awarded in-house from his record company, RCA. However, RCA, for the most part, did not request retroactive RIAA certification of these pre-RIAA record sales achievements. Also, over the years, they did not often request additional certification when the records went gold again, or request retroactive platinum certifications when the platinum status was created in the 1970's.

Therefore, in Elvis' lifetime he did not get all of the gold and platinum certifications he was due and in the years following his death the award certifications became even more badly outdated. Some time after BMG bought RCA Records, the new administration decided to go back and make it right. But, pre-computer-age files on Elvis' sales were mis-filed, incomplete, lost, and scattered.

It happened that in 1990 Graceland had acquired the lifetime collection of files, photography, and memorabilia of Colonel Tom Parker, Elvis' long-time career manager. Colonel's files were more complete and were well-organized. In early 1992, RCA and Graceland worked together to bring auditors from the RIAA to Graceland to go through Colonel's files. The auditors were able to locate sales figures to prompt an amazing number of certifications for the August 1992 presentation previously described. Since then, RCA Records has continued working on retroactive certifications and certification of ongoing American sales. They are also working on the even more difficult task of documenting Elvis' past and ongoing international sales.

International Sales & Gold/Platinum Awards

It is estimated that 40% of Elvis' record sales have been outside the U.S. But, exact sales figures for all the countries around the world are even harder to come by than the American sales figures. Dramatic evidence of the beginning of this effort was during

August 1997, when they made a very special presentation at Graceland. BMG/RCA had invited all non-U.S. factions of their company to provide gold and platinum discs for all Elvis' documented sales achievements in their countries. Over 100 awards were presented in the ceremony, with a large centerpiece plaque from the parent company heralding their estimation that Elvis had sold over 400 million records outside the U.S. But, most of the individual awards presented had no statistical value, as most of the foreign branches of BMG/RCA decided to create 20th Anniversary tributes instead. It will take some time for actual sales figures to be researched and documented and for the appropriate awards update to be presented. If and when that day comes, it will be a little bit more confusing than the American awards because, with the varying sizes of the foreign countries and their record-buying populations, the sales requirements for gold and platinum status vary from country to country.

Elvis Discography/Sessionography

A detailed history of all Elvis' recording sessions, his record releases and related topics is found in the outstanding book "Elvis Presley: A Life in Music, The Complete Recordings Sessions," by Ernst Jorgensen.

Will there ever be a video/DVD release of out-takes from Elvis' movies?

We do not own Elvis' movies and do not decide what is released from them. The various movie companies do. We have always liked the idea of a collection of Elvis movie out-takes being released or a collection of his best musical performances in movies. Whichever movie company or companies wanted to do something like that with their Elvis footage would need our approval to do a new project beyond the parameters of their original contract with Elvis. They would get our full cooperation and we have certainly made the suggestion when we've had the opportunity. It would be wonderful for the fans and wonderful new attention for Elvis' film career.

However, while Elvis is our number one priority and he is his fans' number one priority, that's not necessarily the case with the film companies. They have hundreds of different films in their catalogs to deal with. The out-take footage you hope to see might not even exist. Years ago, before Hollywood became as archival and preservation-oriented as it is now, it was common for footage left over after a film's final edit to be thrown away. Part of the reason was the high cost of film storage space. To do the research and digging to find out what Elvis movie out-takes might exist from decades ago would require a huge commitment of time, effort and financing. The film companies would have to be confident that they could recoup their investment through sales. They would most likely feel that a film like this would be of interest mostly to serious Elvis fans and not mass amounts of the general public. Also, there's the possibility that all the time, effort and financing to do the research would be spent only to find that there was little or no existing footage to work with. Of course, there are many other reasons that the film companies do or don't do something. This is just our effort to offer some insight into some of them. Also to help clarify that Graceland/EPE is not the reason this material, if it exists, isn't in release.

How do I go about evaluating and selling my Elvis memorabilia?

We receive many calls from people asking us to evaluate and put a value on their vintage Elvis merchandise, old records, autographs, concert tickets, movie posters, photographs, items people have that once belonged to Elvis, etc. In addition, we also receive calls from people who want to locate such material for purchase. Graceland/EPE cannot and does not offer official evaluation or authentication of any Elvis memorabilia.

Evaluating Memorabilia

The rule is that there really are no set rules. Knowledgeable collectors can determine a typical market value, which is a good guideline to use. But, in the end, a piece of memorabilia is worth as much or as little as one person wants to sell it for and as another wants to pay for it. Various books about Elvis records and memorabilia have been published over the years.

Selling Memorabilia

You can offer it for the price you hope to get, based on what you learn about market value, or you could ask for "best offer" and find that someone who's looking for what you have could offer you more than you anticipated. The classifieds in your local paper might be a good place to advertise, as Elvis fans and collectors are everywhere. But, you might have better luck advertising in the classifieds of a publication specifically for collectors, one that tends to have a lot of focus on Elvis.

Purchasing Memorabilia

The same resources for evaluating and selling memorabilia can be used for locating memorabilia you wish to purchase. Various public auction websites have Elvis memorabilia, but do be careful about scams.

What are some suggested reading & research sources you could suggest?

Scores and scores of books have been written about Elvis Presley through the years, some attempting to cover his life and career story from beginning to end and some focusing on a particular aspect. Many are well researched and well written. Unfortunately, many are not. With a little help one can sort through the seemingly endless titles of Elvis-related books and find a good many that are truly valuable. Dozens of very good books have been written. These are but a few of the many excellent titles Graceland/EPE can suggest:

"Elvis Presley's Graceland, The Official Guidebook"

It was first published in 1993, with updates made in reprintings that followed. In 2002, a completely new edition (identified by its red cover and the cover photos: one of Elvis and one of his pink Cadillac in front of Graceland) was published. It features a basic biography of Elvis with lots of photos, an extensive photographic and informational tour of Graceland Mansion and its related attractions, and much more. An excellent presentation of the Graceland tour for everyone and a fine starting point for the new fan or Elvis novice to begin his/her Elvis education. Content of the new 2002 edition is significantly more extensive than that of the previous edition. Available in hardcover and softcover. [Buy on ShopElvis.com](http://www.shopelvis.com).

"Last Train to Memphis, The Rise of Elvis Presley"

By Peter Guralnick The critically acclaimed Part I of the author's two-volume biography. Covers the Elvis story from his birth in 1935 to his leaving for Germany with the U.S. Army in 1958. [Buy on ShopElvis.com](http://www.shopelvis.com).

"Careless Love, The Unmaking of Elvis Presley"

By Peter Guralnick. Part II of the author's Elvis biography. Covers the Elvis story from his time in Germany with the U.S. Army in 1958 to his death in 1977. [Buy on ShopElvis.com](http://www.shopelvis.com).

"Elvis, A Life in Music, The Complete Recording Sessions"

By Ernst Jorgensen. A comprehensive detailing of each of Elvis' recording sessions – songs, recording dates, songwriters, musicians and more – with an insightful narrative.

"Elvis Day By Day, The Definitive Record of His Life and Music"

By Peter Guralnick and Ernst Jorgensen. As the title suggests, a day by day, year by year documentation of Elvis' professional and personal life. A collaboration of two of the leading Elvis researchers greatly enhanced by unprecedented access to the extensive Graceland/EPE archives.

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