

Professor David Peimer | Elvis the King of Rock and Roll

Okay, so hi everybody, and hope everyone is well, I'm going to focus on obviously Elvis today. But when I was thinking of how to approach, there is obviously so much written, so many opinions, so many controversies, so many endless discussions. And I thought, okay, I want to focus just on two things – why do I think that he is really great, really brilliant and superb, and what is actually, secondly, behind the image? To get a little bit of a hint more about the human and his own personal story in a way, which I think is often perhaps glossed over, looking only at the image and the impact on Western culture, or even broader, at least. I really believe that this young guy, he started, he was so young, 18, 19, 20, so young with no formal education, no music training, nothing. And what he started with and where he reached and what he achieved and did, consciously or not, doesn't matter. He did it, that he had the guts to do it and carry on. And what I think the impact on Western culture, on other parts of the world, for me, race relations, on the shared development of music, obviously popular music, but coming from gospel, coming from rock and from rockabilly, from rhythm and blues, all those styles of African American music in the south and others. And the ability to absorb and take things further and develop so much the voice, the music, the impact on culture globally, the impact on youth culture, and being part of the creation of it. And on black-white relationships for at least, if not obvious, then implied. And when you delve deeper, you see it so clearly. So I want to look at some of these ideas of Elvis and then show quite a few clips from his very early days on the "Ed Sullivan Show" and others, to much later in Vegas. And then also a couple of short clips from the very recent Baz Luhrmann movie, which I think is an extraordinary achievement. And just a couple of clips to show, and I think is a contemporary way to try and understand his meaning for people of today, obviously he goes back so many decades.

These pictures we see here, it's on the top right, that's his parents, Vernon and Gladys. Gladys gave birth to two sons, to twins, and his twin brother died, was born within 35 minutes of each other, was stillborn. So they grew up with this, perhaps a protective, but absolute loving mother and stepfather, and father, sorry, and father together, perhaps partly because of the tragedy of the stillborn baby. And then later, which I mentioned, the tragedy when he was 23 and his mother died of hepatitis complications, and he sat for two days and nights nonstop next to her dead body. There's reams written about his relationship with her, about the love, the connection, what was generated I think was quite extraordinary. And of course, she and her husband were incredibly poor coming out of the Depression, again, through the war, and having the child. Then on the bottom of the left side, one of the great iconic pictures of Elvis, young, black leather, et cetera. The beginning of the image of rock and roll and later going to show the image of the individual performer and entertainer, not just singer or musician, but performer also, and incredible,

obviously, sex appeal, but also with the guitar, bringing that to the forefront for what became rock and roll. On the bottom right, this is their first house in Tupelo. And it was this tiny, two bedroom house, was all they could afford, and where he grew up for the first 13 years of his life, before the family, the parents and he moved to Memphis. Tiny, tiny little house. This is the idea, the reality of where he came from. So an obvious rags-to-riches story, remarkable, but how did he do it, with no formal education, no training, no teaching of music or singing other than informal listening and watching primarily African American musicians, artists, singing and going to gospel, going to African American churches endlessly.

Something which I want to talk about right at the beginning, this is a fascinating thing, which I'm sure perhaps people know about. This is the tombstone of Elvis's mother, Gladys Love Presley. Top left, is a Star of David, top right is the cross, the bottom is the quote from the Bible, "Not mine, but thy will be done." They were very religious. His parents took him to the church and so on, and he would go with his black friends to the African American churches in the area. Huge influence. Why am I doing this? Because Presley once said, "The image is one thing, and the human being another. Sometimes it's pretty hard to live with just the image." So, that's what I mean. I'm trying to try and find the humanity inside this guy and what he contributed in those areas I mentioned, of music, culture, youth culture, and so on. He gave a lot of money to Jewish organisations. From what we can gather, at least \$150,000 to the Memphis Jewish Community Center alone. Hell of a lot of money, especially in those days. In his own library, he had a lot of books which were about Judaism and Jewish history. Six years after his mother died, Elvis himself designed this tombstone to replace the old tombstone, and it was found years later in one of the rooms in Graceland. And what I find extraordinary, obviously as we were all seeing, is the Star of David. Now, I've read a hell of a lot, and I'm sure everybody has, there's no hard evidence that his mother was Jewish. There is some thought that a great-great-grandmother was Jewish, but it's not absolutely for sure. But somewhere down the line, Elvis decides six years after she's dead to design this himself, the tombstone, and this is what he designs with it. During the final years of his life, he wore a necklace with the Star of David and the Hebrew word "chai" on as well. I don't want to get into speculation, that's for another endless discussion, but we can't speculate to know exactly why, where, how, or what. What we do know is that he was very friendly with the Fruchters who lived next door, who was a rabbi or very, very religious. And he would sometimes come and switch on the lights and run the water on Shabbat for the Fruchters who lived next door and call them ma'am and sir, enormous respect. And apparently an interaction taught to him by his mother. He showed the same respect to the African Americans that he played with to the age of 13 and after, to the age of 13 in Tupelo. I'm going to show it an interview with Baz Luhrmann, the director of the new movie, interviewing his old friend who grew up with Elvis up to the age of 13

in Tupelo, who talks about that young kid coming to their home and how he behaved and what he did in their home. That's for a little bit later.

Elvis also said, "Gospel music is the purest thing there is on earth." He never lost the sight of gospel music and what he called "the spiritual" in music. And that's powerful. How many other so-called rock stars or pop singers or whatever it is, have a clue the origins of rock and roll really are in gospel according to Elvis and rhythm and blues, which all comes from African America. It comes from the churches, it comes from the lived experience, it comes from the Robert Johnsons and so, so many others that have spoken about him afterwards. So we have the bringing together of blues, of rockabilly, of black and white music if I may use that phrase, his mother picking cotton, hearing the songs that would've been sung by African American labourers of the fields. As he said, "Rock and roll is basically rhythm and blues and gospel together. All we did was put it together and take it further." That's Elvis. Chuck Berry, John Lennon said about Chuck Berry, "If you want the definition of rock and roll, you could also call it Chuck Berry." Chuck Berry speaks unbelievably glowing of him. Sammy Davis Jr., B.B. King, who knew him from a very young age in Memphis, James Brown, and so many others of these great African American icons, they speak in the most glowing terms, I've been stunned to read it. And these are not just sort of groupies or naive fans, these are people who are seeing a real insight and a real influence that he had on them, and they had on him. And the two cultures is what they constantly refer to. In the 1970s, in early seventies at a press conference, a journalist called him "The King," and he immediately shut the journalist up and Elvis said, "No," and he gestured towards Fats Domino, who happened to be standing nearby. He said, "No, that's the real king of rock and roll, and the people with him." He didn't hesitate to show his roots, his origins, his respect, his understanding, of what influenced him so much, and this accusation that he stole from Black American music and just sort of commodified it into white, is it doesn't get to grips with the reality of this guy's life. And why so many of these great African American names would've spoken about him in the way they did. For me, he's one of the most significant cultural figures of the twentieth century. From Mississippi, a small town, to relocate. In 1954, he's 13, and he starts to go to Sun Records. Sam Phillips, we all know the stories, and Sam Phillips wanted to bring African American music to the larger white audience. Sam Phillips was absolutely aware of that crossover, and wanted to do it. And he said, "If I could do it, I'll make a billion." But Elvis never said anything like that. Within a year of his music starting, he had sold 10 million records, singles. He was seen as a threat to, I'm quoting from one of the newspapers of the times, "the moral wellbeing of white American youth." We can't forget the threat from white American youth, and there's a clip in the film which alludes to it which I'm going to show. And the savagery that he faced with that.

What has this guy achieved? The best-selling solo music artist of all time. There's debates, but it's probably close to a billion copies of his records have been sold. A billion, that's unbelievable for somebody so young, in their twenties, teen, twenties. in the mid-to-late fifties in particular. The genres he covered, pop, country, rhythm and blues, gospel. He won three Grammy awards. He'd won a Grammy lifetime achievement all by the age of 36. From a tiny, two bedroom house, stillborn brother, twin brother Jesse, and then his mother dying later. His music teacher in Memphis said he has no aptitude for singing. In his junior year, he decided to grow his sideburns styled with hair he chose, rose oil and Vaseline. He loved the flashy clothes of Meyer Lansky and the Lansky group, gang, whatever we want to call them. He was the one, he modelled his clothes off the Lanskys. He crossed cultures, he crossed borders in fashion, in clothing, in physicality, all through music and singing. Again, no training, couldn't read music, hadn't studied it. In particular, there was one African American gospel singer, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, who had a huge influence on his way of singing, his way of interpreting songs to give them the rock-hard edge, more cutting feel, or to give them a very tender, almost ballad tone, between tenor, all different ranges of the voice. And of course he went to many, in the segregated South, he went to many of the churches, and would dance and move and sing with his friends and friends' families there. His neighbour was a young African American guy who Baz Luhrmann interviews for the movie, and I'm going to show that shortly.

1953, Sam Phillips was quoted as saying, "If I could find a white man who had the negro sound and the negro feel, I could make a billion dollars." I'm quoting, so I'm using these words advisedly. So Sam Phillips is aware, he's the one who's aware of the commodity potential and obviously the financial market. Elvis, for me, I don't think I'm being naive here, is coming as a young kid from, he wants to make it, of course he does, he wants to get out of poverty. That maybe the drive much more. But he is hungry all the time for music, music, music. So much of it. And it all starts with, "That's All Right, Ma," as we know, which was a 1946 blues number by Arthur Crudup. But what he did with the song, I'm sure we all remember it, I'm not going to play it. "That's All Right, Ma," the very first one that hit so big, what he did, for me, is he turned that song, which had been written as a lament for lost love into a declaration of independence. And that sums up so much for me of the rock attitude that Elvis brought into the music, youth culture, rebellion, et cetera, Turn a lament for lost love into a declaration of independence. I think we see that in "Suspicious Minds." So many songs, we see that ability to shift the meaning through the voice, the interpretation, the playing on the guitar, and the singing. The attitude comes from taking what it was originally. And I think that informs so much of the youth culture attitude, and the rock and roll attitude. One of the guys who used to play with him said his body movement was natural. When it got a

reaction from the audience, he'd expand on it real quick. He wasn't choreographed in the way that Michael Jackson was. And I'm not knocking Michael Jackson, fantastic in his own way, but he never had a choreographer or any of those other people let's say, most of it he did himself, or with close friends.

In Texas, a 19 year-old Roy Orbison saw Presley for the first time. And I'm quoting from Orbison, "His instinct was amazing. I didn't know what to make of it. There was no reference point in the culture to compare it." There was no reference point in the culture to compare. We get the magnitude of this. There's no reference point. Orbison realises later he's seeing, he doesn't know what, something is just blowing his mind. Lennon, Dylan, and certainly the others all speak about it later, there's no cultural reference point. That's a really insightful phrase by Orbison. They don't know where to locate it. Elvis knows, but Orbison and so many of the others don't know.

Okay, the image of the individual singer with the leather, yes, okay. But also with holding a guitar becomes iconic and the defining instrument of rock and roll. And that's crucial. He brought it in; nobody else. He had two famous songwriters, Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, both sons of Jewish immigrants. That's a whole interesting story for another time perhaps. They wrote "Hound Dog," they wrote "Jailhouse Rock," et cetera. Anyway, Jerry Leiber said, he gave him a piece, he knew it by heart in 10 minutes. He couldn't read music, he never studied it, he had no formal training, but he knew it by heart in less than 10 minutes. I couldn't believe when I gave him "Jailhouse Rock," "Hound Dog," and so many others, 'cause these are the two composers who composed so many of a lot of the hits. After the show in Wisconsin, a local Catholic newspaper sent a letter to J. Edgar Hoover, obviously we all know, FBI director at the time, and the letter quote, "Mr. Presley is a definite danger to the security of the white United States, especially the youth. His actions and body motions are such that they arouse the sexual passions of teen-aged youth. For example, two high school girls had their abdomen and thighs with Mr. Presley's autograph. We consider this an extreme danger to white American youth." I'm quoting it in such detail because it was written by a Catholic newspaper, but a copy of it was sent to J. Edgar Hoover. That's the level of enormity of impact this young, early-twenties, late-teenager had at such an early stage. That's the threat he posed. That's the challenge. That's what he threw down in the face of the culture. And then on the other side, not only from the Catholic church side, the other side, Jack Gould of the New York Times, a critic at the New York Times wrote, "Mr. Presley has no discernible singing ability. His phrasing consists of the stereotype variations that go with a beginner's aria in a bathtub. His one specialty is an accented movement of the body, primarily identified with a repertoire of the blonde bombshells of the burlesque runway. He has no singing talent whatsoever. He belongs in the bathtub." Okay, I quote this because from the New York Times, which is one extreme of comment on

culture, to a Catholic church in Wisconsin, we get the huge picture of what he was up against from the white side.

Okay, "Ed Sullivan Show," 1956.

(A text quote on the screen reads: "...it was like (Elvis) came along and whispered some dream in everybody's ear, and somehow we all dreamed it." -Bruce Springsteen)

Sorry, before we go, I'm just going to hold it here. This is from, I want to play this first briefly from Charlie Rose interviewing a guy called Ernst Jorgenson, who is regarded as one of the most significant cultural commentators on Elvis and his impact, understanding his role and culture in all these ways I've been speaking. And this is a short interview with him and one of the editors at the time of the Rolling Stone Magazine.

(A video clip of Charlie Rose interview with Ernst Jorgenson and Rolling Stone editor Anthony Decurtis)

- [Charlie Rose] Elvis Presley died on August 16th, 1977. He was 42. He was the "King of Rock and Roll," he was a legend who have shaped an era and triggered revolution. Frank Sinatra once said, "I am just a singer. Elvis was the embodiment of the whole American culture." Elvis sold more than 1 billion records worldwide, starred in 33 films, and made history with his infamous television appearances and concert specials. We begin tonight with a man who many believed to know more about the music of Elvis Presley than any other. He is Ernst Jorgenson of RCA Records. Also joining me tonight is Anthony Decurtis, a contributing editor at Rolling Stone Magazine. I am pleased to have each of them here. Here is the obvious question, you've been asked this a thousand, thousand, thousand times, What's the genius of Presley?
- [Ernst Jorgenson] Simple answer, I'm not sure that is a simple answer, but one thing is of course, that Elvis through his upbringing, I think, and very much through his musical talent, was able to take so much American music from different sources, anything from country to blues to gospel, and merge it into one music form. I think he, in that way, bridged so many both social and musical gaps here to create a music that brought all of America together in a way. Later in his career, he then went almost the opposite way in that he was able to then go out and do each of these elements

separately, like country music, like blue's music. And I think it is down to that talent of having so much music in him.

- [Rose] So it was the convergence of so many streams into one. How much the voice?
- [Jorgenson] He used to say, "It's not so much my voice, but what I do with it that is really important." And I think that to some extent is true. Roy Orbison could reach higher notes than him. Sinatra had a more supple style. I think it was his ability to pick up elements from all these musics that didn't fit together. He could do a country song and make it R&B and R&B song and make it country. And I think that's very much the talent of it.
- [Rose] Listen to those people who, and before I go to you on the same question, Springsteen, "Elvis is my religion. But for him, I'd be selling encyclopaedias right now." John Lennon, "Before Elvis, there was nothing." Mick Jagger, "But no one is his equal or ever will be. He was and is supreme." Bob Dylan, "The highlights of my career, that's easy. Elvis recording one of my songs." I mean, that's phenomenal.
- [Anthony Decurtis] Absolutely. I think to just add a couple of things to what Ernst said, there was a kind of cultural ground zero in the fifties and almost like the invention of youth culture, and Elvis was the person, was the kind of conduit for all of that. All of the controversy gave kids something to rally behind. And I think for people who have a kind of cliched view of Elvis as a kind of pathetic guy in a ridiculous white jumpsuit. If you ever go back and look at some of the news reports around when Elvis was first beginning to explode on the American scene, this guy was being denounced by politicians, he was being denounced in newspaper editorials, he was being denounced in classrooms, he was a hugely subversive figure.
- [Rose] Seen from the waist up on television.
- [Decurtis] Absolutely. A lot happened in the years after that. But when Elvis burst on the scene, it was a revolution.
- [Rose] Revolution.

- [Decurtis] This was a moment at which kids rallied behind Elvis as a kind of liberation.

Okay, to hold it there, and just before I go on to show the first clip from the '56 "Ed Sullivan Show," just have to give a little personal anecdote, where it struck me was many, many years ago, decades and decades ago, I was invited and I did a whole lot of workshops in very rural parts of Zululand, a whole lot of theatre-type workshops. And in the beginning, you try and get the group to dance, to move, to sing, whatever. I've done workshops in many, many parts of the world. And I remember going there and it was still the days of the cassette. Anyway, putting on music, I thought, "Okay, let's try this." Tried a whole lot of music, tried everything, tried South African music, tried African, South African, and more traditional African music, Zulu music, tried African American music, tried jazz, tried classical, contemporary pop of the time, or rock. So everything, nothing worked. And I was literally at the point of tearing my hair out thinking, "Okay, that's it. Failure, disaster. Pack up, David. Go home. You can't do workshops travelling around South Africa," whatever. And just by instinct, I have no clue, anyway, I found a couple of tapes of Elvis, put them on, and within minutes, this entire group who had been totally disinterested for 45 minutes to an hour suddenly started to move and sing. And without even knowing maybe really who Elvis was, or the import or the impact, this very rural part of KZN at the time. And maybe not even understanding the words, the English properly, I don't know. But started to dance and started to sing and started to connect. And there were about at least 180, 200, that I was doing a workshop with. And I've never forgotten that moment, and it got me rid of any cultural stereotype, preconception I might have had before. That because a person is this religion or because they have this kind of skin or because this, this, this, therefore et cetera. And speaking afterwards, certainly working in theatre, for me, and speaking afterwards. And people would say, "Well, it's the voice, it's the music, it's the sound, it's the rhythm, it's the et cetera, et cetera, we can go on and on. I just share that, and this is not a naive, romantic story. This was the truth, I was literally at my wit's end completely.

Okay, Ed Sullivan.

(A video clip of "The Ed Sullivan Show", 1956)

- [Elvis Presley] Thank you very much. Thank you, ladies.

(Audience laughs)

- [Elvis] And now friends, we'd like to introduce you to a brand new song that's completely different from anything we've ever done. And this is the title of

our brand new 20th Century Fox movie. And it's also my newest RCA Victor release. And I would like to say right now that the people over at 20th Century Fox have really been wonderful, all the great stars and the cast, the director and the producers. This is our first picture, and they really helped us along. With the help of the very wonderful Jordanaires, a song called "Love Me Tender."

- (Elvis sings "Love Me Tender")

He's 21 at the time. For me, he's singing with such obviously influence of ballad and spiritual and there's gospel inside it and other things as well. But 21, he's trying to find the self-assurance, the self assertion, and this idea of turning a declaration of love into an assertion of independent spirit as well. This show was watched by 60 million viewers, which was 82%, at the time, of the American TV audience. It was a record, needless to say.

We can begin to see the cultural shift that happened. He helped to ignite and helped to crystallise in a way or symbolise the biggest craze since Glen Miller, maybe Frank Sinatra, who did it in their own times. He brought rock and roll into the mainstream. He helped create rock and roll and the beginnings of youth culture. And so, whether he understood or not at this time doesn't matter, this is what he's doing. But I wanted to show this, not the obvious one where he's dancing "Jailhouse Rock" and the others, because we know that so well. But this, when he's 21.

Okay, I want to show the next one, which for me is an amazing piece. And just by the way, in his first year at RCA Records, Presley was responsible for 50% of the record label company's total sales. And at the time, it was the biggest record company in the world. Just as something else before we come into this, a Detroit newspaper wrote, "The trouble with going to see Presley is that you're probably going to get killed. Don't go, you'll get pelted with eggs if you go like they did in Philadelphia." Just one example of what that contributing editor was saying in the Charlie Rose clip, the number of critics. And when you look back at these newspapers, it was unbelievably huge. I read the one from the New York Times, another one here from the Detroit newspaper. There's so many viciously attacking, whether it's about race, or whether it's about youth culture, or rebellion, that he is risk, he's igniting so much revolution, and attack, and criticism of his culture, and he doesn't love and he hates America. So many things that he was accused of. And another newspaper wrote at the time, "This music makes teenage girls scream. It's brutal, it's degenerate, it fosters destructive reactions in young people. It smells false. It is sung, written by cretinous goons. It is rancid, smelling, and an aphrodisiac. I deplore it." It's another critic, white critics of the times.

Okay, this is much later now. This is coming up to 1968. And he had the great comeback tour afterwards. For seven years, he hadn't done live performances or really toured. And this is one of the most remarkable clips I've ever seen of Presley. I love it, probably maybe the most together with bit of the interview later. And it shows him with a tiny, very small audience, tiny as you can see here. He's joking, he's playing. He sees so much of the persona in his body and his voice and his attitude, but his wit and his charm obviously, and sexuality and intelligence.

(A video clip from Elvis' 1968 Comeback Special)

(Crowd cheering)

(Guitar strumming)

- [Elvis] Oh boy, my boy.

- [Jack] Oh boy, my boy.

- [Elvis] It's been a long time, Jack. I'm tellin' you.

- [Jack] It's been a while.

- [Elvis] Awhile.

- [Jack] About 15 minutes.

- [Elvis] About 15 minutes now. Are we on TV?

- [Jack] No, we're on the train heading for Tulsa.

- [Elvis] Goodnight.

- [Jack] Good show.

- (Elvis sings Heartbreak Hotel)

- [Jack] Oh yeah!

(Elvis coughing)

- [Elvis] Wait a minute, wait a minute.

- [Jack] If you're going to cough, cough in metre, man.

- [Elvis] Wait a minute, I forgot the lyrics.

♪ The bellhop's tears keep flowin' ♪ ♪
The desk clerk's dressed in black ♪ ♪

They've been so long on lonely street ♪ ♪
They'll never, they'll never look back ♪ ♪
So lonely baby ♪ ♪
And be so lonely ♪ ♪
They'll be so lonely they could die ♪

(Crowd cheering)

I love it because it shows just such a human side, as I was saying right at the beginning, such a human side of Elvis where he is having fun with his friends. Scotty, who was one of the main players with him for over two decades, with a very small group around. But you can see so much of what's inside. There's a bit of gospel, there's a bit of rock, and the so many different attitudes with the music. And you, this is a "Heartbreak Hotel," this is about a heart break, a loss of love. But it's done with that independent, like tough spirit, get out there and walk, it's transformed in the way that he said it the way he's interpreted it. So anyways, the voice is gruff and it's soft and tender. It ranges extraordinarily, and it's completely aware physically, the body, the eyes, everything. Course by this stage, he's much more mature and subtle performer compared to the early days. But it's done in such an informal way that I think it reveals a huge amount.

Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller again, when they very first met him, they were amazed. And they said he had an encyclopaedic understanding of the blues, gospel, religious music, and rhythm and blues. That's quoting Jerry Leiber. Mike Stoller said, "He knew a hell of a lot. He knew a lot more than we did about country music, gospel music. He knew practically every religious song ever written as far as we could tell." He was in his early twenties when these guys are talking. Musicianship, he played the guitar, he played the bass, he played the piano, got his first guitar when he was 11. He wanted a bicycle, got a guitar, did it. Everything, but again, vocal styles, we see so many of these influences that I mentioned. And just to tell you also, he recorded a gospel record, "Peace in the Valley," which within a pretty short space of time, sold a million, became the top-selling gospel record in recording history. The range is what I'm trying to allude to here, the ballads. We know these of course, I've mentioned some of the others. What what Ernst Jorgenson says about his voice, the warmth, the controlled use of vibrato technique and natural falsetto, the range, subtlety, the conviction. In "Suspicious Minds," what's interesting in the song, which is meant to be about suspected infidelity and impending loss, but there's a stoicism, there's an independent spirit, there's a determination. To quote the great poem, there's like almost an invisible summer. An invincible summer, sorry, inside him, it's invincible. There's something tough there. Music critic of the time, Henry Pleasant said, "Presley has been described as having a baritone and a tenor. An extraordinary range of vocal colour." There are many, many others, I'm not going to go into the

much more knowledgeable musicians, composers, singers, singer teachers, talk about the range of his voice. And of course the screaming, wailing, the reckless sound of African American rhythm and blues, gospel singers, the church. As he said, and I'm quoting from Presley, "Rock and roll was here a long time before I came along. Nobody can sing that kind of music like Black Americans can."

Okay, I'm going to go on and show now the next clip, which is going to come up in a second. One sec. Okay. And this clip here is, sorry, I just need to get this out here. Okay, this is from the trailer of the Baz Luhrmann movie released very, very recently. Tom Hanks plays Colonel Parker and this new amazing actor was they one who plays- ♪ Oh, let our love survive ♪

(A video clip from the trailer for the 2022 film "Elvis")

- [Colonel] There are some who make me out to be the villain of this here story.
- [Elvis] ♪ Let's don't let a good thing die. ♪
- [Colonel] Are you born with destiny, or does it just come knocking at your door?
- [Announcer] The young singer from Memphis, Tennessee. Give him a warm, Hay Ride welcome- Mr. Elvis Presley!
- [Audience Member] Get a haircut, buttercup!
- [Colonel] In that moment, I watched that skinny boy transform into a superhero. He was my destiny. I wish to promote you, Mr. Presley.

(Audience cheering, girls screaming)

- [Elvis] ♪ Warden threw a party in the county jail ♪
- [Colonel] Are you ready to fly?
- [Elvis] I'm ready, ready to fly.
- [Colonel] Tomorrow, all America will be talking about Elvis Presley.
- [Elvis] If I can't move, I can't sing. Some people want put me in jail for the way I was moving.
- [Elvis] They might put me in jail for walking across the street, but you a famous white boy.

- [Elvis' mother] The way you sing is God given. So, there can't be nothing wrong with it.
- [Anchor] Senator Kennedy has been shot. Martin Luther King has been shot to death in Memphis.
- [Elvis] ♪ That's all right for you ♪
- [Colonel] Tragedy, but it has nothing to do with us.
- [Elvis] It has everything to do with us.
 ♪ Oh my love ♪ ♪
 My darling ♪ ♪ I've hungered for your touch ♪
- [Elvis] A reverend once told me, when things are too dangerous to say, sing. ♪ Time goes by ♪ I'm going to be forty soon, and nobody's going to remember me. I need to get back to who I really am.
- [Speaker] And who are you, Elvis?
- [Elvis] I just got to be makin' the most of this thing while I can. This could all be over in a flash.
- [Colonel] We are the same, you and I. We are too odd, lonely children reaching for eternity. The greatest show on earth.

Okay, and I'm going to show another clip, also from another trailer of the movie.

(Another video clip from the trailer for the 2022 film "Elvis")

- [Announcer] Our country itself is safe, but it's lost its sense of direction. Even it's common decency.
- You don't so much as wiggle a finger.
 (Elvis on stage holding up his pinky finger)
- [Elvis] There's a lot of people saying a lot of things, but in the end, you got to listen to yourself.
- [Colonel] In that moment, Elvis, the man, was sacrificed, and Elvis, the god, was born.
- [Elvis] I'm going to show you what the real Elvis is like tonight.

(Elvis sings "Trouble")

- [Colonel] (To Elvis' parents) Now would be a good time to get back into the car.

(Audience screaming)

- Get that boy off that stage!

Okay, that clip carries on in a similar vein. Why I show this just to contrast, I mean obviously it's a movie, it's not the real thing, but it's the obvious hysteria, the frenzy. But the police and you know, the white kids, I mean everything, you can start to feel that something is going on that is so powerful beyond a certain control, hence the need or the desire from the state to absolutely find out what it is and control it, to do something with this phenomenon. Not only this individual, but this kind of music and this rock and this youth culture, this attitude that he's engendering or that he's symbolising at least. And how does society deal with when the artists who really challenge come along, absorb the influences, and take it whole big step further. I know this is done with Baz Luhrmann's classic, incredible visual spectacle and cutting zoom in and zoom out photography and putting the spectacle, and then the individual face, and playing with, it's actually Eisenstein's montage technique going way back, but nevertheless, done very effectively for our times.

And we can't underestimate, these are the times he's living through and what he's doing. So he also went and spent three weeks with Muhammad Ali and they became great friends. And there's a lot of stories about how they would joke and talk. And this isn't the '60s of Ali, he's still making it or he's made it, but he's doing a huge comeback to be the remarkable boxer that he was, and iconic cultural figure, not only a sports hero. This whole claim, and a lot of it written that he stole black music and so on, and Jackie Wilson, very important African American figure, he said "A lot of people have accused Elvis of stealing the black man's music, our music, when in fact, many of us black solo entertainers copied his stage mannerisms." And there's so many others, I've mentioned the other names that they all talk about B.B. King, so many of the others also refer in this way, and to me, it's really a give and take both ways. He becomes a catalyst for revolution music, for a cultural change or revolution, whichever word you want to use, but massive, seismic change for music, for culture, for youth, and the whole youth culture that comes after him, singing and the voice, African American and white. we can understand and I know that I'm pushing more towards Baz Luhrmann's interpretation in the film, but I think he's accurate and what it can suggest for us today, I can't pick up where he was really prejudiced. I can't pick up where he showed serious prejudice, where he showed hate, where he showed rage, whatever, except perhaps from poverty origins and perhaps a general attitude of revolt. But I can't see so

many of these, of the culture wars, identity wars, so many other things going on, I can understand why Baz Luhrmann would've chosen to make a movie of him now. Leonard Bernstein wrote, "Elvis Presley is the greatest cultural force of the twentieth century. He introduced the beat to everything. He changed everything. Music, language, culture, social attitudes, clothes, it was a whole social revolution. And we've heard about John Lennon, Bob Dylan, and so many of the others. Little Richard, "He was an integrator, Elvis was a blessing. They wouldn't let us black folks do black music before he came. He opened the door for black music." Al Green, "He broke the ice for all of us."

Okay, I want you show a short clip from Baz Luhrmann talking to one of his closest friends that he grew with in Tupelo, Mississippi and meeting him. And there's going to be two short clips that I just want to show, and we get an idea of it here. And the first one, it's with his childhood friend Sam Bell, who lived right next door to him. 'Cause Baz Luhrmann did a huge amount of research obviously, to make the film.

(A video clip of Baz Luhrmann interviewing Sam Bell, Elvis' childhood friend)

- [Sam Bell] There, then tell him, "Come on, it's time to go, we need to go."
- [Baz Luhrmann] This image of him being like up there amongst the band with the saxophone.
- [Bell] He wasn't shy, he wasn't shy.
- [Luhrmann] He wasn't shy, and this movement thing, are you saying he's just like moving his hands around or is he?
- Yeah, he's jumping.
- [Luhrmann] Is he helping them or is he got something else going on?
- [Bell] He'd do what they do. No, he do the same, whatever they do. He like the guitar. He fantasised his guitar thing. He wouldn't have one, but he'd fantasised. And he'd be jumping, he'd be singing. He'd sound just as well.
- [Luhrmann] He was a good little singer.
- [Bell] He was a good little guy.

- [Luhrmann] A lot of people go like to-
- [Bell] To us, we say, "He ain't singing," but to them he was singing, you know?
- [Luhrmann] Right. Got it.
- [Bell] That knew what singing was.
- [Luhrmann] Got it.
- [Bell] We didn't know.
- [Luhrmann] Let tell you something that for me, as an Australian, as an outsider, sometimes you read in the early parts that go when they first heard the very first recording, "That's All Right, Mama," A lot of people said that some of the early guys would go, "Oh that's a black singer, not a white singer." Would you have been able to say, did it sound black sound to you or white sound or you just didn't care or didn't even-
- [Bell] Sound black to me.
- [Luhrmann] Did sound black?
- [Bell] Yeah, kind of black to me.
- [Luhrmann] Yeah.
- [Bell] Yeah.
- [Luhrmann] And you think he picked that up just from bringing around you guys? Like just vocally, that sort of style?
- [Bell] I won't say me, but-
- [Luhrmann] No, but you are singing gospel.
- [Bell] Yeah, yeah.
- [Luhrmann] If you are singing gospel together-
- [Bell] Yeah, I have to say that's where it came from.
- [Luhrmann] I know you're not, I'm not just being nice, I know you're not boastful.

- [Bell] We had "That's All Right, Mama."
- [Luhrmann] Seems sensible. When you're like seven years old, you are singing, you move in a certain way. How how would the movement be, of the gospel?
- [Bell] And then we we was doing the foot and doing that.
- [Luhrmann] But you know, like say, when he gets up in the gospel church, you remember you said he gets up in the church and he is like moving like everybody else. He's using the whole body or what's he doing?
- [Bell] Yeah, he's using the whole body just like they are doing. They were doing that too. They were all back and-
- [Luhrmann] Forward, doing the steps.
- [Bell] Doing all that too.
- [Luhrmann] I mean it makes sense, It makes sense.
- [Bell] Yeah, that's where he got it.
- [Luhrmann] Yeah, that makes sense.
- [Bell] He couldn't believe that was him, they didn't think he was paying that much attention.
- [Bell] Okay, this is here.
- [Luhrmann] He stay at your place at any time or?
- [Bell] Yeah, if he wanted to.
- [Luhrmann] Stay over?
- [Bell] Yeah, my grandparents, they just loved him. He could go through the house better than we could. He'd go in there and get what he wanted, open the refrigerator and get what he wants.
- [Luhrmann] So, your grandma really liked him?
- [Bell] Yeah, she really loved him.
- [Luhrmann] What did she like, why so likeable?

- [Bell] He was a likeable guy. We was mannish little guys, but he was mannish too.
- [Luhrmann] What do you mean by that?
- [Bell] By like, "Yes, ma'am" and "No, sir." See during that time, a black person didn't expect a white person to say, "Yes ma'am."
- [Luhrmann] To be polite. To be decent.
- [Bell] Yes ma'am. Thank you. Yes sir. But he always did that and she just loved it. And my papa did too, he just couldn't believe it. He don't have to, but we would say, "yes, sir" too, But we had to 'cause we lived there.
- [Luhrmann] Yeah, I get you.
- [Bell] Yeah, but he didn't have to.
- [Luhrmann] And do you think that was because, do you think he even thought about it, or the way he was brought up?
- [Bell] Just the way he was, they kind of looked down on him a little bit.
- [Luhrmann] Why? 'Cause you were poor?
- [Bell] Yeah, you're poor. And they didn't expect that from him, but he never lost his dignity 'cause he was a little boy. Any kid in the neighbourhood started a ruckus, start up something, you had to stay over there on your side. But because we was all, it was no different, when we all played, they could sit there and relax and we'd just have fun and play.
- [Luhrmann] And was he quiet or a chatter box? Was he a talker or was he shy?
- [Bell] He was quiet around the elder people. But he was a chatter box with us. I mean, Humpty, we had one other guy were younger than all of us was Thomas's brother. And his name was Humpty, he was the most naive one.
- [Luhrmann] Humpty was the sort of simple, well, more sweet.

- [Bell] Yeah, he was the youngest one in the group.
- [Luhrmann] Young Humpty.
- [Bell] And those two, they could never get along.
- [Luhrmann] EP and young Humpty?
- [Bell] Yeah, but they couldn't do without each other either. 'Cause once they come out and they say, "Where Humpty?" if you don't see him, and Humpty would come out and he'd say, "Where EP at?" But when they got together, they always disagreed with each other.
- [Luhrmann] They'd fight.

Okay, I'm going to hold it there, but it's just, I think a very honest little exchange, this is one of his oldest childhood friends going back to when he is 9, 10, 11, 12, and so on, playing together, going to the church together, singing and so on.

President Jimmy Carter who has had a fascinating relationship with music and rock and many, many, soul and jazz, and so many kinds of music. It's fascinating to explore Jimmy Carter's relationship with music and incorporated in his campaign. Anyway, he said music, "Presley's music, his personality, the way he fused styles of white country and black rhythm and blues permanently changed the face of American culture." Okay, I'm going to hold it there. There's obviously so much more that you can go on and on. Thank you very much everybody.

- [Host] Thanks, David. Do you have time for questions?
- Yeah, sure.

Q & A and Comments

Q - Gita, I think the film, "How do you feel the recent film lives up to the legend?"

A - I think the film obviously, perhaps idealises certain parts and it's done with Baz Luhrmann's, to me, remarkable idea of montage and the visual spectacle, close up, long shots, and so on. Yeah, we see in "Battleship Potemkin" and others. But I think that he touches on all these areas and I think he's trying to find a contemporary way of understanding this icon. So, I think that he has to take an angle, we all do, and I think he's taken one that works and it fits his, some may say it's an excessive visual style. I don't, I think it's a very contemporary style.

Mel, "I was lucky enough to see The King, his only performance out of the USA in Toronto." Yes, way back when. "The other show going on at the time was watching all the young teen girls get medical attention while fainting."

Great. Thanks, Mel.

Jonathan, "I spent an evening with Elvis at the Lido in Paris in 1959. I recently sold the signed photograph that was taken of us together."

God, Jonathan, that is incredible. That is remarkable. This Lockdown University, Wendy, Trudy, thank you so much. This is unbelievable. Thanks, Jonathan.

Mona, Okay, yeah "his laughter as well."

Rose, thank you for your kind comment.

Saoirse, right? Not sure about pronouncing. Thank you so much.

"An anecdote for you, My dad took us to see 'Jailhouse Rock' at the Curzon Bioscope in Hillborough. I was 10. We walked out of the movie and my dad turns to me and says, 'You enjoyed this? I couldn't understand a word he said.' Fast forward 30 years and I take my 10 year old son to see some rapping movie and we walk out and I hear myself saying, 'You enjoyed this? I cannot understand a word they said.' History repeating yourself. Stay cool, Sharon."

Thanks, Sharon. That's a lovely story.

Faye, "The latest movie is fabulous. It's more about Colonel Parker."

Yes, the relationship with Elvis, Parker's relationship with Elvis. By the way, he was a Dutch immigrant, an illegal Dutch immigrant. One of the reasons, the theories, why Elvis didn't tour internationally was, it's a theory, is that Parker was actually a Dutch immigrant. He had this Dutch accent obviously, which Tom Hanks tries to capture, and was scared because he was illegal, that if he went out of America, he might not be allowed back in 'cause his passport wasn't updated properly. It's a pure speculation, we don't know. But yes, Parker, the relationship between the two is fascinating and it is focused on in the movie. And I think it's an interesting angle because it's about the commodification and massive obvious commercialisation, but again, it's saying, what is it to be purist? it's nonsense in a certain level as well, or is it? But the old debate of the purist versus the commercial, I think is a bit boring and old, frankly. What matters for me is the quality of the music, the singing, the art, the theatre, the literature, the poem, whatever. It doesn't really matter if it's sold a billion or not. Shakespeare sold more than anybody else in our

times.

Okay, Susan, "He was thought to be inclusive. A friend knew him in his later life and he said that the Jewish religion is all religions."

Fascinating, Susan, thank you.

Mona, "Ed Sullivan insisted cameras focus above the waist only when Elvis appeared." Yep, exactly. On the Ed Sullivan Show was the 60 million Americans viewing, the biggest TV audience ever at the time.

Joan, "Has anyone read the book, 'The Jewish Life of Elvis?' I've read parts of it online because parts of it have been syndicated.

"On the 16th of August, they say kaddish for him at the Elvis Diner in Israel."

Thank you, Joan. Fascinating. This iconic figure is absolutely, is probably the entertainer, together with Marilyn Monroe, of the twentieth century.

Susan, "Elvis was my family members' Shabbos Gentile in Memphis."
Susan, "When he was a young boy, that gave him the gold chai, which is on display in Graceland."

Yes. Was was your family's members' Shabbos Gentile in Memphis? That's incredible, Susan.

Thank you so much. This is amazing. Thank you again, to Wendy, Trudy, and everybody on Lockdown University. We have such connections happening all over, it is extraordinary. It was your family's connection-

- [Wendy] David, it might be fun really, to do another version, a second, and then also people who did meet him, and we could incorporate first hand.

- Lovely, lovely idea Wendy. Fantastic. Love to.

- [Wendy] That's fabulous. Well, the humanity of the man, the humanity.

- The humanity, that's what I've tried to show. And the actor, Austin Butler, who plays him in the film, there's a lovely interview which they did, which he and Baz Luhrmann did exactly that, Wendy, where he was asked, "How did you approach this iconic character?" And he said, "I just tried to look for the humanity." And he said he found it when he discovered that Elvis's mother died, that he was so close to and loved at the age of 23, when he was 23, because the actor, his mother also died when he was 23. And they were very close and so on. And he

said that moment, he felt in his own actor's imagination, gave the humanity that he could connect to. And so much of the singing could come from there and other similar things. And the actor talks a lot about exactly what you said, Wendy, looking for the humanity behind the myth. Elaine, "I think of Johnny Cash." Yes, had his roots in gospel, and played with Elvis. Shoshana, "Is the screen supposed to be black? There's no picture." Oh no, it should have been the pictures. I hope you got it. Jerry, "Was his mother Jewish? It makes him Jewish." Well, from the research, his great-great-grandmother, it appears, was Jewish. I can't say definitively. More research is being done as we talk, probably. This is all quite recent, but I'll leave you to speculate on that and why that Star of David, together with a cross, is on the tombstone that he put, that Elvis put.

- [Wendy] He could have had a feeling, he could have just felt warm toward them as well.

- Exactly. Exactly. Or his mother might have sometimes said it, alluded, anything. Exactly. But it seems more and more clear that his great-great-grandmother was, it was Irish and there was, sorry, it was Scottish, German, and some English ancestry. Then just to go on, sorry, I'm just getting back to the questions here.

Okay, Suzanne, "He never came to London, but during a holiday in the States, I saw him at Las Vegas Hilton in '72. Never that taken with him till I saw him in flesh." Why has this just jumped again? Okay, so talented and charisma after you saw him in flesh.

Suzanne, thank you. And I think that's what he got from his youth, I really do. That it was obviously there, but it just burst. Bob Dylan said it was like his charisma burst out of a prison.

8155, "saw Elvis in June '72 at Madison Square Garden, his only appearance in New York. Unforgettable experience."

Fantastic.

MJW, "Mentioned critical quotes from a Catholic newspaper and of the New York Times. What year were they?"

I can check it again. I'll have a look at my notes.

Rochelle, "I miss Charlie Rose, one of the best interviewers."

Well, there were many.

Parkinson, they let other people speak and they got to the essence. Exactly.

Rose, "When I was growing up in Cape Town, you were either an Elvis or

a Cliff Richard. It was so little parallel when I think of it. Are you familiar with this? And what does it mean? Or was it meaningless?"

No, that's a great point. I remember also at home actually, either Cliff Richard, Elvis, and all going on as some, I don't know. I had never thought of that distinction in a way, or comparison really between the two of them. But that's an interesting idea, Rose.

Carrie, "Talking of Elvis wearing a chai, apparently Louis Armstrong wore a Magen David for years a Jewish family looked after him and he worked for them from young."

That's fascinating. I knew that he had a very strong feeling towards Jewish culture, but I didn't know that specifically. Thank you, Carrie.

Q - Neville, "Great to see you. Hope you're well. Did Elvis ever recover from the death of his twin brother, Jesse? His brother died 35 minutes apart. He was named Elvis after his father, Vernon Elvis Presley." Yes, "And Aaron after family friend, Aaron Kennedy."

A - Yep. I don't think he ever mentioned his twin. Not in public or in interviews that I know of, no.

Romaine, "How do you think Elvis related musically to the effect of his sexual explosion and the subsequent efforts of the government to reign him in?"

I don't think he cared. I think that he felt he had to, there's an interview that he did where he said, if he can't move, he can't sing. And that one clip that I showed where he just shows his little finger, the "Trouble" clip from the movie, it was because the day before, a district judge had banned him from using his body in sexually explicit or expressive manners. So he went on stage and he said, okay, I'll just use my finger and just move the top part of his body more. So, it's a whole satire on it. So, I think it's all the sexual explosion. I think the culture was ready at the time. And I think that he was the symbol, or he embodied it in a way, lived it, in a way it was ready later for a poetic through, in a different way, Leonard Cohen and Dylan and others. But I think it's, Euripides has this wonderful phrase in what, the ancient Greek playwright, "You put it on the harness of necessity and you ride that horse." So whatever the horse is of the culture in your life, you ride it. You have no choice. You put on the harness of necessity and you are part of it. And I think Elvis was part of a whole sexual change in revolution. The pill, feminism, women's rights, so many changes happening, the Vietnam War.

Hilton, "If you get this, I recall her sitting in Brother Bioscope in Manzini, Swaziland, watching "Kissing Cousins." If memory serves me, Ilana, you, Linda and myself, Elvis played himself and his cousin who had fair hair, better than normal.

- [Wendy] That's right. That's a hundred percent true.

- That's from Hilton Curette, Wendy. And it's to you, Wendy. You and Hilton watched "Kissing Cousins" in Manzini,

- [Wendy] We did.

- Ilana, Linda and himself, and Elvis played, and he had fair hair, and his cousin had fair hair, sorry. That's from Hilton, Hilton Curette.

Fantastic. What an extraordinary Lockdown University, again, Wendy, you and Trudy, everybody else have created.

Susan, thank you. "My husband sang 'Love Me Tender' to me on the day he proposed." I can't top that, Susan.

Susan Alexander, "Whenever a genius appears in the world, you may know him by this sign, that the dunces are all in confederacy against him. Jonathan Swift."

Great line, Susan, thank you.

Romaine, "Any work done on the power of an unresolved, and somewhat brilliantly sublimated maternal attachment in music?"

I don't know. I'm sure there is somewhere, Romaine.

Joan, I saw Elvis's first TV appearance, which was on the Dorsey Brothers.

Ah, yes. It's several months before "The Ed Sullivan Show."

Yes. The Dorsey show did not cut off the bottom part of his body as they did on the Ed Sullivan. Yep, you're absolutely right. Thank you.

Ah, Joan, you sent me the YouTube link before the talk today. Great, thank you. That's the link. Sorry I didn't have a chance to, I read your email, but I hadn't had a chance to look at the link.

Sandra, hi. Hope you're well. Hope you're good. "Presley was really very brave and so ahead of his time adding gospel and liturgical music to his performances. Even more so than stars such as Paul Robeson, Billie Holiday, suffered such discrimination for their art. Ironically, the words from the First World War poem would be a fitting tribute to Presley and his legacy. 'They shall not grow old as we are that are left grow old.' My grandchildren still love his music."

Thank you. Okay, Stan. Thanks, Linda. Thank you.

Monty, "Elvis never did encores." Great point. "He walked off stage and it was announced, 'Mr. Presley has left the building.'

Brilliant. Johnny Cash kind of tried to make his own, he said, "I'm Johnny Cash."

"I know exactly where I was when I was announced the radio he had died. I was doing a locum at a pharmacy in Highlands Park in London." Monty, fantastic, thank you.

Alice, "I was so much in love with Elvis." You and 2 billion other women in the planet, and 2 billion men wanted to be him. "I couldn't join his fan club. The wife who was a fan club member, between family and estates, managed to have the largest collection of magazines, record covers, everything Elvis."

Fantastic. Do you know, Alice, that Graceland is the second most visited iconic building in America after the White House, and has approximately the same number of visitors as the Eiffel Tower? Go figure.

"Between family and estates, they've got the largest collection of magazines, everything Elvis. I had no money for photos. Later, I started to do TV work as an actress. Sold the lot for £50. I could still make photos."

Oh, that's fantastic. Thank you. "Also think the film is excellent." Great, Alice.

Linda, "Is it true he didn't write any songs?"

Yeah, he, as far as I know, he mostly adapted and turned and changed in the ways that we've spoken before. Yep.

Hannah, "Hard to look at a non-look alike." I know. "Despite everything going for it, music phenomenal, but for me, can't watch."

Hannah, okay, fabulous, thank you for your kind comment.

Thank you, Susan. Thanks, Jack.

"One can't take away, but one of the characteristics affects his voice."

Jack, that's what they said to me in Zululand, primarily, the 150 people I was trying to get into this workshop was the voice. It's what Dylan said about Sinatra, he said that about Elvis, but he said many other things also about Elvis.

Brenda, "Saw Elvis live when I was 12. It was one of the highlights of my life. My mother was horrified at all the girls fainting, the excitement all around us. Still play with the ballads on her piano."

Great, Brenda.

Miriam, "Malcolm Gladwell tells of Presley's parapraxis when singing, 'Are You Lonesome Tonight?' Elvis had a devil of a time getting the words right."

Ah, I didn't know, maybe.

Daniel, "I'm a lifelong Elvis fan, but very little evidence that he was politically active in black-white relations."

I don't think he was active politically in that way. No, I agree with you, Daniel and Janet, I think he did it through the music and what we've described, what we've discussed in the talk today.

Myrna, "I saw Johnny Ray in Toronto in '55. His signature was falling on the stage and crying. All the audience was screaming and rushing, mostly teen girls. We had to get a note from our parents to get out of school early."

I mean, does it all seem just so innocent today compared to what's going on? But in those days, it had such an impact and effect.

Tanya, thank you. Carla, you're all very kind with the comments. Herbert, thank you again.

"Sun Records has a tour where they play the first record he ever made for his mother's birthday in his early teens. We learned details about Sam Phillips and Elvis, the relationship. The basement in Graceland, the walls are decorated, all the plaques where he donated money."

And that's where it's the \$150,000 to the Memphis Jewish community, there's a plaque in Graceland in that exact room. Herbert, thank you.

Richard, "First record I ever bought was "All Shook Up" when I was 14."

Can't do much worse.

Jillian, "As a kid, we always had Elvis versus Cliff Richard argument. The rebels were the Elvis fans."

Well, of course. Put me in the club.

And Julian, Naomi, "Saw Elvis in Toronto as well. Waited in line forever. What a memory."

Thank you, Ruth. Thank you, Michael. "I saw him in what I thought was his first appearance on the Tommy Dorsey show."

That's right, Yes. Judith, "Is there any explanation for why Elvis wore the Star of David?"

I think we've mentioned some ideas already. Thank you.

Ruth, "Cliff Richard was my big crush. I had 90 pictures of him in my bedroom wall growing up."

Oi! "I met him several times. He was definitely the UK Elvis."

Was it him or Tom Jones? Not sure.

Okay, Steven, "Did Elvis or his mother have a Hebrew name?"

No, not that I know of. I know his brother's named Aaron, but no.

Diana, "Did he write any of his own songs?" Yeah, we spoke about that.

Lydia, "I remember hanging out my window with the aerial to get FM radio so I could hear Elvis and it wasn't played then on Spring Rock Radio yet."

Helen, "I know that when the Beatles refused to perform to segregated audiences, they had a powerful influence on civil rights. Did Elvis perform for segregated audiences?"

That's a great question. I have to really check. I don't want to speculate. I want get back and check that properly.

Elaine, "Toured on the theatre where Elvis' movie played in Toronto."

Sheila, "A member of my synagogue in London has given talks with music about Louis Armstrong and his links to the Jewish family who helped him." Yep. "The part of the extended family, it's amazing. I think great-uncle, if you like," Incredible. "If you'd like to contact," that'd be wonderful. Perhaps if you could send us at Lockdown the contact details, Sheila, that'd be fantastic. "She now lives in Tunbridge Wells, has given many talks." That's fantastic. Thank you. That'd be wonderful.

Marcel. Thank you for your kind comment, Susan. Thank you. Michael. I think that's almost it.

Okay, Wendy, over to you. Your thoughts, your feelings. Where were you when you first heard Elvis?

- In Manzini, Swaziland as Hilton said.

With Hilton and Linda.

- With my sister, Linda, yes, and my best Donna Curette and Hilton. And Hilton with our best friends, Linda's best friend. We were all close family friends, with Schlapoberskys as well, funny enough. Small world.

- Fantastic. Amazing, amazing, incredible. All these connections on Lockdown. Wendy, thank you so much.

- Thanks a million. It was really fun, uplifting, and fun as we already said. Thanks everybody for joining us, and see you soon.

Thank you.