



On August 16 2007, 70,000 Elvis fans attend a special event at Graceland, the Presley family home in Memphis. They are there for the 30th anniversary of the death of the King of Rock and Roll.

But a small minority of devoted Elvis fans do not travel to Tennessee. 'It's not his anniversary,' they insist, 'because he's not dead.'

### **Suspicious**

According to the official story is that Elvis Presley died in the bathroom of his Graceland home. The official cause of death was 'heart failure'. From the beginning there were questions. What had caused heart failure in an apparently healthy 42 year-old man? At the time Elvis's history of prescription drug abuse and over-eating were not widely known.

Suspicion increased when an autopsy report mysteriously disappeared. And many pointed to something Elvis often said in his final concerts: 'I don't look very good now, but I will look good in my coffin.' Was he trying to tell his fans something?

There were several theories about this supposed 'fake death'. Elvis had escaped his fame and returned to a simple life. Or he was hiding from the Mafia in a FBI witness protection programme.

Or working as an undercover drugs agent for the government. Or as a CIA spy. Some even suggested extra-terrestrial involvement: 'Aliens Kidnap The King.'

### **Colonel Parker**

The most believable theory involved Presley's manager 'Colonel' Tom Parker. Parker had a history of faking things - including the story of his own life. 'I come from West Virginia,' the Dutch illegal immigrant told the press. 'I ran away from home to join my Uncle's circus.'

None of this was true.

Parker had brilliantly stage-managed his star's career. He reinvented Elvis several times: from wild rock and roll star to film star to Las Vegas cabaret act. The Colonel even made Elvis join the army to improve record sales.

And the sudden, tragic death of the King of Rock and Roll did sell a lot of records.

Had Colonel Parker fooled the world again? Not according to a close Presley friend and pallbearer at the funeral. 'That was Elvis in the coffin,' he said.



### **The King serving burgers?**

So why all the Elvis reported sightings of Elvis in burger bars and gas stations over

the years? Perhaps it's because there are a lot of Elvis Presleys around.

There are 85,000 official Elvis Presley impersonators and countless unofficial ones. In Hong Kong, for example, Presley fans could mark the 30th anniversary of his death with two Kings: Elvis Ishikawa, from Japan, and the 'Hong Kong Elvis', Johnny Ma.

Elvis Presley died in 1977. His music lives on.

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## **Learning Activities**

### **Understanding**

1. In which city is Graceland?
2. Why did some Elvis fans not go to the anniversary celebrations?
- 3. Which of these statements is not true:**
  - a. Elvis officially died of heart failure
  - b. There was no autopsy
  - c. Elvis joked about his own death



- d. Elvis Presley died in August 1977
- 4. Which of these statements is true?**
    - a. Colonel Parker was American.
    - b. Parker ran away to the circus.
    - c. He came from West Virginia
    - d. He was an illegal alien
  - 5. True or false?**
    - a. All Elvis impersonators are official
    - b. There are more than 50,000 Elvis impersonators.
    - c. There are at least two Elvis impersonators in Hong Kong.

[Answers](#)

### **Writing**

**1. You are Elvis - and you didn't die in 1977. Write the real story of what happened to you. Choose from the following:**

- ★ *You were working for the FBI against the Mafia. Describe how you went into hiding and the details of your new life.*
- ★ *You were kidnapped by aliens. Describe what happened and how you returned to Earth to work in a gas station.*

**2. You are Colonel Parker. Write the real story of your life. Use the information in the text on this worksheet but you can invent more details.**

### **Role Play (speaking & listening)**

Is that Elvis Presley serving food in your local restaurant? Role Play [here](#):

### **Five Fun Facts**

*Find five more facts about Elvis Presley. At least one must not be from the Internet - try books, encyclopedias, dictionaries etc.*

*Think about:*

- \*What was Elvis's biggest hit record?
- \*Did he have any brothers or sisters?
- \*Did he ever visit your country?
- \*Are there any funny stories about him?
- \*Do you the names of any of his films?

### **Listening**

Did you know that Elvis tried to join the FBI? [Listen to the story and do the activities here](#).

### **Project**

**'Elvis Presley changed the world'**

**Prepare a presentation on the life of Elvis Presley with this title. Use words, images, songs and anything you feel will help to describe his life.**

*Remember to include:*

key dates \* key events \* an evaluation