

On The Last Days of Elvis
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Elvis Presley on stage in Los Vegas, 1974, having just finished the song, "You Gave Me a Mountain."

"I want to make one thing clear. I've been singing that song for a long time, and a lot of people kind of got it associated with me because they think it's a personal nature. It is not. It's a beautiful song written by Marty Robbins, and I heard Frankie Laine do it, I think it was, and I just loved the song and it has nothing to do with me personally or my ex-wife Priscilla. She's right here. Honey, stand up. Come out, come on out. Turn around, let them see you. Boy, she's--she's a beautiful chick, I'll tell you for sure, boy. Boy, I knows 'em when I picks 'em. You know? Goddamn. And there's my girlfriend, Sheila. Stand up, Sheila. Turn around, turn around, completely around. Sheila, hold it up. Hold it up. Hold the ring up. Hold up the ring. The ring. Your right hand. Look at that sonofabitch.

"No, the thing I'm trying to get across is, we're the very best of friends, and we always have been. Our divorce came about not because of another man or another woman but because of the circumstances involving my career. I was traveling too much. I was gone too much. And it was--it was just an agreement that I didn't think it was fair to her 'cause I was gone so much and everything. So I therefore, as decently as you can do that type of thing, we just made an agreement to always be friends and to be close and care--'cause we have a daughter to raise--and for her to have whatever she wanted as a settlement.

"After the settlement--it came out at about two million dollars. Well, after that, I got her a mink coat. I know it. I'm talking about a mink coat. You hang loose over there. The--the XKE Jag after the settlement--just gave it to her. She got me--listen to this--*tonight*, a forty-two-thousand-dollar white Rolls-Royce. That's the type of relationship we have. It's not a bad setup, is it, fellows? I mean, I got part of it back, anyway. I wasn't hurting too bad, but I did get part of it back, you know. She bought the car just out of a gesture of love, and she likes this Stutz that I have. It's not a car, it's a Stutz. And she likes the stud. She likes the Stutz. Mike Stone

[Priscilla's boyfriend] ain't no stud--so forget it. She liked the Stutz and--so I'm going to give her the Stutz and she can give me the Rolls, okay? But I wish Mike Stone was a stud, you know. He's a *nice guy*.

"I'd like to do a song here, ladies and gentlemen, that is one of the prettiest goddamn love songs I've heard in my life, man. I'll tell you. No, it is, it's one of the prettiest songs I ever heard in my life. I've never sung it, I've never recorded it. I never liked the damn thing till I found out--damn, I got a toothache--till I found out the story behind why it was written, and then I *really* didn't like it 'cause I don't like that type of stuff. So the next song--no, this is a true story of a song. It's been around for a long time. Charlie, take this belt off, it's going to cut me, castrate me, do *something*, you know. Really, I can't do that--I got things to do, places to go--you know. Places to go and other tours and things and cities and chicks and all that jazz, you know. Look, I just--be careful son, don't let it get caught in the cord. I'll die out here. Electrocute my ass. How many people of you saw the movie *Blue Hawaii*?"

Source: Peter Guralnick, *Careless Love: The Unmaking of Elvis Presley* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 1999).