



Me and a Guy Named Elvis: My Lifelong Friendship with Elvis Presley

By Jerry Schilling, Chuck Crisafulli

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On a lazy Sunday in 1954, twelve-year-old Jerry Schilling wandered into a Memphis touch football game, only to discover that his team was quarterbacked by a nineteen-year-old Elvis Presley, the local teenager whose first record, "That's All Right," had just debuted on Memphis radio. The two became fast friends, even as Elvis turned into the world's biggest star. In 1964, Elvis invited Jerry to work for him as part of his "Memphis Mafia," and Jerry soon found himself living with Elvis full-time in a Bel Air mansion and, later, in his own room at Graceland. Over the next thirteen years Jerry would work for Elvis in various capacities — from bodyguard to photo double to co-executive producer on a karate film. But more than anything else he was Elvis's close friend and confidant: Elvis trusted Jerry with protecting his life when he received death threats, he asked Jerry to drive him and Priscilla to the hospital the day Lisa Marie was born and to accompany him during the famous "lost weekend" when he traveled to meet President Nixon at the White House. Me and a Guy Named Elvis looks at Presley from a friend's perspective, offering readers the man rather than the icon — including insights into the creative frustrations that lead to Elvis's abuse of prescription medicine and his tragic death. Jerry offers never-before-told stories about life inside Elvis's inner circle and an emotional recounting of the great times, hard times, and unique times he and Elvis shared. These vivid memories will be priceless to Elvis's millions of fans, and the compelling story will fascinate an even wider audience.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In 1954, at age 12, Schilling first met fellow Memphis homeboy Presley, a 19-year-old truck driver "a year out of high school and less than a week into a recording career that carried no guarantee of turning into steady work." He provides a fascinating view of Memphis in the late '50s, but most of his memoir is from after 1964, when he officially joined the retinue of friends—the "Memphis Mafia"—that served as Elvis's surrogate family. While this thoroughly enjoyable book deftly describes his many adventures with Elvis and other notables, including the Beatles, Ann-Margret, the Beach Boys and Billy Joel, the heart of it is his many observations of Elvis's inner exploration. Unlike the rest of Elvis's posse, Schilling was liberal in his musical and racial views, and he shared Elvis's spiritual hunger "for a sense of meaning and purpose." Schilling provides the most detailed account yet of the sometimes comical LSD trip he took with Presley, and he poignantly observes the "disappointment and frustration" Elvis felt about his Hollywood movies. Overall, Schilling's heartfelt narrative makes this more than just another piece of Elvis product. (*Aug.*)

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From [Booklist](#)

When 12-year-old Schilling was invited to join the older kids in their football game, he was surprised to learn that the guy calling the plays was the singer of "That's All Right (Mama)," a song currently tearing up the airwaves. Schilling eventually joined Presley's entourage, the Memphis Mafia, a close-knit group of bodyguards, road managers, and confidants. He had the difficult task of trying to be a true friend without becoming a yes-man or a pain in the ass. In 1977 he was one of Presley's pallbearers and later joined Elvis Presley Enterprises as creative affairs director, whose job was to protect Presley's image and legacy. Schilling's account of his years with Presley joins the ever-growing body of work written by associates (*Elvis: What Happened*, 1977; *Good Rockin' Tonight*, 1994; *Elvis' Man Friday*, 1994), sharing anecdotes, gossip, and insights into what made Elvis Elvis. Schilling portrays an incredibly successful, talented, charismatic, spiritual, and moody force prone to acts of extreme generosity (he paid for Schilling's West Hollywood Hills home) who was ultimately a tragic figure whose short life was beset by constant creative disappointment. *Benjamin Segedin*

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Review

More than anything, this moving and elegantly told memoir resonates with the spirit of true friendship. ("The Washington Post")

Schilling has the goods where else can you read about the King giving karate lessons to Liza Minnelli in a hotel room while Chubby Checker and porn star Linda Lovelace looked on? ("Entertainment Weekly")

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