

The  
*Elvis*  
INTERVIEWS

*A Novel*

BY GLEN BONHAM



---

BATTLEFIELD  
PUBLISHING  
INC.

THE ELVIS INTERVIEWS © 2006 Glen Bonham

All rights reserved. The use of any part of this publication transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, or stored in a retrieval system, without the prior consent of the publisher is an infringement of the copyright law.

**BATTLEFIELD PUBLISHING INC.**

[www.theelvisinterviews.com](http://www.theelvisinterviews.com)

Interior design and typesetting (Sabon & Ocean Sans) by **SAS**igraphix.

Cover design and back cover art by Geof Isherwood.

Editor: Sonja A. Skarstedt.

Printed By Marquis Imprimeur Inc., Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Elvis images used by permission, Elvis Presley Enterprises, Inc.

This story is a work of fiction. All of the characters, incidents, and dialogue, except for incidental references to public figures, products, or services, are imaginary and are not intended to refer to any living persons or disparage any company's products or services.

First Printing.

ISBN 0-9781175-0-6

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Bonham, Glen

The Elvis interviews / Glen Bonham.

ISBN 0-9781175-0-6

I. Title.

PS8603.O55E58 2006

C813'.6

C2006-903163-0

*For Ina*

The  
*Elvis*

INTERVIEWS

## CHAPTER 1

The familiar frenzy of New York greeted Jimmy Miyake as he arrived at JFK International Airport aboard JAL flight 439. He retrieved his luggage and nervously waited in line for Customs and Immigration, caught off-guard by the laborious security measures in place since 9/11. Finished with Customs, he breathed a sigh of relief and strode through the main exit.

As the full heat hit him in the face, he knew the day was shaping up to be a scorcher. *It's been a long time*, he thought, the morning sun temporarily dazzling him along with a deluge of memories. He removed a cell phone from his double-breasted sharkskin jacket, flipped it open and pressed a number.

"*Hai* (Yes)?" snapped a voice on the other end.

"*Moshi moshi Yasamura san* (Hello, Mr. Yasamura)," said Jimmy. "I'm here in New York. Made it through Customs and Immigration, no problems." The party on the other end babbled something and Jimmy responded, "*Hai*, I will keep you informed." He clicked off his cell and stuck it back in his pocket. His weekender slung over his shoulder and his carry-on bag firmly in grip, he joined the other arriving passengers in the limo line-up.

Tall, slender and impeccably dressed, Jimmy was causing more than a few stares even among the jaded New Yorkers. Depending on your fashion sense you'd guess he was either forty years behind the times, or directly on the cutting edge of retro. His sharkskin jacket overlapped generous-cut trousers tapering to

## THE ELVIS INTERVIEWS

---

cuffs that presided over pointy shoes. His jet-black hair was slicked into a pompadour that segued nicely into a 50s ducktail. Despite the muggy, blistering New York heat, Jimmy refused to remove his jacket or even unbutton his shirt collar, preferring not to call attention to the tattoos embellishing most of his body.

The other overnight passengers, exhausted and short tempered, jostled for position on the curb, each hoping to grab the first available taxi or limo. Jimmy, cool and composed amid the barrage of pushes and shoves, slipped out of line and approached a Punjabi limo captain just coming on duty. He deftly folded and palmed a fifty-dollar bill in his manicured fingers before slipping it into the captain's hand. The man looked at the bill, then back at Jimmy. A quick nod to the driver of an incoming limo brought the shiny black car to the curb. The captain deposited Jimmy's luggage in the trunk, opened the rear passenger door and waited for Jimmy to seat himself before closing it firmly. Stepping off the curb the captain put up his hand to stop oncoming traffic. With a dignified bow and a snappy salute to Jimmy, he sent the limo on its way while those still waiting in line glowered in disgust.

The limo pulled sleekly out into traffic and the driver asked, "Where to, sir?"

"Philadelphia," replied Jimmy.

"Philadelphia?" The driver peered back at Jimmy in his rearview. "Sir, I can't take a fare that distance without checking with dispatch."

Jimmy nodded casually.

The driver made his call and secured the necessary permission, informing his passenger that it would cost two hundred dollars.

"Done," said Jimmy, leaning forward to hand the driver a slip of paper containing the address. He clicked off his cell phone, laid his head back and was soon dreaming his way through the non-stop cacophony of the Big Apple.

## CHAPTER 2

Ed Stafford was sitting in his usual spot at the 21 Club, a combination restaurant-nightclub located in south Philadelphia. The place was swathed in gaudy red velour and gilded tassels, crammed with the sort of fake antique furniture certain Italian gangsters find so appealing.

Ed was having an early lunch and was just about to wolf down his second slab of ham-on-rye when his cell phone started vibrating. He put down his sandwich, pulled the phone from his pocket, glared at the screen and let out an exasperated sigh. Damn, the office. He briefly considered letting it go on vibrating but changed his mind, flipping it open and muttering, “Stafford here.”

“Eddie?” came a voice from the other end, “Creighton’s been looking for you. Where are you?”

“Hi, Danielle.”

“Where are you, Eddie? The old man is really ticked. He said this is your last chance. I can’t stall him any longer. Have you got a story for this month?”

Ed let out another long sigh. “I’m working on something.”

“Are you at home?” asked Danielle.

Silence.

“You’re not at home, are you?”

“I’m on it, Danielle.”

“Are you sober?”

“Of course I’m sober,” answered Ed, defensively.

“Can I put you through to him? Can you please just talk to him?” she pleaded.

## T H E E L V I S I N T E R V I E W S

---

“I’m tied up at the moment, Danielle. Tell Creighton I’m working on something. I’ll be in later this afternoon. I’ve gotta go.” He flipped the phone shut before she had another chance to protest. He felt bad about cutting her off like that. She was a nice girl. Always looking out for him. Ed suspected that Danielle had a thing for him, but that was crazy. He was old enough to be her father. He did the math in his head. Danielle was what, around thirty? A very attractive thirty, with her long blonde hair, big gray-green eyes and eager-to-please, ruby-lipped smile but even so . . . He was fifty-two. He shot a quick look at himself in the mirror at the back of the bar. His face was on the jowly side, in need of another shave, and the lines around his eyes a little more pronounced than they used to be, but he still had most of his hair. *Hey*, he told himself, giving the loose folds around his chin a quick tweak, *I guess anything’s possible*.

“One more, Dino,” Ed said to the bartender, who stood about five-foot-seven and was built as compact and square as a tank, a mop of coiffed curls framing his wary yet calculatingly friendly face. Dino poured a double shot of Jack Daniels over a couple of ice cubes and slid the chunky glass across the bar while Ed Stafford continued pondering his predicament. He was still drawing a blank on this month’s so-called scoop. To say that he lacked motivation was an understatement, his writing career having seen far better days. In his heyday, Ed had broken some major stories, his name a familiar beacon among the leading publications. He even held the distinction for having re-opened some long-dead cases with his bulldog investigative journalism. But that was the past.

Ed savored his next sip of whiskey, trying not to think too hard about the fact that, in spite of the title of his current column, *Stafford’s Scoop*, it had been years since he had put out anything remotely resembling a scoop. Then again, it had been maybe a decade since anyone considered him to be in the “scoop” business. The publication he worked for now, *The Hollywood Rattlebag*, was nothing more than a sleazy gossip rag modeled



## THE ELVIS INTERVIEWS

---

after *The National Enquirer*. Editor Buzz Creighton—who wouldn't know Hollywood if the sign that graced Mount Lee fell on him—wasn't interested in scoops. He wanted gossip, the kind of stuff guaranteed to grab attention at the check-out counter, between the *ka-ching* of cash registers and the rustle of lottery tickets. The monthly *Rattlebag's* entire editorial content consisted of bogus stories based on “candid” shots of celebrities in compromising positions, downloaded from the Internet. Ed Stafford knew the job was beneath his dignity, unworthy of his caliber of journalism and—

*Yeah, well*, he said to himself, interrupting his own thoughts, *that was then and this is now. Get over it.* Ed knocked back the remainder of his second Jack Daniels and looked up just as Frank Shapiro walked in.

The 21 Club's owner was a sinister-looking guy with a barrel chest whose weasel-like, penetrating grimace registered everything and unnerved everyone in his path. He nodded stodgily to Ed, sauntered behind the bar, opened the till, and took out a stack of bills. As he counted off some twenties, Dino drifted down from the other end of the bar to hand him a pad and pen. Frank scribbled something on the pad, peeled off the top sheet and stuck it in the till, slamming the drawer shut with a little more force than was necessary.

“Lousy night in Atlantic City, huh, Boss?” asked Dino, flicking a deft hand through his coiffed mop.

Frank grunted and stuffed the bills into his pocket. He walked around to the other side of the bar and straddled the seat next to Ed.

“Hi ya doin' Eddie?” muttered Frank as he massaged his temples, trying to rub away a splitting headache.

“By the way,” interrupted Dino as he pushed a glass of water, two Alka-Seltzer tablets and a scrap of paper across the bar, “some guy by the name of Miyake called earlier. Wanted to know if you were gonna be around. I told him you'd be in maybe later.” Dino looked at his watch. “About two hours ago.”

## T H E E L V I S I N T E R V I E W S

---

“He askin’ for money?” grumbled Frank as he dropped the two tablets into his water glass.

“Everybody wants money, boss,” Dino replied, caginess punctuating his sarcasm.

“You got that right,” said Frank as he waited impatiently for the tablets to dissolve. When they finally turned to fizz, he seized and drained the glass, belched loudly and scanned the scrap of paper.

“Miyake,” he said to him self, smiling, “well, what’d ya know? Jimmy Miyake!”

“Miyake . . . that’s a Jap name, right?” smirked Dino.

Ed Stafford shook his head in disgust. “*Japanese*, Dino,” he corrected the bartender, “I believe the correct term is *Japanese*.”

“Yeah, whatever,” snapped Dino, dismissively, “but this guy didn’t sound like no Jap . . . eh—Jap-a-*neeze*.” Dino corrected himself, deliberately enunciating every vowel as he grinned sarcastically at Ed. When there was no response, he sauntered back down to the other end of the bar to wash some glasses. Frank looked at Ed, shook his head and nodded in Dino’s direction. “Dumb Guinea!”

Ed, shaking his head in frustration, finished his drink and tossed some bills on the bar. He noticed Frank eyeing his uneaten half of the sandwich. “Help yourself.”

“You don’t mind?” asked Frank, reaching for the sandwich.

Ed laughed, gave Frank a good-natured slap on the back, slid off his stool and left the bar to walk the two blocks back to the *Rattlebag’s* dingy headquarters.

## CHAPTER 3

The airport limo pulled up in front of the 21 Club as the last of the lunch crowd trickled off into the dusty afternoon. The driver hustled out, grabbed Jimmy Miyake's bags from the trunk and set them on the sidewalk. Jimmy removed two one hundreds and a fifty from his red sharkskin billfold and slipped them to the driver.

"Thank you very much, sir." The driver glanced appreciatively at the fifty. "It's been a pleasure." He sashayed back into the car, nipped the door shut and pulled back out into the busy traffic.

Jimmy picked up his luggage, entered the club and paused inside the door. As he waited for his eyes to adjust to the darkness, he discerned a voice calling his name: "Hey Jimmy! Over here!" He started moving in the direction of the raspy voice, his elbows brushing the edges of the dim corridor until he recognized Frank Shapiro sitting at the bar.

"Hello, Frank. It's good to see you!"

Frank got up, gave Jimmy a warm hug and a kiss on the cheek and held him at arms' length as he looked him up and down. "Nice suit. You look like you just walked out of a Frankie Avalon flick."

"It happens to be called *retro*, Frank," Jimmy informed him.

Frank shook his head and waved his arms. "Kids! What do I know, anyway? C'mon, siddown. What'll you have?"

"Dry martini—two olives," replied Jimmy, almost on cue.

Frank motioned to Dino who slowly sauntered back down

## THE ELVIS INTERVIEWS

---

from the other end of the bar. “Dino, this here’s Jimmy Miyake—fresh off the plane from Japan. He used to work for me.” Dino gave Jimmy the once-over and nodded, blasé as ever. Frank ordered Dino to prepare a martini for Jimmy and a scotch for himself. Dino nonchalantly began fixing the drinks.

“Feelin’ any jet lag?” asked Frank.

“A little when I got off the plane. All cleared up now,” replied Jimmy as Dino set the drinks down flatly on the bar.

“Is there somewhere private we can talk?” he asked.

“Sure,” answered Frank, “we can go up to my office. Follow me,” he ordered as he picked up both glasses.

When Jimmy leaned down to pick up his luggage, Frank said, “You can stash that behind the bar. Dino’ll take care of it. C’mon.”

Jimmy hoisted his weekender over the bar to Dino. “I’ll keep the carry-on with me,” he informed the bartender.

“Come on,” repeated Frank, as he motioned Jimmy to follow him through the club to the back stairs leading up to his office.

“Charming place you’ve got here, Frank,” said Jimmy as he cased the decor. The way he said it, Frank couldn’t tell whether or not he was being facetious.



In a corner of his office, laid out with the same fake Italian reproductions that filled the club downstairs, Frank had created a comfortable seating arrangement. He and Jimmy settled back in the two overstuffed crimson armchairs, a marble-topped coffee table between them. Frank leaned forward.

“So how do you like livin’ in Japan? You miss the good old US of A?”

“A little bit. Japan took some serious getting used to. It’s an entirely different culture, but I’ve come to appreciate the place. It is home to me now.”

Frank would always remember the day Jimmy Miyake first came to work for him: another cocky eighteen-year-old ready to

## THE ELVIS INTERVIEWS

---

make his big mark on the world. Jimmy's family had immigrated to Philadelphia from Japan when Jimmy was a baby. He was seven years old when his parents' car was struck by an out-of-control eighteen-wheeler. When the authorities learned he had no known relatives in the States, they placed him with a less than loving foster family. By the time he was ten, social workers had plastered Jimmy with labels: attention deficit disorder, with serious anger issues, to boot.

The boy's constant urge to rebel resulted in his being kicked out of the house when he was sixteen. When Frank found him, Jimmy had been living on the streets for two years. Frank immediately spied the raw potential and started Jimmy out as a runner with one of his numbers operations. Jimmy was an astonishingly fast learner, and before long he had earned himself a rep as one of Frank's top administrators. By his early twenties Jimmy's days on the street were ancient history and he was firmly entrenched in Frank's operations, doing quite well for himself. His wardrobe reflected his change in fortunes and attitude: frayed denims and ripped leather jackets exchanged for snappy, dark-hued cords and stylish bombers.

One day, having learned he had family overseas, Jimmy began to wonder about his Japanese ancestry. Because his parents had kept the Japanese culture alive in their home, he was quite in tune with the language. Though not fluent, he had a basic understanding of the short- and long-clipped syllables. Armed with nothing more than a longing to find himself, along with a few bucks he had managed to put aside, Jimmy headed off to explore his Japanese roots. For nearly ten years, Jimmy's communication with Frank and his former homeland amounted to nothing more than the occasional post card.

"You making any money? You look like you're doin' okay for yourself." Frank reached out to finger the silky texture of Jimmy's jacket. "Not my taste, but the suit feels expensive."

"It is," smiled Jimmy.

"So," Frank said, leaning back and taking a sip of his scotch,

## THE ELVIS INTERVIEWS

---

“Your message said you were comin’ to town to talk about some business?”

Jimmy leaned across the coffee table. “I have a proposition for you, Frank.”

Frank leaned forward, his eyebrows raised. “A proposition? I like propositions! Well! What have you got?”

Jimmy, his fingers lightly caressing the cool marble surface of the table, said, “I am employed by a wealthy business man in Japan. This man has sent me over here in the hope that I might acquire something he has desired for quite some time.”

“Uh, huh,” murmured Frank, listening raptly.

“He has mentioned this object on numerous occasions over the years.”

“Uh, huh,” repeated Frank.

“He would like to possess it.”

“And?”

“I told him I knew someone in America who was exceptionally good at acquiring things. Things that might not necessarily be for sale.”

“That would be me,” said Frank, clasping his hands together.

“Yes, that would be you, Frank. This man,” Jimmy continued, “is also very private. He prefers to keep a low profile.” He paused, wanting to make sure Frank understood.

“Yeah,” nodded Frank.

“Now my boss has a passion. A serious hobby, you might call it.”

Frank cocked an eyebrow.

“His hobby is . . . Elvis Presley.”

Frank smiled, “And I need to know that because . . . ?”

“Ah,” smiled Jimmy, “but that’s why I’m here.”

Frank shrugged and reached for his glass.

“This interest in Elvis Presley is more than some passing fancy. It borders on what you might call an obsession.”

“Really into it, huh?” said Frank before he took another sip of scotch.

## THE ELVIS INTERVIEWS

---

“Yes, Frank, he is really into it. And when I say the man is wealthy, I mean that money is no object.”

The word “wealthy” had immediately snagged Frank’s attention. However, the mention of “money is no object” had him perched on the edge of his seat.

“So,” Jimmy continued, thoughtfully brushing a thread from the flawless fabric of his sleeve, “my boss would like to acquire this object—which unfortunately is not for sale.”

“Everything’s for sale, Jimmy. You know that,” said Frank, draining his glass.

“My boss must have this object. And he’s willing to pay for it.”

“And how much is your boss willing to pay for this uh, ‘object?’”

“One million U.S. dollars.”

Frank sat there with an amused look on his face, oblivious to the creases in his own not-so-retro sleeve. Then he stood up and went to pour himself another drink from his private bar, situated directly behind a massive oak desk that purportedly once belonged to Al Capone. “You want another martini?” he called to Jimmy.

“No, I’m fine, thank you.”

Frank came back and lowered himself back into his seat. “A million bucks!”

“One million dollars, Frank. Twenty-five percent down, the balance on delivery of the object in question.”

Frank stared at Jimmy with all the intensity of a puzzled father. “Jimmy, I sometimes think back to the days when you used to work for me. You were one of my best people. You weren’t crazy like some of my other guys.” He paused to take another sip of his scotch, his eyes never leaving Jimmy. “So I guess what I’m sayin’ is, you come to me with this million dollar deal. And because it’s *you*, I gotta take it seriously.”

“I assure you, Frank, I’ve never been more serious.”

“A million bucks is a lot of money.”

“It certainly is.”

## THE ELVIS INTERVIEWS

---

“Okay, so here’s the million dollar question. What object would we be talkin’ about here?”

“As I mentioned earlier, my boss is a big Elvis Presley fan.”

“Yeah, you said that.”

“He has been a major collector of Elvis artifacts.”

“Get to the point, please Jimmy?” Frank could have gnawed his glass with impatience.

“My boss would like to acquire Elvis Presley’s pink Cadillac.” Jimmy said it so casually, he could have been talking about an Elvis postcard or first edition LP.

“His *what?*” Frank wondered whether the scotch was beginning to warp his hearing.

Jimmy slowly repeated the request, punctuating each word with a pause. “Elvis. Presley’s. Pink. Cadillac.” And waited for the words to sink in.

Frank squinted. “You *shittin’* me?”

“No, Frank, I am definitely not shitting you.” Jimmy reached for the expensive carry-on sitting next to his chair and hoisted it onto the table. Within seconds he had emptied the bag of a few neatly folded shirts, a shaving kit and other incidentals. He flipped the bag over to expose the little brass feet on its bottom, and deliberately twisted them a quarter-turn each. He swung the bag back into the upright position, reached in to lift the false bottom and extract the stacks of hundred dollar bills secreted within, laying them on the coffee table.

“That is one hundred thousand in cash, Frank.”

Although he tried to maintain his cool, Frank couldn’t keep his eyes from protruding, reminding Jimmy of two very large, soft-boiled eggs. “Jeeze! How’d you get *that* through Customs?”

Jimmy ignored the question. “If you accept the job, my boss will transfer the balance of the deposit, another one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, into any account of your choice. Do you still do any off-shore banking?”

“Yeah, sure,” grinned Frank, blinking hard as he managed to regain his composure. “Whenever I have something to deposit.”



## THE ELVIS INTERVIEWS

---

“If you accept the job, Frank, you *will* have. Would you like some time to think it over?”

“Think it over? A million bucks? What’s there to think over?” shrugged Frank, his eyes protruding even more intensely.

“I just hope you realize that this will be no walk in the park, Frank.” Jimmy brought his immaculate fingers together in a silent tap.

“You let me worry about that,” said Frank, taking another sizeable gulp of scotch. “This pink Cadillac—what can you tell me about it?”

“The car is currently on display in the automobile museum in Elvis Presley’s mansion. In Graceland. Memphis, Tennessee.”

“On display? Oh, so we’re talkin’ some heavy-duty security, right?”

“Which is why my boss is willing to pay a million dollars.”

“Right,” said Frank, staring at the stacks of bills on the table. Then he smiled and shook his head. “Jimmy, we pull this off they’ll want to make a freakin’ movie about us.”

“I can assure you, Frank, the last thing my boss wants is to draw attention to himself.”

“Yeah, well, you know what I mean,” Frank said dismissively, “it was just a thought.”

“Frank,” said Jimmy in a serious tone, “I’m not going to presume to tell you your business, but you know this won’t be easy. You’ll need a real professional to pull this off. Do you know somebody who can handle a job of this caliber?”

“Uh huh,” said Frank, nodding his head, “I know just the guy.”

“So, do we have a deal?” asked Jimmy.

Frank’s office door was open just enough for Dino to hear most of the conversation. He had come up earlier to see Frank about something. That could wait. Dino turned and crept quietly back down the dark stairway to the bar.



## T H E E L V I S I N T E R V I E W S

---

Jimmy stood up, removed a business card from a sterling silver case in his jacket pocket and, holding it in his two hands, very formally handed the card to Frank. Frank thought this gesture a little odd until Jimmy explained that it was a Japanese custom to present your business cards with both hands.

Frank examined the raised embossed symbols and letters on the card before turning it over. One side was English, the other Japanese. Nodding his head he said. "Pretty classy! You've really got this Japanese thing down, huh?"

With a subtle bow Jimmy picked up his bags and walked to the door. "I'm staying at the Marriott. My cell phone number is on the card."

Jimmy left and Frank sat down to contemplate the one hundred grand lavishly spread out across the top of his massive oak desk.



PHOTO BY GEOFF ISHERWOOD



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Glen Bonham is a writer-producer who resides in Mississauga, Ontario with his wife, Ina. He has written for television and films. *The Elvis Interviews* is his first novel and he is currently at work on a sequel.