Gravestone of Gladys Presley, mother of Elvis, in Graceland, Memphis, and the Tree of life pendant gifted to him by the Memphis Mafia

that he didn't want to be kept out of heaven on a technicality.

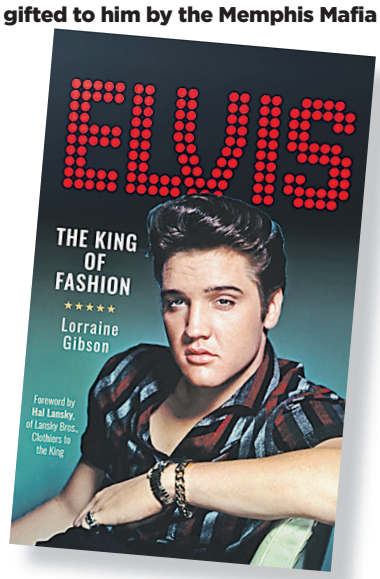
One of the most compelling pieces of this pedigree puzzle is the appearance in various Presley family trees of Nancy Burdine, a European Jew. Tracing Elvis' lineage for her book, *Elvis and Gladys*, author Elaine Dundy discovered Nancy's daughter was Martha Tackett who married Mansell White and had a daughter called Octavia or 'Doll'. Doll married Bob Smith and they had a daughter, Gladys Love Smith - Elvis' mum. Dundy, who credits Elvis's third cousin, Oscar Tackett with this information, then searched through five generations of women from Nancy and ended up at Elvis, indicating his descent from a direct line of Jewish women.

Who knew? Well, at the time, hardly anyone. However, Elvis did and later told several people – including Jewish friends George Klein, Alan Fortas and Larry Geller, all of whom became part of his inner circle.

Roselle Chartock sums up: "The words 'Elvis' and 'Jews' may not seem to go together. But the truth is that, despite growing up in a poor, fundamentalist Christian family in the Deep South – an area sometimes known for its antisemitism – Elvis Presley developed a deep affinity to Jews. I believe the main reason goes back to that day when Gladys told [him] about their Jewish blood."

◆ **Tickets for *Direct From Graceland* are available at elvislondonbridge.co.uk**

◆ ***Elvis: The King of Fashion* by Lorraine Gibson is out this summer (White Owl Books)**

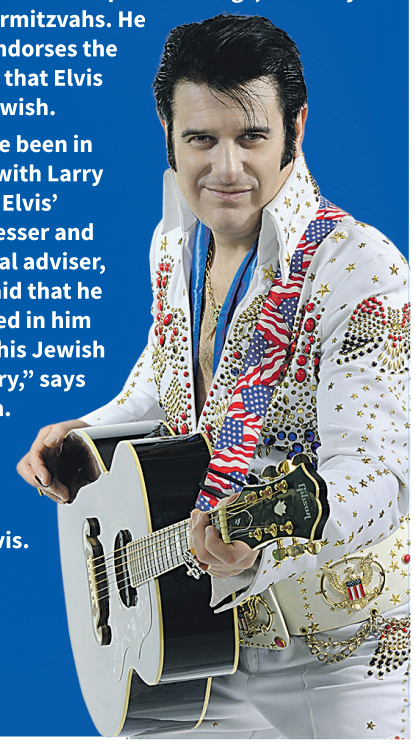


ELVIS SHMELVIS

By day, he's Martyn Dias from St Albans, but once he pulls on his bespoke spangled jumpsuit, raven-black wig and bejewelled gun-slinger belt, he is Elvis Shmelvis, one of the UK's best-rated Elvis tribute acts – and certainly the number one Jewish version.

He rocks an impressive simulation of The King's voice, making him in demand to get all shook up at weddings, birthdays and barmitzvahs. He fully endorses the theory that Elvis was Jewish.

"I've been in touch with Larry Geller, Elvis' hairdresser and spiritual adviser, who said that he confided in him about his Jewish ancestry," says Martyn.



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