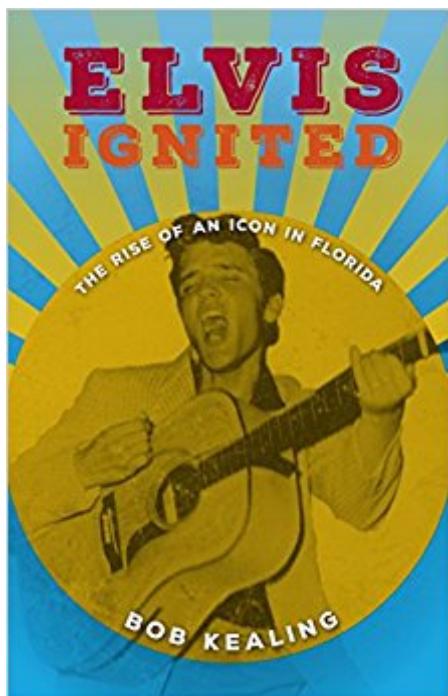


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# Elvis Ignited: The Rise Of An Icon In Florida



## Synopsis

From Hillbilly Cat to the King of Rock and Roll "I don't think there was a better time and place to be a teenager than in Florida in the 1950s. It was such a magical place. Elvis is part of what contributed to that excitement."--Bob Graham, former Florida governor and United States senator "Kealing tells us the story of what happened when Elvis arrived in Florida and what role the Sunshine State played in his life and musical career. This is a critical era in the Elvis Saga."--William McKeen, editor of Rock and Roll Is Here to Stay: An Anthology "Presents a great picture of what it was like to be a touring musician in the 1950s and also of Florida at the time and how the culture was changed by the shock of Elvis."--Joy Wallace Dickinson, author of Remembering Orlando: Tales from Elvis to Disney

It was his most electric and influential time as a live performer. The young and hungry Elvis, the rising star, burst onto stages large and small--sexy, controversial, brimming with talent and ambition. One lightning-hot year in Florida fueled his rise from novelty act to headlining megastar.

Elvis Ignited follows the immensely talented performer through his four tumultuous Florida tours in fifteen months spanning 1955-1956. In 1956, his most crucial and transformative year, Presley played more live shows in Florida than in any other state in the country becoming the object of worship, scorn, and controversy. Kealing spotlights intriguing back stories of Floridians like Presley's controversial manager Tom Parker and Mae Axton, who penned The King's first national breakout hit. Kealing follows the back roads travelled by Presley, Scotty Moore and Bill Black, interviews people who saw them up close recalling the time-stands-still memories of hearing Presley's hit songs for the first time and the shrieks of young fans at the sight of the young rockabilly god. Kealing reveals little-known historic sites in Florida tied to Presley's rise. Struck by a new kind of music and performances so different from anything they had known before, Floridians saw how special Elvis was before the rest of the world caught on. Kealing continues the story through Elvis's years in the army and the filming of Follow that Dream in Florida in 1961. Elvis's rise to fame in the Sunshine State was a turning point in

American music history. It was the arrival of rock and roll.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Kealing's 'Elvis Ignited' captures a legend's beginnings in Florida. This is the Elvis that created the legend: young, beautiful, raw and revolutionary, a shot of pure energy into mid-century America."-Colette Bancroft, *Tampa Bay Times*"Contains fascinating stories about the singer's early career in the Sunshine State."-Ben Brotemarkle, *Florida Today*"Elvis Ignited" offers the first comprehensive record of a real turning point in American musical history, in Florida-a setting often overlooked by chroniclers focused on New York, California or Nashville.

Kealing's portrait of young musicians driving through the night, fueled by Coca-Cola and the sounds of all-night radio stations, reminds us of how much has changed in American culture and celebrity since the 1950s. It's a great ride."-Joy Wallace Dickinson, *Orlando Sentinel*"This book has the energy of Elvis's hip-shaking and leg-shaking performances. At once mythic and incredible, it's a kind of creation story. It's a time and place not to be forgotten and Bob Kealing makes it exquisitely memorable."-Phil Jason, *Naples Florida Weekly*"Kealing makes a persuasive argument that Presley's "moonshot" to fame could not have happened without Florida. Kealing's book celebrates unsung female journalists...who were able to see Presley with more clarity and insight."-Larry Aydlette, *Palm Beach Post*"Reveal[s] Florida's crucial role in the life and musical careers of the king of rock 'n' roll. . . . The first comprehensive record of a real turning point in American musical history."-Orlando Sentinel"\"Fascinating stories about the singer's early career in the Sunshine

State.Ã¢â€”â€¢Florida TodayÃ¢â€”â€œ[Presley] comes back to life in the pages of Bob KealingÃ¢â€”â€œs Elvis Ignited. . . . This is the Elvis that created the legend: young, beautiful, raw and revolutionary, a shot of pure energy into mid-century America.Ã¢â€”â€¢Tampa Bay Times

This book recognizes one-time Floridians like Mae Axton and Tom Parker for the crucial role they played in the rise of young Elvis. And while their male counterparts were dismissive and derisive of young Elvis, for the first time you'll read about how trailblazing female journalists across the peninsula painted a far clearer and balanced view of who Presley really was.

Very good overview of an often overlooked part of Elvis' early career!!

bought this for my son and he said it is REALLY good

Great book! Interesting book! Any fan would love!

Interesting, well written tale of Elvis' journey in his younger years in Florida. I have many Elvis books and this one was very objective and quite a bit of information that I didn't know.

great book!

Bought this for my mom and she loved it

Elvis Presley's story has more moving parts than a Saturn V. How did a poor kid raised in one of the poorest neighborhoods in the poorest states grow up to become the most recognized person on earth? Presley's life has been analyzed and his story told and re-told, but until Bob Kealing dug in, there was hardly a word about the time and place where he served his musical apprenticeship: Florida. As a native Floridian and Elvis fan, this book is indispensable. Kealing's passion for celebrating Florida's history and its people, whether it's Tupperware's Brownie Wise or local legends like Jim Morrison and Gram Parsons, led him to unlock old memories and take readers step by step through Elvis's slow, steady, and then meteoric rise -- much of which was honed in the Sunshine State. What tickles me is hearing from people who grew up in a world known

as Old Florida dialing back to 1955 to share vivid memories about the time the Hillbilly Cat came to town. They fall back in time and to describe their teenage enthusiasm, their accessibility to the rising star, and you clearly recognize they knew they were tuning into something very, very different. These fortunate Floridians were present at the creation. And Kealing graciously gives credit where credit is due, namely to the female reporters from several Florida newspapers who, unlike their male counterparts, treated Presley with respect as a singer, performer and, to be sure, a Southern gentleman. It was their collective and shared perspective of the young singer that helped tell the story of the regional act that became a global phenomenon. Their stories enhance *Elvis Ignited* and make this an essential book that helps complete the Presley timeline. PS: Extra credit for referring to Dutch conman Andreas Cornelis van Kuijk as 'Tom Parker'. He was no friend of Elvis's, and certainly no colonel.

I first saw Elvis in Ft. Myers, in 1955 and 4 times in Jacksonville. Bob has captured so much of the truth of the Elvis history so many of us loved. I am so privileged to be just a small part of this wonderful book, and to have a picture of Elvis and me in the Florida Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

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