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—Harold J. Laski

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ELVIS PRESLEY is pictured through the years of his career which began in 1953 when he made his first record. From left, in 1957

as his popularity began to boom; in the mid-1960s when he was a movie star; in 1971 when he blossomed as an entertainer in Las

Vegas; and this year, performing at one of his last concerts. Presley died Tuesday of an apparent heart attack in Memphis, Tenn.

## Elvis wiggled into stardom

**Knights News Service**  
The king is dead. His crown had, of course, been asked for some time. His hips, whose gyrations scandalized a nation 20 years ago and gave him the nickname "Elvis the Pelvis," were no longer so trim. The chin under the lips whose "sexy" sneer had launched a million squeals had begun to double. But to many, Elvis Aron Presley remained "the king of rock and roll." In latter years his concerts had begun to border on self-parody, and compared to many of today's rock stars, Elvis Presley, even at his most torrid, was tame. But his impact on popular music was like a kick in the head from a blue suede shoe, and he remains one of the seminal figures in the sound called rock and roll. Rock and roll, of course, did not spring forth full-blown. Its roots are in black music, rhythm, and blues — "Race music," as it was still called in the 1950s, when musical styles, like the social structure of the country, remained largely segregated. White singers sang "white," big-band stuff

Controlled, rhythm and blues was something else — funky, more emotional. Suggestive. Elvis Presley was white but he sang black, just like he'd always like country and rockabilly music, and the two styles melded in his delivery. But in 1953, when he parked his Ford pickup outside the Memphis Recording studios, a subsidiary of Sam Phillips' Sun Records, Elvis Presley was merely a 19-year-old Tennessee truck driver with two goals: The first, and immediate one, was to cut an acetate record of "My Happiness" and "That's When Your Heartaches Begin" (total cost, \$4) to give his mom for her birthday. His second, longer-range ambition was to own the coolest car in town, preferably a pink and black Cadillac. Phillips eventually heard the tape Presley made and was mildly impressed, but felt the boy would take a heap of grooming if he were ever to become a singer. But a year later, (See ELVIS, Page A4)

## Fans mourn as 'king of rock and roll' dies at 42

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Fans of yesterday and today, old and young, teenyboppers and their middle-aged mothers, gathered today on Elvis Presley's doorstep, not to scream and cheer but to mourn. Their king is dead.

Elvis Aron Presley, the sexy Mississippi truck driver who launched his own record career and became America's greatest king of rock 'n' roll, died Tuesday afternoon of a heart ailment. He was 42.

About 75 people spent the night outside the gates of Graceland mansion, some lying on pillows and blankets, most just standing around.

At one point the gates opened, several cars came out, and the crowd swarmed around taking pictures and trying to get autographs. One of the cars carried Vester Presley, an uncle who was chief of security, and his wife.

Vester Presley said Elvis' former wife, Priscilla, whom he divorced in 1973, arrived at the mansion at about 3 a.m.

"She is taking it hard. She is in a total state of shock," he said. Another group of about 30 people

spent the night outside the Memphis Funeral Home where Presley's body was taken, said night supervisor Jim Stewart.

He said the switchboard received calls from all 50 states and from as far away as Guam and Johannesburg, South Africa.

"Everybody wanted to know where to send flowers," Stewart said.

Vester Presley said the singer's father, Vernon Presley, decided to

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open the casket for public viewing at Graceland from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Dr. George Nichopoulos, longtime physician to the swivel-hipped, throaty baritone who was known as the "King of Rock 'n' Roll," said an autopsy revealed a constriction in one of the main arteries to the heart, which restricted blood flow and brought on a heart attack.

"What caused it? Any one of a number of things," he said.

Nichopoulos said his patient, who carried about 175 pounds on a six-foot frame as a young man but recently had been reported grossly



Performing in 1971

overweight, had been taking a number of appetite depressants, but did not have a drug problem.

Dr. Jerry Francisco, the Shelby County medical examiner, discounted rumors that Presley, who had been a virtual recluse at his white-columned Graceland mansion for 20 years, had suffered from a drug problem.

"There was no indication of drug abuse at all," Francisco said. "I was aware of the rumors and that is why I mention it."

He said the only evidence he found of drugs in the autopsy involved those Presley was taking for mild hypertension and a colon problem.

Francisco said there would have been visible needle tracks if illegal drugs were involved.

Debert Donn West, who was a Presley bodyguard for 16 years, said in Chicago just hours before Presley died that the singer was heavily addicted to drugs and haunted by fears that drove him into seclusion.

West was interviewed by Chicago Sun-Times columnist Bob Greene about the recently released book, "Elvis What Happened?" that West and two other former bodyguards have written about Presley.

"He was on pills all day long, and he would give himself shots in the arm or

the leg with those little plastic syringes," West said in the interview. "He would have us give him shots in the rear end. We prayed for this man many times. His drug habit is so severe that I'm convinced he is in danger of losing his life."

Presley, whose recording of "Heartbreak Hotel" helped to put him on top of the entertainment world 21 years ago, was discovered unconscious at Graceland in suburban Memphis on Tuesday afternoon.

Presley was found dressed in pajamas and lying face-up in the red-carpeted bathroom next to his second-floor bedroom.

He was taken to Baptist Hospital in a Fire Department ambulance while Nichopoulos and emergency medical technicians worked to revive him.

"Come on Presley, breathe. Breathe for me," Nichopoulos implored repeatedly as the ambulance sped to the hospital.

But he added, "We knew he was probably dead when he left the house."

The doctor said attempts to revive Presley, who appeared in 31 films — including "Love Me Tender," "GI

Boys," and "Jailhouse Rock," continued because of a slight chance life still existed in his body.

"The reason we continued to resuscitate him was his pupils were constricted," the doctor said at a hospital news conference after an autopsy. "Usually in death, there's not enough oxygen and the pupils dilate."

"Heartbreak Hotel," the first hit for Presley, was released in January 1956. It was one of 45 records that sold more than one million copies, including "Hound Dog," "All Shook Up" and "It's Now or Never." Booming record sales and overflowing audiences at personal appearances made the entertainer who combined country-western, gospel and rhythm and blues one of the world's wealthiest entertainers.

When TV brought "Elvis The Pelvis" into millions of homes, church and parents' groups denounced the raw sexuality of his performance as a bad influence on children. His gyrating hips were only mildly suggestive compared to many of today's rock performers, but on the Ed Sullivan Show, he was shown only from the waist up.

Bitsy Mott, who worked as a bodyguard for Presley for 15 years, said the last time he saw the aging star was during a 1975 Presley concert in Tampa, Fla., Mott's home. "I went backstage, and when I walked out, I said to my wife, 'Elvis is dying.' He looked so much like his mother did just before she died."

Presley's mother, Grace, died of heart trouble at age 42 on Aug. 14, 1958. Vernon Presley, the star's father, was taking his son's death "very badly," said family friend Dr. Elias Ganem in Las Vegas.

Presley, whose new single, "Way Down," was at the top of Billboard's latest list of Hot Country Singles, was to have flown to Portland, Maine, Tuesday night to begin an 11-day tour of the Northeast and South. Presley had played racquetball at his private court until almost 6 a.m. Tuesday.

Ward of Presley's death swept across this city where he had lived since leaving his birthplace, Tupelo, Miss., at the age of 13.

Mayor Wyeth Chandler ordered flags in the city lowered to half-staff in memory of Presley.

Elvis was working as a truck driver after graduating from Memphis' Humes High School when he walked into Sam Phillips' office at Sun Records in 1955 to record "Blue Moon of Kentucky." The recording became a hit.

His career was largely the creation of a promotional genius, Col. Tom Parker. Presley made his appearances on the Ed Sullivan show after Parker became his manager.

A television rating service gave Presley 82.6 per cent of the nation's TV audience for his first Sullivan appearance in 1956 to 78.6 per cent for President Eisenhower's acceptance speech on three networks.

"When I found Elvis, the boy had nothing but a million dollars worth of talent," Parker said once. "Now he has a million dollars."

When Presley was drafted in the (See MOURN, Page A4)

## Deep South judge choice for FBI post

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Carter plans to nominate Frank Johnson, a deep South judge with a strong civil rights record, as the next director of the FBI, knowledgeable administration sources say.

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The White House was expected to announce today that Carter will send Johnson's name to the Senate, which must confirm his selection. The choice ends a seven-month search for a director to take charge of the bureau and its 8,000 agents.

Carter and Atty. Gen. Griffin Bell chose the 58-year-old federal district

judge to succeed Clarence M. Kelley after rejecting four candidates recommended by a presidentially-appointed search committee, the sources said.

By choosing Johnson, a Republican, Carter and Bell may have a candidate who can sail through the Senate hearings with little, if any opposition.

But Sen. James O. Eastland, D-Miss., chairman of the Judiciary Committee that will first consider Johnson's nomination, would not comment Tuesday night.

Johnson's nomination is certain to please civil rights groups who assailed the bureau in the 1960s for

allegedly ignoring beatings of black activists in the South.

That charge came while J. Edgar Hoover, the director, was carrying out a secret campaign to discredit the movement's chief leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Since then, civil rights groups have continued to criticize the FBI for failing to add blacks and other minorities to the ranks of agents in any great numbers.

Johnson's record seems to show a quality Bell particularly sought in an FBI director. The attorney general had said he wanted someone strong enough to control "the dominant personalities" in the bureau's hierarchy.

While Kelley was respected for his sincerity and good intentions, he was often criticized by congressmen and others who deal with the bureau for being too weak to control the old Hoover hands still holding powerful FBI jobs.

Kelley is retiring Jan. 1. His announcement last winter that he would step down followed criticism by Carter during his campaign for the presidency.

Morale is low in the agency. One former FBI man faces a criminal trial while other officials — both present and former — remain under investigation for allegedly illegal intelligence gathering activities in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

## VW gives up on bug sales in America

**Knights News Service**  
It's the last hurra for the Volkswagen Beetle sedan, the little car that started the post-World War II invasion of the American market by foreign cars.

VW of America officials at Englewood Cliffs, N.J., confirmed Monday that when present dealer inventories of the sedan are exhausted, there will be no more to be had.

Approximately five million Beetles have been sold in this country since the first two were imported in 1949, but in recent years sales have dropped off sharply as VW buyers' interest shifted to the Rabbit lineup.

Sales were hard hit by the revaluation of the German mark. In the last 10 years, the base price of the little car soared from 1,780 to 3,699.

A VW spokesman said the cost of bringing the car into line with U.S. emissions and safety standards "makes it uneconomical" in view of limited sales, to continue to import it into the United States.

Sales of Beetle models in this country last year were a mere 27,000 units, less than 15 per cent, and the present outlook for 1977 is no better. The Beetle sedan, however, will be survived by its convertible version — at least through 1978 — despite the fact it is a limited volume model.

"We are continuing the convertible in the United States because there is a special market there," the spokesman said.

The end was hastened for the rear-engine, air-cooled Beetle sedan in late 1974 when VW began importing new Rabbit models with their front-mounted, water-cooled engines, which are now pacing a U.S. comeback for VW.

Rabbits are scheduled to go into U.S. production next April at a plant nearing completion in Westmoreland County, Pa.

## Sewer explosions unnerve residents

By JACK MASTERSON and BOB PROSKE  
News Staff Writers

Yellow lights flickered at night at numerous barricades around open, blasted out manholes along Jefferson Street Tuesday night with the frightening memory of that afternoon still in the minds of many of the street's residents.

Related photo, news on page B1

Some residents still were sitting on their front porches wary of the possibility of being met with gas fumes when they ventured into their homes.

Across Schoonover Park, near the city swimming pool, workers from O.H. Materials Inc., of Findlay about 8 p.m. began "skimming" gasoline off the top of water in a sewer line that ran close to the Ottawa River bank.

One of the workers said the park area was only their first stop in what would be a long night. The group brought along two carts of huge flood lights with separate generators to be used.

The worker added his firm was hired by the Ford Motor Co. to do the skimming of the city's sewage. The skimming process barely made any

noise, unlike the explosions that had frightened many residents only six hours before.

A break in a large gasoline pipe at the Ford Motor Co.'s engine plant at Bible Road and Sugar Street in Bath Township apparently was the cause of the explosions that rocked the northeast section of Lima.

Fumes from at least 5,000 gallons of gasoline that leaked from Ford into the sewer system resulted in two major explosions Tuesday, according to Lima Sanitary Engineer James Schmenk.

No serious injuries were reported as a result of the blasts, but Orville H. Parr, 67, of 630 N. Jefferson suffered an apparent heart attack and died Tuesday night after checking his basement for gas fumes, according to assistant fire chief Rollin Kerzee.

The gasoline pipe at the engine plant ran from an underground storage tank to a building where new automobile engines are tested, Schmenk said.

He and Mayor Harry Moyer said the break went apparently unnoticed until the first explosion occurred at a sewage lift station next to the Schoonover Park pool about 10:30 a.m.

The strong odor of gasoline mixed with sewage permeated the air. Moyer said Ford plant workers had just returned from a two-week vacation layoff and re-starting machinery at the factory could have caused the break.

The break occurred underground, (See EXPLOSIONS, Page A3)



LIMA SEWER Division workers stand by a blasted out manhole on Jefferson Street Tuesday afternoon following a series of explosions caused by fumes from about 5,000 gallons of gasoline that leaked into the city sewer system. The source of the gas spill was traced to the Ford Motor Co. engine plant at Bible Road and Sugar Street in Bath Township. No serious injuries were reported. (News photo by Dennis Laman)

**Sunny and cool**  
Clear and cool tonight. Low in mid 40s to low 50s. Sunny and cool Thursday. High in low to mid 70s. Tuesday's high was 83 and today's low was 63 degrees. Precipitation was .09 of an inch at 7 a.m. today. Weather map on page A4.

### Inside today's News

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Perry School board approves third levy attempt in a year, page B1.

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