

while many people suggest long-term incarceration or segregating sex offenders forever as solutions, Williams argues that is not feasible or helpful. The incarceration system is overcrowded and overrepresents people of color, so long-term incarceration of sex offenders would only stress an already broken system. Segregating sex offenders will also not prevent new sex crimes from occurring (205). The majority of perpetrators know their victims, so the assailants are “already in our backyard”. After refuting the suggestions most lay people would give, Williams fails to suggest how to house SVPs.

Her major appeal for change is local governments inviting community participation in local decisions. I appreciate her advocacy that local communities should have a voice in institutional decisions related to their community, especially placement of SVPs. However, I wanted tangible ideas for sex offender housing. Williams quickly mentions Circles of Support and Accountability (COSAs), in which volunteers create a network to hold sex reoffenders accountable after release. COSAs have been implemented for high-risk offenders in a number of countries, including the United States, and they have contributed to successful reintegration efforts (207). I wish Williams’s book included an exploration of programs that have had successful outcomes.

Overall, the book complicates and subverts typical public knowledge about housing sex offenders. Williams writes, “While communities do react to sex offenders out of fear, their opposition also involves deep-seated, ongoing concerns about how political and legal institutions have differentially empowered some communities to maintain local control over local issues” (203). I imagine readers will begin to assess sexual offender housing regulations in their own community, likely finding no easy answers.

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Zoglin, Richard. *Elvis in Vegas: How the King Reinvented the Las Vegas Show*. Simon & Schuster, 2019.

In 1992, the United States Post Office offered Americans a chance to vote on two possible images of Elvis Presley for a stamp commemorating the singer. The first,

depicting the 1950s Elvis, triumphed over the second which depicted the Elvis of the early 1970s, by a factor of three to one. Synonymous with Las Vegas, the white-jumpsuited figure of the second image has become a cultural signifier of kitsch, embodied by a multitude of Elvis impersonators and film, television, and musical parodies. The Vegas-era Elvis has also come to embody something of an American understanding of tragedy, with the all-conquering hero reduced to an overweight, drug-impaired joke barely capable of performing even as his lavish lifestyle made it necessary to do so. One of the great strengths of Richard Zoglin's new book, *Elvis in Vegas: How the King Reinvented the Las Vegas Show*, is that it reminds its readers of why the stamp vote was mistaken. The Elvis who returned to live shows in 1969 after a nine-year hiatus spent making increasingly atrocious movies was, if not the most revolutionary Elvis, then certainly the greatest performer. The brilliance of the 1969-1970 shows, as Zoglin makes clear, were unmatched by any of his performances before or after, not even the jaw-dropping 1968 comeback special on ABC.

Las Vegas was, Zoglin argues, a big part of Elvis's identity, even before he became the first major star to establish a regular residency in the city, paving the way for later big names such as Celine Dion, Elton John, and Britney Spears. The book opens with an account of Elvis's disastrous first appearance in the city in 1956 when a brash young upstart with greasy hair and cringeworthy stage patter bombed with an older alternately appalled and disinterested audience. Despite this rare early career failure Elvis made Vegas a regular recreational stopover, especially during his Hollywood years. As he rarely gambled, Elvis preferred taking in the Vegas shows and the showgirls, and Zoglin suggests Liberace was a significant influence. Although Zoglin dismisses Elvis's 1964 movie *Viva Las Vegas* as "a pretty bad film" (105), perhaps unfairly so, his account of Elvis's affair with his co-star Ann-Margret captures her importance to him in a way that underlines the unsuitability of his 1967 marriage to the far-less worldly Priscilla Ann Wagner. (Zoglin fails to note that the singer had been involved with the woman who became his wife since she was fourteen years-old, behavior that might now demand a reconsideration of his legacy).

Zoglin's dismissal of *Viva Las Vegas* also extends to the lyrics of its title song which he criticizes as "some of the clunkiest in the Elvis canon" by having "three *theres* in two lines!" (106, italics in original). This strange criticism reflects some of the book's weaknesses. In the first instance, by focusing on the words over the feel of the song Zoglin seems to miss why it is significant (and thus, why it has

been covered by everybody from the Dead Kennedys to Shawn Colvin to Bruce Springsteen). In the second, Zoglin occasionally gets lost in the details and also frequently gets those details wrong. There are not, for example, three “theres” in the opening two lines of *Viva Las Vegas*, there are two and one “they’re,” an error made all the more egregious by Zoglin quoting the relevant lyrics immediately before making his erroneous assertion. It is not his only mistake. Early on in the book he asserts that Elvis died from “a drug overdose” (18), a claim that remains unsubstantiated (not least because the autopsy report was sealed). It is telling that having made this bold assertion, Zoglin walks it back towards the end of the book, asserting that of the fourteen different drugs found in the singer’s system, “at least five” were “in potentially toxic doses” (236). This is quite a different claim and it is not clear why Zoglin did not seek to fix the contradiction. Similarly, Zoglin asserts that in his later shows, Elvis began “performing a medley of patriotic songs [...] that he dubbed ‘An American Trilogy’” (232), a medley that was put together and named by country music singer Mickey Newbury in 1971. Such criticism might seem unnecessarily picayunish, but there are many such errors and the reader might be forgiven for being concerned about the veracity of some of the other claims made by the author.

These concerns aside, there is much of value in the book. Almost half of it is given over to a history of the development of Las Vegas as desert resort. Many stories exist of acts large and small who made Vegas a major attraction. The book also contains a valuable account of the city’s racial politics: a remarkably long-lasting commitment to Jim Crow segregation aimed at appeasing white southerners who flocked to Vegas in large numbers. Above all, however, the book offers a compelling glimpse into a brief moment when Elvis Presley cared about, and felt challenged by, what he was doing and the incredible artistry that he produced in the then-unlikely environment of a Las Vegas showroom.

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