

Elvis Presley at INDOT? Yes, Thank You Very Much!

Elvis has left the building — at INDOT?

As this [INDOT-produced video](#) suggests, it is believed that the “King of Rock and Roll,” Elvis Presley, at least once roamed what is now the site of INDOT’s Logistical Support Center (LSC) in Indianapolis.

“I am 100% sure that Elvis was here,” said Paul Dinkens, who has served for 22 years as the Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) director of maintenance and security for the entire 162,350-square-foot building at 6400 E. 30th St., which includes the LSC on the north end. Before his IDOA duties, Dinkens worked for 13 years as an INDOT employee in the building.

“Other musicians also came here,” said Dinkens, referring to Dolly Parton, Kenny Rogers, and others.

The state of Indiana purchased the building in 1987. Before that, the 1967-built structure served as home to RCA Corp., which owned three adjacent buildings on the street. The current LSC building was where RCA manufactured and packed music cassette tapes and eight-track tapes.



Paul Dinkens opens a solid-oak, 3-inch door to enter the Elvis Room, where he poses with a guitar.



Three soundproof 12-by-14-foot booths, used for quality control, were — and still are — in the building. RCA inspectors played back the tapes in the rooms to ensure they were of the highest quality. Of the rooms, Dinkens said: “They had two solid-oak, 3-inch doors; I took the inside doors out several years ago. The walls are 12 inches of concrete from ceiling to floor and all the way around. Tacked onto them are insulated ceiling tiles and acoustic foamboard.”

It is believed that Presley listened to his music in one of those booths. Through the years, LSC employees — including Dinkens — have called that booth the “Elvis Room.”

The entire building was INDOT’s from 1987 to 2000, and Dinkens was there from the beginning, starting as a janitor.

“The utilities of all three buildings were hooked together,” said Dinkens, referring to a small RCA engineering building in the middle as well as the eastern-most RCA building, the largest of the three that was used for manufacturing vinyl records and as a warehouse and distribution center. “When I started employment here as a janitor, maintenance staff from the other RCA buildings were still helping service our building. The RCA maintenance staff told me that music artists signed to the RCA label came here, including to listen to the recordings.”

Dinkens continued: “They told me that Elvis was here, in this soundproof booth, before his final

concert (Presley's final show was at Indianapolis' Market Square Arena on June 26, 1977. He died 51 days later). The maintenance staff couldn't get close to him. They saw him in his white costume with bodyguards everywhere. I don't really know if it was the day of the final concert."

That day, as this [video](#) shows, Presley's plane landed at Indianapolis International Airport. RCA executives met him there (*photo, right*), giving him a plaque to commemorate the pressing of the company's 2 billionth record, Presley's "Moody Blue" album, which would be officially released three weeks later. Presley traveled from the airport to Stouffer's Restaurant and Inn, at 2820 N. Meridian St., to rest before taking the Market Square Arena stage that night. His other whereabouts that day have not been chronicled.



Besides the maintenance workers who told Dinkens that Presley went into one of the soundproof rooms, retired RCA employee Deb Burkett, who packed tapes at the facility, said she heard that Presley had been in the building in the 1970s, but she can't verify the date.

Retired RCA employee Joyce Oakes started working in the RCA tape facility in 1969, packing tapes for two years before spending the next 13 years in the tape building as a housekeeper. From 1985 to 2000, she transferred to the far-east RCA building as a housekeeper. Oakes doesn't remember Presley being in the RCA tape building. However, she corroborated much of what Dinkens said.

"The soundproof rooms had two thick wooden doors," said Oakes, adding that RCA quality-control testers listened to tapes in there to make sure there was no hissing or other abnormal sounds. "I went into the soundproof rooms to empty wastebaskets as part of my housekeeping duties. I believe that when musicians came to town for concerts and visited the facility, they went into the rooms to hear the tape quality."

Oakes said Alabama, Chet Atkins, Parton, and Rogers came through the building in the 1970s, and Martina McBride in the early '80s. Employees, including Oakes, lined up to shake their hand.



RCA retirees Rick Taylor and Frank Clifford also worked in the building. Taylor remembers seeing Waylon Jennings there. Clifford saw Ronnie Milsap inside and outside the facility (*left in far-left photo taken by Clifford*), but he noted that celebrity softball games on the RCA grounds were just as memorable. Players included John Denver and members of Alabama. Game pranks included a feather-filled fake softball (that joke was on Randy Owens of Alabama, *left photo taken by Clifford*) and a grapefruit painted

to look like a softball (Denver fell victim to that prank).

The celebrity visits inside the building and games outside the facility have nearly faded from memory, as RCA has not been affiliated with the building or grounds for more than 35 years.

The facility was occupied solely by INDOT from 1987 to 2000. In addition to housing the LSC during those years, INDOT used the building for roadway management personnel and signal technicians; the latter moved there from a Kitley Avenue location. Also, the purchasing department operated out of the facility, managing the procurement of shovels, hydraulic cylinders, salt spreaders, and other equipment.

Since 2001, the LSC — also known as the INDOT sign shop — has shared the building with these state agencies: Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Department of Correction Parole District 3, and Indiana Archives and Records Administration (IARA). The soundproof rooms are located in the latter; the IARA has used them for microfilming.

Even today, the Elvis Room and two other soundproof booths remarkably deaden all sound.

“You can hear yourself breath; you can’t hear anything (else) from inside these rooms,” said Dinkens. “You don’t know if it’s daylight or dark.”

On this 45th anniversary of Presley’s death, the film “Elvis” by director Baz Luhrmann will be released in the U.S. on June 24 after making its world debut in late May at the Cannes Film Festival.

The film doesn’t include mention of the Elvis Room, but maybe it should.

(For more photos, click [here](#).)