

LLL Premier Lecture

Friday, February 17, 2012, Tuscany Falls Renaissance Theater at 7pm, \$10pp

John Wilkinson I Told Elvis He “Couldn’t Play Guitar Worth a Damn!”



John Wilkinson first saw Elvis on TV and did not like the way he played or how he treated his Martin D18 guitar. He swore that one day he would tell him. John had started playing the guitar himself at the age of five and by the age of six, he was also playing the banjo.

When Elvis came to John's hometown, he decided to make his way there to try and get to see and to speak to him. He extended his hand to Elvis, introduced himself and said, “Elvis, you can't play guitar worth a damn.” Elvis laughed, challenged John to play for him and was impressed with this nine year old kid.

John received a phone call in 1964 asking him if he and his band would stand in as the opening act for 'Jefferson Airplane'. One of Elvis' body guards, a Native American known as 'Chief,' informed John that someone wanted to see him after the show. Elvis remembered John from their original meeting and he was invited back to the house to sing country and gospel songs and to just hang out. Elvis said that one day he was going to quit movies and return to performing.

Mid 1968, John received another phone call from Elvis himself. He became Elvis Presley's rhythm guitarist and from July 1969 until June 26th 1977, he played in over 1,100 shows including Elvis's famous *Aloha from Hawaii* special.

He has great stories to tell.