

## Pat and "The Hillbilly Cat" - the summer of Elvis

When Elvis first broke out onto the scene, he was affectionately known as "**The Hillbilly Cat.**" For me, this has been the *summer of Elvis*; first, it was the ELVIS movie which I saw twice and raved over in the July issue. That followed by me going to see "**Elvis Experience**" at Theatre St-Denis with my cousin. The show is a song-by-song, word-by-word reproduction of concerts from 1972 in Las Vegas - absolutely fabulous. It stars Martin Fontaine, who had headlined "**Elvis Story**", which played for 10 years in Québec city. Unbeknownst to us, it was his very last show, and it has since been retired! Now, more recently, I decided, after months of contemplation, to adopt a cat. **What does a cat have to do with Elvis, you may be asking?** Let me explain.

As a child, despite my obvious affection for animals and cats (*see photo right*), I was raised in a hillbilly mentality, where, under my father's misguided influence, I was taught to dislike cats - they were the enemy and were to be chased away immediately by any means necessary. Our neighbours had many cats, some ferel, some not. It was a bit of a problem, but nothing serious, although my dad didn't think so. For years, I was influenced by this backward mentality and had learned to hate cats until 2007, when my wife convinced me to get a cat, and it changed my life.



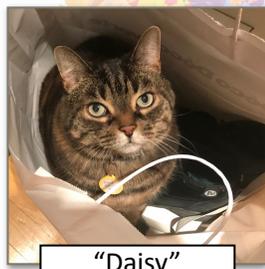
When I went to choose a cat at the SPCA, I remembered this photo of me holding a black cat and seeing this innocent boy who just wanted to show affection. I felt sorry for the boy that had been derailed by bad influence. So I chose a cat that obviously had been traumatized and needed extra special care. I needed to give back to this animal in a way that would **repay any bad karma** I may have accumulated in the past concerning cats. So I came home with this magnificent creature that looked and acted like a wild cat - like a puma, really. We named him "**Kumba**" (pronounced Koomba). That's me sporting a black tuque and holding him in my arms. He was my therapy cat. Later on, we adopted a 2nd cat named "**Gromit.**" You can see an illustration I drew of him and gave to my wife on the day he was put down due to illness.



"Kumba"



"Gromit"

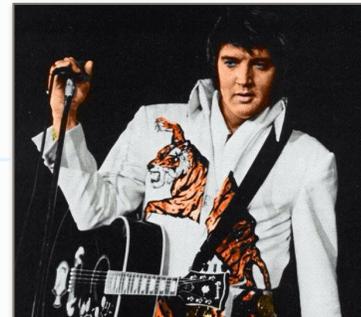


"Daisy"

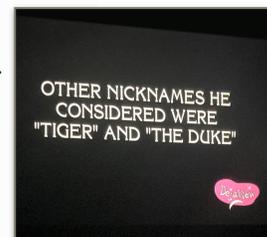
And then, my wife found a cat in a snowstorm, and we kept her and named her **Daisy** - the tortoiseshell one in the bag!

So, for anyone wondering, my wife and I broke up last year, which is why I live here now. Kumba and Gromit passed on, and Daisy stayed with my ex-wife. This brings me to "**Tiger,**" my newly adopted cat, and the tie-in with Elvis.

After choosing him at the SPCA last week, I started running through possible names for him. They had named him "**RIMBO**" which I did not care for! The names that came to mind were "**Elvis and Bono** (my two favorite artists), **Tiger** (my nickname as a boy), and **Duke.**" Although he does not look anything like a tiger - more like a skunk - **I went with Tiger because that was my childhood nickname.** I was given two signs from the Universe that told me this should be his name; 1) while watching an episode of **Frasier** I saw this message (*see screenshot, you won't believe your eyes*), and 2) seeing a coupon, the SPCA gave me to **save \$1.00 on Royale "Tiger" paper towels!** I got him a tiger striped collar to make it official - lol! And what brings it all together is that Elvis went by the karate name Tiger, performed a song called "Tiger Man," and even had a famous jumpsuit called the "Mad Tiger!"



Meet "Tiger"!



And, as with the first cat I adopted, Kumba, the idea was always to nurture my soul via the cat by caring for it. So, naming him Tiger makes it feel like I am caring for the little boy inside of me who still needs healing.



**Written by Patrick Franc**

**SONG OF THE MONTH** "Tiger Man" by Elvis  
[https://bit.ly/tiger\\_man](https://bit.ly/tiger_man)

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