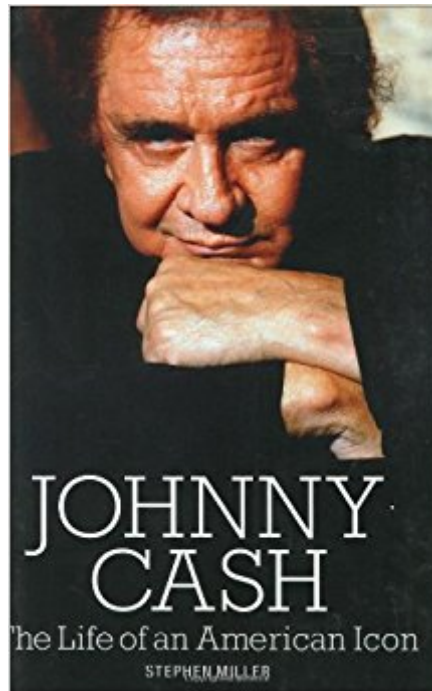




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# **Johnny Cash: The Life Of An American Icon**



## Synopsis

Johnny Cash is the only artist to have been elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Rock and Roll Songwriters Hall of Fame. His hits include "I Walk the Line", "Ring of Fire", and "A Boy Named Sue". By 1969, he had sold more records than The Beatles. The author interviews Johnny's brother Tommy, who provides insights into their childhood as well as a look at life on the road with The Johnny Cash Show. The book also includes interviews with Johnny's long-time manager Lou Robin, his producer since the early days Jack Clement, and artists Sandy Kelly, Narvel Felts, George Hamilton IV and V. Miller also carried out research at the Country Music Foundation in Nashville and talked to DJs Bill Black and Dick Barrie.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

'Miller tells his tale rather well with an eager unjaundiced eye.' Q --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Stephen Miller reviews albums and conducts interviews on a country music radio show based in Edinburgh.

It is worth to read this book about "Johnny Cash".Very detailed and well known described.I love it!

Very, very detailed.Also very boring and hard to read.Full of names most people have never heard

of and lots of dates. Not as entertaining as the biographies and autobiographies I have read about Cash. No real insight into the kind of person he was or what made him tick.

With an intention to skim, I became wrapped up in the life of Johnny Cash. This was a complete chronicle that focuses more on the entertainment side of Cash's life. Cash endured lots of pain that starts with losing his brother in a freak accident, the self destruction of a druggie lifestyle, trials & tribulations of trying to stay musically on top, exhaustive touring, pain of aging, and most of all, the anguish of poor health with debilitating disease. You won't get too much out of the very personal deeper relationship with June, only what we already knew, how she struggled to save him from himself. There is very little about his daughters, in fact, there are no pictures of the daughters except Roseanne. We only learn how absent he was in their lives, and while he was home, he was still absent! It was rumored that June was not the best singer and their son John Carter Cash lacked talent too. As a singer, Carter Cash's voice was weak compared to his father's. In the book, the author provides some quotes of sharp criticism toward young Carter Cash. Johnny Cash kept family close and they always performed with him. Many aspects of Cash's life were covered chronologically. Knowing how celebrity stories change through the years, the author provided more than one interpretation of an incident. What I appreciated is that the author gave several versions, interpretations, or stories about the man and incidences, because with celebrities, several versions exist. This book reveals so much about the album hits & misses. It is surprising how many albums he made, and how many didn't make it to the top. You get a full sense of his druggie lifestyle, and the damage that goes with that. Much is written about Cash's religious influences and how he incorporated it to his musical career. And then, of course, the health problems, you just can't help but feel his pain. Although Johnny wanted to perform til his was dead, he pretty much did that... and maybe he should not have. It's difficult for us to see our idols age!! An epilogue was inserted to reflect the death of June and mention of Johnny's death on Sept. 12, but there isn't much on the deaths. What is included is a huge selective discography and a lengthy index. The author mainly received his info from sources that included articles, books, etc. It's clear that he didn't get much from the Cash family but did speak with brother Tommy Cash and close friends. Note: Don't get distracted by the use of English spelling, such as recognise, harmonise, programme, etc. If you are into a blow by blow account of his professional and religious life, read this one!.....Rizzo

This is a rather different approach to a biography. The author admits that he never actually met Cash, but researched a lot of what has been written by and about him over the years. It is a good

place for someone who doesn't know much about Cash to start and there are numerous references and leads to follow up on. The tone of the book is very much like a textbook and has very little in the way of passion either about Cash or his music. There are a lot of references to liner notes and other written material; but little if anything that is new or original. There is also no indication that the author had any love or admiration for Cash the person or his music; but just decided to review what was available (of which there is an awful lot) and produce a book. It is a good book to add to others about Cash; but is completely overshadowed by "Johnny Cash" the Autobiography with Patrick Carr. (see my review on it). I thought it might have been titled "An Encyclopedia of Cash

As a lifelong Cash fan, a book like this was a long time coming during Cash's own lifetime. Overall, while adding some interesting insight into some aspects of Cash's life and career, it's a missed opportunity to clarify many misconceptions about the life and legacy of Johnny Cash and only supports and adds to the inaccurate misconceptions by obviously failing to correct them using more thorough research. Miller tends to rely way too much on previously published material by other writers that was just as inaccurate then as it is now - facts any serious Cash fan would easily be able to point out. How anyone can justify a 372 pg. biography without including even one sourced footnote - something a high school student is required to include in any term paper - is beyond comprehension. In comparison, Peter Guralnick's brilliant 1994 biography on Elvis, "LAST TRAIN TO MEMPHIS," included over 40 pages of notes and acknowledged a list of hundreds of people who contributed personal and professional input. Miller, however, relies way too much on the comments of only a very select few directly involved in Cash's life and career which comes across more as rumor or innuendo rather than fact. Hopefully, the next major Cash biography will be written by someone more able and interested in using accurate facts. If you're looking to read a definitive Johnny Cash biography, you'll have to wait because this isn't it.

I regret that I wasn't more of a Johnny Cash fan when he was alive. While I owned several of his records, I only had a cursory understanding of his life and the way he wrote songs and made music. After his death, I picked up Stephen Miller's book - the only book currently available that discusses Johnny's passing - and delved into the career of the Man in Black. The author interviewed many of Johnny's friends, his manager Lou Robin, and his brother Tommy. The details seem very accurate, comparing them to Cash's autobiography that I read right after this book. The best parts of the book were discussions of Johnny's early work on Sun Records, his prison concerts (especially San Quentin and Folsom), and his more recent work with the brilliant producer, Rick Rubin. If you're a

fan, this book is definitely worth a read.

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