



Johnny Cash

Michael Streissguth

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To millions, Johnny Cash was the rebellious Man in Black, the unabashed patriot, the redeemed Christian—the king of country music. But Johnny Cash was also an uncertain country boy whose dreams were born in the cotton fields of Arkansas and who struggled his entire life with a guilt-ridden childhood, addictions, and self-doubt. A sensitive songwriter with profound powers of musical expression, Cash told America and the world the stories of a nation's heroes and outcasts. *Johnny Cash: The Biography* explores in depth many often-overlooked aspects of the legend's life and career. It examines the powerful artistic influence of his older brother, Roy, and chronicles Cash's air force career in the early 1950s, when his songwriting took form...and when he purchased his first guitar. It uncovers the origins of his trademark boom-chicka-boom rhythm and traces his courtship of Bob Dylan in the folk revival era of the 1960s. *Johnny Cash* also delves into the details of Cash's personal life, including his drug dependency, which dogged him long after many thought he had beaten it. It unflinchingly recounts his relationships with his first wife, Vivian Liberto, his second wife, June Carter Cash, and his children. And it follows Cash as man and musician from his early years of success through the commercially desolate years of the 1980s to his reemergence under the influence of producer Rick Rubin—and association that revitalized his career yet raised contradictions about Cash's values and craft. Scrupulously researched, passionately told, *Johnny Cash: The Biography* is the unforgettable portrait of an enduring American icon.

Johnny Cash Details

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From Reader Review Johnny Cash for online ebook

Melinda Elizabeth says

The biography gives valuable insight into the complex and private life of Johnny Cash. With interviews from his daughters, band mates, song writers and the like, the book allows a certain level of familiarity with the subject.

However there is still a large extent of the book that reads like a discography.

Perhaps a more balanced view of the persona of Cash, being somewhat removed from the usual line towed by the House of Cash, it still has a certain level of influence by those handed the task to keep the myth alive.

Brenda says

When I read it I felt like the author was just telling things that had already been written in other books and just put them in an order that he liked. Kind of disappointed in the book.

Adam Calhoon says

this book would be a great book for music lovers, or just the hardcore johnny cash fans, it dose give alot of detail and at sometimes is allite slow but will pick up. there is alot of detail but overall the auther did a good job on his bio. i liked the book at times but it gets boring towrds the end of the book.

Kole Sanders says

This is a good book to read if you like country and rock. Johnny Cash is a man amoung man and the last of his kind, and that is a frontter man. The auther who wrote this is Michael Streissguth and he want to tell us about Cash and how he grew up over the years. Like who his mom was and how she help him get in to music, and his dad and how he made Cash the man he was. The theme of the book is to tell people about Cash. Through out the book you get a good look at his life, who he met, and how he wrote some of his song. The book was a nonfriction and a description. I got this because the book tell you about Cash and give you a first hand look at him. I love this book because it told me about Cash and I love his music and I relly want to know more about him. Like i said before it a good book to read if you like Cash or country and rock. I think this because if you don't like those thing then this book will be very boring to you. I also thought that this book give you a very good look at Cash and tell you how his mom and dad might.

Nada D says

A great musician like Johnny Cash does not need a biography, his music itself speaks about him!

I knew him better by his songs rather than this book.

Brian Young says

Johnny Cash was/and forever will be the king of country. The Man in Black, however, was portrayed in this book as a TOTAL snooze fest. I LOVE his music, ive listened to almost every one of his albums, but this book does not do him justice. Reading is something I enjoy, but I could not pick up this book without just wanting to pass out. Not Johnnys fault at all, as he lived his life like a party, except more depressing. Michael Streissguth just did not write with much conviction, which honostly sucks, the man in black deserves better than a choppy boring book that cannot entertain. The authors purpose behind writing this book is to tell the legend that is Johnny Cash, a task he ultimately failed in, BUT this book will cause me too read other Johnny Cash biographies just in the hope that they will be at least a little more interesting.

Wendy says

Whereas "Cash: The Autobiography" was a window into the soul of The Man in Black, "Johnny Cash: The Biography" reads more like the abstract for his Nashville homestead. Although I appreciated getting the facts that were left out of "Walk the Line's" romanticized storyline, I often pined for a biography that maybe wasn't perfect but told a damn good story, just like one of Cash's songs.

Jeffrey says

As much as I carry Johnny Cash's music in my heart with a fulsome love (and Folsom Prison), everything else written or made about him seems to pale in comparison. The movie Walk the Line was a real pleasure, but this book makes you realize how the happy ending was a set up; Johnny's demons did take a six-year hiatus, but they returned to fuck him for most of the rest of his life.

I like this about this bio. Steissguth knows his subject and states the facts, so it's not Kitty Kelly. You sense he really loves the Man in Black with all his flaws. Unfortunately, though the story is truly compelling, the writing is at best merely competent, at worst, pedestrian.

One of the great things about reading a bio like this is you discover people you never imagined would open the pages of a book like this, do. I ran into a friend of mine the other day who is a prominent local musician involved in avant-garde music, various sessions, etc., and I was please to discover she'd recently read the George Jones autobiography. I'm looking forward to reading the Jones autobiography to see if writing in the first person livens up the language.

Daniel says

There's no doubt Michael Streissguth faced a challenge in recounting Johnny Cash's life story, one overshadowed by mythmaking during much of his life, and even more so during his career revival in the '90s, following his death in 2003, and after the release of the "Walk the Line" biopic in 2005.

"Johnny Cash: The Biography," a straightforward and relatively brief recounting of the singer's life, improves in its second half as Streissguth's awkward attempts at colloquial writing give way to more straightforward storytelling. Still, the book is marred by an overreliance on too few sources -- Tennessee Two bassist Marshall Grant, record producer Jack Clement, and Cash's daughter Rosanne especially -- and overlong quotes from those sources that, at times, feels like padding.

It's not that the sources are untrustworthy, but a longer list of more diverse voices would help describe a life as long and interesting as Cash's, even if it meant giving fewer pages over to those people who cooperated with Streissguth and using secondary sources for those who may not have.

A handful of other missteps -- a misspelling of the song title "Me and Bobby McGee," a framing device using the idea that Johnny Cash be added to Mount Rushmore that goes nowhere, and too little discussion of Cash's relationship with such country luminaries as Waylon Jennings, Merle Haggard and George Jones -- also mar the book.

Still, a moving chapter on Cash's dying days, told mostly by daughters Cindy and Rosanne, almost makes up for the book's weaknesses. It's in this section, which mostly gives the two women center stage, that the long, unedited quotes are most effective.

Lyle Nicholson says

This is a very in-depth biography of Johnny Cash. I'm not a real fan of Johnny Cash, not a country music lover and only reading this for research into a book I'm writing, but I found this book of interest. The author does a great job in documenting Johnny Cash's early years, to his years in the army and then his breakthrough into stardom. There is some good profiling of how Cash dealt with his fame and a great detailing of how he descended into drug abuse. In the end, a captivating read, even for a non-country music fan.

Taylor says

In the book, Johnny Cash: the biography, the author talks about Johnny Cash's life and all the hardships he had to overcome. The author states his purpose directly. You can tell he states this directly because he states his purpose through out the book. He starts the book off at the beginning of Johnny's life and continues to tell the legacy of Johnny Cash.

The theme of this book is that he never gave up and that he stayed determined. You can tell this because while Johnny was famous he got into a lot of drugs, and he overcame the drugs and kept his dreams solid. He also overcame his abusive and alcoholic father. He also got rejected by a record company but he kept going.

The author wrote this book in chronological order. It started from the beginning of Johnny's life and went to the end.

In my opinion I liked this book. The beginning was kind of boring but towards the middle it started getting good. The movie followed the book very well.

Jay says

I recently finished the newer bio of Johnny Cash by Robert Hilburn, and a while back I read the manga biography "I See a Darkness" by Reinhard Kleist. I don't believe I have ever delved into a topic like the life of a person with so many sources (and there's more where these came from!). And I'm really not that big of a fan, but this is one interesting life story. In this biography, I found the writing more like a traditional biography. The larger stories of Johnny's life are the same as in the Hilburn book, but there are some differences in how they are told. This book had some different anecdotes and seemed to stick more to telling these anecdotes. There were times where the author states opinions, mostly second guessing the critics on the later Cash releases. I didn't find a lot of analysis of Cash's life in these pages, unlike in the Hilburn book. This was written more by topic with illustrating anecdotes. I was disappointed in the ending, when we get about a page wrapping up Cash's life after his death. Given the author was willing to express opinions in the introduction of the book and later concerning songs, I'm surprised the book ended so quickly. This life story demands reflection, and the reader will notice this is missing.

Another issue I had with the book was the chronological telling. It was chronological by sections, but within each section, to focus on a theme, the author sometimes jumped around a few years. This is hard to avoid in such a complex story, but it was clumsy and confusing at times. I'm not sure this could be made better without making the book much longer.

What did I like about the book? In comparison to the Hilburn book, it was shorter and it had some different anecdotes given the different sources used. And you got a different feel for Cash. Hilburn's Cash came across to me as very smart and composed of a series of conflicting opposites. Streissguth's Cash seems more playful and lucky, or maybe unexplainable is a better term. One thing is for sure, Cash was a complex person, and the biographies I've read haven't been able to get the reader into Cash's mind enough to understand everything he did in his life. That's probably too much to ask for, and I wouldn't trust Cash's autobiographies to be any better in that regard.

Pia says

After Walk this Line romanticized Cash's life and his marriage to June Carter Cash as the woman who saved him from addiction, this book respectfully sets the record straight. Cash, although he was sober for periods at a time, never fully recovered from his drug addiction. An interesting read, but too much just a straight-up biography to be fully engrossing.

Tristen House says

The Life of Johnny Cash, The Life of Johnny Cash, the biography, is self explanatory, it's about the life of Johnny Cash. It is written by Michael Streissguth. The main characters are Johnny Cash, Ray Cash, Carrie Cash, Vivian Liberto, and June Carter Cash. It's about the hardening life of a very interesting man, Tortured by addiction and a hardened lifestyle. His first marriage was destroyed and he didn't feel like he could go on. I personally like the book very much. I liked the book because he's the most amazing person to me, I love his

music, I like his personality, He radiated charisma. One reason I like him is because he really had a way with words he made a lot quotes, one quote that he said was “A man’s gotta be tougher than the limber he’s cutting.” I really like that quote. I recommend this book to anyone who like country and/or classic country. Older people would like him better than younger people. I rate this 5 of 5

jmelauren says

This crushed the happily ever after Walk The Line left me with.

Besides that personal disappointment, I didn't think was a very deep or thorough telling of Johnny Cash. First it isn't about the man at all, and it's more like bullet points of his career instead of an actual telling of Johnny Cash and his music.
