



# Johnny Cash

1932 - 2003

Indy Randhawa  
Edmonton Public Library



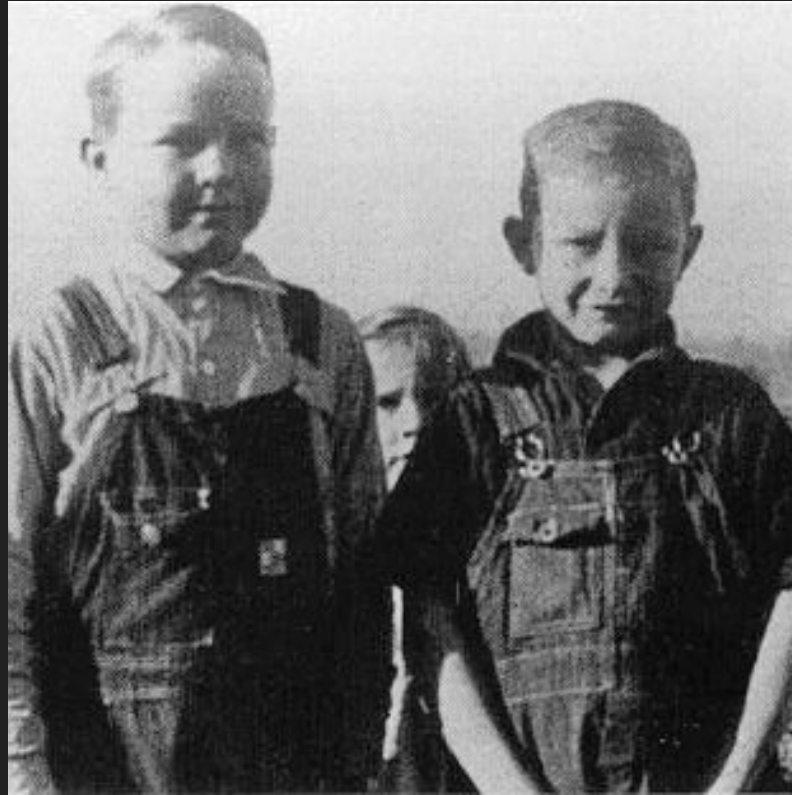
# Early Years

- J.R. Cash was born on Feb 26, 1932, in Kingsland, Arkansas
- Fourth of seven children
- Moved to Dyess, a New Deal colony, when he was 3
- Started working in cotton fields at the age of five
- Struggles during the Great Depression inspired many of his songs



# Early Years

- Older brother, Jack, killed in a table saw accident in 1944, at the age of 15
- Cash often spoke of the horrible guilt he felt over this incident. Influenced his religious beliefs
- Taught guitar by his mother and a childhood friend
- Began playing and writing songs at the age of 12
- In high school, he sang on a local radio station



# Military Service

- Enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1950
- Deployed to Germany with the Radio Squadron Mobile
- Created his first band, "The Landsberg Barbarians"
- Honourably discharged on July 3, 1954, and returned to Texas



# First Marriage

- Married Vivian Liberto in San Antonio in 1954
- They had four daughters: Rosanne, Kathy, Cindy, and Tara
- Liberto filed for divorce in 1966 because of Cash's drug and alcohol abuse, constant touring, and his relationship with June Carter
- Their four daughters were then raised by their mother



# Early Career

- Moved to Memphis in 1954
- Sold appliances and played with The Tennessee Two
- In 1955, Cash made his first recordings at Sun, "Hey Porter" and "Cry! Cry! Cry!"
- Started drinking heavily, became addicted to amphetamines and barbiturates
- Briefly shared an apartment in Nashville with Waylon Jennings, who was addicted to amphetamines







# Early Success

- Cash's next record, "Folsom Prison Blues", made the country top five
- "I Walk the Line" became #1 on the country charts and #20 on the pop charts
- In 1958, Cash left Sun to sign an offer with Columbia Records
- Sun continued to release his music for years





# Ring of Fire

- In the early 1960s, Cash toured with the Carter Family
- He had first met June in 1955, and became infatuated with her
- Despite his addictions, he continued to be successful
- His rendition of "Ring of Fire" was a crossover hit, reaching the pop and country charts





# Forest of Fire

- In June 1965, Cash's camper caught fire during a fishing trip in Los Padres National Forest in California
- The fire destroyed 508 acres, drove off the refuge's 53 endangered California condors.
- He was the only person to be sued by the government for starting a forest fire.



# Jails & Prisons

- Arrested 7 times, never went to prison
- On May 11, 1965, he was arrested in Mississippi for trespassing
- Arrested October 4 in Texas, by a narcotics squad.
- Cash began performing concerts at prisons in the late 1950s
- These performances led to a pair of highly successful live albums, Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison and Johnny Cash at San Quentin





**vevo**

# Activism

- Singing songs of Indian tragedy and settler violence went against mainstream country music
- "The Ballad of Ira Hayes" was not played on radio
- Was asked to leave the Country Music Association
- In reaction, he posted a letter as an advertisement in Billboard, "D.J.s, station managers, owners, where are your guts? So many stations are afraid of Ira Hayes. Just one question: WHY??? Ira Hayes is strong medicine ... So is Rochester, Harlem, Birmingham and Vietnam."







# Addiction & Divorce

- By the mid 1960s his drug addiction became severe
- Liberto filed for divorce in 1966 because of his drug abuse, and his close relationship with June Carter
- Arrested in 1967 in Georgia, after a car accident. He was carrying drugs, attempted to bribe a deputy
- Sheriff released him after warning him about his behavior and wasted potential



# June Carter

- June, Maybelle, and Ezra Carter moved into Cash's mansion for a month to help him get off drugs
- In 1967, Cash's duet with June Carter, "Jackson," won a Grammy Award
- Cash proposed on stage to June on in 1968
- The couple married a week later in Kentucky
- The two would remain married until her death





# The Man in Black

- Often called "The Man in Black"
- His look contrasted most of the country acts, who wore rhinestone suits and cowboy boots
- In 1971, Cash wrote the song "Man in Black" to help explain his dress code
- Was critical of racism, the Vietnam War, the prison system



A man with dark hair, wearing a black leather jacket, is shown from the chest up. He is holding a light-colored acoustic guitar. The background is dark. The Vevo logo is in the bottom left corner.

vevo

# Presidents

- He was friendly with every US President
- Close to Jimmy Carter, who was a distant cousin of his wife, June
- Cash advocated prison reform at his July 1972 meeting with United States President Richard Nixon
- Nixon asked him to play certain songs, but Cash thought they were anti-hippie and anti-black
- Instead played "The Ballad of Ira Hayes" and "Man in Black"



# More Health Issues

- Cash relapsed into addiction in 1983, went into rehab
- In 1988 he visited Waylon Jennings in hospital, ended up getting heart surgery himself.
- Both recovered, although Cash refused to use any prescription painkillers.





# Career Revitlization

- In 1994 recorded “American Recordings” in his living room, accompanied only by his guitar
- Featured covers of contemporary songs, won Grammy for Best Contemporary Folk Album.
- In 1996, Cash released American Recordings II, which won the Best Country Album Grammy in 1998
- He would release 7 total American recordings, the last of which came out after his death





**vevo**

# Final Years

- June Carter Cash died on May 15, 2003,
- He recorded 60 songs in the last four months of his life
- Cash died of complications from diabetes on September 12, 2003,
- Many believed his health worsened due to a broken heart over June's death.
- He was buried next to his wife, near his home in Hendersonville, Tennessee.



# Legacy

- Walk the Line, released in 2005
- Daughter Rosanne and son John Carter Cash are notable musicians
- A species of black tarantula was named after him
- The Johnny Cash Museum opened in 2013, in Nashville
- In 2006, a musical, Ring of Fire, debuted on Broadway
- Appeared on a number of TV shows



# Legacy

- 9 Country Music Awards
- 18 Grammys Awards
- On the Hollywood Walk of Fame
- #31 on Rolling Stone's "100 Greatest Artists of All Time" list
- Inducted into Country Music Hall of Fame (1980), the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (1992), Gospel Music Hall of Fame (2010)



