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## **P.O.V.'s "Johnny Cash: The Man, His World, His Music," A Rarely Seen 1969 Portrait of the 'Man in Black' at His Peak, Tuesday, Aug. 5 on PBS**

Film Captures Cash on the Road, on Stage and Behind the Scenes, Fresh on the Heels of His "Folsom Prison" Album; June Carter Cash, Bob Dylan, Carl Perkins Featured

*"...a rousing masterpiece." – Rolling Stone Magazine*

### **MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET**

National Air

Date: **Tuesday, Aug. 5, 2008** at 10 p.m. on PBS. (Check local listings.) The **P.O.V.** series (a cinema term for "point of view") is now in its 21st year on PBS, is broadcast June through October, with primetime specials in the fall and winter.

Summary: In this classic 1969 documentary by Bob Elfstrom, the Man in Black is captured at his peak, the first of many in a looming roller-coaster career. Fresh on the heels of his *Folsom Prison* album, Cash reveals the dark intensity and raw talent that made him a country music star and cultural icon. Director Robert Elfstrom got closer than any other filmmaker to Cash, who is seen performing with his new bride June Carter Cash, in a rare duet with Bob Dylan, and behind the scenes with friends, family and aspiring young musicians. **Johnny Cash: The Man, His World, His Music** paints an unforgettable portrait that endures beyond the singer's 2003 death.

**Johnny Cash** includes concert performances of some of Cash's best-loved songs, including "Ring of Fire," "Jackson" (with June Carter Cash) and "Folsom Prison Blues" in the kind of venues — prisons, Indian reservations — that marked the man as more than an entertainer. The film also captures Cash recording the Bob Dylan composition "One Too Many Mornings" with a young, gum-chewing Dylan (who had originally recorded it on his 1964 *The Times They Are A-Changin'* LP) and trading reminiscences with one of his closest friends, rockabilly legend Carl Perkins, who shared Cash's sharecropper's upbringing and musical beginnings at the fabled Sun Records in Memphis. The two men also shared substance abuse problems that nearly killed them. Cash also visits Dyess Colony in Arkansas, where his parents were then living.

Filmmaker's

Statement: "My camera, my sound recordist Alan Dater and I were having a wonderful relationship with Cash," remembers Bob Elfstrom. "It was like a dance. In a way, he was directing the film, drawing us to concert to concert, from stage to backstage, from backstage to a van driving around the country. It was like the kid is having a comeback and he knew his music was crossing over and taking off."

Filmmaker Bio: [Robert Elfstrom, Producer/Director](#)

Considered one of the best documentary cinematographers working today, Robert Elfstrom's other feature documentary credits include directing the Oscar-nominated "Other Voices," and cinematography for such landmark Maysles brothers' films as "Gimme Shelter" and "The Running Fence." He has worked extensively for such flagship PBS series as *NOVA*, *American Masters*, *National Geographic Specials* and *Frontline*.

Elfstrom, who lives in San Francisco, has also worked on documentary projects for HBO, the Discovery Channel, TBS, CBS and NBC. Elfstrom's full list of credits can be found at [www.bobelfstrom.com](http://www.bobelfstrom.com).

Songs in the  
Film:

"Ring of Fire"  
"Land of Israel"  
"Daddy Sang Bass"  
"Folsom Prison Blues"  
"Five Feet High and Rising"  
"Great Speckled Bird"  
"Jackson" (with June Carter)  
"Orange Blossom Special"  
"One Too Many Mornings" (with Bob Dylan)  
"Big Foot"  
"Cisco Clifton's Filling Station"  
"Busted"  
"The Last Thing on my Mind" (June Carter)  
"Big River"  
"The Long Black Veil"  
"Devil to Pay"

Length: 86:46

Credits: Director/cinematographer: Robert Elfstrom  
Producers: Arthur Barron, Evelyn Barron, Roy Herkin  
Editor: Lawrence Silk  
Sound Production: Alan Dater

Johnny Cash: Johnny Cash was born John R. Cash, one of six children of Ray and Carrie Rivers Cash, on Feb. 26, 1932, in Kingsland, Ark. When John was 3 years old, his father moved his family to Dyess Colony in northeast Arkansas. There they farmed 20 acres of cotton and other crops, and John worked alongside his parents and siblings in the fields.

After graduating high school and working in an automotive plant in Pontiac, Mich., Cash enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. He did basic training in Texas (where he met first wife Vivian Liberto) and was shipped to Germany. When discharged in 1954, Cash returned to the States and married Liberto. They settled in Memphis, where Cash worked a variety of jobs -- including appliance salesman -- while trying to break into the music business. That same year, Cash auditioned as solo artist for Sam Phillips' Sun Records. He entertained hopes of recording gospel music, but Phillips immediately nixed that idea.

Cash's fourth chart single, "I Walk the Line" shot to *Billboard's* No. 1 position and remained on the charts for 43 weeks. Throughout the remainder of the 1950s and into the 1960s, Cash continued to chart consistently. But his grueling tour schedule took its toll, and Cash became dependent on narcotics and was divorced by the mid-60s.

By 1967, Cash overcame his addiction with the help of his singing partner June Carter and her family. In 1968, he and Carter married and his career experienced a renaissance. Throughout the remainder of the decade and into the 1970s, Cash was at the top of his game. A pair of live recordings made at Folsom Prison and San Quentin both went gold, many awards followed including Country Music Association's Entertainer of the Year in 1969, and Cash *The Johnny Cash Show* premiered on ABC the same year.

In 1980, at 48, Johnny Cash became the youngest living inductee into the Country Music Hall of Fame. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame bestowed its honor on him in 1995. In 1985, Cash joined friends Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings and Kris Kristofferson to form The Highwaymen. The supergroup released three albums between 1985 and 1995.

Although battling serious health problems in the late 1990s, Cash entered a professional renaissance after signing with rap producer Rick Rubin's American record label. Grammy and CMA award-winning albums followed from 1994 to 2003: *American Recordings Unchained*, *American III: Solitary Man*, and *American IV: The Man Comes Around*.

After losing June Carter Cash unexpectedly in May 2003, Johnny Cash passed away Sept. 12, 2003 at Baptist Hospital in Nashville, from complications from diabetes. In 2005, a film version of his early romance with Carter, *Walk the Line*, was Oscar-nominated for Best Picture. The album *American V: A Hundred Highways*, featuring Cash's last sessions with Rubin, was released in 2006. (Source: CMT: Country Music Television. For a detailed bio, go to [http://www.cmt.com/artists/az/cash\\_johnny/bio.jhtml](http://www.cmt.com/artists/az/cash_johnny/bio.jhtml).)

In the News: Compadre Records/Music World Music announced the release of *Johnny Cash Remixed*, featuring bold new interpretations of Cash classics from top remixers and producers recruited to take the original master recordings and infuse them with the sounds of modern styles such as hip hop and dance music. The album, which includes a performance from Snoop Dogg, will be available in stores and online on Oct. 14. A vinyl deluxe edition will be available on Sept. 23 in select independent record stores.

*Johnny Cash Remixed* has the blessing and support of the custodians of Johnny Cash's legacy. "My father made his stead by defying the expected and accepted way of things," says John Carter Cash, son of Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash and executive producer of *Walk the Line*.

P.O.V. Web: The **Johnny Cash** companion website ([www.pbs.org/pov/johnnycash](http://www.pbs.org/pov/johnnycash)) offers a streaming video trailer of the film, an interview with filmmaker **Robert Elfstrom** (video, podcast and text); a list of related websites, organizations and books; a downloadable discussion guide and classroom activity; and this special feature:

Points of View: Remembering Johnny Cash: We asked members of the 1969 film crew, including the director, the editor and the cinematographer, to reflect on the man, his world and his music. We invite viewers to share their thoughts and memories of the 'Man in Black,' an American original, who died in 2003.

Outreach: P.O.V. is working with public television stations and national and community-based groups across the country to foster community dialogue around the issues presented in **Johnny Cash: The Man, His World, His Music**. For a list of upcoming screening and discussion events, go to: [http://www.amdoc.org/outreach\\_news.php](http://www.amdoc.org/outreach_news.php)

Pressroom: Visit P.O.V.'s pressroom, [www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom), for press releases, downloadable art, filmmaker biographies, transcripts and special features.

P.O.V.: Produced by American Documentary, Inc., the award-winning P.O.V. series is the longest-running showcase on television to feature the work of America's best contemporary-issue independent filmmakers. Airing June through October, with primetime specials during the year, P.O.V. has brought more than 250 documentaries to millions nationwide, and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. Since 1988, P.O.V. has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's social issues. Visit [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov).

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***DVD REQUESTS: Please note that a broadcast version of this film is available upon request, as the film may be edited to comply with new FCC regulations.***

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