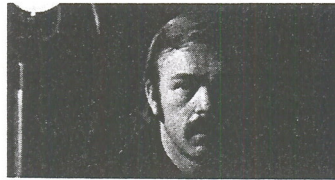


# HOUSECALL

However repulsive the idea of political assassination is to Americans, we've all been dimly aware that there has been more to the violent deaths of certain foreign leaders over the past two decades than has met the eye. And although it comes as no great shock to read of Soviet or Nazi attempts to murder foreign heads of state, when we are confronted with the evidence of our own involvement in such plots, it's time for us to sit up and take note. That's exactly what Tad Szulc has done in *Murder by Proxy*, the fourth in our ongoing series of articles on the CIA and the rest of the U.S. intelligence community. Investigative reporter Szulc reveals that while it is probably true that no American CIA official actually pulled the trigger, the agency probably provided the weapon. And such knowledge seems to be widespread among our friends and enemies alike. "Curiously," says Szulc, "it never occurs to the CIA people that the national interest is not necessarily served by secret interventions. More often than not, these violations of the sovereignty of other countries tend to boomerang on us. As a result, the CIA now finds itself in the predicament of being accused of every mischief in the world, real or imagined, guilty or not. The disgrace acquired from the CIA's foreign involvement far outweighs the political advantage." Concludes Szulc: "What we need is a CIA that concerns itself solely with the gathering and interpretation of intelligence."

Just so, and as any reporter knows, sifting fact from fiction is a full-time task requiring much judicious application. How the misinterpretation of intelligence—or the misuse of it—can confound the relevant issues is amply illustrated in George O'Toole's article, *The Oswald-FBI Cover-Up*, an excerpt from his best-selling book *The Assassination Tapes* recently published by Penthouse Press. In a top secret report to the Warren Commission investigating the circumstances surrounding the death of President Kennedy, it is revealed that Lee Harvey Oswald may have been recruited by the FBI in September 1972 to work as an undercover agent. The implications of this intelligence are bizarre—yet so powerful was J. Edgar Hoover, says O'Toole, that rather than risk his wrath the Commission took whatever interpretation of the events the FBI wanted to give it. The FBI, after all, was the only investigative arm of the Commission. If those fateful moments at the Texas Book Depository are reconsidered from the standpoint that Oswald was probably a dupe and an informer, then subsequent developments take on a different tone.

Now tone is what it's all about for balladeer Johnny Cash, the uncrowned King of Country Music. It's the mood he sets when he walks onto a stage and raps with his audience. It's the high he achieves when he opens up "Folsom Prison Blues." In an exclusive *Penthouse* interview conducted by author-journalist Larry Linder-



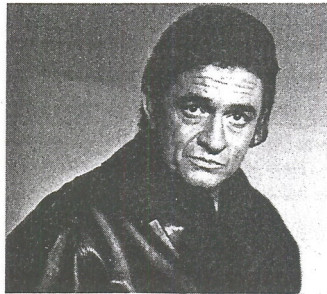
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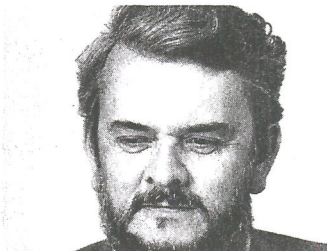
GEORGE O'TOOLE



JOHNNY CASH



TAD SZULC



JOHN FERGUS RYAN

man, Cash reveals some of the inner drive that led him from the cotton fields of Arkansas to the solid gold success of the record charts. "Cash looks raw, speaks plain, and is surprisingly gentle—all qualities he manages to project onstage," says Larry. "He's paid all the dues. He was strung out on amphetamines, did time on pill busts, and damn near killed himself several times over in dozens of road accidents." Who got the monkey off his back? "God," says Cash, simply. "I don't play church. The spiritual strength I have is real . . . it's a personal strength I draw on."

For some men, inner strength may mean the difference between life and death. Take the case of Ed Downing, of Oil City, Pa. Just how the army bureaucrats battered him around from Georgia to Germany—with a stopover in Vietnam long enough for Ed to earn three Purple Hearts, the Bronze Star, and the Silver Star—is detailed by *Penthouse* staffer Judith Jobin in *The Destruction of a Human Being*. It reads like a Three Stooges movie script, but it moves the reader more to anger than laughter. It's a tribute to American grass-roots guts that Downing survived.

A happier learning experience—by far—is presented in *The Education of Litmus Grogan*, our fiction offering, by regular *Penthouse* contributor John Fergus Ryan. Ole Litmus may have already had a few hard bangs out of life back in Vile Hickory, Tennessee, but he's due for some more by the time he gets to Memphis. Arriving with five dollars in coins (shaken loose from his piggy bank), Litmus soon finds both love and rejection at a local den of iniquity known as Claude's Tabernacle—where the elite meet to beat. A duly beaten Litmus—flags flying—readily succumbs to the charms of Miss Billie Flodene Bitch, only to be snatched away from that horn of plenty by Bertha Jo Buttschmoother, a waitress who gets tired of waiting. Will Litmus pass the test? Tune in to Ryan and turn on your Bunsen burner.

Moving on from the Litmus Papers to other capers, we commend to your attention the report by sexologist Rhea Philip on *Trisexuality*—this being the maximum physical integration between three people of mixed gender or otherwise. "Trisexuality sees people as fashion," says Miss Philip bluntly. "You treat your lovers like suits. You pick them out, wear them until they look dated, and then throw them away." But between the fucking and the chucking are countless permutations known heretofore only to Eros and Masters & Johnson, and the young ladies who open our Forum mail.

It's enough to set the cerebrum racing, this seemingly incompatible spectrum-jumping from J. Edgar to a fictive degenerate you could take home to mother (but not leave alone in the same room with her). Add to the mix a dash of Xaviera, a flash of fashion, and *Penthouse* pictorials that give pause—and you wind up with something cool to swing with on a summer evening. Right? O—

# PENTHOUSE

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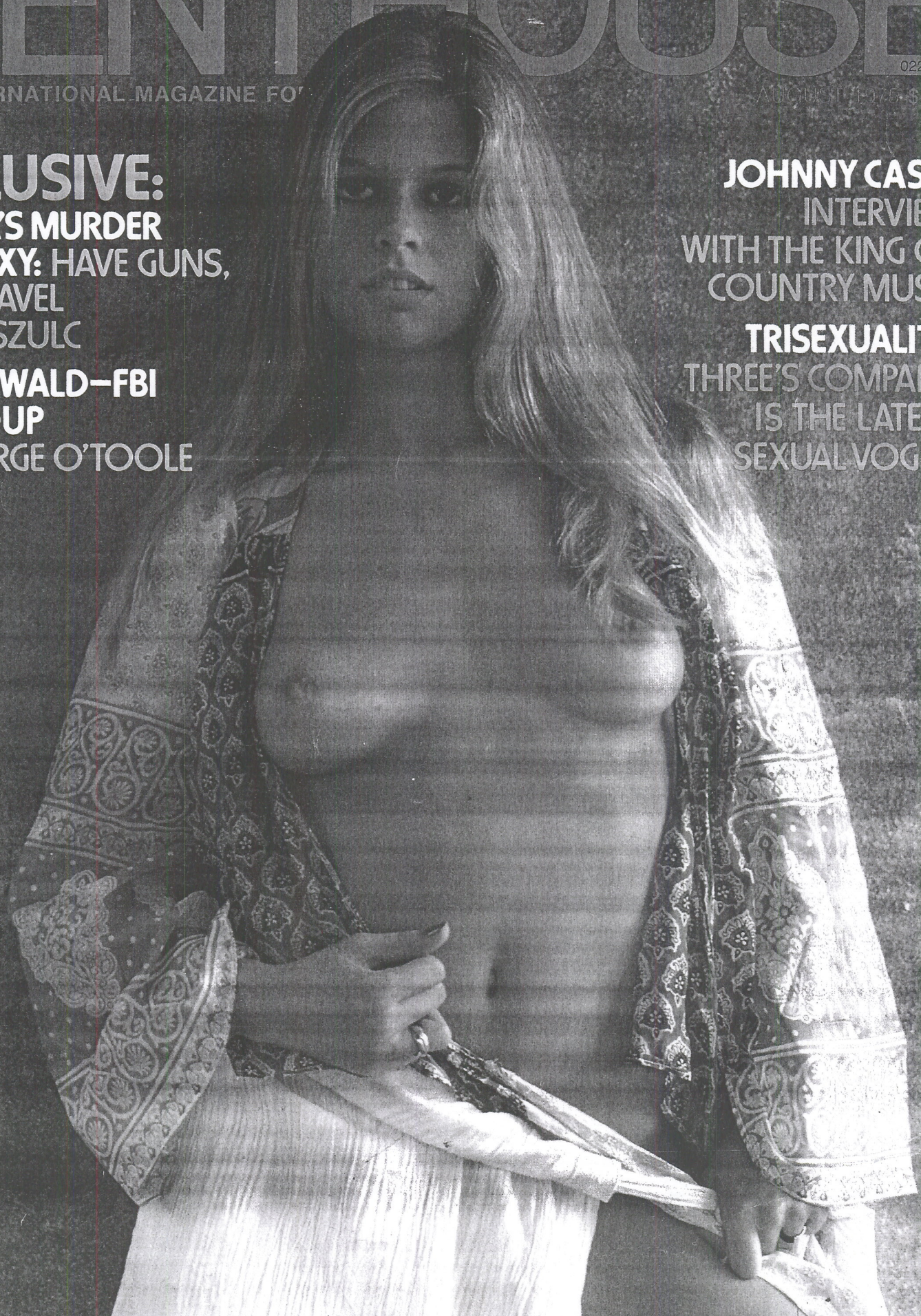
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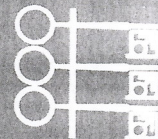
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PENTHOUSE, 1975, U.S. Volume 6 Number 12; published monthly in the United States and simultaneously in Canada by Penthouse International Ltd., 909 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022, Tel. (212) 593-3301. U.K. edition published in the United Kingdom by Penthouse Publications Ltd., 2 Bramber Road, West Kensington, London W14 9PB, Tel. 01-385-6181. Entire contents copyrighted © Penthouse International Ltd. 1975. All rights reserved. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Second-class postage paid New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Editorial offices as above. All reasonable care taken but no responsibility assumed for unsolicited editorial material. Postage must accompany if return required. All rights reserved in material accepted for publication unless initially specified otherwise. All letters addressed to Penthouse or its editors assumed intended for publication. Nothing may be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission from the publishers. Any similarity between persons or places mentioned in the fiction or semi-fiction and real places or persons living or dead is coincidental. Single copies \$1.25 in U.S., Canada and AFO (\$1.75 December issues). Subscriptions: U.S., Canada, AFO — \$10.00 one year, \$18.00 two years, \$26.00 three years; elsewhere — \$15.00 one year, \$25.00 two years. Address changes etc. to Penthouse, 155 Allen Blvd., Farmingdale, N.Y. 11735. Postmaster: send form 3579 to Farmingdale address.

Advertising Offices: New York: Penthouse International Ltd., 909 Third Avenue, Tel. (212) 593-3301; Midwest: Penthouse International Ltd., 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60601, Tel. (312) 565-0466; West Coast: J. E. Publishers Representative Co., 8732 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90069, Tel. (213) 659-3810; Southeast: J. E. Publishers Representative Co., 4445 Alpha Road, Suite 110, Dallas, Texas 75240, Tel. (214) 387-2424; U.K.: Penthouse Publications Ltd., 68 Upper Berkeley St., London W1H 7DH, Tel. 01-262-0331 — Telex 919865. Printed in the U.S.A. Distributed in the United States, Canada, and all U.S. territorial possessions by the Curtis Circulation Co., 21 Henderson Drive, West Caldwell, N.J. 07006, and distributed throughout the rest of the world by Magazine Division, New English Library Ltd., Barnard's Inn, Holborn, London E.C.1. Penthouse and the Penthouse key are trademarks of Penthouse International Ltd., New York © August 12, 1969 Penthouse International Ltd.

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