



## On the Road with Bob Dylan

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“The War and Peace of Rock and Roll.” —Bob Dylan

In 1975, as Bob Dylan emerged from eight years of seclusion, he dreamed of putting together a traveling music show that would trek across the country like a psychedelic carnival. The dream became reality, and **On the Road with Bob Dylan** is the ultimate behind-the-scenes look at what happened when Dylan and the Rolling Thunder Revue took to the streets of America.

With the intimate detail of a diary, Larry “Ratso” Sloman’s mesmerizing description of the legendary tour both transports us to a celebrated period in rock history and provides us with a vivid snapshot of Dylan during this extraordinary time. This reissue of the 1978 classic resonates more than ever as it chronicles one of the most glittering rock circuses ever assembled, with a cast that includes Joan Baez, Robbie Robertson, Joni Mitchell, Allen Ginsberg, Ramblin’ Jack Elliott, and a wild entourage of groupies, misfits, sinners, and saints who trailed along for the ride. Sloman candidly captures the all-night revelry and musical prowess—from the backstage antics to impromptu jams—that made the tour a nearly mystical experience.

Complete with vintage photos and a new introduction by renowned Texas musician, mystery writer, and Revue member Kinky Friedman, this is an unparalleled treat for Dylan fans old and new. Without question, **On the Road with Bob Dylan** is a remarkable, revealing piece of writing and a rare up-close and personal view of Dylan on tour.

## On the Road with Bob Dylan Details

Date : Published August 27th 2002 by Three Rivers Press (first published 2002)

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Author : Larry Sloman

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## From Reader Review On the Road with Bob Dylan for online ebook

### Lancelot Link says

I think Bob Dylan called this book "The war and peace of rock and roll" because it doesn't feel as though it will ever end. If you're a fan of rather dull, unedited interviews, then take heart -- this book is for you.

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### erica says

TERRIBLE. Briefly enjoyed the mention of local places I recognized at the start. It soon becomes clear that this is not "the ultimate behind the scenes look" at the RTR. Is Sloman even friends with Dylan? Why is he always using "scream" in the middle of a conversation? Most of the time Dylan answers him with one word responses. I think most of this book is probably made up but can't imagine why, if it was fiction, it wouldn't be more exciting. And why he would portray himself as someone being ignored and made fun of. Is it supposed to be humorous but falls miserably flat? I skimmed the second half and only because someone kindly loaned it to me, because of my interest in Dylan and I wanted to be able to say I read it.

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### Aj Baker says

Two stars is generous. It has its moments but they are few and far between.

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### Dewayne Stark says

Another read about Dylan, this an inside view.

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### GloriaGloom says

La premessa è d'obbligo anche se non va spiegata: trattasi di un grande libro per Dylaniani , non per Dylanologi.

Parte a razzo Sloman trasportandoci sin dalle prime righe al centro dell'azione, in quella New York del '75 che saluta il ritorno in città dell'Illustre Scomparso (per tutte quelle persone normali che non ritengono la vita di Dylan una tappa obbligatoria della propria formazione culturale va detto che negli anni precedenti agli accadimenti del libro Dylan si era ritirato dal mondo giocando a fare il signorotto di campagna, lo sfornafigli seriale, la parodia di Johnny Cash e l'autore di un paio dei dischi più brutti della discografia universale - Planet Waves e Self Portrait. Con indovinata sintesi potremmo usare le parole che un suo epigono minore italiano, in una delle sue poche riuscite canzoni, dedicò al periodo bucolico del Vate senza più l'alloro "Lui adesso vive in California, da 7 anni sotto una veranda ad aspettare le nuvole, è diventato un grosso suonatore di chitarre e stravede per una donna chiamata Lisa" ) alle prese con le alcoliche registrazioni del controverso Desire - il suo disco di maggior successo commerciale ma, stranamente, il meno costeggiato dai cartografi del verbo Dylaniano (sarà, è una mia tesi da Dylaniano e non da Dylanologo, per la "scandalosa" doppia paternità dei testi, condivisa con lo psicologo clinico Jacques Levy, fraterno sodale del Nostro in quegli anni) - e le prime 50 pagine sono una deliziosa falsa pista disseminata di scorribande ubriache in macchina per la

città, feste di bentornato e preparativi per il più bizzarro e improbabile dei tour : un giro nella provincia dimenticata in compagnia di decine di musicisti, poeti, registi, giocolieri e non si sa cosa a intrattenere con un raffinato gioco meta musicale un pubblico di personaggi di Sherwood Anderson in teatri fatiscanti e palestre di college. Il famigerato Rolling Thunder Revue. E dove inizia il vero racconto Dylan scompare e vanno in scena le picaresche avventure di Larry "Ratso" Sloman, figlioccio di Hunter Thompson e del suo giornalismo gonzo e lo sfiatato inseguimento alla carovana delle star. Sempre tenuto ai margini del circo itinerante, tra sberleffi, prese in giro, doposbronze, eccessi farmacologici, macchine scassate e materassi bitorzoluti di hotel di infima fama. Il suo momento di massima gloria arriverà quando gli assegneranno il compito di dogsitter del beagle di Dylan. Ma nel mezzo di questo frustrante peregrinare riesce a infilare alcune perle di altissimo giornalismo gonzo: improbabili interviste al cognato(?!) di Jack Kerouac, alla mamma di Dylan, a teppistelli anfetaminici dei sobborghi dei sobborghi d'america, commenti in presa diretta di Allen Ginsberg durante le esibizioni di Dylan, chiacchierate con la groupie Lisa costretta a ogni tappa a ripassarsi tutto l'entourage solo per far arrivare bigliettini demenziali all'invisibile star, schermaglie intellettuali con Joan Beaz ecc... ecc... . Inevitabile il paragone con l'altro grande libro su questo tour, quei Diari del Rolling Thunder del futuro premio Pulitzer Sam Shepard, anche lì Dylan è solo un'entità, un dio capriccioso e onnipotente che appare e scompare in uno scenario narrativo fatto essenzialmente da un paesaggio americano. Solo che Sloman lo riscalda con il fuoco dell'esuberanza, del sopra le righe, Shepard lo raffredda in un'algida sintesi concettuale alla Hopper. Catartico il racconto del loro incontro nel libro di Sloman, i due scrittori a notte fonda nella hall di un albergo a sfogare le loro frustrazioni e il loro amore masochistico per il genio più scorbutico del mondo. Dylan in absentia plasma comunque ogni loro percezione della realtà. E' un libro prezioso e divertente, sconsigliato ai Dylanologi ? e ai cultori della scrittura cesellata, qui si viaggia a cento all'ora con tutta la grandezza e i limiti di un certo giornalismo sfasato. Da gustarsi insieme alla visione del traballante Renaldo & Clara, film monstre di quel tour e all'ascolto del quinto volume delle bootleg series, imperdibile documento sonoro di quei concerti, forse, e qui i Dylanologi di cui sopra mi sbraneranno, ultima fiera zampata di quel leone prima di essere ingabbiato nelle innocue categorie della modernità.

Un grazie alla Minimum Fax che tra un imperdibile e dimenticabile nuovissimo genio delle lettere americane e l'altro traduce e pubblica certe perle dimenticate.

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### **Kristen Wenzel says**

This account by a rock journalist was annoying because he often drifted into the third person and was obviously way too much of a fan of Dylan to be objective (funny for me to say). He came off like an over-eager teen, but maybe he wanted to. It was interesting to get the behind the scenes on the tour and his dialogues with other musicians like Joni Mitchell and Leonard Cohen are great, as well as his discussions with Rubin Carter. His observations on the whole situation of "the Hurricane" are entertaining, particularly his comments on media hype and manipulation. Not great, but not bad either.

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### **Scott Jacobson says**

A speed freak's EXHAUSTIVELY detailed account of life on the road with Dylan's mid-70s Rolling Thunder Revue. This is the phase of Desire and Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, etc. By this point in his career Dylan had learned to insulate himself from hangers-on like the author, so much of the book is bogged down in tedious, meticulously recounted dialogue with the tour manager. ("Dammit, Ratso, you're gonna get yourself thrown off the tour!" "C'mon, man, I just need one more quote from Bob!" "Bobby don't need to be bothered with this right now!" and on and on and on.) The interesting stuff is truly interesting, though. Dylan comes across as a guy who'd learned to accept the unique, borderline mystical place he'd assumed in

American culture. You get a glimpse of his insecurities ("I don't think Kinky Friedman likes me, man"), and thankfully Sloman brings the same obsessive attention to detail to the show descriptions as he does to his own behind-the-scenes plight. It's a good book. Trim some of the Ratso and it'd be great.

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### **Howard says**

The tour must have been fun, but it is not very interesting to read about. The author wrote for Rolling Stone and expanded his articles into the rather massive paperback reissued in 2002. It's difficult to read straight through, as there are many gonzo detours into the author's search for significant people & events (of which there were few) outside the concert hall. One of those books that undermines my positive sentiment & affection for the subject matter & makes me wish I'd picked up *Middlemarch* instead, like I've always been meaning to do someday. The most valuable portions for me were conversations with the relatively under-appreciated women on the tour, all of whom come off well (Ronee Blakely, Joni Mitchell, Joan Baez & Bob's wife Sara). Joni Mitchell's rant about being pigeonholed as a "Female Songwriter" with a "Woman's Perspective" is almost worth the rest of the book. Several celebrities of dubious merit were along for the ride, including Allen Ginsberg who always has something to say. If you can borrow this book I recommend it.

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### **Roving Gambler says**

As a person who has traveled to see Dylan, many parts of this book rang true. The lost souls who always seem to be around are still there. The feeling of being disconnected, always a new town, travel, lack of sleep, but lots of the same faces. This book put me back on the road and while it had many flaws, it touched me in a way other books don't. It was real to me and I recommend it to any Dylan fan and especially those "lost souls" goin to one more show.

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### **Joe Fahey says**

This book was utterly fascinating, I can't believe seeing the start and finished dates above but that does include the event of a basement flood destroying my first copy, then trying to read a downloaded pdf copy on my iPad (which I didn't particularly enjoy as much as a bound book of papyrus, or paper I guess they used to call it in the 20th century). It was a long read and I'd occasionally get bogged down in some of the earlier pages but at some magical point I got into the rhythm of the story telling and was captivated. As big of a Dylan fan as I am, I guess I've never really read much about him fleshed out as a person rather than a mysterious and private artist. It took a long time for the author to gain the trust of the enigmatic artist but when he finally did, it was highly worth the wait which mainly took place in the final pages of the book. It really cracked me up, how funny Dylan is, and so brilliant of course. The saga itself covers a lot of ground beginning with the impetus and recording of the "Desire" album and the focal point of the Rubin Carter, the subject of the song "Hurricane". That album was one of the missing links in my Dylan record collection but I've since picked up a copy and listened to it heavily as a companion piece as well as the live recordings from the "Rolling Thunder Revue", the tour which this book chronicles. Along the way you get to meet and get to know so many incredible artists who were involved and or performed in these shows including Roger McGuinn, Mick Ronson, Leonard Cohen, Kinky Friedman, Allen Ginsberg, Gordon Lightfoot and many more, plus Dylan's wife Sara and his mother Beatty who were presented in a candid and heartfelt fashion. But in particular, Joan Baez and especially Joni Mitchell were highlights in the storyline and added so much to the artistic sensibilities of the times. I'm looking forward to reading the Sam Shepard penned "Rolling

Thunder Logbook” which covers the tour from a different perspective. And if I haven’t gone over my word count, I have to mention that I’ll be seeing Bob Dylan tonight in concert and that this book has added even more interest and enthusiasm for the show.

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### **Clint Banjo says**

I was expecting better...the Stones Tour coverage by Stanley Booth is the best example...sometimes a bit long winded and the author is hung up on his own problems although still a great insight to a great time and Tour, made me want to listen to the music...

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### **Jesse says**

obnoxious, unfocused and poorly written, "Ratso" Sloman expends so much energy trying to get Dylan to read his shitty poetry, or get Roger Waters to buy him dinner, or bang desperate hippie chicks that he never manages to give any insight on what made the first Rolling Thunder tour so legendary. "On the Road" should be taken literally, as the author basically lives in his car the whole time after he's kicked off the tour caravan. "with Bob Dylan" should be taken more as a joke. Dude would make hanging out with A.J. Weberman seem like a good time.

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### **furious says**

an interesting account of life on the road with the Rolling Thunder Revue, from the perspective of the ultimate insider/outsider. i happen to be a big fan of Rolling Thunder era Dylan, so i kinda dug this artifact. to others i can see how it might be kind of tedious & lacking in the "Hammer of the Gods" type sensationalism. for Dylan fanatics/completists it is, of course, indispensable.

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### **5 Track says**

in its gonzo way, this along with BD's own Chronicle might be the most insightful book I've read on Uncle Bob, and maybe not incidentally on what rocknroll means or meant or stood for once or could maybe represent again someday as a popular experience-based ART FORM, not just as a popular commodity or everybody's weird hobby. all the angles are covered, even if you don't realize it til you look back at what you just read and think it over a bit. so I guess in a way this is also a book about how to write a book about this. true multi-dimensionality in rocknroll literature.

"The war & peace of rocknroll" ~BD

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### **Mark Goddard says**

Great book. Amazing that most of this takes place in my backyard. Plymouth, Falmouth, Boston. Sloman captured those times with panache to say the least. Great document of a tour, musicians and a time

that will never be repeated!

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