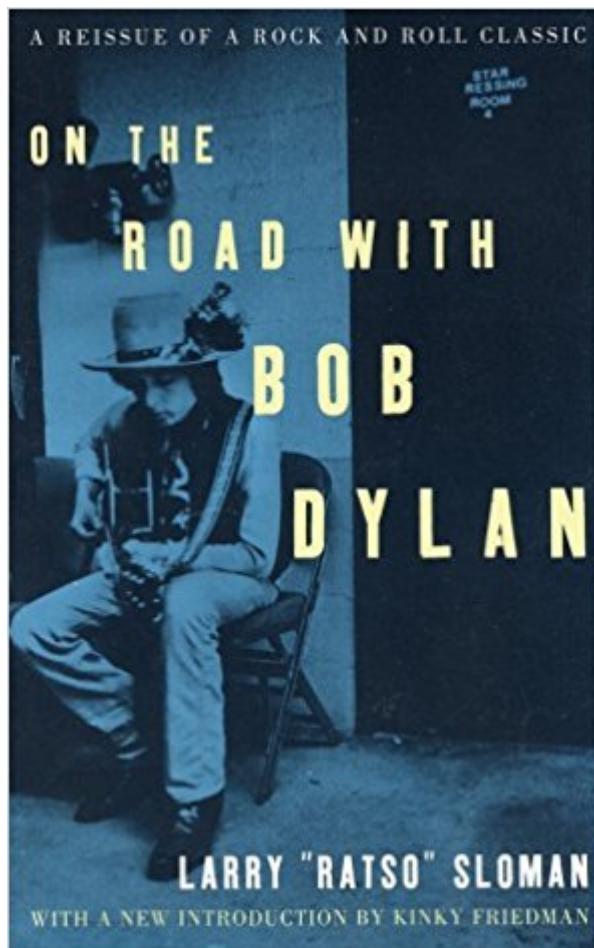


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# On The Road With Bob Dylan



## Synopsis

“The War and Peace of Rock and Roll.” 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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When Dylan personally invited the fledgling author Sloman (*Reefer Madness*) to chronicle his Rolling Thunder Revue tour back in 1975, Sloman thought he had landed his dream gig, expecting all-night parties and intimate chats with the tour's supporting cast, which included Joan Baez, Joni Mitchell, Robbie Robertson and Allen Ginsberg. In fact, Sloman, who first published this memoir in 1978, found access to the stars very limited. After the first concert, Dylan's manager bounced him from the band's hotel. Yet he decided to do whatever it took to stay on tour, earning the nickname "Ratso," after the wily con man played by Dustin Hoffman in *Midnight Cowboy*. Sloman embraced the role: "I was Ratso, I realized, rolling with the punches, licking my wounds in auxiliary highway hotels, stuffing my frayed dreams into a tattered suitcase, limping along the highway in search of that warm sun that always follows the thunder." But by the end of the tour, Sloman is still stuck with inglorious duties like looking after Dylan's beagle puppy. A brisk and funny (if somewhat over-the-top) prose stylist, he records some interesting moments a sunrise ceremony led by an Indian chief, coincidentally named Rolling Thunder; an emotional encounter with Jack Kerouac's bartending brother-in-law Nicky in Lowell, Mass. but he never really gets close enough to Dylan to offer readers any insights. Ultimately, this book is about one fan's attempt to be accepted by his rock-and-roll heroes, and in Sloman's hands the project is as narcissistic as it sounds. Reading his memoir, one goes from rooting for the underdog to wishing he'd just go home. 16 pages of b&w photos not seen by PW. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Ã¢ "An invaluable insiderÃ¢ 's look at a legendary tour.Ã¢ • Michael Musto, the Village VoiceÃ¢ "An all-access pass to hang with the greatest singer-songwriter of our time. On the Road with Bob Dylan remains a true gonzo rock journalism classic and a revealing study of musicÃ¢ 's greatest genius/enigma.Ã¢ • David Wild, contributing editor to Rolling Stone and host of BravoÃ¢ 's Musicians

Larry Sloman's "On the Road with Bob Dylan" is one of the best books about both Dylan, and what it's like to be a reporter, on the road, trying to cover one of the biggest rock stars. I love this book. Sloman cares so much about Dylan and Dylan's art, and that comes through time and time again. Sloman isn't just a reporter out covering the tour. He knows Dylan, and he knows most of the other musicians who were on the Rolling Thunder Review with Dylan including Joan Baez, Roger McGuinn and Ramblin' Jack Elliott, so he is able to provide a perspective that you can't get from most people who write about Dylan. Sloman's vivid, you-are-there descriptions of Rolling Thunder Review concerts 'caused me to seek out bootlegs of the shows so I could hear fro myself the music

he enthuses about. The book is aptly titled, as it really is 'On the Road' meets Dylan. While a good portion of the book is concerned with Sloman's problems as a journalist on assignment for Rolling Stone getting access to Dylan and the other stars of the Rolling Thunder Revue, there are many scenes in which Sloman interacts with Dylan and Dylan's former wife Sara. The reader gets a real sense of what they're like. At one point Sloman talks to Michael Bloomfield on the telephone about Bloomfield's relationship to Dylan, and gets Bloomfield's take on Dylan and that alone is worth the price of admission. As a former Rolling Stone Senior writer, I've dealt with some of the same problems Sloman deal with in his book and what he rights is the authentic deal for sure. I'm also a huge Dylan fan - my recent novel, *True Love Scars*, (*True Love Scars (The Freak Scene Dream Trilogy) (Volume 1)*) features a main character who is obsessed with Dylan - so every detail of the Rolling Thunder Review is of interest to me. I didn't want Sloman's book to end. Bob Dylan himself called Sloman's book, "The War and Peace of rock 'n' roll." Quite a compliment. If you dig Dylan, this book is for you.

I suppose it's impossible for any journalist to really present Bob Dylan. I'm not sure Bob's really there. He's probably already at the next gig. What I did expect was a thorough description of the times: the tour, the people, the parties, the drugs and alcohol, the difference between the artists and the audience in 1975. Mr Sloman got some really interesting bits--the Bloomfield critique of Dylan's recording methods, Baez' thoughts, Mitchell's theories. But the whole book is missing so much it really doesn't deserve more than 3 stars.

When he had diolog with others this book smokes, when he decribes a personal adventure redundant.

I've read all the Bob books that're worth reading and this one is far and away the best, as close to the honesty--warts and all--and humor and power of *Fear and Loathing On The Campaign Trail '72* as any book I've read. The Bloomfield interview is a stone classic. The Bob quotes and descriptions are priceless. The verbatim interview/transcript approach puts the reader in the room with the speakers. Most any single page of this book gives you more than you'll find in Shelton's entire book. I finished this book and turned directly back to page one and started it again.

Since Dylan came, I've been there. So have lots of us. He's the iconic figure that helps connect the dots for everybody 50 or 60 years old. I've read, collected, listened, copied, imitated, shunned,

exhorted, and every other kind of recognizable mental acknowledgment an attitude for the times. I like finding out new facts about the real Bob Dylan. The more I read about Bob, the more it seems the same stories keep resurfacing with a different twist. Everything is a version of what some "out of the dark" associated person may have said or for sure, according to quotes, did say. Who knows? Before I began plowing into this "On The Road One", I just finished another Dylan book, "Behind The Shades, Revisited", . So far, it's very interesting reading, except for the fact I stay confused about this Ratso fellow. He never seems to show up in any other Dylan biographies, although he writes as if he was continuously on the scene. For me the Rolling Thunder sections of the other Dylan histories represented a boring aspect of the times. Especially when the outsiders are brought into the fold and they are illuminated for the reader's interest. I think the Rolling Thunder aspect of Dylan's history is a large pathetic waste of Dylan's life and performances. There's very little quality listen able music from those times. The jam band, drug infested, hedonistic debacles staged every night throughout the World's stages seem boring. I guess you had to have been there, and probably on stage. So I'm going to continue digging through this first person Dylan tale, and see if Ratso becomes more bonified, and maybe even give the "Renaldo and Clara" episodes more thought.

The reading of the work brings it to life. I might not have read the book; listening to it is engaging.

I dont read biographies on bob Dylan. Read one once and it was plenty enough. *Chronicles*. This book was okay. A tad tedious but I suppose that's what life on the road is :"same stuff different town." Inspired t read more by this author.

I really liked the book and didn't mind if it strayed off to "On the Road With Larry...". I found Sloman's frustrations as entertaining as the accounts of the shows and the filmmaking. Dylan is a hard catch anyway, very allusive and private. And I respected that. But I also respected the writer and the artist's entourage who protects him in this book. I'm not sure if any other journalists had attempted to follow Dylan at this time they wouldn't have or didn't actually get the same treatment. The man is already eccentric, and barely trusted those around him to keep him clear of distraction. Dylan also had a lot of pressure on him filming and performing a very different Dylan show from any other he had attempted before. And he also was balancing a family life with all this. I rate it high and recommend it as an alternative to other books.

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