

Rideshare by Robert, Every Rides a Short Story, is a collection of journalistic short-story essays describing a 7-year, 25,000-ride journey. The stories capture life on the road before, during, and after the Covid-19 Global Pandemic.

Rideshare by Robert: Every Ride's a Short Story

By Bob Reilly

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RIDESHARE

by Robert

Every Ride's a Short Story



7-YEAR JOURNEY AND OVER 25,000 RIDES

Bob Reilly

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Disclaimer

I have made every attempt to provide anonymity for all individuals portrayed in this book. The names have been changed to protect the innocent, and in some cases, the not-so-innocent. I have substituted the characteristics of individuals in the stories to further my attempt to maintain anonymity. Conversations are based on my best recollection, notes, and indelible impressions. Although I have spent time with celebrities and public figures in the last seven years, I have intentionally omitted their names in this book. Locales, and other details of when and where the rides occurred, have been modified to maintain my objective of rider protection and anonymity.

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Forward:

What People Are Saying About the Author and the Book

This is One Ride You Won't Soon Forget

"This must-read book is all about common sense and wisdom. A solid template and path to follow on life's ride with wonderful experiences to contemplate. Bob is not only a great writer but also a good listener and the road on this ride has inspiration, creativity, joy, and honesty. You'll feel like a rideshare passenger, eavesdropping on pearls of wisdom and points of view that perhaps you hadn't considered. Bob's gifts as an accomplished humorist, author, singer, songwriter, and guitarist, allow his personable reflections and appreciation of the art of living to shine. It's essential reading. So, travel along, be a part of 'Rideshare by Robert,' swing the door open and climb in. Get empowered and entertained. This book is a gem ~ fun and important. You'll love the ride...Congratulations Robert!"

- Cerphe Colwell

Washington, DC Rock Radio broadcaster-Infinity Broadcasting/CBS
Radio/Viacom/Audacy MusicPlanetRadio.com

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Author of "Cerphe's Up, A Musical Life
with Bruce Springsteen, Little Feat, Frank Zappa, Tom Waits, CSNY
and Many More" Carrel Books-Skyhorse Publishing

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A Fascinating Peek Behind the Curtain

"Rideshare by Robert is a collection of memorable stories told with heart and humor by a true master of the craft. Hop in and let Bob Reilly regale you with tales of triumph and tragedy, humor, and

warmth. Each new ride gives the reader a tantalizing glimpse into the human spirit in all its glorious, swirling madness. This book is one to keep and one to share with everyone who digs "real-life" with a humorous, poignant, artful spin."

- Susan Butler Colwell

Author of *The Summerlands*, Book 1 of the *Angels and Elementals*
Series

<https://susanbutlercolwell.com/>

"In "Rideshare by Robert," nationally recognized Singer-Songwriter-Guitarist (and rideshare driver), Bob "Robert" Reilly, captivates his readers with tantalizing tales from his six years as a Mid-Atlantic based rideshare driver. Reilly wears many hats while transporting clients to and fro in his faithful blue Honda - sage for every age, front seat philosopher, wildcat therapist, and, at times, behind-the-wheel comedian. Providing lifts without riffs, he never wavers in his ability to embrace the various human spirits he encounters and searches for truth and meaning in the rich assortment of life experiences they offer.

Relax, fasten your seat belts, and get ready for a mesmerizing voyage into the Rideshare world of Bob Reilly."

- Mark Opsasnick, Washington, D.C.-based author, and music historian ("Rock the Potomac")

"Bob Reilly contacted me in the summer of 2010 to see if I was interested in playing eight songs with him at a coffee house in Ellicott City, Maryland. So, on September 4th, 2010, Bob and I started a musical journey that continues to this day.

His original songs are a window into the world that he sees. He uses words like a paintbrush to convey beautiful messages about life and its meaning.

Bob's "Rideshare by Robert" uses the same techniques to tell the many experiences and miles that he has witnessed. Some stories will make you think, and some will have you laughing out loud. This is one book that you won't want to put down!"

- Joe Goulait
"Reilly Goulait Band"
www.bobandjoemusic.com

"The scientific community agrees: Bob Reilly is a decidedly separate and distinct element inhabiting the Periodic Table. One of the only people on planet Earth who requires--please wait while I double-check my scientific calculations here--a grand total of zero hours of sleep. But his inherent estrangement from this activity translates into a huge win for mere mortals who otherwise pillow their heads in expectation of actual REM.

There's no reason to sugarcoat things. Bob's joie de vivre far exceeds that of the kid in the candy store. Along with basketball players who tower over seven feet, Bob's been known over the course of these rides, to drive his faithful blue Honda while simultaneously sitting in the back seat, taking careful and copious notes from clients.

File in, buckle up, and see where the road takes you."

- Tony Glaros
Freelance Journalist, Teacher, Writer.
www.muckrack.com/tony-glaros

"Our journey as friends began when we were just 14 years old.

Bob Reilly's talent as a singer, leader, and humorist, leaped off the stage even then, as the lead singer for a 10-piece cover band. He has impressed me again, over 50 years later, with a brilliant offering into the world of rideshare...using those same talents to transport, charm, comfort, and tell the tales of this unique community.

Bob Reilly

I have just finished and thoroughly enjoyed, reading many of the stories and the background behind the stories of his rideshare world. I am delighted and inspired that he was able to recognize God's plan for his life and work at this time. His compassion for the human soul and his gift of humor are absolute gifts to his riders and readers.

Keep up the good work Bob and keep the faith!"

- Cynthia Lynn, Ph.D.

Author of the Logan McKee Series, entrepreneur, adjunct professor, businesswoman, and world-class Nana

"Bob Reilly has blended joy, sadness, and poignancy in compelling stories. A fulfilling read!"

- Ev Foster

Author of *A Killing in Cumberland*

"My friend, Bob Reilly, and I go way back to early 1986 when our wives worked together in a restaurant. I was a DJ there on the few nights I wasn't on stage with various bands I performed with. Bob would drift over and chat with me while I spun records (yes, vinyl LPs in those days).

Bob is a versatile and highly intelligent friend who surprised me when he presented samples of his book "Rideshare by Robert" for me to peruse. Who knew Author was on his list of achievements? His writing is moving, witty, and insightful. I enjoyed reading about his experiences and anticipate more enjoyment when I finally get to read the whole book.

Keep up the good work Bob!"

- Johnny Castle

Singer-Songwriter, Musician, Teacher
Current Band: The Thrillbilys Band

Former Bands: Crank, The Nighthawks, Tex Rubinowitz & The Bad Boys, Switchblade, Bill Kirchen & Too Much Fun

“You’ve gotta read this book by one of the best storytellers ever. I’ve sat and reveled in Bob’s stories for years, and I’m glad he put them together in a book that keeps you riveted from beginning to end. It’s like you’re there in the car while he takes on his next interesting passenger. Every ride is a short story indeed. Bob’s rides throughout the Covid pandemic are particularly enamoring. He shares the different views of his customers, their conversations, and Bob’s reactions to the ride experience. He puts his humor, faith, and humanity on display for all of them.

This is entertainment at its best. Bob Reilly has taken the ridesharing experience to the next level.

It’s enjoyable, personable, thoughtful, and chock full of interesting folks he’s met along the way.”

- Paul Goldbeck
Photographer/Videographer
AU Beck Productions
240.893.7585
aubeckproductions@gmail.com
www.aubeck.com

“When Robert “Bob” Reilly was exiting the shipping and logistics industry as a “top of his field” senior executive and consultant, he was faced with a serious decision. In typical Bob Reilly fashion of turning lemons into lemonade, he quickly assessed the situation and jumped into the brave new world of rideshare, never looking back. Many other middle-aged men saw rideshare as an opportunity to make a quick buck in a changing economy, as they moved towards retirement or another career. But Bob saw a way to combine several of his passions, including his deep personal faith, his love of humanity, and his deep

Bob Reilly

study of its spirit. He has creatively mixed in his own music in the process.

This book is the culmination of his original vision. I believe he would agree that so much more has unfolded because of stepping into this unique universe. This journey has opened so many possibilities and eclipsed his original goal of journaling the rideshare experience. It's rife with Bob's unique insight and humor. It solidifies his reputation as a talented storyteller. The stories range from the everyday mundane, the extraordinary, the touching, the tragic, and the all too human.

So, reach for the car door, step in, and don't forget to bring your open mind and open heart with you. You'll be greeted by a big smile and warm welcome. More importantly, you are sure to learn something new about the richness of your world, as expressed through its inhabitants.

Enjoy the "Ride" (forgive the mixed metaphor), and take a long, sweet, cool sip of this unique concoction, courtesy of Bob's 4-wheeled Lemonade Stand!



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“In reading story after story in Bob “Robert” Reilly’s collection of essays “Rideshare by Robert” it’s obvious that Bob is a gifted writer and storyteller whose stories are told in an easy, conversational style. Accumulated from over 25,000 rides, many of which took place in the Washington-Baltimore region, at the height of the COVID crisis, it also becomes obvious that Bob is a man of faith with a heart of gold that he readily shares with his riders. What follows are many compassionately told stories that are sometimes humorous, sometimes heart-wrenching, sometimes thought-provoking, but always entertaining.”

- Art Allen
Freelance Artist
www.graphixartdesign.com

“Join my longtime friend Bob (Robert) Reilly while he spins tales of his adventures as a rideshare driver. Clearly, riding with Bob is an experience far more profound than simply getting transported from pickup location to destination. Along the way, from Point A to Point B, riders (and readers) should be prepared to reflect, laugh, philosophize, and share deep personal connections. Bob looks beneath the surface to find commonality and humanity among his diverse cast of riders. With humor, insight, spirituality, compassion, and great tenderness, Bob takes us all on a journey through his rideshare experiences in this series of real-life vignettes and reflections.

How fortunate that we get to tag along for the ride!”

- Ellen Berrahmoun
Flutist/Writer/Photographer/ Arts Educator
Photography: <https://fineartamerica.com/profiles/ellen-berrahmoun>
Work in Print:
The Secret Life of the City: Street Portraits of Grace and Beauty
<https://www.blurb.com/b/4779584-the-secret-life-of-the-city>
Music: <https://soundcloud.com/jazzboxmusic>

Bob Reilly

"Humorist and man of faith, Bob "Robert" Reilly, gives us a candid and refreshingly realistic view of the stories of all of us who are trying to make sense of the difficult world and lives we find ourselves in. Robert's welcoming grace he offers others in the backseat of his ridesharing Honda Civic opens the door for his passengers to share the truth of their lives in the safety of his sanctuary on wheels.

This book is filled with the grit of this life met by the faith of this storyteller saint whose journey through triumph and failure reveals itself in the empathy extended to one and all in the backseat of his little sanctuary.

Giving hope as a child of God should: one life at a time."

- Jon Paul
Writer, Consultant

Introduction

Welcome to Rideshare by Robert, and the amazing world that's known as rideshare.

My name is Bob Reilly AKA The Roads Scholar.

This book was written to capture some of the profound experiences of my last seven years as a rideshare driver. Before, during, and after the Covid-19 Global Pandemic. During this time, I completed over 25,000 rides and spent personal time with approximately 33,000 people. Most of the rides and related stories took place in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States.

My book is broken down into journalistic short-story essays. The idea of this format was inspired by the title of the book, "Every Ride's A Short Story." This concept came to me after four months of driving. The diverse range of stories, insights, reflections, and revelations were all birthed from this basic premise.

Every ride is not a "Sunny Day Moment," nor is every observation or commentary on the rideshare experience. There's something here to challenge, offend, inspire, motivate, celebrate, reject, embrace, accept, or dismiss, for every reader.

Perhaps you'll even be entertained along the way.

If I accomplished any of the above in evoking, or in some cases, provoking, something in the reader, I believe I've accomplished something as a writer.

My heart desires that whatever these stories, perspectives, and meanderings stir in you, please take a moment to pause and listen. Perhaps through internal processing, you will gain new insight about yourself, why you think the way you do, and who you are as a person connected to this greater thing that we call humanity.

Every squeaky-clean feel-good, funny, or tearful reflection has a gritty, messy, smelly, real moment around the corner.

Welcome to the rideshare life. Welcome to my universe.

As I tell people often, this book is not for everyone, any more than being a rideshare driver is for everyone, however, this book is about everyone.

This book is about you and me. It's our story.

In fact, it's the story of humankind. Each one of us is the story.

When people tell me they would like to write a story or a book, but they don't know where to begin, I tell them, "You are the story. You are the book. Start writing."

I did not start my rideshare journey fully open to the creative process of photography and writing stories. Prior to jumping into the gig economy, I was in the middle of a six-month process of trying to reenter the job market. After 35 years in my industry, as a senior-level executive and consultant, I found myself on the outside looking in. My full-time job search, punctuated by second and third-round interviews, was an exercise in total frustration. In some cases, finding out the job I was interviewing for was given to a younger person whom I had mentored along the way. I was delighted for these people who secured a job, and at the same time, I was managing the mixed emotions of losing the potential job I was pursuing.

During all this chaos and transition, my wife lost her job. She was suffering from severe medical conditions requiring immediate attention.

I could sense a deep loss of confidence; frankly. I was struggling with my identity.

In faith, at my core, I knew who I was and that the current season would surely pass, however, in the hazy fog of swirling emotions, and external forces bearing down, the experience was earth-shattering.

Clarity was slipping away. Shell shock.

Truth is, we don't always think clearly when a bomb detonates.

A friend of mine strongly suggested I get out of my job search cycle and get on the road for a while as a rideshare driver. What? Drive total strangers around in my car? Are you kidding? However, he saw something I couldn't fully see at the time. He recognized my highly relational self. He knew instinctively I would dry up inside without daily human interaction.

So, with much resistance, I entered the world of rideshare.

For close to four months, I was very discontent. I was looking up and crying out. Trying to make sense of this new reality. I was not a very happy camper. I was processing this new life condition, questioning why, and not managing it very well. Then, one day, a

bright light revelation moment filled the interior of my vehicle and overtook me.

Bam!

I was moved from “grumbling to humbling.” I was exactly where I was meant to be for a greater purpose. I did not fully grasp the purpose, or how things would unfold, but I knew it in my deepest being.

In the coming months and years, I journaled four binders of stories. Stories about my personal transformation, rider stories, and stories about other rideshare drivers. I also began taking pictures and marrying them with text on Instagram and other social media.

Photojournalism.

I conceived the brand name Rideshare by Robert to umbrella this world I was entering.

A new beginning. A fresh perspective.

The creative energy was uncontainable. My heart and my senses were open. The creative vision was unfolding before my very eyes. Every conversation. Every moment of silence. Every look. Everywhere.

Creation. Transformation.

And so, with that historical backdrop, climb in, buckle up, and get ready for a wild and wonderful ride.

A ride unlike any other. Filled with unique stories about you and me.

Humanity. Many tribes and many nations.

I've arrived, I'm here. I'm ready. I see your smile, so let's get going.

You are now entering the world of Rideshare by Robert.

A place where anything can happen and usually does.

About The Author

Bob Reilly was born in Washington, D.C., and currently resides in Maryland. This is Bob's first published book, with several creative projects in the works. These would include recording original songs inspired by stories in the book, and a YouTube Channel with an audio Podcast. All under the Rideshare by Robert brand.

He is a prolific songwriter, recording, and performance artist. You can find his latest albums and singles on your popular music streaming platforms.

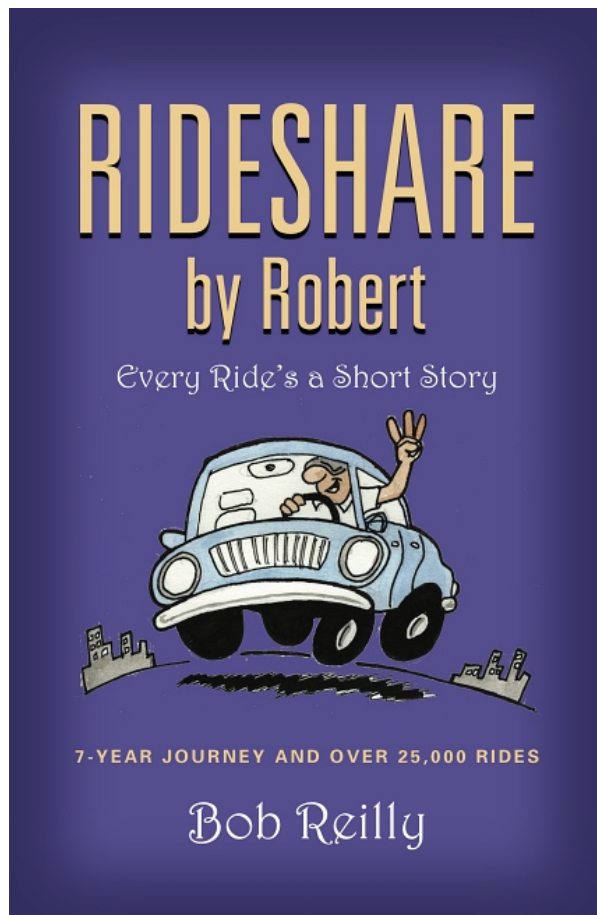
Bob Reilly: Work in Progress
Bob Reilly: The Bridge/Unexpected Ways
Bob Reilly: Perfect Love
Bob Reilly: The Journey Home

More about the author can be found in the Forward section of this book.

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