

## [Back Seat Producers](#)

We Don't Make Movies, But We'll Let You Know What Is and Isn't Working in Hollywood.

- [front page](#)
- [contests](#)
- [about](#)
- [RSS](#)

*MOVIE – MOTION PICTURE – SHOW – FLICK – MOVING PICTURE – PICTURE  
– PICTURE SHOW – FILM – COMING ATTRACTION – DOCUMENTARY – 3-D  
– INFOTAINMENT – SILENT MOVIE – ROUGH CUT – SLOW MOTION – SCENE  
– TALKIE – FINAL CUT – FEATURE FILM – SHOT – CREDITS – DVD EXTRAS*



- **Drinks, DVDs or tickets**

[Make A Donation](#)

- **Contact Us**

Voice Mail: 618.207.4747  
Email: [tony@](#)  
Email: [adam@](#)  
more to come

- **Subscribe**

[Subscribe with iTunes](#)  
[Subscribe \(RSS\)](#)

- **Favorite Sites**

- [Geeklabel](#)
- [Netflix Now Playing](#)

- **Podcasts**

- [DragonLance Canticle](#)
- [Fear The Boot](#)
- [Geeklabel](#)
- [Red Earth Saga](#)
- [Scifi Smackdown](#)
- [Sofa Dogs](#)
- [The Habitual Insomniac](#)
- [The Kick-Ass Mystic Ninjas](#)
- [Tony's Losing It](#)

- **Podiobooks**

- [7th Son: OBSIDIAN](#)
- [Billibub Baddings and the Case of the Singing Sword](#)
- [Chasing the Bard](#)

- [Morevi: Remastered](#)
- [Nina Kimberly The Merciless](#)
- [Nocturnal](#)

## • Sponsors



NETFLIX  
Rent Movies From Netflix  
Only \$4<sup>99</sup>/mo  
No Late Fees  
100,000+ Titles  
Free Shipping  
[Click here](#)

Record  
Edit  
Mix  
Publish

← [Theatrical Review: Saw V Weekend Box Office For October 24 - 26](#) →

## DVD Preview: Inside Bob Dylan's Jesus Years: Busy Being Born Again

October 26th, 2008 · Author: Tony2 · [4 Comments](#)

### Gonna Change Your Way of Thinking

Joel Gilbert's documentary on Bob Dylan's sudden conversion to Christianity is an authentic, detail-oriented and thought-provoking work. It is a must see for fans and casual viewers alike. The subject-matter alone is fascinating and remains, thirty years from its occurrence, a little told story about the already mythic and mysterious artist.



On November 9, 1979, Bob Dylan shocked San Francisco (and America at large) by performing nothing but new songs from his gospel album titled "Slow Train Coming," and other then-unreleased gospel songs written by the rock poet. The fans, expecting his hits, classics, or the man they have created in their mind as a result of all of his previous records, is nowhere to be found.

When presumably being asked something about why he didn't play any of his old songs at the concert or why he may have changed his music's message, Dylan speaks in archived footage from the era "The old stuff's not gonna save them and uh... I'm not gonna save them. Neither is anybody else gonna save them. They can boogie all night. It's not gonna work."

The purpose of the first-half seems to be orienting the viewer with the world Dylan was entering at the time: The Vineyard Movement, a decentralized and individualistic approach to Christianity—progressive at the time. This viewpoint, coupled with the perspective of Messianic Judaism, or, Jewish

believers in Jesus as the foretold Messiah, frames the manner in which Bob Dylan, of Jewish descent, considers and then pursues his own journey to Jesus Christ.

The second-half of the film covers the most controversial music Dylan had made since he went electric in 1965. Alienating his fan base once again, Dylan pursued this journey of personal discovery as his primary artistic expression for two and a half full-length albums and four years of touring, after which fans and critics alike remain, I would argue, mostly confused about where his belief system stands today. We are treated to samples of Dylan's preaching at the concerts, and interviews with the band, and there is, at the heart of the film, a serious discussion of the seemingly contradictory dichotomy between religion and rock 'n' roll and whether Dylan was able to reconcile the two.

The film is helmed by Joel Gilbert, and released by the company Highway 61 Entertainment. Gilbert and the company seem to be offshoots of a professional Dylan tribute band called "Highway 61 Revisited." Gilbert dresses like Dylan, and passes as a shadow of someone who might have been a version of Dylan in "I'm Not There." Gilbert's appearance is a bit distracting—it makes the film seem wholly subjective from the jump. But Gilbert asks the right questions about this period of life, challenges his interview subjects from different perspectives, and is a competent and informed interviewer. It also does an excellent job of bringing in voices of contempt for Dylan's work during that period, most notable of which apparently was Joel Selvin, writer for the San Francisco Chronicle. Selvin really gives the music industry, critics, and disenchanting fans, a voice in this film.

I would argue that the only weakness of the documentary is that the entire affect of the film, in the aggregate, seems to be sympathetic to Dylan's conversion. But, in truth, the film spends a lot of time trying to understand what Dylan was converting *to*, rather than promoting or discouraging *why* he converted.



In the end, the film ends on a different type of note than it began, takes a somewhat surprising turn, and attempts to reveal what the film feels Dylan has always been trying to get at in his never-ending search.

As a fan of Dylan, my greatest acclaim for this film is that it covers a great deal of uncharted territory, to my knowledge, for the very first time on film and uses primary sources. It may be the most important source on Dylan's Christian music to date, period. Only "Behind the Shades Revisited," a book on Dylan's life, has adequately shed some light on Dylan's work in this period to my knowledge, besides the few interviews Dylan has given himself. For enthusiasts and analysts of Dylan's work, that makes this film very important.

I highly recommend this film for both people who love Dylan and casual viewers who may not have even been aware that this period of Dylan's music existed.

No matter what conclusion one draws about what Dylan's life or music means, your perspective is limited prior to having seen this documentary if you had not been deeply involved in Dylan's music during this period or are not a huge fan of it. It will change the way you think about Dylan's music, and perhaps his life. If you're measuring Dylan's artistry through metrics that do not include an analysis of this period, it will create a different set of rules to do so.

**Tags:** [DVD Review](#) · [Preview](#) · [Text Reviews](#)

#### 4 responses so far ↓

- [1 Tom Grasty](#) // Oct 27, 2008 at 9:30 am

I am really looking forward to grabbing this. It's a part of Dylan's history I really find interesting.

Since you, too, are obviously a fan, I thought I'd introduce you to my new novel, BLOOD ON THE TRACKS, which I think you'd enjoy.

It's a murder-mystery. But not just any rock superstar is knocking on heaven's door. The murdered rock legend is none other than Bob Dorian, an enigmatic, obtuse, inscrutable, well, you get the picture...

Suspects? Tons of them. The only problem is they're all characters in Bob's songs.

You can get a copy on Amazon.com or go "behind the tracks" at <http://www.bloodonthetracksnovel.com> to learn more about the book.

- [2 Jeannette Allegra](#) // Oct 27, 2008 at 1:15 pm

Interviews are engaging. Graphics are innovative, clever, keeping things moving. It's obvious you know your look-a-like and want us all to share what you found out about the amazing Dylan. Great addition to my collection.

- [3 Chuck](#) // Oct 31, 2008 at 11:54 am

Opening night was in fact November 1, 1979.

The only "old" song that Bob had rehearsed with the band in Santa Monica was "It's All in the Game", a 1958 hit for Tommy Edwards. But even in the van on the way to the Warfield, we still didn't know he was going to play only the "Slow Train" songs. There was no encore.

On the second night, after a long post-show delay and in street clothes, Bob and the band came back onstage to acknowledge the applause from the fans who liked the show and wouldn't leave.

But he didn't have another new song to play. So they wrote one on the spot, "Pressing On", a throwaway like most of "Saved".

Read "Restless Pilgrim" by Scott Marshall if you are still interested in this story.

- [4 Tony #2](#) // Nov 5, 2008 at 2:25 pm

Wow, thank you Chuck for that information. I thought it was Nov 9, because the stub they used in the film—supposedly the SF Chronicle writer's stub—had the date Nov. 9th on it.

I've heard the Dylan made significant changes to "Love and Theft" lyrics on the spot as well. And I think the album "Saved," while generally dismissed, has some great songs on it. "Pressing On" being one of them. So it doesn't surprise me that a song that's pretty darn good was a throwaway for Dylan.

Good stuff.

## Leave a Comment

Name

Mail

Website

Submit

## • Search It!

To search, type and hit e

## • Recent Entries

- [Weekend Box Office For November 7 - 9](#)11.10
- [Theatrical Review: Zack and Miri Make a Porno](#)11.9
- [News Briefs](#)11.5
- [Weekend Box Office For October 31 - November 2](#)11.3
- [Theatrical Review: Rock N Rolla](#)11.2
- [BSP Episode 078: The Sixth Sense](#)10.31
- [News Briefs](#)10.29
- [Weekend Box Office For October 24 - 26](#)10.27
- [DVD Preview: Inside Bob Dylan's Jesus Years: Busy Being Born Again](#)10.26
- [Theatrical Review: Saw V](#)10.26

- [Visit the archives for more!](#)

## • Categories

- [Announcement](#)
- [Contests](#)
- [Events](#)
- [News](#)
- [Promo](#)
- [Shows](#)
  - [BSR](#)
  - [Conventions](#)
  - [Double Trouble](#)
  - [Feedback](#)
  - [On The Lot](#)
  - [Special Episode](#)
  - [Special Guests](#)
- [Text Reviews](#)
  - [DVD Review](#)
  - [Preview](#)
  - [Theatrical Review](#)
  - [TV Review](#)

## • Archives

- [November 2008](#)
- [October 2008](#)
- [September 2008](#)
- [August 2008](#)
- [July 2008](#)
- [June 2008](#)
- [May 2008](#)
- [April 2008](#)
- [March 2008](#)
- [February 2008](#)
- [January 2008](#)
- [December 2007](#)
- [November 2007](#)
- [October 2007](#)
- [September 2007](#)
- [August 2007](#)
- [July 2007](#)
- [June 2007](#)
- [May 2007](#)
- [April 2007](#)
- [March 2007](#)
- [February 2007](#)
- [January 2007](#)
- [December 2006](#)
- [November 2006](#)
- [October 2006](#)
- [September 2006](#)
- [August 2006](#)
- [July 2006](#)
- [June 2006](#)
- [May 2006](#)
- [April 2006](#)

## • Admin

- [Log in](#)