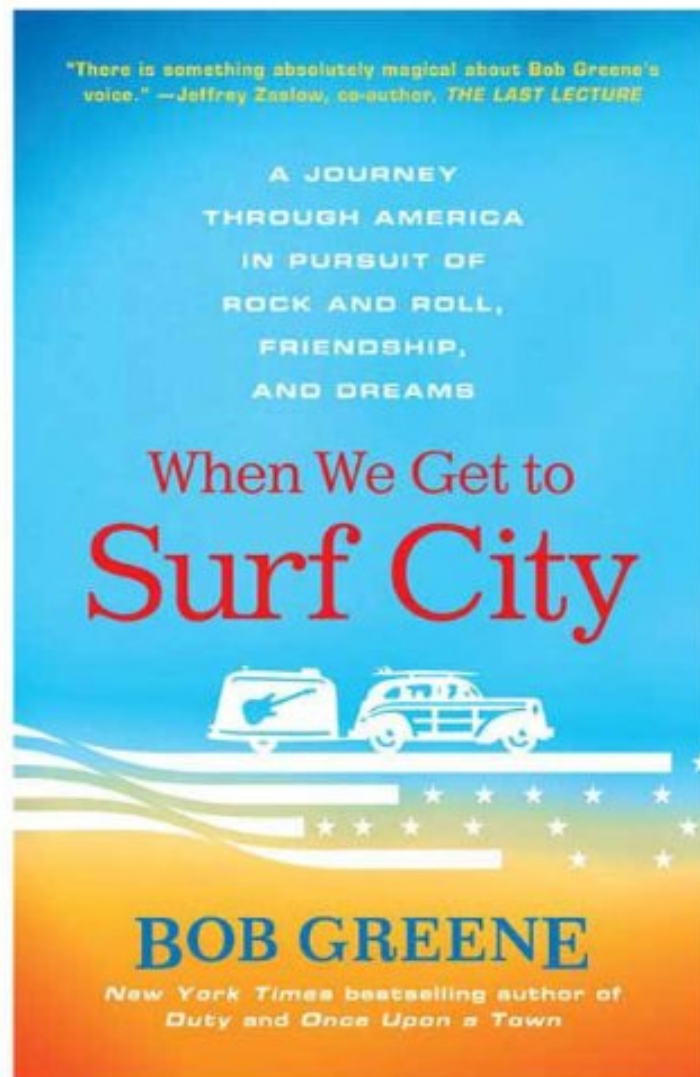


[PDF] When We Get to Surf City: A Journey Through America in Pursuit of Rock and Roll, Friendship, and Dreams

## When We Get to Surf City: A Journey Through America in Pursuit of Rock and Roll, Friendship, and Dreams

Bob Greene

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**Bob Greene : When We Get to Surf City: A Journey Through America in Pursuit of Rock and Roll, Friendship, and Dreams** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised When We Get to Surf City: A Journey Through America in Pursuit of Rock and Roll, Friendship, and Dreams:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Jan and Dean on tourBy sundaeLove Bob Greene. Followed his writing in Chicago when he wrote a newspaper column. His books can be funny, heartfelt, and insightful. This book is

about when he toured with Jan and Dean. He was actually invited to sing with them on their yearly tours. I felt like I went on tour with them by reading this book. Got the inside of what it's like to go on tour with a rock group, got insights into other groups they were billed with (like the Beach Boys and many others). Learned a lot about Jan and Dean and how they were able to work around Jan's problems (from that "Deadman's Curve" accident). Very interesting documentary written by a fine writer. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Behind the scenes with Bob Jan Dean

By KJ Thank you, Bob Greene, for writing this book! This is a great inside perspective of the Jan Dean touring experience in the last years of Jan Berry's life. At various times it is funny, sad and triumphant, and overall a tribute to the passion and persistence of Jan through all of the adversities that resulted from his near-fatal 1966 car crash. It's also a tribute to Dean Torrence, who was a kind and good friend to Jan all of those years after the accident. It couldn't have been easy but he stuck with him to the end. If you're interested in rock roll history and the 60s era this book is for you. Another great read from years ago is *Be True To Your School*, also written by Bob Greene and the driver for this one in a way. *When We Get To Surf City...* is almost a sequel. Very good! 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Every Teenager's Dream Come True--Bob Greene Does it Again

By Dawn Lee Wakefield Kent Kotal's *Forgotten Hits* blog noting Bob Greene's best work to date was enough of a heads-up to take a closer look. From a regular spot in the audience to stage left, Greene gave up the comfort of a famous writer to become a road rookie on Jan and Dean's summer shows. In the 1960s Bob was a typical teenager driving with the car radio blaring Jan and Dean's latest hit; forty years later, Bob Greene is on guitar, on stage, offering backing vocals for Jan and Dean. Subtitle: "Every teenager's dream come true". Greene's musical fantasy began when keyboardist/songwriter Gary Griffin, today part of the Surf City Allstars, read Greene's book "*Be True to Your School*". Griffin phoned with the chance of a lifetime; would Greene like to join Jan Dean and the band that summer? Two seconds later, he agreed. At his own expense, Bob packed his guitar, his computer and on the road he went. That summer of fun turned into 14 more. In that time, Greene forged true friendships and became "one of the boys of summer". The basic tale moves quickly, courtesy of Greene's "you-are-there" writing. Hidden inside the story of surf music is a special back story: the lifelong partnership/friendship between Jan Berry and Dean Torrence. Music aficionados know the real story of "Dead Man's Curve" and how Jan Berry went from savant musician and promising prodigy to "young man in ICU" overnight in a nightmare-fulfilling prophecy. Berry's injuries never fully healed. Fans had no idea, until "Surf city", that Jan Berry, once called genius, listened to a cassette daily to re-learn the words to his own songs. Jan's limitations caused dual strain for Torrence, who did his job and Jan's, graciously maintaining an image of "everything's alright; it's all good." For the first time the "Dean", Torrence's true character and devotion to his friend is revealed. Jan's full-time job was just to show up and be the "Jan" part of the duo. The rest was left to Dean to bring it all together, and he did so, thanks to a superb band including Griffin, Philip Bardowell, David Logeman, and Chris Farmer. "Surf City" is your front and center concert seat, eyewitness perch for summer fun. Greene shares his insight into the hearts and minds behind the melodies and harmonies of surf music legends Berry and Torrence, and their band--unquestionably a must-read. This review also appeared in "Keep Rockin'" magazine, January/February, 2010 issue.

In a dazzling and exhilarating display of narrative on-the-road reporting, award-winning journalist and New York Times bestselling author Bob Greene takes readers on an unforgettable American journey of music, memories, and universal longing. Running away to join the circus is a dream we're told to put away once we're no longer young. But, as Bob Greene writes, "just when in our lives we give up on capturing the freedom and bright mornings of our world when it was new, sometimes something happens to keep the sun high in the sky a while longer. Sometimes we find something we weren't even aware we were looking for." For fifteen years beginning in the 1990s, Greene stepped into a universe that, out in the country every summer night, is hiding in plain sight: the touring world of the great early rock bands who gave America the car-radio and jukebox music it still loves best. Singing backup with the legendary Jan and Dean as they endlessly crisscross the nation, Greene takes us to football stadiums and minor-league ballparks, to no-name ice cream stands and midnight diners, to back roads and carnival midways as he tells a riveting story of great fame and lingering sorrow, of unexpected friendship and lasting dreams, of the things that keep us going in the face of all the things that threaten to stop us. Striking chords of recognition and yearning, *When We Get to Surf City* glistens with cameos by the men and women with whom Greene traveled the United States on his deliriously unlikely journey, including Chuck Berry, Martha and the Vandellas, the Everly Brothers, Jerry Lee Lewis, the Beach Boys, the Monkees, the Kingsmen, James Brown, Lesley Gore, the Drifters, Little Eva, and the Coasters. All of them; not just the people on the stage, but the people in the audiences, are seeking their private versions of the mythical destination Jan and Dean came up with all those years ago: Surf City as the perfect, cloudless place we all believe is out there, if only we can find it. Hilarious and heartbreaking, moving and brilliant, this is the trip of a lifetime, a travelogue of the heart, accompanied by a thundering guitar chorus of Fender Stratocasters. It is a story destined to touch readers not just today, but for generations to come, as long as the music itself echoes.

From Publishers Weekly In 1992, author and NPR commentator Greene was invited onstage to sing Surf City with the 1960s surf duo, Jan and Dean. Greene didn't know it at the time, but he would spend the next 15 years touring and

performing with them. Greene narrates the tedium and joy of touring as a middle-aged man with other middle-aged men whose greatest celebrity was three to four decades in the past. Yet Jan and Dean were unlike any other oldies road show, for Jan had suffered injuries in a 1966 car accident so severe that they affected every moment of his life. Greene travels a circuit of state fairs, stadiums, amusement parks and corporate showrooms, living a grown-up version of his teenage fantasy. His main focus is the peculiarities of life in the heartland, the dynamics of performing and the deep, unspoken friendships among men who make their livings on the road. Greene also has a series of bizarre encounters with aging celebrities ranging from James Brown to Frank Sinatra. Throughout, Greene shows unusual sensitivity to detail. At times, however, one wishes he would have provided more background on his subjects, as the nuances of surf rock are pretty obscure to many under the age of 60. Overall, the structure of the book mirrors perfectly life on the road—a blur studded with moments of great intensity. (May) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. “There is something absolutely magical about Bob Greene’s voice. No, not his voice onstage, singing backup with Jan and Dean. But his voice in this book, well, it just soars. It’s a voice that is all at once lyrical and heartfelt and full of great humor. After a thousand summer choruses, Bob Greene’s voice has never been better.”— Jeffrey Zaslow, co-author, *The Last Lecture* “I love this book. . . It takes me back to an age that, for all who lived through it, never ends: a time of sun and surf and fun before the cynicism and war and rebellion. . . Reading it, I am there again without a care and with friends I have never met, but whose music is as much a part of me as my closest relative. . . Wonderful, wonderful.”— Cal Thomas, syndicated columnist “Greene has distinguished himself as America’s poet laureate of summer.”— Baton Rouge Advocate “Joyous, loving, funny and touching, like a salty breeze blowing memories across the page. And it puts that music— that wonderful music— right back in your head where it belongs.”— Huntington Beach (California) Independent “The perfect summer vacation book. . . It takes you back to the feeling of those hot summer nights when you were younger, and every day was about fast cars, fast food, your favorite friends and favorite records.”— Bob Sirott, *One More Thing*, NBC-TV “A dream come true.”— New York Post “Four stars. . . revealing. . . hilarious. . . about the still-redemptive powers of rock and roll at any age, and, ultimately, of friendship.”— Mojo magazine, Great Britain “Bob Greene rode this perfect wave. . . back to cloudless blue skies and ‘two girls for every boy.’ Back to burgers and shakes at the Dairy Queen and the thrill of the perfect song on the radio. Like The New Yorkers’ John McPhee, Greene has a writer’s gift of breathing unexpected life into the seemingly mundane. . . real affection and poignancy.”— The Christian Science Monitor “Wonderful. . . masterful.”— Hutchinson (Minnesota) Leader “I didn’t want this book to end. . . The ribbon of highway with its pleasures and perils is worth it all when you roll up to the next stage and unload your gear. The band, the audience and the music will soon become one again, and is there anything better than that? . . . Absolutely essential reading.”— Bob Stroud, WDRV radio, Chicago “Bob Greene is speaking your language. . . The transforming power of music, how it can bring you right back to the first time you heard it, how it can make you feel sunny on a gray day, how it can be enough to make your life work. . . It gets right into your heart and soul.”— Bob Lefsetz, *The Lefsetz Letter* “For Bob Greene, touring the country and singing backup in a rock group was the equivalent of running away and joining the circus. Wasn’t that everyone’s dream at some time? . . . This guy is amazingly versatile. He can write about anything and somehow make it relate to almost any reader.”— North Platte (Nebraska) Telegraph “A home run.”—David Galassie, Associated Content “One of the best books on music of the year. . . A sentimental journey through the heart of America. . . the true story of a rock and roll band that has been to the top of the charts and seen it all, only to have it quickly and brutally fall apart.”— Crawdaddy magazine “It’s all golden. . . It’s about being on tour with a band that brings summer everywhere they go, but more than that, it’s a story of love and loyalty, and the freedom of the open road.”— Ken Shane, *Popdosen*