

## A Complete Unknown

AMY O'LEARY Back Porch Stories  
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I have just seen the movie 'A Complete Unknown' for the second time. And if it is shown at our own Frontier Cinema, I might see it a third time, I liked it so much. It is a movie about the great American musician Bob Dylan and takes place mostly in New York's Greenwich Village from 1961 to 1965. I loved this film because it taught me a few things and this old broad loves learning something new.

The movie is based on the book 'Dylan Goes Electric!' by Elijah Wald and shows Dylan beginning his career at nineteen as a folk singer, meeting Pete Seeger and his idol, Woody Guthrie. Dylan was a Jewish boy who moved from the Midwest, changed his name and never looked back. He started out playing solo on his acoustic guitar and writing songs. The movie ends with him playing an electric guitar with a fully amped band behind him.



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I admit that I didn't know much about him before I saw this movie. I never owned a Bob Dylan album. My brother Kim said he had one, but I never heard it played. My family wasn't a folk-song kind of family. However, I can remember our family being invited over to homes in the late sixties where, after dinner, someone might bring out a guitar, start playing, and everyone would sing along. The songs I remember singing were 'Puff the Magic Dragon', 'This Land is Your Land', 'Down in the Valley' and others.

Dylan landed on the early sixties folk music scene at the right time, at the right place, and met the right people. That trifecta of good fortune wouldn't have mattered a lick had it not been for his talent. He played the guitar, harmonica and sang. His voice was unique--a comedy troupe I was in had fun imitating his talking and singing, but his song writing was what knocked me out. Man, that guy could write a song! He was always writing, jotting down the lyrics on whatever paper was at hand. He wrote Blowin' in the Wind, Like a Rolling Stone, The Times They Are A Changing, Mr. Tambourine Man and so many more that spoke to so many people.

The early sixties were a time of unrest in this country. President Kennedy, and Malcolm X had been assassinated, Civil Rights protests were going on, and a very scary threat of a nuclear war sparking W/Will dominated the news. If a folk singer/songwriter was looking for what to write about, they would only have to pick up a newspaper or turn on the television.

There was also unrest in the music scene during that time. Rock 'n' Roll wasn't accepted by everyone, mostly adults, and the thought was that either you were a folk singer or you were a delinquent playing loud music that made teenagers dance funny, but not both. Dylan crossed the line and wasn't immediately embraced for it. No matter, people would come around eventually. Sir Bob would keep playing and writing and has had the esteemed honor of receiving the prestigious Nobel Prize in Literature for his song writing. He is in his eighties and still touring.

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The movie showed what it was like in New York during the time Bob Dylan came on the music scene. He wore rumpled clothes. He was unkempt and he smoked like a chimney. But none of that mattered because of what came out of his mind. The music was so good! This old broad got a history lesson and got her toes tapping watching a really great movie.

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