



## My Custom Van: And 50 Other Mind-Blowing Essays that Will Blow Your Mind All Over Your Face

By Michael Ian Black

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Get ready for the read of your life. Never before has a single book combined awesome vans, unicorns, Billy Joel, and erotic fiction in such a potent combination. A writing tour de force? Perhaps. A reading experience that will sear itself into your consciousness like a red-hot branding iron? Without question.

Comedian and basic cable superstar Michael Ian Black unleashes the full fury of his astonishing intellect in this collection of short comic essays. *My Custom Van* is a no-holds-barred assault to the funny bone that will literally beat you into submission with hilarity\*.

How did he do it? How did he create such a fine anthology? Answer: With love. Michael opened his heart and used the magical power of love to write more than fifty thought-provoking essays like, "Why I Used a Day-Glo Magic Marker to Color My Dick Yellow," and "An Open Letter to the Hair Stylist Who Somehow Convinced Me to Get a Perm When I Was in Sixth Grade."

Maybe you think love is not a substitute for "good writing skills" and "spell check." Bull pucky! When it comes to writing books, love is the most powerful word processor of all.

Sounds pretty great, right? And yet...something is still holding you back from paying the full purchase price of this book. What is it? Perhaps you secretly believe you do not deserve a book this good. Nonsense -- you deserve this book and so much more. In fact, if Michael could have written you all the stars in the sky, that's what he would have done. But he couldn't do that, due to his lack of knowledge in the area of astronomy. So he wrote this book instead.

And this flap copy.

Enjoy.

\* Michael Ian Black is not responsible for any actual injuries caused by reading this book.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Michael Ian Black has proven that even the most simple-minded among us can occasionally create works of genius." -- Stephen Colbert

"Like all custom vans, Michael Ian Black's book is customized to fit all your needs and wants for the journey of your life. It's luxurious, entertaining, spooky, disturbing, and hilarious. Devil's in the details! It's stocked with tacos, vampires, squirrels, a cleaning lady, scented candles, salami, tundra, and a foreword by Abe Lincoln himself -- now that's Class with a capital C. Enjoy the ride of your lifetime." -- Amy Sedaris

"This is a great book for shut-ins, for people who like to laugh at sentences, and people who like to move their belongings from place to place. In fact, anyone who likes to pack or ship anything will find a lot to like in these pages." -- Dave Eggers

"Fun to read while you're pooping." -- Sarah Silverman

"I always walk away jealous and a little fearful of Michael Ian Black's sharp comedic wit. If you like your comedy dry, absurd, and unforced, you will love this book." -- Jim Gaffigan

"Michael Ian Black speaks to the laughless in all of us and asks, 'Why aren't you laughing?' Then he takes the laughless in all of us roughly by the shoulders and INSISTS THAT WE LAUGH, usually by writing exceedingly funny and compelling essays such as those included in this volume." -- John Hodgman

"Michael Ian Black is so wrong that he's right." -- Lewis Black

#### About the Author

Michael Ian Black is a writer, comedian, and actor who currently appears on *Another Period*, *The Jim Gaffigan Show*, and *Wet Hot American Summer: First Day of Camp*. He created and starred in many television series, including *Michael and Michael Have Issues*, *Stella*, and *The State*. He wrote the screenplay for the film *Run, Fatboy, Run* and wrote and directed the film *Wedding Daze*. Michael regularly tours the country as a stand-up comedian and is the bestselling author of the book *My Custom Van (and 50 Other Mind-Blowing Essays That Will Blow Your Mind All Over Your Face)*, the memoir *You're Not Doing It Right*, and the children's books *Chicken Cheeks*, *The Purple Kangaroo*, *A Pig Parade Is a Terrible Idea*, *I'm Bored, Naked!*, and *Cock-a-Doodle-Do-Bop*. Michael lives in Connecticut with his wife and two children.

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What I Would Be Thinking If I Were Billy Joel Driving to a Holiday Party Where I Knew There Was Going to Be a Piano

I'm not doing it. I'm just not. I know I say the same thing every year, but this time I mean it -- I am not playing it this year. Seriously, how many times can I possibly be expected to play that stupid song? I bet if you counted the number of times I've played it over the years, it probably adds up to, like, a jillion. I'm not even exaggerating. One *jillion* times. Well, not this year.

This year, I'm just going to say, "Sorry, folks, I'm only playing holiday songs tonight." Yeah, that's a good plan. That's definitely what I'm going to do, and if they don't like it, tough cookies. It'll just be tough cookies for them.

But I know exactly what'll happen. I'll sit down, play a few holiday songs, and then some drunk jerk will yell out "Piano Man," and everybody will start clapping, and I'll look like a real asshole if I don't play it.

I wonder if they'll have shrimp cocktail.

Now that I think of it, it's always Bob Schimke who yells out "Piano Man." He does it every year. He gets a couple of Scotches in that fat gut of his, and then it's "Hey, Billy, play 'Piano Man!'" That guy is such a dick. He thinks he's such a big shot because he manages that stupid hedge fund. Big deal. He thinks because he used to play quarterback for Amherst that everybody should give a shit. I don't. Who cares about you and your stupid hedge fund, Bob? That's what I should say to him this year. I really should. I should just march right up to him and say, "Who cares about your stupid hedge fund?" Let's just see what Mr. Quarterback has to say about that. And I know he made a pass at Christie that time. She probably liked it too.

I'm such a loser.

Why do I even go to these parties? I mean, honestly, how many times do I need to see Trish and Steve and Lily and that creepy doctor husband of hers and all their rich Long Island friends? Although that Greenstein girl is nice. Maybe she'll be there. What's her name -- Alison?

What if Alison asks me to play "Piano Man"? Then what? I've got to stick to my guns, that's what. I'll simply say, "Some other time." Yeah, that's good. Kind of like we're making a date or something. And then at the end of the night when we're all getting our coats, I'll turn to her and say something like, "So when do you want to get together and hear 'Piano Man'?" Oh man, that's really good. That's so smooth. After all, how is she going to say no? She's the one who asked to hear it in the first place! Oh man, Billy, that is just perfect.

Maybe she'll say something like, "How about right now?" Yeah. And maybe we'll leave together. I can drive her back to my place and I can play her the stupid song and then maybe we'll do it. I'd really like to do it with that Greenstein girl.

How awesome would that be? Me leaving with Alison on my arm and Bob's big fat stupid face watching us go. That would be too rich. I'd be real nonchalant about it, too -- "See you later, Bob."

Who am I kidding? She'd never go out with me. She was dating that actor for a while. What's his name? Benicio? What kind of name is Benicio? A stupid name, that's what kind. Hi, I'm Benicio. I'm so cool. I'm sooooo cool. I should start going by Billicio. I'm Billicio Del Joelio. I play pianolo.

*Sing us a song, you're the piano man...*

Oh great. Now it's in my head. Perfect. Now I have to walk around that stupid party with that stupid song stuck in my head all night.

Amherst sucks at football.

You know what I should do? I should just turn this car around and go home. Just pick up the phone and call them and tell them I ate some bad fish or something. Yeah, that's what I should do.

What am I going to do? Go through my entire life avoiding situations where somebody might ask me to play a song? I can't do that. No, Billy, you've just got to grow yourself a sack and take care of business. And if

that loudmouth Bob Schimke requests "Piano Man," I just need to look him in the eye and tell him I'd be happy to play it for him just as soon as he goes ahead and fucks himself.

Who am I kidding? Of course I'm going to play it. I always play it. Probably the only reason half the people at that party even show up is to hear me play "Piano Man." They probably don't even like me. Not really. They just want to tell all their friends that Billy came and played "Piano Man." Again. Like I'm the loser who's *dying* to play it. Whatever.

Fine. I'll do it, but not because *they* want me to, but because *I* want me to. I'm not even going to wait for them to ask. I'm going to march right in there and play the song and that'll be that. I'm not even going to take off my coat first. Yeah. Let's see what Bob has to say about that. I might even play it twice.

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