

In depth Bio of Rick Sigsby, THE Author

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Where does the inspiration come from? In my case, it began in middle-class America, Midland, Michigan. My father was a fireman and my mother stayed at home in my formative years so she could boot my behind out the door long enough each day to discover the world and augment my imagination.

My first dream was shattered by the time I was attending Cook Elementary, as I had already surpassed the maximum requirements in height and weight to become a jockey. Sports were the daily endorphin rush and academics came easy enough to cause a slow decline in priority. English, both the speaking and writing versions, was not a favorite subject but my mid-level grades made those who chose to excel look good.

My first writing was as a string reporter for the Sports Editor of the Midland Daily News covering cross country, basketball and track. Somehow I managed to always mention myself most of the time.

Fast forward through the angst and awkward years of high school and college with moderate success in athletics at Midland High, Delta College and Central Michigan University. I received a Masters in Education at the University of Michigan and wandered through years of employment before settling in as a park ranger.

My lifelong interest in horse racing became a convenient way to drain the vast sums of money I accumulated as a County employee by becoming an owner and breeder of Standardbred racehorses (the jiggy-jogging trotters & pacers). It was here in the world of equines that I met and married my wife and future editor.

At this point I began writing feature articles for several national horse racing magazines. After a few years I was having coffee with a friend who also happened to be the Publisher of several mid-Michigan newspapers. He asked if I might be interested in writing for his newspapers and my weekly column Rick Off The Record was born.

Having the freedom to write about interesting people, places and events has been an adventure to say the least. The opportunity to interview celebrities, sports icons, politicians and a variety of eclectic personalities has put me in touch with a new eye-opening segment of life.

The culmination of several years of columns became the best of Rick Off The Record in the form of my first book **Discovering Hidden Treasures** in 2007. It includes a peek behind the curtain into the living rooms of more than forty treasures I now call friends.

My second book was a pictorial look at one of mid-Michigan's most interesting counties through **Images of America: Gladwin County** published by Arcadia Publishing in 2008. That was followed by **The Valley of Athletes**, which chronicles the athlete history of the Saginaw Valley Conference; the oldest high school athletic association in Michigan. In 2010, **Discovering Hidden Treasures, Part II** was delivered. Book #5, **Living on the Edge: A History of Auto Racing in Michigan**, published in 2011, was inspired from interviewing such legendary racers as Gordon Johncock (two-time winner of the Indy 500) and Ed Howe (voted by Stock Car magazine one of the 25 most influential people in auto racing history).

Then it was on to my alcohol phase. Book #6 was **Michigan's Holy Water: The Great Lakes Wine Bible**, which is a comprehensive winery guide and over 80 interviews with the winemakers, vineyard managers and winery owners of Michigan. If there's wine, there must be beer and book #7 was **Michigan's Holy Hops: The Great Lakes Beer Bible**. As the alcohol content continues to climb, now comes **Michigan's Holy Spirits: The Great Lakes Distillery Bible**. Each book in the series contains a little history, a little education and a lot of pure Michigan entertainment.

I have no doubt many of my former teachers and classmates are scratching their heads when they see books on the shelves of Barnes & Noble that say by Rick Sigsby. Quite often I'm asked where I find the subjects to write about and it reminds me of the Robert Frost poem The Road Not Taken because I have taken the road less traveled and it has made all the difference.