



The Barefoot Bandit: The True Tale of Colton Harris-Moore, New American Outlaw

Bob Friel

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The Barefoot Bandit tells the riveting true story of Colton Harris-Moore, America's twenty-first-century outlaw. Born into a poor family marred by alcohol abuse, Colt had the local sheriff after him before the age of ten. Colt survived by breaking into homes to forage for food, and learned to evade the police by melting into the Pacific Northwest wilds. As a teenager, he escalated to stealing cars, boats, and identities. An extensive manhunt finally caught Colt, but he escaped juvenile prison and fled to nearby Orcas Island, where he assured his place alongside outlaw legends such as D. B. Cooper by stealing an airplane without ever having a formal flight lesson. And that was just the beginning.

As a resident of Orcas Island, author Bob Friel witnessed firsthand as local police, FBI agents, SWAT teams, and even Homeland Security helicopters pursued Colt around the island. Colt's crime spree infuriated and terrified many locals, while others sympathized with the barefoot young criminal—the controversy tearing at the formerly quiet community. The story gained international fame, with *Time* calling Colt "America's Most Wanted Teen" when he stole and crashed his third airplane. After more than two years on the run in the Northwest, Colt fled Orcas and began a spectacular cross-country trek. Friel followed the Barefoot Bandit all the way to the Bahamas, where the chase finally ended in a hail of gunfire at 3 a.m. on a dark sea.

Through his personal experiences and hundreds of interviews with witnesses, victims, local authorities, Colt's family, and, indirectly, Colt himself, Friel gives readers an exclusive look at an outlaw legend. Set against the backdrop of the Pacific Northwest's evergreen islands, where Internet millionaires coexist with survivalists and ex-hippies, this is a gripping, stranger-than-fiction tale about a neglected and troubled child who outfoxed the authorities, gained a cult following, and made the world take notice.

"I doubt if even the best fiction writer could create a character like Colton Harris-Moore. This is an incredible but true story. Bob Friel is a gifted reporter and a very fine writer."

—Nelson DeMille, New York Times bestselling author of *The Gold Coast* and *The Lion*

"Something about Colton Harris-Moore—crafty stealer of cars, boats, and airplanes—captured the fascination of our fast-moving country. But it took Bob Friel, a plucky reporter with a pitch-perfect story sense—to chase down the legend and make it real. In Friel's fine telling, the Barefoot Bandit emerges as both villain and folk hero in a thrilling modern fugitive tale."

—Hampton Sides, author of *Hellhound on His Trail*

"A Dillingeresque tale for our current Great Recession era. Friel not only gives a brilliantly clear-eyed look at a bandit's adventures but also the effects they had on his peaceful community."

—Matthew Polly, bestselling author of *American Shaolin* and *Tapped Out*

"Riveting, thorough, and deeply human, this terrific read doesn't just tell the story—it brings it to life."

—Marcus Sakey, bestselling author of *The Two Deaths of Daniel Hayes* and *The Blade Itself*

"Friel offers a thrilling portrait of a bright and neglected teen trying to outrun authorities and his own troubled past."

—*Booklist*

"This highly entertaining story of a modern-day Huck Finn will be enjoyed by lovers of adventure stories as well as true crime."

—*Library Journal*

"It is Friel's ability to spin a great yarn that draws the reader in from the start and never lets up. And he does it with deft reporting and a breezy and entertaining style that enlivens a tale as incredible as it is true."

—*Associated Press*

"[A] true-crime classic."

—*Aspen Daily News*

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