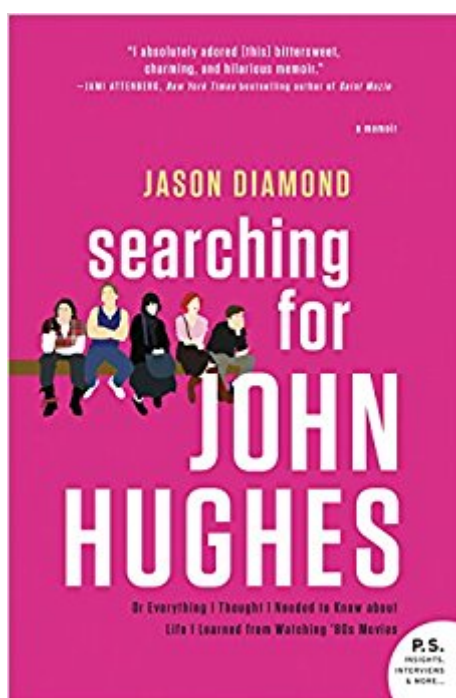


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Searching For John Hughes: Or Everything I Thought I Needed To Know About Life I Learned From Watching '80s Movies



Synopsis

For all fans of John Hughes and his hit films such as *National Lampoon's Vacation*, *Sixteen Candles*, and *Home Alone*, comes Jason Diamond's hilarious memoir of growing up obsessed with the iconic filmmaker's movies—a preoccupation that eventually convinces Diamond he should write Hughes's biography and travel to New York City on a quest that is as funny as it is hopeless. For as long as Jason Diamond can remember, he's been infatuated with John Hughes's movies. From the outrageous, raunchy antics in *National Lampoon's Vacation* to the teenage angst in *The Breakfast Club* and *Pretty in Pink* to the insanely clever and unforgettable *Home Alone*, Jason could not get enough of Hughes's films. And so the seed was planted in his mind that it should fall to him to write a biography of his favorite filmmaker. It didn't matter to Jason that he had no qualifications, training, background, platform, or direction. Thus went the years-long, delusional, earnest, and assiduous quest to reach his goal. But no book came out of these years, and no book will. What he did get was a story that fills the pages of this unconventional, hilarious memoir. In *Searching for John Hughes*, Jason tells how a Jewish kid from a broken home in a Chicago suburb—sometimes homeless, always restless—found comfort and connection in the likewise broken lives in the suburban Chicago of John Hughes's oeuvre. He moved to New York to become a writer. He started to write a book he had no business writing. In the meantime, he brewed coffee and guarded cupcake cafes. All the while, he watched John Hughes movies religiously. Though his original biography of Hughes has long since been abandoned, Jason has discovered he is a writer through and through. And the adversity of going for broke has now been transformed into wisdom. Or, at least, a really, really good story. In other words, this is a memoir of growing up. One part big dream, one part big failure, one part John Hughes movies, one part Chicago, and one part New York. It's a story of what comes after the "Go for it!"—part of the command to young creatives to pursue their dreams—no matter how absurd they might seem at first. Â

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Customer Reviews

• "Tells a heartbreaking story of restless youth, imposter syndrome, and the movies that help him make sense of it all...Makes me want to tell my parents and children how much I love them...and then curl up on the couch and watch *The Breakfast Club*." • (Emma Straub, author of the New York Times bestsellers *Modern Lovers* and *The Vacationers*) • "With geniality, humor and charm, Diamond explores the ways in which cinematic fantasy can influence, overshadow, and help us to escape reality. This book is for anyone playing out an eternal adolescence." • (Melissa Broder, author of *So Sad Today*) • "Jason Diamond writes with equal parts wit and candor about what happens when life diverges wildly from the suburban fairytales made popular by John Hughes. Diamond passionately conveys how lovely it is when we find less cinematic but harder earned happy endings on our own terms." • (Maris Kreizman, author of *Slaughterhouse 90210*) • "Oh look, it's all my favorite things in one book: Chicago, New York City, punk rock, food, and existential crises...Bittersweet, charming and hilarious...details the longing and struggle of an aspiring writer with clarity, wit, and heart." • (Jami Attenberg, New York Times bestselling author of *The Middlesteins* and *Saint Mazie*) • "Both funny and heartbreaking, Diamond's memoir is not just an account of how one director's films impacted-and perhaps saved-his life. It is also a memorable reflection on what it means to let go of the past and grow up. A quirkily intelligent memoir of finding oneself in movies." • (Kirkus Reviews)

Jason Diamond is the founder of Vol. 1 Brooklyn and an associate editor at Mensjournal.com. His work has been published by the New York Times, The Paris Review, Pitchfork, Vice, Bookforum, McSweeney's, and many other publications. He lives in Brooklyn.

If you grew up on John Hughes movies or found them later in life, can quote every line in Ferris Bueller's Day Off or still dream of taking that day off, can relate to any of the members of The Breakfast Club or think of *Pretty in Pink* as your high school soundtrack, then Jason

Diamond's memoir *SEARCHING FOR JOHN HUGHES* might be just what you want to read. Just a warning, it is sad and has some very dark moments. Diamond, who grew up on the North Shore, which Chicagoans and Hughes fans will know all too well, had probably one of the most unpleasant childhoods I have ever heard/read about. In fact, I am still haunted by it and commend him for his strength to not only write about it but to have survived it. I admire his quest to become a writer, to pursue Mr. Hughes to such lengths, and to have the determination to stick with something even at great financial loss. But, stick with it he did and without giving any spoilers, he knew what his end goal was and did it all on his own. It is a remarkable story. I am shocked at both of his parents' behavior and I hope that in the not-too-distant future, Diamond might share what became of his mother and father and how he came to peace with how they treated him. There was both abuse, physical and emotional, as well as abandonment, and no resolution shared in the course of the book. The parts about his childhood were so painful to read, and although Diamond was resourceful, he shouldn't have had to be, as only a teen, and the cruelty that they showed to him was unforgivable. Loving Chicago and the North Shore as well as Hughes' movies, I was inclined to read the book and relive the movies in all their glory. Each of them brings back memories of not only life as a teen, but of the city that I adore, which the director so lovingly captured on film. This is a heartfelt memoir that shows you really can follow your dreams, get knocked down a lot, get back up again and again, and if you don't give up, you might just be surprised where you land.

I came into this as a huge Hughes fan thinking it would be a lot of commentary on movies, but I was surprised at how personal and powerful of a memoir this turned out to be. For those who've ever felt out of place, left behind, or otherwise discarded by a world that just doesn't understand -- this is a book for you. Diamond turns from a painful childhood toward the bucolic cinematic universe of John Hughes, in turn finding that one can only hide in film for so long. While the story is dark and at times difficult to read, the book is a testament to the will of young artists and the power of media to provide solace even when we are the most vulnerable. It reminded me of another moving book about teens, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. Diamond's earnest prose and deeply personal connection to Hughes makes for a great read, especially if you've ever struggled to find somewhere and something to call your own.

Anyone growing up in the 80s is going to find this book to be a real treat but even if you didn't grow up during the best decade ever, you'll still find something to like. When I

was asked to do this tour and began to casually chat about the book, I was surprised by how many people I ran into who had absolutely no idea who John Hughes was. Really? My first reaction? What is wrong with you? In 1984, the movie *Sixteen Candles* came out. I was a sophomore in high school. In my junior year, *The Breakfast Club* came out. In my senior year, my most tumultuous year by far, *Pretty in Pink* debuted. ALL of these movies shaped me as a human being. So much so, that I introduced them to my kids as soon as they were old enough to understand all that teen angst. John Hughes wrote many movies and he directed some of them too but what he did best was really nail the teen experience. Enter Jason Diamond. His infatuation with Hughes goes beyond my love of the man, in that he followed his work well into the 90s and filled notebook upon notebook with bits of knowledge about him. Searching for John Hughes is about Diamond's quest to write a book about Hughes but it's about so much more. Diamond's childhood was troubled. Although he lived very close to some of the iconic Chicago movie locations seen in some of the films I mentioned, he dealt with physical abuse at his father's hand, a mother who struggled to be the kind of mother she really wanted to be, and Diamond's continued struggle to find himself. As a teen, pretty much abandoned by his mother, he's forced to move from couch to couch, living off the kindness of friends. School, often a challenge, provided some brief moments of clarity. Especially when one of his favorite teachers turns him on to good literature and gives him a place to stay. This memoir has highs and lows, both good and bad. Diamond struggled with drugs and alcohol but his survival instinct always seemed to kick in when he needed it to. Moving from job to job, he began to think about writing as a career and that is when he decided to write a biography on the man himself, Hughes. A biography that never happened. What struck me about this memoir is that Diamond is a really interesting guy on his own. His challenging childhood, his ability to always pull himself up by his bootstraps, was impressive and there was a lot that I could relate to. As much as I love Hughes, and as much as I enjoyed reading about Hughes, I almost wanted to read more about Diamond. As some of you know, my mother passed away on November 15th. This was the first book I read after her passing and it gave me all the feels. It's like I jumped into a time machine and went back to my senior year. Hughes knew so much about being young and wanting more. Like Andie in *Pretty in Pink*, I came from the wrong side of the tracks and struggled through my high school years. I had a Duckie and a Blane and even a Steff. How could Hughes have known this? That was his appeal. Everyone viewing these movies can find someone to relate to. Rich, poor, popular or not. If you haven't seen his movies, I implore you to do so. Then? Read this book. It's filled with lots of movie facts but Diamond also takes us to some of the iconic filming locations in and around the Chicago suburbs. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

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