



You Couldn't Ignore Me If You Tried: The Brat Pack, John Hughes, and Their Impact on a Generation

By Susannah Gora

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You can quote lines from *Sixteen Candles* (“Last night at the dancemy little brother paid a buck to see your underwear”), your iPod playlist includes more than one song by the Psychedelic Furs and Simple Minds, you watch *The Breakfast Club* every time it comes on cable, and you still wish that Andie had ended up with Duckie in *Pretty in Pink*. You’re a bonafide Brat Pack devotee—and you’re not alone.

The films of the Brat Pack—from *Sixteen Candles* to *Say Anything*—are some of the most watched, bestselling DVDs of all time. The landscape that the Brat Pack memorialized—where outcasts and prom queens fall in love, preppies and burn-outs become buds, and frosted lip gloss, skinny ties, and exuberant optimism made us feel invincible—is rich with cultural themes and significance, and has influenced an entire generation who still believe that life always turns out the way it is supposed to.

You Couldn't Ignore Me If You Tried takes us back to that era, interviewing key players, such as Molly Ringwald, Anthony Michael Hall, Ally Sheedy, Judd Nelson, Andrew McCarthy, and John Cusack, and mines all the material from the movies to the music to the way the films were made to show how they helped shape our visions for romance, friendship, society, and success.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The phrase was coined by David Blum in the headline Hollywood's Brat Pack, heralding his cover story for the June 10, 1985, issue of *New York* magazine with its cover photo of Emilio Estevez, Rob Lowe, and Judd Nelson. The label stuck, Gora notes, and extended to describe other actors: Andrew McCarthy, Demi Moore, Ally Sheedy, Molly Ringwald, and Anthony Michael Hall. A former editor at *Premiere*, Gora guides the reader through the creation of the teen cinema of the 1980s, described by the American Film Institute as the cultural phenomenon which helped make us what we are today. To recall the era, she interviewed two dozen actors, plus the directors and producers behind the Brat Pack's memorable movies, including *The Breakfast Club*, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, *Sixteen Candles*, *Pretty in Pink*, *St. Elmo's Fire* and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. As Gora sees it, The films changed the way many young people looked at everything from class distinction to friendship, from love and sex to fashion and music. Writer-director John Hughes's ability to capture adolescent angst is highlighted. The 1980s youth films maintain their popularity on TV and DVDs, and Gora gives them near-encyclopedic, comprehensive coverage. (Feb. 9)

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From Booklist

Concentrating on the making of such seminal films as *Sixteen Candles*, *The Breakfast Club*, *St. Elmo's Fire*, *Pretty in Pink*, *Some Kind of Wonderful*, *Say Anything*, *Home Alone*, and, of course, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, Gora's celebration of writer-director John Hughes (1950–2009) tends to be exhaustive and often exhausts. Gora cites the *New York Times'* A. O. Scott on Hughes—he "was our Godard"—and Roger Ebert's characterization of him as "the philosopher of adolescence" to orient her essay exploring what she calls cine-sociology, "the concrete sociological impact that movies can have on our lives." She discusses the origin of the sobriquet Brat Pack, offers biographical portraits of Hughes and many of the actors most associated with his movies, discusses the music of the so-called Brat Pack films (it was a crucial factor in their success), and considers how the Brat Pack films changed a generation. Although probably too self-important for its own good, this is still a must for Hughes admirers and students of American pop culture. --June Sawyers

Review

"As readable as it is informative, Susannah Gora's book sets these influential films into a cultural and cinematic context—and provides compelling behind-the-scenes stories about the people who made them."--Leonard Maltin

"A must-have for fans of '80s teen flicks...what makes it so readable is the juicy, behind-the-scenes stuff."--Mike Householder, Associated Press

"Gora interviews all the major actors and players anew, and knits together a narrative that, in the end, gives fans a clear, sound understanding of what commercial and cultural forces produced these films — "Sixteen Candles," "The Breakfast Club," "Ferris Bueller's Day Off," "Say Anything" and more — and why they still mean a great deal to so many." — Chicago Sun-Times

"I've become addicted to Susannah Gora's new book, "You Couldn't Ignore Me If You Tried," her masterful documentation of Hughes and the Brat Pack films." —Steve Spears, St. Petersburg Times

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Janice O'Connell:

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Jodie Kahl:

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