



Alligator Candy: A Memoir

By David Kushner

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Alligator Candy: A Memoir By David Kushner

From award-winning journalist David Kushner, a regular contributor to *Rolling Stone*, *The New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair*, and other premier magazines, *Alligator Candy* is a reported memoir about family, survival, and the unwavering power of love.

David Kushner grew up in the early 1970s in the Florida suburbs. It was when kids still ran free, riding bikes and disappearing into the nearby woods for hours at a time. One morning in 1973, however, everything changed. David's older brother Jon biked through the forest to the convenience store for candy, and never returned.

Every life has a defining moment, a single act that charts the course we take and determines who we become. For Kushner, it was Jon's disappearance—a tragedy that shocked his family and the community at large. Decades later, now a grown man with kids of his own, Kushner found himself unsatisfied with his own memories and decided to revisit the episode a different way: through the eyes of a reporter. His investigation brought him back to the places and people he once knew and slowly made him realize just how much his past had affected his present. After sifting through hundreds of documents and reports, conducting dozens of interviews, and poring over numerous firsthand accounts, he has produced a powerful and inspiring story of loss, perseverance, and memory. *Alligator Candy* is searing and unforgettable.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

On October 28, 1973, 11-year-old Jonathan Kushner hopped on his bike and took off for the 7-Eleven. Jon's four-year-old brother, David, stood on the sidewalk and watched him peddle away. It's a small detail that might have been lost in years of subsequent day, except that this was the last time that David saw Jon alive. Over the years, the questions that haunt him stem from this moment: Could David have changed Jon's mind? If David hadn't begged his brother to buy him a toy, would Jon have gone? Readers experience the sequence of events through the perspective of David as a child: Jon's bike found off the path, Jon's body in the trunk of a car, Jon's funeral. Kids at school said that the killers had pickled Jon's body and put it in a jar. David's father said that David was inside when Jon left and could not have been the last one to see him. What really happened? At 13, David started furtively hunting through the library's microfilmed newspaper articles, searching for information about Jon's death. Teens will relate both to David's need to uncover the truth and his desire to protect his parents from what he discovers. The crime is always presented from David's intensely personal perspective, and his sense of horror is excruciatingly amplified as he realizes that his parents have known the disturbing details all along. More than 40 years later, Kushner, now an acclaimed author and journalist, is ready to tell the story. VERDICT Teens looking for graphic details would do better with titles such as Vincent Bugliosi's *Helter Skelter*. But those seeking to understand how life continues after a grave loss will love Kushner's eloquent words and personal viewpoint.—Diane Colson, Gainesville City College, FL

Review

“A raw story about courage, survival and most certainly about love.” —*Tampa Bay Times*

“Kushner's moving book is not only a memorial to a brother tragically deprived of his right to live; it is also a meditation on the courage necessary to live freely in a world riven by pain, suffering, and evil. A probing, poignant memoir about tragedy, grief, and trying to cope.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“Kushner's riveting memoir, *Alligator Candy*, begins by asking how any parent or family can survive such unimaginable evil and devastating grief....Parents today can understand the love, hope and fear he so eloquently describes in this account of one family's transcendent courage in the face of crushing pain.”
—*Bookpage*, "Top Ten Book of the Month"

About the Author

A contributing editor of *Rolling Stone*, David Kushner also writes for publications including *The New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair*, *Wired*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *New York*, *GQ*, and *Details*. Kushner served as the digital culture commentator for National Public Radio's *Weekend Edition Sunday*. He has been featured in *The Best Business Writing*, *Best American Crime Reporting* and *The Best Music Writing*, and his ebook, *The Bones of Marianna: A Reform School, a Terrible Secret, and a Hundred-Year Fight for Justice*, was chosen by Amazon as a Best Digital Single of the Year. His books include *Alligator Candy*; *Jacked: The Outlaw Story of Grand Theft Auto*; *Levittown: Two Families, One Tycoon, and the Fight for Civil Rights in America's Legendary Suburb*; *Jonny Magic and the Card Shark Kids: How a Gang of Geeks Beat the Odds and Stormed Las Vegas*; and *Masters of Doom: How Two Guys Created an Empire and Transformed Pop Culture*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Hilda Baker:

This Alligator Candy: A Memoir book is just not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you obtain by reading this book will be information inside this reserve incredible fresh, you will get facts which is getting deeper a person read a lot of information you will get. That Alligator Candy: A Memoir without we comprehend teach the one who reading it become critical in pondering and analyzing. Don't possibly be worry Alligator Candy: A Memoir can bring any time you are and not make your bag space or bookshelves' turn out to be full because you can have it in the lovely laptop even phone. This Alligator Candy: A Memoir having good arrangement in word along with layout, so you will not sense uninterested in reading.

Susan Tokarz:

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