

Gasping For Airtime: Two Years In the Trenches of Saturday Night Live

By Jay Mohr

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When 21-year-old Jay Mohr moved from New Jersey to New York City to pursue his dream of stand-up stardom, he never thought the first real job he'd land would be on *Saturday Night Live*. But, surprisingly, that's just what he did. What followed were two unbelievable, grueling, and exciting years of feverishly keeping pace with his talented cohorts, out-maneuvering the notorious vices that claimed the lives of other cast members, and struggling at all costs for the holy grail of late-night show business: airtime.

In *Gasping for Airtime*, Jay offers an intimate account of the inner workings of *Saturday Night Live*. He also dishes on the guest hosts (John Travolta, Shannen Doherty, Charles Barkley), the musical guests (Kurt Cobain, Steven Tyler, Eric Clapton), and of course his *SNL* castmates (Chris Farley, Adam Sandler, Mike Myers, and David Spade). Refreshingly honest and laugh-out-loud funny, this book will appeal both to fans of Jay Mohr and to devotees of *Saturday Night Live*.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Twenty-three-year-old actor and stand-up comic Mohr was playing college campuses after a brief stint hosting an MTV game show when he landed every comic's dream job: featured performer and writer on *Saturday Night Live*. In this stilted but honest memoir, he chronicles his frustrating two seasons on the show, from 1993 to 1995. Few of his sketches aired, and aside from his impressions of Ricki Lake, Christopher Walken and Dick Vitale, he was rarely on camera. (When he was on air, he admits, he often couldn't keep a straight face.) Mohr treats readers to some affectionate, entertaining tales of the late Chris Farley, but his book is less a juicy inside story of the comedy institution than a tale of an immature young man's struggle with a high-stress, erratic workplace: "The schedule for putting together *Saturday Night Live* was made back in the seventies when everyone was on coke.... Problem was, no one did coke [anymore] and we were expected to keep the same hours." Floundering in the unstructured work environment, Mohr suffered crippling panic attacks, which he treated with alcohol and pot until he finally found real relief with a prescription for Klonopin. Even panic-free, Mohr still felt like the odd man out and chafes at his less than meteoric rise. He serves up mostly superficial dish (watching Nirvana rehearse, shooting hoops with various celebrities) and offers unflattering self-revelations (desperate competitiveness, jealousy and sulking)-resulting in a memoir that will appeal only to die-hard Mohr fans.
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From Booklist
Most know Mohr from his role in *Jerry Maguire* or from his stand-up comedy. Most will not remember him from his time on *Saturday Night Live*, a two-year stint during which the 21-year-old served as a writer and secondary cast member. Mohr chronicles those years with the sly wit he's become known for, as well as nostalgia for both the time he had and the kid he was. That's not to say things went well. He barely got any sketches on air, his dressing room was once an elevator shaft, and he suffered panic attacks so severe he thought he would die on camera. But he also met some encouraging people (Mike McKeon) and was able to spend a little time hanging out with various luminaries (Eric Clapton), so even though he moans and whines about what he endured on the show, he ends up describing the experience as glorious. Fans of the show will especially like the snippets about such SNL figures as Chris Farley, Lorne Michaels, and Mike Myers. Good insider dish. *Ilene Cooper*
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About the Author
Jay Mohr was a featured performer and writer on *Saturday Night Live* from 1993 to 1995. His breakthrough film role was in *Jerry Maguire*. Other film credits include *Picture Perfect*, *Go*, *Pay It Forward*, and *S1M0NE*. Jay often guest hosts Premiere Radio's *Jim Rome Show*. He recently produced and hosted a weekly comedy/music/sports talk show for ESPN, and he is the creator and executive producer of NBC's hit series *Last Comic Standing*. He lives in Los Angeles.

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