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## Memoir relates fast times at Mirador High

Ask any adult about the most challenging part of parenting, and you'll hear mumblings of Terrible Twos and Fearsome Fours.

But then, mouths gape. Realization hits. Brave grown-ups shake in terror, thinking about the Teenage Years.

But what about them? Do teenagers deserve the reputation they've gotten? Upon graduation from college, author Jeremy Iversen decided to find out. As a 24-year-old adult he went back to school, and in his new book, "High School Confidential," what he found may shock you.

As soon as they had their college diplomas, Iversen says that most of his Ivy League classmates headed for corporate jobs. Iversen began to wonder if perhaps that kind of life wasn't what he really wanted. Where did his youth go? He began to think about the book and movie "Fast Times at Ridgemont High." What if he did a sort of updated version of Cameron Crowe's experiences?

It took several weeks, but Iversen found a school that would accept his idea. Mirador High School in Emerald Valley, Calif., would be his new home for the last semester of senior year. Iversen enrolled as 17-year-old Jeremy Hughes and became the newest member of the graduating class.

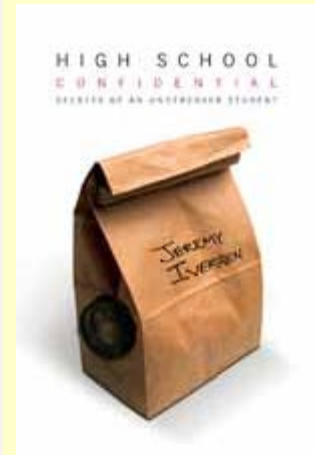
Iversen said that he decided he wanted to be one of the "popular kids," and after enduring a brief label of "narc," he managed to infiltrate the Senior Circle and befriend a few underclassmen.

There was Vic, a prankster facing expulsion; Thea, a tortured artiste who was harder on herself than any critic could be; blonde, beautiful Alexis who fended off advances from a sleazy male teacher; Charity, who hated drama but who seemed to create it; Derrick, a quiet leader battling depression; and Cody, whose grief for his best friend simmered just beneath his steroid-laced skin.

Iversen found drugs and alcohol at Mirador. He found apathetic teachers and corrupt administrators, mismanaged budgets and students left wanting for lack of money. And he found that today's teenagers don't really deserve the bad reputation they have.

From New England to Vancouver, Florida to Southern California, are teenagers all alike? Iversen says in his notes that he took some liberties with time-frame, but quotations are verbatim and events really happened. Still, while his experiences might not be universal, "High School Confidential" will nonetheless fill parents' veins with ice. The problems that Iversen's high-school peers experienced and the pressures they endured will undoubtedly face

**TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER**  
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our graduating seniors.

Iversen's mastery of story made me fall in love with every one of his classmates, and his sense of suspense and timing made me carry this book around for days. The only marring in this reads-like-a-novel narrative is that there is no closure. Did Iversen "come clean" at graduation? I'd like to know. And I think you will, too, when you read this otherwise well-done book.

If you are a parent, an educator, or if you believe that old "high-school is the best time your life" tripe, then get a copy of this book. Dude, it's, like, one of the best books you'll read this year.

*"High School Confidential" by Jeremy Iversen, Atria, \$25, 464 pages.*

For comment or questions, please e-mail [webmaster@pahrumpvalleytimes.com](mailto:webmaster@pahrumpvalleytimes.com)

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