



# Candyfreak: A Journey through the Chocolate Underbelly of America

*Steve Almond*

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Perhaps you remember the whipped splendor of the Choco-Lite, or the luscious Caravelle bar, or maybe the sublime and perfectly balanced Hershey's Cookies 'n Mint. The Marathon, an inimitable rope of caramel covered in chocolate. Oompahs. Bit-O-Choc. The Kit Kat Dark.

Steve Almond certainly does. In fact, he was so obsessed by the inexplicable disappearance of these bars—where'd they go?—that he embarked on a nationwide journey to uncover the truth about the candy business. There, he found an industry ruled by huge conglomerates, where the little guys, the last remaining link to the glorious boom years of the candy bar in America, struggle to survive.

Visiting the candy factories that produce the Twin Bing, the Idaho Spud, the Goo Goo Cluster, the Valomilk, and a dozen other quirky bars, Almond finds that the world of candy is no longer a sweet haven. Today's precious few regional candy makers mount daily battles against corporate greed, paranoia, and that good old American compulsion: crushing the little guy.

Part candy porn, part candy polemic, part social history, part confession, *Candyfreak* explores the role candy plays in our lives as both source of pleasure and escape from pain. By turns ecstatic, comic, and bittersweet, *Candyfreak* is the story of how Steve Almond grew up on candy—and how, for better and worse, candy has grown up, too.



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