

MOVIES

# Review: ‘Coming Through the Rye’ Tracks Down J.D. Salinger

**Coming Through the Rye** | Directed by James Steven Sadwith | Drama | PG-13 | 1h 37m

By ANDY WEBSTER OCT. 13, 2016

With the glossy “Coming Through the Rye,” the director James Sadwith pays heartfelt tribute to both J. D. Salinger, the reclusive writer of “The Catcher in the Rye,” who died in 2010, and the book itself. He also affectionately fictionalizes his own past (he wrote the script), drawing from his actual meeting in adolescence with Mr. Salinger.

It is 1969, and 16-year-old Jamie Schwartz (Alex Wolff) is hopelessly alienated at a boys’ prep school. Tormented by his peers and identifying with Salinger’s hero Holden Caulfield, he has adapted and is determined to mount a stage production of “Rye,” encouraged by a teacher (Adrian Pasdar). But first he must secure Salinger’s blessing. So he sets off, with the aid of a sprightly, sensible townie, DeeDee (Stefania Owen), for the author’s home in New Hampshire. (That state is played by the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, lovingly shot by Eric Hurt.) The journey succeeds, at least as far as a meeting with Salinger, and in terms of cementing Jamie and DeeDee’s intimate bond.

Mr. Sadwith — a seasoned television writer, director and producer making his feature debut — adds faint echoes of “Catcher” while lending a polished veneer, most evident in a romantic scene amid swirling milkweed seeds. Mr. Wolff is appealingly earnest (but lacks Caulfield’s caustic edge), while Ms. Owen is a radiant burst of optimism. As Salinger, the formidable Chris Cooper has a brief but masterly turn,

sympathetically rendering the writer as a curmudgeon defending his literary offspring. “Go do something of your own,” he tells Jamie. Mr. Sadwith eventually did.

*“Coming Through the Rye” is rated PG-13 (Parents strongly cautioned) for language and mature themes.*

**Coming Through the Rye**

**Director** James Steven Sadwith

**Writer** James Steven Sadwith

**Stars** Alex Wolff, Chris Cooper, Adrian Pasdar, Stefania LaVie Owen, Amy Parrish

**Rating** PG-13

**Running Time** 1h 37m

**Genre** Drama

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