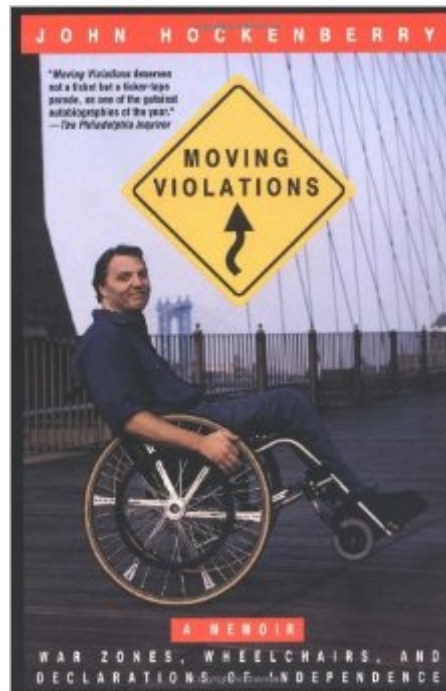


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# Moving Violations: War Zones, Wheelchairs, And Declarations Of Independence



## Synopsis

John Hockenberry's *Moving Violations* is one of the most entertaining, provocative, unexpected, outspoken, and occasionally outrageous books in recent memory. It is a story of obstacles--physical, emotional, and psychic--overcome again, and again, and again. Whether riding a mule up a hillside in Iraq surrounded by mud-stained Kurdish refugees, navigating his wheelchair through intractable stretches of Middle Eastern sand, or auditioning to be the first journalist in space, John Hockenberry, ace reporter, is determined not only to bring back the story, but also to prove that nothing can hold him back from death-defying exploits. However, he will never be a poster boy for a Jerry Lewis telethon. A paraplegic since an auto accident at age nineteen, Hockenberry holds nothing back in this achingly honest, often hilarious chronicle that ranges from the Ayatollah's funeral (where his wheelchair is pushed by a friendly Iranian chanting "Death to all Americans"), to the problems of crip sex and the inaccessibility of the New York City subway system. In this immensely moving chronicle--so filled with marvelous storytelling that it reads like a novel--John Hockenberry finds that the most difficult journey is the one that begins at home, as he confronts the memories of his beloved one-armed grandfather, and finally meets his institutionalized Uncle Peter, whose very existence was long a secret buried in the family history. *Moving Violations* is a sometimes harrowing but ultimately joyful ride.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I want to keep my review short because, if you have not read this book, reading my review will take

up some of the time in which you could be reading the real book. When "Moving Violations" was first published, I heard a review of it on NPR. John Hockenberry is an NPR alum so I expected the book to be almost as good as the review led me to believe. I ordered it from Amazon and devoured it in almost no time. It was actually better than the radio review had led me to expect. A month later, I got a call from Seattle that delivered horrific news. My 21-year-old son had been in a contest with gravity and gravity had won. Although he had just had 18 hours of surgery, there was no way to know if he would ever walk again. Through the years since that time, I have read "Moving Violations" many times. It initially gave me entrance to a new world and was much more helpful to both my son and I than all the rehab publications combined. I knew, from the moment I answered that phone call that both my son and I had crossed into the Twilight Zone and nothing would ever be the same again. The Twilight Zone, however, had at least one map. My son's journey was, and continues to be, unique (as all such journeys are). I did feel, from the very beginning, that we had a preview of some of the directional signposts and even some of the scenic overlooks. I cannot help but think that our family has been living and learning about this new life in a richer way than would never have been possible if we had not read this book. As soon as my son came home from rehab it became clear that he had lost his will to live. I had a captive audience and started reading "M V" aloud. It is well written and mirrors many of the dilemmas in the life of a young male with spinal cord damage.

This book contains the memoirs of John Hockenberry, a well-known journalist who is disabled. Hockenberry takes us through a blow-by-blow account of the accident which left him paralyzed from the chest down. He explains the nature and extent of his injuries and describes his experiences in the rehab hospital where he learned how to manage the needs of daily life from his wheelchair. He then takes us through the details of his young adult years, his education, marriage, and career. The only aspect of the book that I did not like was that Hockenberry occasionally gets a little heavy-handed with philosophizing. The extensive self-analysis, however is understandable, since this is very much a book about coming to terms with his life-to-date and his culture. It was the 1980 eruptions at Mt. St. Helens that got Hockenberry his big break with NPR. Hockenberry was covering the reports for a local radio station in Eugene, Oregon, where he was living at the time, and his reports drew the attention of the national NPR news editors. They never suspected that their intrepid Oregonian journalist was in a wheelchair until the day he was not able to phone in a report before the deadline because he couldn't locate an accessible phone. NPR found that Hockenberry was quite talented at finding, writing, and reading news stories, and brought him to their headquarters in D.C. Later, Hockenberry was chosen to be the Middle East correspondent for NPR, stationed in

Jerusalem. It was there, far from home and the Americans with Disabilities Act legislation, where Hockenberry faced tremendous challenges that taught him much about the human family.

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