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### STORY TOOLS

### Video

-- Library Journal, 12/15/2007

**Planetary Defense.** color. 48 min. Mark Moidel, Space Viz Prods., 206-20-EARTH (32784) or 518-907-4569; [www.spaceviz.com](http://www.spaceviz.com). 2007. DVD \$49.99. ASTRONOMY

If terrorism, the economy, and global warming weren't enough to worry about, this documentary takes worry to a whole new level—planetary extinction! It brings together eminent scientists, *Apollo 9* astronaut Rusty Schweickart, and legendary sf writer Sir Arthur C. Clarke to focus serious attention on the possibility of a catastrophic collision between Earth and an asteroid or other astronomical object. It presents evidence of previous impacts, the possible effect of various collision scenarios, and what actions could be taken to avert such a calamity. The documentary is especially good at showing how scientists are researching the problem and what policy constraints need to be overcome to mount a realistic planetary defense. It presents animations of impacts and scenes of scientific work in a visually appealing, fast-paced manor reminiscent of the Discovery Channel. Clarke and numerous scientists appear on screen. The program is formatted for broadcast with commercial breaks. Recommended for astronomical and popular science collections in all libraries.—**Lawrence R. Maxted, Gannon Univ. Lib., Erie, PA**

**Power Sewing Skill Series.** Vol. 7: **Linings A to Z.** 83 min. ISBN 978-0-9746814-6-7; Vol. 8: **Designer Seam and Hem Finishes.** 95 min. ISBN 978-0-9746814-7-4; Vol. 9: **Jeans Couture.** 96 min. ISBN 978-0-9746814-8-1. ea. vol. color. Power Sewing, dist. by AV Café, 6201 S. 58th St., Suite A, Lincoln, NE 68516; 877-228-2233; [www.theavcafe.com](http://www.theavcafe.com). 2007 release. DVD \$29.95; 9-vol. series \$269.55. CRAFTS

Teacher and pattern designer Sandra Betzina teams with designer and teacher Ron Collins in this series meant for those with more than basic sewing ability and an understanding of terminology (serging, flat fell seams, twin needle sewing, etc.). In an informal and chatty manner, they share tips and illustrate with their own creations how to turn basic clothing construction into beautifully finished articles. *Jeans Couture* takes a more structured approach, starting with a conversation about fabric weight, needle and thread choices, etc., through the construction and finishing of jeans. There is no question that these two know what they are talking about. The productions, on the other hand, suffer from somewhat amateurish camerawork and an absence of close-ups. Purchase where there is demand for more than

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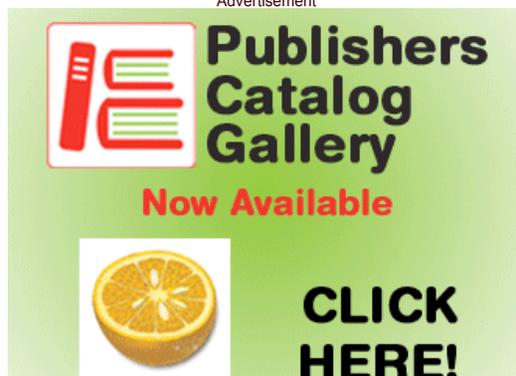
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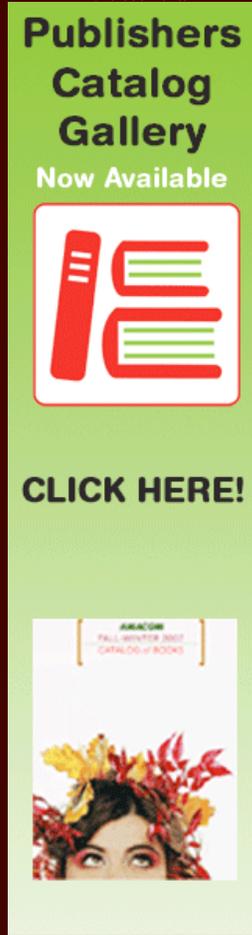


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basic sewing instruction.—**Joan Greenberg, Warminster, PA**



**Body & Soul.** color. 5 hrs. Moira Armstrong, Red Rooster Film, dist. by Questar Entertainment, [www.questarentertainment.com](http://www.questarentertainment.com). 2007. DVD ISBN 978-1-59464-308-8. \$29.99. F

At age 18, Anna Gibson (Kristin Scott Thomas) entered a cloistered convent near her home in Wales. Sixteen years later, she had begun to doubt her calling when her brother committed suicide, leaving two little boys, a pregnant wife, and a floundering woolen mill. This 1993 *Masterpiece Theatre* series, based on the novel by Marcelle Bernstein, begins as a reluctant Anna leaves the convent temporarily to help out in a world of technology and traffic of which she knows nothing. Drawing on leadership skills no one, least of all she, knew she had, Anna earns the respect of the mill's insecure employees as well as business leaders and financial types as she turns the company around while stabilizing her traumatized family. Of course, she also turns heads and finds herself sexually attractive and attracted, again in an unfamiliar world. The technology situations hold up amazingly well nearly 15 years later. This rich production is highly recommended for any library collecting adult leisure videos.—**Diane Welch Kazlauskas, Univ. of North Florida Lib., Jacksonville**

**Proof: Prescription for Murder.** color. 203 min. Thaddeus O'Sullivan, dist. by Koch Vision, 22 Harbor Park Dr., Port Washington, NY 11050; [www.kochvision.com](http://www.kochvision.com). 2007. DVD ISBN 978-1-4172-2944-4. \$29.98. F

A U.S. company is on the verge of taking over Chemacran, an Irish multinational pharmaceutical company, but negotiations have stalled. Why? Dublin is about to explode as racial tensions reach new heights with the brutal beating of a young white Irishman by a Nigerian immigrant. Was it manslaughter or murder? Racist incidents are increasing at a dangerous rate. Why does a certain government official continue minimizing the situation? A man is killed as he steps in front of a bus on his way to meet a reporter. Was it suicide or murder? Against this backdrop of racial volatility, corrupt politicians, lethal business tactics, and unethical pharmaceutical practices, journalists Terry Corcoran (Finbar Lynch) and Maureen Boland (Orla Brady) tie all these events together in a surprising conclusion. This four-part miniseries is recommended for general audiences.—**Karen A. Plummer, Univ. of Akron Lib.**

**White Palms.** color. 100 min. In English & Hungarian w/English subtitles. Szabolcs Hajdu, dist. by Strand Releasing, 6140 W. Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232; 310-836-7500; [www.strandreleasing.com](http://www.strandreleasing.com). 2007. DVD \$27.99. F

The recent explosion of cheating allegations in major league baseball and professional wrestling has renewed focus on our global culture's desperate desire to win at all costs. Such zealotry for success sets a bad example for aspiring young athletes and is a primary theme in *White Palms*, an unorthodox story of Olympic dreams set in the ambivalent period of Hungarian history characterized by goulash democracy. Rather than overtly condemning a tyrannical coach and overbearing parents for driving preteen gymnast Miklós Dongó (played by Miklós Zoltán Hajdu) to be consumed by hopes of glory, the film explores the manner by which Miklós confronts his doubts. Shunning his chosen path, he joins a circus troupe and escapes the grasp of his brutal coach. Two decades later, Miklós is now a gymnastics coach. Despite obvious psychological damage inflicted by his mentor, he exhibits disturbingly similar tendencies, striking a student without reservation or fear of consequence. Ultimately, Miklós's conflicted nature is redeemed through the successful coaching of a challenging student, using his athletic skills to entertain rather than achieve. Deft direction and smoothly edited transitions between past and present give *White Palms* an immediacy that effectively conveys Miklós's inner being. Recommended for all collections.—**Eric Pasteur, Peoria P.L., IL**

**The History Channel® Presents: The Civil War.** 6 vols. color & b/w. 10+ hrs. Craig Haffner & Donna E. Lusitana, Greystone Communications for the History Channel, dist. by A&E Home Video c/o New Video Group, 800-423-1212; [www.newvideo.com](http://www.newvideo.com). 2007. DVD 978-0-7670-9725-3. \$49.95. HIST

This six-volume set is a collection of three distinct programs from the History Channel: *Civil War Combat*, *Civil War Journal: The Conflict Begins*, and *Civil War Journal: The Commanders*. The first two volumes focus on "The Hornets' Nest at Shiloh," "The Bloody Lane at Antietam," "The Wheatfield at Gettysburg," and "The Tragedy at Cold Harbor." The remaining four discs include eight episodes from *Civil War Journal*: "John Brown's War," "Destiny at Fort Sumter," "The Battle of 1st Bull Run," "The 54th Massachusetts," "West Point Classmates—Civil War Enemies," "Robert E. Lee," "Stonewall Jackson," and "Sherman and the March to the Sea." Each episode includes interviews with scholars, reenactments, archival photographs, and the narration of letters, newspaper articles, and other material from the era. Each individual episode offers stunning detail and examination of the subject, moving beyond the basic retelling of individual events and offering scholarly interpretations that are enhanced through the archival photos and document readings. The audio and visual quality are excellent. This is a great collection for those who have not previously purchased the individual programs. Recommended for both public and academic libraries.—**Michael LaMagna, Cabrini Coll. Lib., Radnor, PA**

**Sun Dogs: The True Story of the Jamaican Dogsled Team.** color. 90 min. Andrea Stewart, Dog Leg Media, dist. by Palm Pictures, 76 9th Ave., 11th fl., New York, NY 10011; [www.palmpictures.com](http://www.palmpictures.com). 2007. DVD \$19.99. INT AFFAIRS

Inspired by the success of the Jamaican Olympic bobsled team, Danny Melville devises a plan to salvage stray dogs from the Jamaica Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals shelters and Kingston streets to create the Jamaican dogsled team. This is the story of the first 12 dogs rescued, their training, and the humans involved in the effort. The story is told

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with a great deal of good humor, music, and a combination of live action and animation. The video also tells of widespread poverty and limited opportunities for native Jamaicans like Devon Anderson, the team's chief dogsled manager, and Newton, the former chief musher, who betrayed the team's trust shortly after his Minnesota training session. As patron Jimmy Buffett says about the team, "It's not going to change the world, just make it a better place to bark in." This video is recommended for all audiences for its honest look at socioeconomic conditions in Jamaica, its innovative approach to creating opportunity for Jamaicans and their stray dogs, and, again, for its very good humor.—**Cliff Glaviano, Bowling Green State Univ. Libs., OH**

**Looking for Langston.** b/w. 60 min. Isaac Julien, dist. by Strand Releasing, 6140 W. Washington Blvd, Culver City, CA 90232; 310-836-7500; [www.strandreleasing.com](http://www.strandreleasing.com). 2007. DVD \$24.99. LIT

As its title suggests, *Looking for Langston* is British filmmaker and artist Julien's attempt to examine the life and works of famed author Langston Hughes. The film is neither a documentary nor a typical narrative work but a montage of dreamlike sequences set against the background of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. Throughout, we are treated to examples of Hughes's poetry as well as that of other notable authors of the period. Julien's background as an "installation artist" (where sculpture and various other media are combined to influence one's experience of a particular space or environment) is readily apparent here. Shot exclusively in black and white, the film begins with a small group of mourners attending a wake. The highly stylized scene immediately sets the tone as the camera moves seamlessly from the wake above to the film's primary set, an artful re-creation of a 1920s speakeasy below. Inside this fantasy demimonde, elegant, tuxedo-clad gay men are seen in a variety of fleeting interactions and flirtations, the thin veneer of which hides their often lonely existence. The cinematography blends well with the archival footage that is occasionally inserted into the film; however, it is while viewing such fleeting glimpses of the real 1920s Harlem and Hughes himself that one begins to realize how little of either is actually examined in *Looking for Langston*. Had the film aimed to be a simple mood piece—an artistic imagining of gay, black men during the Harlem Renaissance—with Hughes's work adding an authentic and appropriate layer to the mix, it would have been much more affective. However, if we are to judge it as an exploration of the author and his work, the film is lacking. If one is truly looking for Langston Hughes, one would do well to look elsewhere.—**David Gordinier, SUNY at Brockport Lib.**

**War Made Easy: How Presidents & Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death.** color. 73 min. Media Education Fdn., 60 Masonic St., Northampton, MA 01060; 800-897-0089; [www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org). 2007. DVD ISBN 978-1-932869-13-2. \$34.95; high sch. \$125; acad. libs. \$195. Public performance. POLITICS

Based on journalist Norman Solomon's 2005 book of the same name, this documentary questions the manner in which the U.S. government has in recent years justified going to war and the absence of critical scrutiny of those justifications by the American media. The documentary cites examples back to the Vietnam War, but it focuses on the second Iraq War. It presents media clips of President Bush and other officials claiming with implied certainty that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. Solomon says the media played into the rush to battle by both uncritically accepting the government's claims and by squelching opposing viewpoints. He repeatedly cautions that the American media is too closely tied to the military to offer true objectivity. Solomon presents his criticisms on camera, juxtaposed between relevant news clips and explanatory off-screen narration by actor Sean Penn. *War Made Easy* is a more sharply defined and better-argued look at the subject than the somewhat whiny and self-righteous documentary *Independent Intervention: Breaking Silence* (Video Reviews, *LJ* 10/15/07). *War Made Easy* is highly recommended for all libraries, but because of its tiered pricing, it is an essential purchase only for public libraries.—**Lawrence R. Maxted, Gannon Univ. Lib., Erie, PA**

**10 Questions for the Dalai Lama.** color. 85 min. Rick Ray, Monterey Media, 566 St. Charles Dr., Thousand Oaks, CA 91360; 800-424-2593; [www.montereymedia.com](http://www.montereymedia.com). 2007. DVD ISBN 978-1-56994-399-1. \$24.95. REL

If you had only one hour, what would you ask the Dalai Lama? This is the question that Rick Ray asks, and answers, in this excellent film. He uses his expert filmmaking skills to uncover the personal, political, and religious tensions that inform the Dalai Lama's answers. Tenzin Geyche Tethong, the 14th Dalai Lama, is the exiled political and religious leader of the Tibetan people. He has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, yet he is acutely aware of the cruel sufferings of the Tibetans under Chinese rule. His background is steeped in tradition, and yet now he lives in a world of nearly unfathomable change. He studies science while following a rich, spiritual life. Ray reveals it all here; highly recommended for laypersons interested in biography, current affairs, or religion.—**Kathleen Sullivan, Phoenix P.L.**

**Xtreme Moto XXX.** 4 vols. color. 149 min. Quick Fix Prods., dist. by TOPICS Entertainment, [www.topics-ent.com](http://www.topics-ent.com). 2005; 2007 release. DVD ISBN 978-1-59150-780-2. \$29.99. Includes: **Moto XXX; Hellraisers; It's All for You; Up in Flames.** SPORTS

This four-disc set is little more than an extended collection of video clips, showing mostly freestyle dirt motorcycle jumping set to a sound track of fast-paced, hard-driving music. Filmed in a variety of locations and venues and featuring well-known motocross and X Games riders, this credibly displays riders' skills both with their machines and with their airborne acrobatic stunts, often including some very stylish jumps. This accounts for almost all of each video's content, save for brief video bites, often inane or crude, that separate each jumping segment. The videos have no narration or commentary and lend nothing to an understanding of the art or skill involved in freestyle jumping. They are simply large doses of visual imagery set to a sound track. While there is undoubtedly an audience for this kind of action, similar fare is easily accessible on the web, so libraries should pass.—**David Van de Streek, Penn State Univ. Libs., York**



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