

a 60-ish man named Rick Boyle, an inspiring figure with a story worth knowing, filmmakers David and Kathi Peters's *Chain of Life* buries its lead, only revealing in the final minutes how Boyle lifted himself out of a life of misery and self-destruction to help others. Capturing Boyle as he sits and quietly lays out the grim details of his childhood (little love, a profound learning disability, a global feeling of worthlessness), his suicidal tendencies, and his remoteness and controlling ways as a father and husband, the film juxtaposes much of his commentary against footage of a bicycle tour of Ireland that he took with his son and a friend. The answer to what Boyle's sad background has to do with his vacation eventually becomes obvious, but only after the viewer strains to put things into long-delayed context. Despite these structural problems, *Chain of Life* does offer a genuine payoff as Boyle's victory over soul-crushing odds and his focus on service emerge. A strong optional purchase. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

Kevin Roche: The Quiet Architect ★★★
(2017) 81 min. DVD: \$29.95 (\$249 w/PPR from www.kinolorberedu.com). DRA. Kino Lorber (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

The almost unbelievably prolific—and highly influential—Irish-American architect Kevin Roche (1922–2019) is profiled in filmmaker Mark Noonan's documentary, which offers an excellent biographical sketch of the Pritzker Prize winner, combining archival materials with penetrating excerpts from interviews with Roche, his

wife, and many admiring colleagues. The film also features extensive, lovingly photographed footage of both the exteriors and interiors of many of his buildings, from the early Oakland Museum (1966) and Ford Foundation (1968) up through the extraordinary Dublin Convention Center (2010). *The Quiet Architect* emphasizes Roche's powerful work ethic and incredible productivity, as well as his innovative ideas about maintaining a strong connection between a building and its environment, and ensuring that the finished structure would be user-friendly. Towards those ends, Roche added interior gardens and pedestrian walkways in some instances, positioned buildings to minimize ecological disruption, and—particularly in the case of corporate headquarters—made office areas not only functional but also inviting. While they do not eschew practicality, Roche's buildings are still especially prized for their remarkable beauty and variety. Fellow architects readily testify to the enormous impact that his approach has had on the field, but also note his modesty and openness, qualities evident in the genial interviews with Roche included here. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

The Long Goodbye: The Kara Tippetts Story ★★★

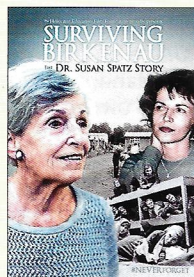
(2019) 87 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Thirtysomething Kara Tippetts was a pastor's wife living in Colorado with four

Surviving Birkenau: The Dr. Susan Spatz Story ★★★1/2

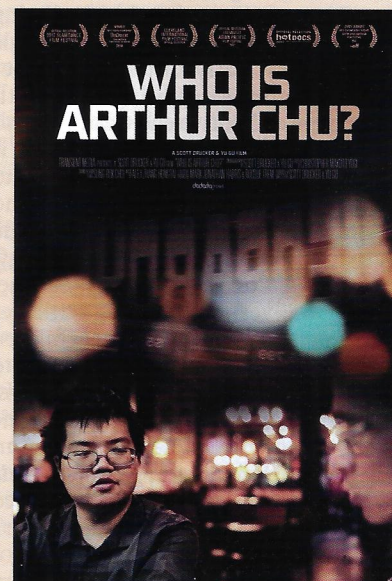
(2018) 71 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$199.99 w/PPR). Dreamscape Media. Closed captioned.

At the age of 96, the remarkably youthful and lucid Susan Spatz recounts her own horrifying experiences during the Holocaust, along with the compelling tale of her postwar return to normal life, which turned out to be as confusing, disappointing, and often unhappy as "normalcy" can be. Born in Vienna in 1922, Spatz lived a privileged existence until the Third Reich made life hell for her and fellow European Jews in Berlin, Vienna, and Prague. Eventually imprisoned in the Terezin concentration camp in Czechoslovakia, Spatz endured tremendous suffering, although she also displayed a knack for learning how to lessen the chances of death by being in the right places at the right times (such as working in storage rooms to get out of the cold). Transported to the Auschwitz death camp, Spatz was among the few there who were not murdered by the Nazis. In filmmaker Ron Small's *Surviving Auschwitz*, Spatz describes how the Germans knew full well that they had lost the war and that camps were being liberated as Allied troops advanced, yet they ramped up efforts to kill Jews anyway, for no other reason than to carry on the genocide until being forced to stop. Spatz's recollections of serendipitous moments that saved her are amazing: sometimes, it was literally a matter of turning left instead of right that kept her alive. A failed marriage after the war was disillusioning, but her subsequent emigration to America and enrollment in college at the age of 40 makes for some entertaining memories, especially about how her daughter—who was already attending the same university—worried about ending up at the same student parties as her mom. A powerful portrait of a lively Holocaust survivor, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)



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children when she discovered a lump in her breast that turned out to be a sign of a stage 4 cancer that quickly spread to her lymph nodes, and then her brain and bones. Filmmaker Jay Lyons's documentary describes Kara's valiant fight to "live love large" by sharing her suffering with others. Turning her parenting blog into a chronicle of her cancer journey, Kara says that "suffering isn't a mistake." She recounts her struggle to remain physically intimate with her husband, the futility of being angry with God, and her decision to end treatment and enter hospice care. Sometimes her counsel is unwelcome, and her attempt to reach out to a woman with a terminal brain tumor who is contemplating suicide is rebuffed. The film follows her plateaus, bursts of energy, inevitable hair loss, slow physical decline, saying goodbyes, and dealing with her greatest regret—knowing that her children must grow up without her. She takes time to write a book, and is supported by friends, her church congregation, and allies she met on the Internet, notably author Ann Voskamp and TV's *Fixer Upper* star Joanna Gaines. In interviews here, Kara, who died in 2015, admits that enduring pain isn't easy, but that faith, an appreciation for simple things, and living each day fully can help turn illness into a blessing. Extras include additional interviews with Voskamp, Gaines, and quadriplegic Joni Eareckson Tada. Recommended. Aud: P. (S. Rees)

Moynihan ★★★

(2018) 104 min. DVD: \$24.95. *First Run Features* (avail. from most distributors).

Ambassador to India and the United Nations, author, and U.S. senator, Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1927-2003) was a man for all seasons. Patrician in speech and appearance, the Irish Moynihan was actually a product of New York City's Hell's Kitchen. Co-directed by Toby Perl Freilich and Joseph Dorman, this documentary describes a man who inhabited two worlds, bridging academic thought and government. Moynihan's recurrent theme was the culture of poverty and racism, and the critical need for jobs in urban America. Raised during the Depression, Moynihan was drawn to the idea of government activism after JFK was elected in 1960. Moynihan was always an idea man, but not an ideologue, and in a moment of rare bipartisanship, President Nixon asked him to be his domestic advisor (Nixon actually liked Moynihan, sharing the same hardscrabble upbringing). Alarmed by the rise of the black militant movement in the wake of the 1960s inner city riots, Moynihan courted controversy by urging "benign neglect" of some civil rights issues, but he later became disenchanted with Nixon's "southern strategy" for re-election (which included fanning white grievances), and resigned. Moynihan

again became a polarizing figure when he defended Israel in the United Nations, scorning claims of alleged racist brutality against Palestinians. Always a gadfly, Moynihan sought to raise big questions, using his education and caustic wit. As a senator he was ahead of his time on a wide range of issues, including global warming, international debt, the breakup of the Soviet Union, and the rise of ethnic violence. A deal maker, Moynihan tried to work across the aisle, noting that contempt for government would only result in contemptible government. With mostly admiring commentary from George Will, Henry Kissinger, and Chuck Schumer, among others, this thoughtful tribute to a sadly missed public servant is recommended. Aud: C, P. (S. Rees)

The Unimaginable Journey of Peter Ertel

★★★★1/2

(2017) 104 min. DVD: \$95. *DRA. Victory Films* (avail. from www.peterertelfilm.com). PPR.

The subject of Joseph Cahn's documentary is Peter Ertel, who was 96 years old when this film was shot. Ertel's life odyssey is nothing short of astonishing: born in Germany, he was conscripted into Hitler's army despite being a self-proclaimed pacifist and a sarcastic critic of the Nazi philosophy. He survived the military battles on the Russian front, rising to the role of platoon leader. Returning to Germany, Ertel sought to escape the war by surrendering himself to American forces. He was transferred as a prisoner of war to the U.S. and sent to a camp in Alabama where he learned English. After the war, Ertel was recruited by the State Department and returned to Germany to work with the occupying forces in rebuilding the country. He came back to the U.S. with his wife in 1953 and settled in Cleveland, where he took a job with a company owned by Orthodox Jews. Cahn weaves a compelling tapestry of historical footage and personal photographs to trace Ertel's biography, but the key is having Ertel as the on-camera narrator—Ertel is an excellent raconteur who tells a provocative and emotionally enriching life story. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

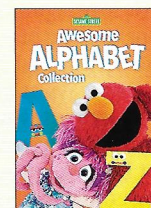
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Series Update

The following titles are new additions to series previously recommended. Titles are available from most distributors unless otherwise noted.

Shout! Factory has released **Sesame Street: Awesome Alphabet Collection** (130 min., DVD: \$14.98), starring



Elmo, Abby Cadabby, and other Sesame Street pals in an alphabet-themed compilation covering all 26 letters that features celebrity appearances by Norah Jones, Pharrell Williams, Maya Angelou, Sheryl Crow, and Ricky Gervais. See review of *Sesame Street: Be a Good Sport* in VL-5/14.

PBS Home Video has released **The Berenstain Bears: It's Time for School!** (80 min., DVD: \$6.99), featuring characters from Stan and Jan Berenstain's lovable Bear family series as they learn about school. See review of *The Berenstain Bears Christmas Tree* in VL-11/08.

The PAW Patrol explores new territory in **PAW Patrol: Jungle Rescues** (96 min., DVD: \$14.99), the newest title from Paramount and Nickelodeon's computer-animated series following puppy patrollers Marshall, Chase, Zuma, Skye, Rubble, and Rocky. See review of *PAW Patrol* in VL-7/14.

Newly available from S'more Entertainment is **The Dick Cavett Show—Baseball's Greatest Hits: Pitchers** (390 min. DVD: 3 discs, \$29.95), in which the legendary host converses with Major League Baseball pitchers including Whitey Ford, Dizzy Dean, and Satchel Paige, as well as guests such as Mickey Mantle, Paul Simon, and Salvador Dali. See review of *Dick Cavett's Vietnam* in VL-11/15.

Hosted by Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr., **Finding Your Roots: Season 5** (600 min., DVD: 3 discs, \$39.99), the 2019 fifth season of PBS's genealogical series, explores the family trees of notables including Christiane Amanpour, Lisa Ling, George R.R. Martin, Kehinde Wiley, and Kal Penn. See review of *Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* in VL Online-11/12.

