

“Libby, Montana”

Educational Media Reviews On-Line

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Libby, Montana, a documentary by Drury Gunn Carr and Doug Hawes-Davis, is a powerfully disturbing portrayal of the effects of asbestos on this small town. Logging was always big for Libby but geology also provided this place with a vast source of vermiculite. Mining became big business and provided many families with the American dream. Unfortunately, that dream became a nightmare since the particular vermiculite in Libby was contaminated with asbestos. W.R. Grace, the company that elevated Libby and ran the mine for years, is chronicled in the film.

The directors use a montage of past and present footage to paint the picture of Libby. The use of archival footage is blended seamlessly with the present. The film's main focus is on the cleanup, particularly the interaction between the citizens and the state and federal governments. Interviews with the residents provide the viewer with a very personal account of how asbestos has impacted their lives. They provide emotionally wrenching stories and the viewer can not help but be drawn in. The directors do a wonderful job of showcasing the community's strength and perseverance. Carr and Hawes-Davis deliver a well-balanced piece showing both the blessing and the curse of asbestos.

Libby, Montana contains an original music score which perfectly compliments the subject matter. The music is included on a CD along with the DVD. The DVD also contains deleted scenes and directors' interviews.

College and university libraries with programs in environmental studies would benefit from having this in their collections as well as public libraries collecting historical pieces.

Highly Recommended