

“Film Shorts”
See Magazine
by Kevin Wilson
Edmonton, Alberta

LIBBY, MONTANA
Directed by Drury Gunn Carr
**** (out of five)

The contempt of free enterprise enthusiasts comes in many flavours, none more bitter than their disdain for government regulators and regulations. Let businesses police themselves they cry, no matter how often private enterprise finds itself on the wrong side of the law....or the place where their consciences should be.

An absence of conscience helps explain the recent history of Libby, Montana, where the WR Grace Corporation let its employees mine vermiculite for decades. During that time, while the company reaped the benefits of being the world's largest primary supplier of this ostensibly wonderful multipurpose stuff, it failed to tell its employees that vermiculite was giving them asbestosis. And at the point in the story where you expect and hope that some sort of justice will be done for the remaining men who speak softly because of their destroyed lungs, the congruent interests of business and politics (and the well-placed individuals who straddle both camps) snatch defeat from the jaws of victory time after time.

While Libby, Montana's rough-hewn feel certainly suits the rustic city of Libby, that same hand-made appearance and bucolic pace belies what proves to be a quietly savvy approach to storytelling.

Tragic, infuriating, edifying.