

sense. The subjects recount every kind of story, from the loss of virginity to transitioning from male to female while trying to conceive with a spouse. They also talk about their first orgasms, and the pluses and minuses of contraceptive options. One 39-year-old mother plainly states, "Condoms suck!" Several talk about experiences with abortion, including one woman who ended up at a crisis pregnancy center and another who took the morning after pill. One woman had three abortions, two before she had her present kids and one afterward. She didn't experience any complications, but another older woman here remembers a classmate who died after an illegal abortion, which sent a chill among her and her friends. Another woman talks about the consequences of an open marriage. While she was pregnant, her husband had an affair and gave her syphilis (she found out because he left the test results in their car). Although she was allergic to antibiotics, she took them anyway and while she worried that her baby could have birth defects, he was fortunately born healthy. The women in O'Feral's film are all forthright and engaging, although a little more post-production work would've been ideal, since traffic and voices can be heard in the background of some interviews. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

SPORTS, GAMES & RECREATION

A Film Called Blacks Can't Swim ★★

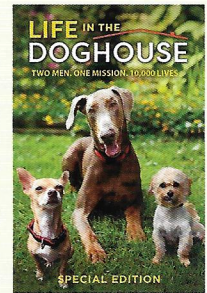
(2019) 30 min. DVD: \$99; public libraries; \$150: colleges & universities. Ed Accura (avail. from <https://afilmcalledblackscantswim.bandzoogle.com>). PPR.

This semi-documentary, directed and edited by the pseudonymous Mysterex, is essentially a hortatory piece encouraging blacks to learn to swim—something that in Africa (and apparently Britain, where the film was made) is considered culturally unnecessary, and even dangerous. Much of this short film is devoted to interview clips with people who, despite their fears, have learned to swim and now enjoy swimming in pools for fun and exercise; unfortunately, the sound recording in these segments is mediocre, far too resonant for clarity's sake. Animated inserts separate the interview montages from brief scenes telling an odd fictional tale about Frank (played, rather hysterically, by British hip-hop artist Ed Accura), who is terrified by news reports of floods and hurricanes, and keeps hearing the voice of a screeching woman in his mind telling him that learning to swim is impossible. To protect himself from drowning, Frank decides to wear a life jacket all the time, even when he sleeps—although that voice keeps haunting his dreams, so he often awakens screaming. But his wife and young daughter prod him to take ionswimming lessons, and by the

Life in the Doghouse ★★★1/2

(2018) 84 min. DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$24.95. FilmRise (avail. from most distributors).

It would be hard to imagine anyone not being moved by the blend of cuteness and pathos in Ron Davis's feature documentary, which goes behind the scenes of a unique dog shelter and adoption center operated by horse trainers/equestrians Danny Robertshaw and Ron Danta out of their home in Camden, SC. Running up six-figure expenses, the pair board 71 dogs at a time inside the house (rather than in impersonal exterior kennels) in a friendly, communal environment. Many of the canines are true rehabs, carefully selected from overcrowded animal shelters just prior to execution dates (a large number also came from waterlogged New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina). The two men—whose backstory as a committed gay couple in the American South adds additional interest—have successfully placed more than 10,000 pets in loving homes. Yet, the heartbreaking point is also made (via a melancholy overhead-drone sequence of a conventional shelter's post-euthanasia disposal routine) that millions of domestic animals annually go to their deaths, and the heroic efforts of these animal lovers are an exception, not the rule, in a nation overrun with strays, cast-offs, and the results of horrendous puppy mills. The closing theme song, "I Love My Dog" by Cat Stevens, says it all. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)



end Frank is shown taking off the jacket and jumping into a pool. A photograph of a smiling Simone Manuel, a multiple medal winner at the 2016 Olympics, confirms that blacks can indeed swim, and very well. Well-intended but not well-made, this is not recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Team Khan ★★★

(2019) 82 min. DVD: \$24.95. Passion River (avail. from most distributors).

Co-directors Blair Macdonald and Oliver Clark train their lens on Amir Khan, a 28-year-old British WBA world light-welterweight boxer. The handsome, sharp-dressed athlete relies on a team that includes his father, uncle, and brother, all of whom accompany him to Las Vegas for his 2014 bout against Devon Alexander. After his win, Oscar De La Hoya proclaims Khan to be among the top three boxers in the world. Khan also triumphs against Chris Algieri, but afterward wonders if it isn't time to start planning for retirement. In the wake of the 2004 Olympics, Khan felt like his childhood got fast-tracked. "I missed it all," he says, "because I was in the public eye." When he isn't competing, Khan lives in Bolton with his Brooklyn-born wife and daughter. During the film, he also travels to Pakistan to visit his home village and to offer support after a deadly Taliban attack (here, Khan is treated like a rock star). Although he hopes to fight Floyd Mayweather, the latter retires before Khan gets the chance. Instead, he faces Mexico's Canelo Álvarez in a match that does not go as planned. Before the fight, Khan quips that it could be the last for the two of them "if Donald Trump becomes President." In a very real sense, Khan's team

includes Muslims across the globe eager to see him reclaim his world champion status. The Álvarez fight would not turn out to be Khan's last fight, but the filmmakers make it clear that he's risking his health and possibly even his marriage if he continues. An interesting sports profile with larger sociopolitical overtones, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

Wrestle ★★★

(2018) 96 min. DVD: \$34.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99. Oscilloscope (avail. from most distributors).

In the tradition of youth sports-competition documentaries, filmmakers Suzannah Herbert and Lauren Belfer's *Wrestle* features the usual drama, triumphs, failures, conflicts, and varying levels of frustration among student athletes and adult coaches. While racism is often a demeaning hurdle for student jocks trying to leverage success on the court, or field, or in the ring, the town of Huntington, AL, seems determined to take down African American kids on Jim Crow principle. The young men hassled in *Wrestle* are several members of the wrestling team at Huntington's J. O. Johnson High School. But that's not the only problem keeping coach Chris Scribner (white, mid-to-late 30s, near-military haircut) awake at night. Scribner's long-range task is to prepare as many of his team as possible to qualify for Alabama's state championship, a job he takes seriously. But there's a lot on his plate: one powerful-looking teen is so distracted by imminent fatherhood that he can't focus; another with attention-deficit disorder refuses to take his meds and impulsively makes up doomed wrestling holds; and a boy undergoing a growth spurt is gaining pounds