

School Library Journal Reviews Reality Check Program DVD

The [School Library Journal \(SLJ\)](#) has

completed a review of the Reality Check Program DVD. *SLJ* is the world's largest and most authoritative reviewer of

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For Children's, Young Adult and School Librarians

children's and young adult content—principally books, but also including audio, video, and the Web—the magazine and its Web site provide 38,000 subscribers with information indispensable in making purchasing decisions. The Journal serves librarians who work with students in school and public libraries, reaching an audience of more than 100,000.

The review was featured in the School Library Journal on February 1, 2010:

The Reality Check Program. DVD. 1:27 hrs. Prod. by Larry Lawton. Dist. by LL Research & Consulting, Inc. 2010. \$39.95.

Gr 7 Up—Lawrence Lawton admits to making many bad choices in his life, some of which led him to spend 11 years in prison for racketeering and other crimes. He lost his family and was denied many freedoms taken for granted by most of us. From the perspective of someone who has "been there," he developed this program as part of a broader series of services (realitycheckprogram.com) which aim to help teenagers and young adults avoid a similar fate. In clear and sometimes explicit language, he shares exactly what occurs in prisons on a daily basis as well as the long-term consequences of an arrest record and incarceration. His emphasis throughout is on good decision making, especially in the choice of friends. It's not as if young people haven't heard these warnings before, but this time they come from a person who speaks from first-hand experience. The program, which offers a chapter selection option, employs prison photographs which might be unsettling to viewers, but that's exactly the reaction desired. Lawton, who is now a paralegal, stresses that young people can easily lose many of their prime years in a hostile, threatening, and sometimes deadly environment and then return to an unforgiving society. The presentation sometimes seems preachy and canned, which may turn off some of those he is trying to reach, but getting through to even one potential inmate makes it all worth while. The film can be used in a variety of individual, school, and community settings. School support staff members may welcome this title. —*Dwain Thomas, formerly of Lake Park High School, Roselle, IL*