

The Sends

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Download \$19.94 | DVD \$24.95 | ★★☆☆☆

THE SENDS IS CLOSE TO PERFECT in its no-frills depiction of a tight group of talented but not quite world-class Swedish climbers. They aren't famous, but the viewer will recognize a prototype. Young, strong, dedicated and earnest, these are the climbers who rule your local crag, pushing limits and grades not for recognition or sponsorship, but because they love to climb.

In a refreshing lack of attitude, the characters seem almost shy in front of the camera. The director, Shawn Boye (*Swedish Meatballs*), does a great job showing the effort involved in each of the high-grade first ascents, from V13 boulders, 5.13b trad, 5.13c psicobloc and 5.14b sport climbs. The climbing—all on Sweden's splitter granite—looks awesome and the cinematography is professional, but it is the characters who really engage the viewer with a sincerity any climber will recognize.

"I was totally empty," Björn Strömberg says about his 30th, and first successful, attempt on his cave project. "There was just one thing, nothing more. I didn't notice if I was tired. I didn't analyze anything. I was just climbing." He runs his hand through his beard and looks up at the camera. "I think it's time to get my life together," he says.

Yet this film also succeeds in elucidating the fact that climbing is life and we generate validity and meaning from send to send.

—Jeff Jackson



The Last of His Kind

By David Roberts | <http://browseinside.harpercollins.com> | \$25.99 | ★★☆☆☆

IN HIS NEW BIOGRAPHY, "The Last of His Kind," David Roberts uses personal correspondence, writings, photographs and interviews with friends and family to write the definitive portrait of Bradford Washburn, who emerges as driven and generous, but at times arrogant and short-tempered.

In the chapters on Washburn's brilliant 1935 traverse of the Saint Elias Range and his first ascent, with Bob Bates, of Mount Lucania and 150-mile hike out, up and over Mount Steele, Washburn is shown as a pioneer in alpine-style mountaineering in Alaska and Canada.

The details Roberts provides about these trips, such as how strung out Washburn and Bates were on Lucania after throwing out much of their gear to move faster, create gripping, adventure-novel reading.

Roberts interviews professionals about Washburn's photography, which ironically came from Washburn's passion for new routes, not professional study.

And he doesn't shy from Washburn's failings and feuds, including his pilot error that resulted in the deaths of two female passengers in a 1938 plane crash. Washburn's complex relationship with fellow Harvard Mountaineering Club member Charles Houston is explored in emotionally nuanced detail; Houston felt slighted by Washburn on a 1933 trip to Mount Crillon and subsequently left Washburn off his Himalayan expeditions to Nanda Devi and K2, despite Washburn's experience.

This book is a must-read for anyone seeking to understand one of the most important figures in American mountaineering.

—Candace Horgan



Recompense: Streams, Summits, and Reflections

By Brian Irwin | www2.xlibris.com | \$29.99 | ★★☆☆☆

THE PROBLEM WITH ESSAY collections is that sometimes you see an author's patterns too easily. Witness Brian Irwin's *Recompense: Streams, Summits, and Reflections*, a wildly diverse collection of mostly previously published essays focusing on climbing, skiing and fishing.

It's hard not to view Irwin's essays "Papa Noel" and "The Stalls" as two sides of the same coin, dealing with an American's guilt over his recreational climbing in impoverished regions like South America. You can only take so much of that, but viewed separately, they stand up.

Built upon a vast store of personal reflection, Irwin's essays at times tantalize while dealing with the murky territory of emotion. His piece "The Last Moonset," an account of meeting Sue Nott on the Kahiltna Glacier right before Nott's ill-fated attempt on Foraker, is chillingly honest, especially in how her disappearance affected him.

Irwin acknowledges that the essays may seem only loosely connected, but believes that they all share themes of how the outdoors and nature influence him. That statement is belied by "Floating the Swan," an essay about Irwin's early medical training, which comes out of left field.



Irwin is at his most interesting when writing about climbing and skiing in New England, and his experiences with the Wilderness Rescue Team.

—Candace Horgan

Climbing Stronger, Faster, Better: Beyond the Basics

By Michael A. Layton, D.C. | <http://sites.google.com/site/climbingstronger> | \$24.95 | ★★☆☆☆



A SELF-PUBLISHED RAM dump in 10-point type, Dr. Layton's compendium of training, health and climbing tips provides a wealth of information in an idiosyncratic, no-frills style. This book began as a training manual and evolved into an omnibus. Thorough chapters on training, injuries and nutrition fill the first two-thirds, while dense and sometimes cryptic sections on climbing tools and tactics (bolting! self-rescue! avalanches!), with an emphasis on alpinism, round it out. Bottom line: an excellent training manual for intermediate to advanced climbers, with scads of useful tips on the minutiae that often separates the epic send from the merely epic.

—Rob Dillon

[MY FAVORITE BOOK]

Expeditions | By Andrew Lindblade

MOUNTAIN TALES FALL INTO one of two types. Those that depend on death and injury for drama and those that don't. The Australian alpinist Andrew Lindblade's *Expeditions* is one of those few that lands squarely in the second category. In it, Lindblade traces his evolution from Arapiles crag rat to world-class alpinist, articulately wrestling with the greatest climbing question: why?

Expeditions leaves the reader agape at Lindblade's accomplishments with his great friend and partner, the Kiwi warrior Athol Whimp, an incredible friendship that colors nearly every page. Self-motivated to the core, the Lindblade/Whimp partnership never received a penny of sponsorship. They did it all themselves: three straight open bivies on the North Pillar of Fitz Roy in Patagonia; another week later on an ice shelf chipped from the sides of Cerro Torre; myriad summer and winter climbs in

the Southern Alps; the first ascent of Thalay Sagar's North Face, for which they received the 1997 Piolet d'Or. Lindblade is at his terrifying best narrating their light and fast ascent of Jannu's *Wall of Shadows*, pushing through storm when the electric blue haze of an imminent lightning strike latches onto Athol and forces refuge in an icy slot 300 feet below the summit. In the moment that the taciturn Athol mutters, "I wouldn't be here with anybody else, mate," *Expeditions* transcends the genre, passing from a book about mountains into one about partnership, trust and total commitment, things we can actually bring back from the high places.

—Gregory Crouch

