

# **Bruce David Janu**

**Dir., *Crayons and Paper***

bdjanu@bellbookcamera.com

847.721.9222



Bruce David Janu's first feature documentary, *Facing Sudan*, hit the festival circuit in 2007 and garnered two best documentary awards. *Crayons and Paper* is a follow-up to that film and features one of its subjects: Dr. Jerry Ehrlich.

"I was just taken by him," explains Janu. "He is a film unto himself."

Over the last several years working on *Facing Sudan*, Janu has become passionate about Darfur and, in particular, about the fate of children in conflict zones. *Crayons and Paper* focuses on the plight of children in two of the world's most violent places: Sri Lanka and Darfur.

Janu often speaks to organizations and schools about the conflict in Darfur and uses music and images from his two films to help raise awareness about the situation in Sudan.

A teacher by trade, Janu is known for his unique approach to education, often using the skills that he acquired through a background in theatre production. He often dresses up in costume and can be sometimes heard singing songs he wrote about various historical events and people. In 1992, he gained a short-lived notoriety with his "Frank Sinatra Detention Club." An avid Frank Sinatra fan, he created a unique way of making after-school detentions more enjoyable for himself: 30 minutes of Sinatra music. Even today, Janu puts extra credit Sinatra questions on every test. He began an educational supply company in 1999 which featured demonstration videos of two of his products: *Bring Out Your Dead: Recreating the Black Death in the Classroom* and *Mouldering in the Grave: a Dramatic Approach to Teaching about John Brown*. Several educational videos followed and soon Janu was producing videos professionally, both in the educational field and for corporate and wedding clientele.

After finishing "Facing Sudan," Janu was ready for another documentary. His wife wasn't, however. The long hours Janu put into the making of "Facing Sudan" was difficult, especially since the couple has two small children and Janu works full time as a teacher.

So Janu decided to incorporate the new film into a Master's thesis he was completing at the University of Chicago. Parts of the film were presented along with a cultural analysis of Dr. Ehrlich's drawings in early 2009.

"So here I am again," states Janu. "Hopefully, using Dr. Jerry's story to raise awareness not only about Darfur, but about Sri Lanka as well."

When he is not making films, Janu teaches history and sociology at John Hersey High School in suburban Chicago.

## **Films**

*Crayons and Paper*, 2008  
*Facing Sudan*, 2007  
*Beautiful Cary* 2007  
*Cary, Illinois: A Gravel Pit Community?* 2007  
*In Search of Goth(ic)*, 2005

## **Presentations**

Keynote, Great Lakes Regional Council for the Social Studies (April 2009) "From Teacher to Filmmaker"  
African Studies Association, Teachers' Workshop (November 2008)  
Opening address, 28<sup>th</sup> Annual History Teachers Conference (October 2008)  
Genocide and Human Rights Summer Institute, Northern Illinois University (June 2006)  
National Council for the Social Studies annual convention (November 2000) "Bring Out Your Dead! Using Drama and Song in the History Classroom"

## **Books and Publications**

*Bring Out Your Dead! Recreating the Black Death in the Classroom* (2000)  
*Mouldering in the Grave: A Dramatic Approach to Teaching About John Brown* (2000)  
*The Constitution: A Cooperative Learning Approach* (2000)  
*Read All About It 2: Early American History Through Newspapers* (2000)  
*Read All About It! English History Through Newspapers of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (1999)

## **Articles for *Illinois History Teacher***

"The Iron Horse Comes to Illinois" (2008)  
"Hull House and the Immigrants" (2003)  
"The Mexicans in Chicago" (1999)  
"Mary Livermore and the Illinois Women's Suffrage Movement" (1996)

## **Education**

University of Chicago, MA 2009  
Eastern Illinois University, MA 1991  
Eastern Illinois University, BA 1990