



February 2014

God's Pocket

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Recommended Citation

Blizek, William L. (2014) "God's Pocket," *Journal of Religion & Film*: Vol. 18: Iss. 1, Article 17.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol18/iss1/17>

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God's Pocket

Abstract

This is a film review of *God's Pocket* (2014), directed by John Slattery.

Author Notes

William Blizek is the Founding Editor of the Journal of Religion and Film, and is Professor of Philosophy and Religion at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He is also the editor of the Continuum Companion to Religion and Film (2009).

God's Pocket
(2014)
Directed by John Slattery
US Dramatic Competition

God's Pocket is a dark comedy about a man and his wife. Her son is killed at work, but she does not believe that he died as his colleagues say he died. This sets off a



series of adventures—maybe misadventures would be a better term. In the end, the husband finds himself living with friends from the neighborhood in Florida where they fled to escape the consequences of failing to pay a loan shark. This is a happy ending, at least as happy an ending as you could get from a dark comedy.

We chose to review the film because of its title. The movie turned out not to be about religion, except for the title. So, what is God's Pocket? It is a neighborhood where people are born, grow up, get a job (not always a legitimate job), marry, have children, and die. And their children probably do the same. It is an insular neighborhood. Outsiders are not welcome. Outsiders do not understand the neighborhood. Everyone in the neighborhood knows all about everyone else in the neighborhood. Lots of bad things happen in the neighborhood, but these things are just a part of the landscape. The bad things are

familiar, they are expected. In some ways, God's Pocket is like a small town. In some ways it is like tribal territory. It is a law unto itself.

So why is the Pocket called God's? It is God's pocket because this is where its inhabitants feel safe. This is the place where things are familiar. This is where they are protected. This is where God looks over them. The irony is that how the inhabitants feel about living in God's Pocket does not match reality. In reality they are not safe, they are not secure, they are not loved. And this is why a trailer home in Florida counts as a happy ending.

— William L. Blizek