



January 2017

Winnie

William L. Blizek

University of Nebraska at Omaha, wblizek@unomaha.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf>



Part of the [African History Commons](#), and the [Film and Media Studies Commons](#)

Please take our feedback survey at: https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE

Recommended Citation

Blizek, William L. (2017) "Winnie," *Journal of Religion & Film*: Vol. 21: Iss. 1, Article 11.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol21/iss1/11>

This Sundance Film Festival Review is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Religion & Film by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.

Winnie

Abstract

This is a film review of *Winnie* (2017), directed by Pascale Lamchi.

Keywords

Truth and Reconciliation Commission, South Africa, Mandela

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).



Winnie (2017), dir. Pascale Lamche

The South African Truth & Reconciliation Commission was designed to help South Africa heal after years of a brutal apartheid. Some reparations were made to injured victims, but some amnesty was given to perpetrators of harm. The idea was that forgiveness was better than vengeance in bringing about much needed healing.

This film is a biography of Winnie Mandela, billed as a more accurate account of her contributions to the struggle for freedom and human rights in South Africa. The movie suggests that Winnie's contributions have been underappreciated. It also suggests, often in Winnie's own words, that she was badly treated by the TRC; indeed, it suggests that Winnie should never have been brought before them at all for her actions. Some people, however, have felt that she was treated too lightly and that justice is as important to the healing process as forgiveness. Of course, the line between justice and vengeance is often a thin one; the TRC was controversial in its decisions not to punish some, but it also has been viewed as a model for how Christian forgiveness

could be modeled in state policy after a civil war. Although he did not often speak of his faith, Nelson Mandela modeled his Christian beliefs in how he led his nation through the painful period of reconstruction.

The movie, unfortunately, has the feel of a self-promoting video, so that the idea that Winnie has been treated badly or that she deserves greater recognition for her contributions falls flat; it fails to make its point effectively, and so one is left with the sense of an unconvincing argument more than a new sense of her own perspective.