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## Enforcement Hours

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# Enforcement Hours

## **Abstract**

This is a review of the Slamdance Film Festival short film, *Enforcement Hours* (2019), directed by Paloma Martinez.

## **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).



**Enforcement Hours (2019), dir. Paloma Martinez**

In church, the sanctuary is a sacred space, a place blessed by God. A sanctuary city, then might be seen as a place blessed by God, a place in which people are doing God's work: healing the sick, helping the poor, or helping those who are oppressed. As Jesus says in Matthew 25:40: "In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

In San Francisco, the rapid response line is designed to respond quickly to those who are being confronted by ICE agents. The responders provide legal assistance to those confronted by ICE agents and make sure that those people are not abused. Immigrants who are not legal are hunted by ICE, which means that they live in constant fear. ICE agents are dressed in military outfits and carry weapons, thereby exacerbating the fear. One person in the film has to decide whether to walk her child to school so that her child is safe, but risk her own arrest. Or, should she stay home and stay safe, but send her child to school (which may not be safe for the child).

Some people claim that sanctuary cities encourage illegal immigrants to cross the border. Others claim that sanctuary cities protect murderers and rapists. Yet others argue that the sanctuary cities defy Federal law. These are debatable claims, but what the critics of sanctuary cities fail to understand is the power of doing God's work. Critics have lost sight of the “sanctuary” in “sanctuary city.” This short film makes that abundantly clear.