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Abortion Helpline, This is Lisa

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Abortion Helpline, This is Lisa

Abstract

This is a film review of *Abortion Helpline, This is Lisa* (2019) directed by Barbara Attie, Janet Goldwater, and Mike Attie.

Keywords

Abortion, Hyde Amendment

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).



Abortion Helpline, This is Lisa (2019), dir. Barbara Attie, Janet Goldwater, and Mike Attie

The Hyde Amendment was passed in 1976 and affirmed by the Supreme Court in 1980. It prohibits federal funds, including Medicare, from being used for abortions except in cases of rape, incest or endangerment to the life of the mother. It is named after its sponsor, Congressman Henry Hyde of Illinois. The greatest impact of the Amendment is on poor women, many of whom come from communities of color.

The Women’s Medical Fund (WMF) is an organization that provides financial assistance to poor women wanting an abortion. All employees answer the phone: “This is Lisa,” to protect the employees from anti-abortion activists. The Women’s Medical Fund operates with the help of donations. Women are asked to contribute as much as they can to the procedure and donations permit the WMF to cover additional costs. Unfortunately, the WMF does not always have funds available when a woman calls. Or it may not have sufficient funds to help a particular woman.

This means that while the Women's Medical Fund helps many women, whether a woman gets that help or not is a matter of chance. This documentary short shows the counselors who answer the phones as "Lisa" and their efforts to help as many of these women as they can.