



February 2021

Trammel

William L. Blizek
University of Nebraska at Omaha, wblizek@unomaha.edu

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

Recommended Citation

Blizek, William L. (2021) "Trammel," *Journal of Religion & Film*: Vol. 25 : Iss. 1 , Article 38.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol25/iss1/38>

This Slamdance 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.

Trammel

Abstract

This is a review of the short film, *Trammel* (2021), directed by Christopher Jason Bell.

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Author Notes

William Blizek is the Founding Editor of the Journal of Religion and Film, and is Emeritus 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).



Trammel (2021), dir. Christopher Jason Bell

In this short film we meet Dale. Dale lives in what appears to be a small Wisconsin town—we first meet Dale wearing a Green Bay Packers’ jacket. Dale is all alone until he walks into the local drug store and approaches a Muslim man, Mohammad, behind the pharmacy counter. Here Dale has someone to talk to. He tells Mohammad stories about his various activities—his visit to the zoo, his delivery of sperm, the money that his mother spent that he now owes. As the stories go on, Dale begins to reveal more about himself to Mohammad and to the viewer.

When Dale returns to the drug store, Mohammad is not behind the counter. Dale passes the time reading the labels on products he finds on the shelves. He sits at a dining table, but there is no food, no one to serve him. In the last scenes we see Dale outside the drug store looking in through the window and we realize how lost and lonely he is without Mohammad.

The third pillar of Islam is Zakat—the giving of alms or charity. According to this pillar, Muslims are to give some portion of their income to the poor. But, if you are not rich you can do good deeds, you can show good behavior toward others. So, in this short film we find Mohammad

meeting the requirements of the third pillar of Islam by listening to Dale, by giving Dale some human connection, by caring for Dale. Sometimes it is the little things that we do that make a difference in the lives of others and, more importantly, make a difference in our own lives, in who we are as a human being or in this case who we are as a good Muslim.

The title of the film, Trammel, means to be restricted or trapped. This clearly is a description of Dale and that makes Mohammed's behavior, his caring and respect for Dale, especially important to Dale and especially important as an expression of Mohammad's faith.