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## Sleeping with the Devil

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## Sleeping with the Devil

### Abstract

This is a review of the short film, *Sleeping with the Devil* (2021), directed by Alisa Wang.

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### 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-Omaha. He is also the editor of the *Continuum Companion to Religion and Film* (2009).



**Sleeping with the Devil (2021), dir. Alisa Yang**

Alisa Yang had a difficult life as a youngster. She suffered from sexual and other abuse. Her mother gave her away, but Alisa was later returned to her mother. One big problem for Alisa and her mother was that Alisa's mother was an Evangelical Christian and that Alisa gave up the belief in God and the connection she had with religion as a youngster.

Alisa's mother took her to many religious experience events in an effort to bring Alisa back to Jesus. These events are very similar. You are told that you are a sinner, that you are walking in spiritual rebellion. You are expected to have a severe emotional experience, after which you feel a change in your being. The details may differ from healer to healer, but the fundamental process is the same. Many of these events are similar to popular evangelical crusades.

Eventually, Alisa's mother convinces her to have a Skype appointment with Bob Larson of the Spiritual Freedom Church who performs exorcisms by Skype for only \$295. He also has a television show called "Ask the Exorcist." Bob Larson goes through his routine with Alisa. She

says that she wants to return to the Christianity of her youth, but she doesn't seem to make the commitment that Bob asks of her. Finally, a frustrated Bob accuses her of walking in spiritual rebellion—rejecting God—and sleeping with the Devil. He tells her that he cannot help her, but that if she wants to call him again, she should feel free to do so. Alisa tells Bob that she's not sure she can afford it and Bob tells her that this is her problem. He then says judgmentally (even though he's told Alisa that he's not going to judge her) that continuing on her present path will be much more expensive than the \$295 he charges.

Alisa made the film, *Sleeping with the Devil*, while in graduate school. The film consists of clips from her exorcism experience with Bob Larson, but it also includes clips of other exorcism events over a period of many years. Those other clips show the similarity of the exorcism gurus, including their request for money. If you exorcise the devil from thousands of individuals, you ought to be able to make a pretty good living. In the clips shown in this film, including those of Bob Larson's exorcisms by Skype, the disingenuousness of the exorcist or healer is apparent, even if those who are undergoing the experience believe that the devil is being driven out of them.