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Unforgivable

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Unforgivable

Abstract

This is a review of the short film, *Unforgivable* (2021), directed by Marlén Viñayo.

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Author Notes

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Unforgivable (2021), dir. Marlén Viñayo

In El Salvador gang members, some vicious killers, are sent to a special prison, San Francisco Gatera, in western El Salvador. Evangelical churches control almost every wing of the prison. Prisoners here are “taught” to be Christians. They often find themselves in circumstances similar to an Evangelical crusade. In 2017 almost all of the prisoners withdrew from the gang life and “became” Evangelical Christians. The exception is a small isolation bloc, where conditions are deplorable, and prisoners are treated in appalling fashion. Those in the isolation bloc are also former gang members, but they are also gay. God loves and forgives murderers and rapists—the worst of the worst—but not gays.

This is a documentary film that takes you inside San Francisco Gatera, where we actually see the conditions under which the prisoners are kept. We also meet some of the prisoners and follow their path from the isolation bloc to another prison that houses only gays. We presume that they will be treated better, probably not great, but better in the new prison. The prisoners often

have to face the choice of leaving the man they love to move to survivable conditions or to stay with the man they love under conditions in which they may not survive.

This film raises the question of what is really “unforgivable?”