



January 2024

Petro

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

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



Part of the [Political Science Commons](#), and the [Social Justice Commons](#)

Please take our feedback survey at: https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE

Recommended Citation

Blizek, William L. (2024) "Petro," *Journal of Religion & Film*: Vol. 28: Iss. 1, Article 30.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32873/uno.dc.jrf.28.01.30>

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol28/iss1/30>

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.

Petro

Abstract

This is a film review of *Petro* (2023), directed by Sean Mattison.

Keywords

Columbia, Gustavo Petro, M-19

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).



Petro (2023), dir. Sean Mattison

This is a documentary film about Gustavo Petro, a young man who joined the armed guerilla group M-19 in Colombia. M-19 derives its name from the 19th of April, the date of an allegedly fraudulent election of 1970. Some thirty years after joining M-19, Petro ran for the office of President. After years of perpetual violence in Colombia, Petro ran on a platform of peace. But you cannot have peace without equality, so his platform included establishing a government for the people and not for the powerful. His opponents, on a platform of helping the people in power, maintain their power and the inequality of wealth that accompanies that power. But you cannot maintain power without violence. The election, then, became a contest between peace and equality, and power and violence. Colombia was clearly divided between these two fundamental ideas. On election day, Gustavo Petro and his vice-presidential candidate, Francia Márquez, won. But the battle between peace and violence, between equality and power, is not yet over.

While this is a documentary film, there is a sub-text. There is an ongoing battle between good and evil in the world, between peace and equality, and power and violence. Colombia is an example of this battle, but it is obviously a battle taking place in many countries around the world. While the battle takes place in the political arena, the movie suggests that the battle between good and evil is also taking place in the souls of individual human beings. It is a part of the very nature of our humanity. For good to win out over evil in the public arena, it must win out in the hearts of individual human beings first.