

12th & Delaware Viewing Guide

Two years ago, while I was working with the Christian community in Miami to establish pregnancy help clinics in their neediest neighborhoods, filmmakers approached us to do a documentary. We declined for a variety of reasons. None of them had to do with being concerned that what goes on in our centers be made known to the public. Just the opposite. I have spent the bulk of my adult life trying to advance the pregnancy help movement and testifying about the gritty and gracious, life-saving and life-changing work unfolding inside a typical pregnancy help center.

The film 12th and Delaware portrays this in their own way. They did not bother to show any of the almost three thousand women every week that turn from abortion to choose life as a result of those who serve at pregnancy help centers. Nor did they show any of the typical ongoing help mothers are provided freely from whatever resources the pregnancy help center can offer. However, to complain that their film is slanted or to dismiss it as biased is too easy— too lazy.

So how do we critically learn from and review this film? How does the film reveal the ambivalence of abortion that every woman facing the moment knows; and forms the foundation as to why pregnancy help centers are so effective? This guide is to help you ask and answer these critical questions. In the end, we hope it helps you to confidently support pregnancy help centers and to winsomely talk to others about their work.

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Discussion Questions

1. While the abortion provider's clinic and the pregnancy care center are directly across the street from one another and compete for clients, the abortion clinic is a business selling a service while the pregnancy care center serves women free of charge and at a cost to the center. Do you think this difference affects the type of information a woman receives about abortion and how she is counseled? If so, what scenes from the film show this difference?
2. Candace downplays the possibility of abortion complications, including possible immediate complications from abortion such as excessive bleeding that could necessitate the removal of the uterus leading to a future inability to have children. How important is informed consent for all patients undergoing medical treatments? Should patients be made aware of the possibility of a complication, even if it occurs infrequently? Does providing information about possible abortion risks hinder a woman's ability to choose or enhance it?
3. Candace compares the safety of an abortion to a tonsillectomy. Considering that the procedure reduces two beating hearts to one, does such a remark reflect a callous view of human life?
4. Although the stated goal of the filmmakers was to make an objective documentary, how might film editing affect the presentation of each viewpoint? For example, consider the skewed juxtaposition of the abortion clinic and pregnancy care center. We meet Candace and her husband Arnold 43 minutes into the documentary. Does this approach change how a viewer perceives the abortion clinic workers? The emphasis on protecting the hidden doctor who arrives in the Mustang, camera shots from behind closed drapes, and the choice of music in certain sections of the film provides an underlying current of implied potential violence against the abortion providers. Does this approach detract from the storyline about women in the midst of making a difficult decision about an unwanted pregnancy? Do the scenes of the Catholic Mass, the pro-life demonstrations in Washington, and recitation of the rosary outside the abortion clinic present the role of religion in the prolife movement in a positive or negative light?
5. Does Anne come across as genuinely interested in the well being of the women she counsels? Does Candace? Describe scenes from the film that influenced your opinion about each woman.
6. Do you think the film ends before the story is over? While we hear Candace saying that the pregnancy care center does not end up truly helping to meet the needs of the woman who decides to carry her baby to term, we never meet women after they give birth to the baby or after they experience an abortion. What do you think we might learn about the abortion issue and the work of the pregnancy care center if the filmmakers followed the story through to the results of each woman's decision?
7. What issues in your life, if any, would move you to get up at 5 AM to pray and protest? Historically, what social issues in addition to the prolife movement have evoked that type of commitment?