

# ‘Unplanned’ isn’t fun to watch, but it’s necessary viewing

When the movie “Hotel Rwanda” came out in theaters in 2004, I didn’t go see it. I had heard that it was difficult to see the results of the slaughter of thousands upon thousands of Tutsi people by the Hutu in that African country.

Eventually, I decided to rent the movie well after it became available on DVD. I did not expect it to be any less disturbing, but I figured that I SHOULD see the movie, because the slaughter of these people and the way the world ignored their plight for so long.

I would never say I enjoyed watching “Hotel Rwanda,” but it was an important movie to see.

This week, I saw another movie that I did not want to see, but is important to see.

“Unplanned” tells the story of Abby Johnson, who rose quickly through the ranks of Planned Parenthood, becoming one of the youngest clinic directors in the organization. One fateful day, she assists with an ultrasound-guided abortion of a 13-week-old fetus. And that changed everything for her.

Johnson quit Planned Parenthood and became a pro-life advocate herself. She eventually founded And Then There Were None, which claims to be the only ministry in the country that helps abortion workers leave the industry and find new jobs. Close to 500 people, including doctors, have chosen a new walk of life through Johnson’s organization.

Catholic News Service’s **review of the film** calls it, a “hard-hitting, fact-based drama (that) dares its viewers to confront the reality of what happens when a baby is aborted.”

Yes, it’s hard-hitting. Johnson, in an interview for the radio show, “Catholic Baltimore,” said it was difficult in some ways to share her story in the book and on the big screen.

“It’s one thing to write out your story and put it out for the public. It’s very different to have that visually represented for everyone to see,” she said. “But you know, God has already used this film in a very powerful way, just in the private screenings. And I know that that he’s going to do something really remarkable in the lives and hearts of many of the people who see the film,” by helping women and men who have experienced abortion find healing.

“So that’s worth all the vulnerability that I feel just to make sure that people are healing and getting plugged in and lives are being changed and saved,” said Johnson, who is played in the film by Ashley Bratcher.

The interesting thing about this film is that not all of the Planned Parenthood volunteers and employees are depicted as evil. Some are committed to helping women, although Johnson now notes that such compassion, while genuine, is misguided.

The main villain in the piece is the clinic director, Cheryl (played by Robia Scott), Abby’s mentor and boss. She’s almost a caricature of the evil corporate Planned Parenthood organization. Really, all she needs is a Dalmatian-spotted coat and you’d swear she is Cruella deVil (which, of course, is a sly reference to “cruel devil”).

Not all pro-lifers are portrayed as good, either. Early in the movie, some belligerent anti-abortionists on the clinic fence line taunt those going into the clinic, calling them “baby killers,” in sharp contrast to those who pray quietly or offer gentle counseling to women on the cusp of an abortion.

In the movie and in the interview, Johnson noted that Planned Parenthood’s own numbers indicate a no-show rate as high as 75 percent when there were people praying peacefully outside a clinic.

“I think it’s because there’s nothing normal about walking into an abortion clinic. There’s nothing normal about having an abortion. So, when we’re out there praying and giving witness, I think we’re sort of like the outward sign of their inward conscience,” she said.

“I can’t tell you how many times when I’ve been out praying, women have come up

and said, 'You know, I was looking for a sign. I was praying for a sign all morning and you guys being out here, that's my sign,'" Johnson said.

She said many women who come to the clinic feel they don't have any other choice than to abort their baby. "Women don't have abortions because they're just so excited to exercise their right to choose; they're having abortions because they feel like they're out of options or out of choices," she said. "Being on the sidewalk, we're able to offer them that hope."

Do you want to see "Unplanned"? Probably not. It won't be as fun as "Captain Marvel" or "Wonder Park." But you SHOULD see "Unplanned." It's an important movie that will challenge your thinking, even if you already consider yourself pro-life.

*Listen to a Catholic Baltimore radio interview with Abby Johnson below.*

*Also see:*

Movie Review: 'Unplanned'

Johnson hopes 'Unplanned' rating won't keep parents from taking children