



Exclusively On **VARIETY.com**

[Click Here
For Access](#)

[Home](#) > [Reviews - The Man Who Stole My Mother's Face](#) > [The Man Who Stole My Mother's Face](#)

http://www.variety.com/index.asp?layout=print_review&reviewid=VE1117923685&categoryid=31

To print this page, select "PRINT" from the File Menu of your browser.

Posted: Tue., Apr. 27, 2004, 5:10pm PT

The Man Who Stole My Mother's Face

(Docu -- Australia-South Africa)

A Film Finance Corp.(Australia)/Hatchling Prods. production. Produced by Jeff Canin, Cathy Henkel. Directed, written by Cathy Henkel.

By [RONNIE SCHEIB](#)

Helmer Cathy Henkel's search for justice for her mother, a white woman who was the victim of a savage rape by a white man in Johannesburg that went unpunished for over a decade, risks being claustrophobic in its home-movie intimacy. Returning to South Africa for the filming, Henkel initially remains within the narrowly focused orbit of the rape -- interviewing police, neighbors, family and members of the judicial system. But, her quest expands until, rather abruptly, it assumes nearly cosmic proportions. Pic doesn't trace the most cogent or artistically satisfying curve from personal to social justice, but arrives nonetheless. "Face" should prosper on PBS and women-targeted cable.

Henkel's mother Laura never "got beyond" the rape that left her face and life shattered. Pic's technical awkwardness, perhaps reflecting filmmaker's uncertain distance, almost pays off in filmed confrontations with her mother's accused attacker, a gesticulating digitized blur of denial in the center of the frame. Ultimately radically enlarging pic's canvas, Henkel's investigation reveals a country with

widespread sexual abuse, where one out of two women is raped, and sodomizers of 2-year-old twin girls confidently walk the streets.

Camera (color, DV), Ian Miller, Henkel; editor, James Bradley. Reviewed on cassette, New York, April 26, 2004. (In Tribeca Film Festival -- competing, Capetown and Hot Docs film festivals.) Running time: 74 MIN.

Read the full article at:

<http://www.variety.com/story.asp?l=story&r=VE1117923685&c=31>

Like this article? Variety.com has over 100,000 articles, 35,000 reviews and 10,000 pages of charts. Subscribe today!

<http://www.variety.com/emailfriend>

or call (866) MY-VARIETY.

Can't commit? Sign up for a free 14-day trial!

<http://www.variety.com/emailfriend>

© 2004 Reed Business Information © 2004 Variety, Inc.
Use of this Website is subject to [Terms of Use](#). [Privacy Policy](#)