

Sometimes in April 2005/Certificate 15

Synopsis of the film

Sometimes in April depicts the story of Rwanda's genocide, not only as it occurred in 1994 but also as the country was still experiencing healing and justice in 2004. The story follows two Hutu brothers – Augustine and Honore – through the genocide. The film begins with Augustine as a school teacher in April 2004, 10 years after the genocide began, teaching his class about the atrocities. We also learn that Honore is being tried by the International Crimes Tribunal for his role as an influential radio personality, encouraging and inciting Hutus to murder Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Most of the film is told as flashbacks, focusing on the stories of Augustine, his wife and two sons in Kigali, and a teacher in a Catholic school who is trying to protect Augustine's daughter and the other students.

Both Augustine and Honore survive, though Augustine loses his wife and children. At the end of the film the estranged brothers are trying to put the past behind them - one brother by admitting his guilt and the other by forgiving that brother, whose actions led to the death of his wife and children.

An interesting sub-plot follows the US Secretary of State as she tries to deal with the West's response to the violence. Through constant comparisons to the events in Mogadishu in 1992 and debates on whether peacekeeping troops would be sent to Rwanda, the Secretary of State finds herself unable to respond to the massacres and growing humanitarian crisis as her Generals are unwilling to intervene. The resulting debate on whether the events were 'Genocide' or 'Acts of Genocide' meant there was no intervention by the West and the 'never again' promised in the aftermath of WWII happened again. This sub-plot also covers the western media's disinterest and unwillingness to report the facts.

When it was made and where

Sometimes in April was made in 2005 and was originally created for HBO and shown on television. It was filmed in the USA and Rwanda, and also in Arusha in Tanzania. It has docu-drama features as it shows President Clinton and news coverage from the time.

HMDT Review

Please note that the review may act as a spoiler for the film.

Sometimes in April explores the personal suffering and grief of survivors of the Rwandan genocide. The storyline, although based around the brothers, encompasses many other characters and tells the story of the shocking events from many different perspectives. The film deals with the real tragedy of the genocide from the perspective of the victims.

The film explores the themes of why it happened – from the dour effects of colonialism through to the previous conflicts between Hutus and Tutsis in neighbouring Burundi and the use of propaganda and the actions of the perpetrators themselves. We recommend *Sometimes in April* because it tells the story of the genocide in a very frank and straightforward manner, focussing on the individual stories of those directly affected. It also covers the *Gacaca* trials, a participative justice system in Rwanda, which began in 2001 to try and tackle the huge backlog of cases against genocidaires. The film helps to consider an **Untold Story** in a new way, which will assist anyone commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day 2011.

Issues to be aware of

There are some fairly graphic scenes which viewers should be aware of. Please consider your audience and their understanding of genocide before you show this film.

You can use HMDT resources to find out more information about the genocide in Rwanda <http://www.hmd.org.uk/genocides/rwanda> or read a survivor testimony <http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/survivor-stories>.