

A Haunting Meditation on 'Inner' Violence Explodes Narrative Conventions

Internationally hailed as one of today's most innovative and audacious filmmakers, Nina Menkes' new film is a hallucinatory meditation on violence told through the story of a U.S. marine, just back from the Gulf War, caught digging a grave for his murdered wife in the Mojave Desert.



THE BLOODY CHILD premiered at the 1996 Sundance Film Festival to critical acclaim, and was recently named one of the year's five best films by Kevin Thomas of The Los

Angeles Times. Menkes describes the film as "a spell, a witches' brew. It's an exploration of violence and a spell to try and change that violence."

Intercutting stark scenes of the marine's arrest with hallucinatory images from North Africa and a layered soundtrack which includes text from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, THE BLOODY CHILD looks at American violence from a new, non-traditional perspective. The filmmaker's sister, Tinka Menkes, stars as an emotionally wounded marine Captain in charge of the arrest, who absorbs the impact of the dead woman's spirit. The murderer, the arresting officer, her military associates, and the victim -- whose voice, fractured but incessant, patrols the scene -- are trapped within a violent configuration which seems to hold no promise of redemption or release.

"Brilliant ... Beautiful, utterly demanding, and enlightening ... a rigorous work of art on the highest level." -- Kevin Thomas, *The Los Angeles Times*

"Mesmerising. At a time when experimental filmmaking is in retreat, the craft and bold unconventionality of THE BLOODY CHILD are challenging in the most bracing sense. Pic weaves a spell that's hard to shake for days after and offers an object lesson in the cinematic possibilities standard narrative misses." -- Godfrey Cheshire, *Variety*

"At once chilling and clarifying, the Menkes sisters have allowed us to look into an abyss. A must see!" -- Jonathan Rosenbaum, *The Chicago Reader*

"A fascinating game with time and point of view, resulting in a powerful experience ... A masterful exercise in the deconstruction of events that cinematically leads to unforgettable conclusions." -- David

Based on a real incident, Menkes found the true story of the accused marine to be "an intense intersection of violences. I used it as an infrastructure to get into very highly personalized feelings about inner violence."

Hunter, *The Hollywood Reporter*

THE BLOODY CHILD was shot on location in Africa and in Twenty-nine Palms, California, home of the nation's largest marine base. All the film's male cast members were actual enlisted marines at the time of the shoot, and all were Desert Storm veterans. The marines not only acted in the film but also helped write scenes and one serving as assistant director.