

## **"Highly Recommended" by *Video Librarian***

My Neighbor, My Killer \*\*\*1/2 (out of 4)

(2009) 80 min. DVD: \$420. Anne Aghion Films. PPR.

Anne Aghion's documentary focuses on **survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda**, as Hutu men who participated in the slaughter of Tutsis return home from prison and **communities hold neighborhood trials (called "Gacaca")** to review their cases.

Aghion spent years filming in the rural community of Gafumba, where women whose husbands and children were brutally murdered spoke about their ongoing grief, as well as watching the accused resume their daily lives, the fear for their own lives, and what it was like to live next to those who destroyed their families. In scenes from Gacacas, people sit on the ground while officials explain the court's purpose and call for testimony, during which women describe how their children were attacked, and the accused generally claim their innocence.

Asking for forgiveness was a government-sanctioned means of reducing one's sentence, and the granting of same was officially expected of the victims. In an interview, one of the accused denies direct participation, while another admits in a Gacaca that he did kill Tutsis (and names others involved). Eyewitness testimony to the genocide are contrasted with scenes of the now-peaceful countryside, while the grief, anger, and sense of desolation are conveyed not only in words but in extended silences as the women work or simply sit together.

**Aghion's amazing [My Neighbor, My Killer](#) brilliantly captures the aftermath of an unimaginable experience through the words and expressions of those who survived. Highly recommended.**

Note: Aghion's film [The Notebooks of Memory](#) is also newly [available on DVD](#) for \$390.  
Aud: C, P. (M. Puffer-Rothenberg)

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