

## LONG NIGHT'S JOURNEY INTO DAY

(DOCU)

A Reid/Hoffman production. Produced by Frances Reid. Co-producer, Johnny Symons.

Directed by Frances Reid, Deborah Hoffmann. Camera (color), Reid, Ezra Jwili; editors, Hoffmann, Kim Roberts; music, Lebo M; sound (Dolby), Victor Mzwandile Njokwana; post-production supervisor, Megan Mylan. **Reviewed at Sundance Film Festival (competing), Jan 29, 2000. (Also in Berlin Film Festival — Forum.)** Running time: 90 MIN.

With: Desmond Tutu, Glenda Wildschut, Mary Burton, Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, Jann Turner, Tony Weaver.

By EMANUEL LEVY

**F**rances Reid and Deborah Hoffmann's "Long Night's Journey Into Day," winner of Sundance's Grand Jury Prize in the documentary competition, offers a compassionate look at the inner workings and psychological dynamics of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the country's unprecedented effort to heal its collective wounds. Boldly confronting such tough issues as the struggle for justice and need for forgiveness, the film centers on four case studies that expose the roots and banality of evil during the years of apartheid. There may be a small theatrical audience for this intense, emotional docu, which is guaranteed a long life on the festival circuit before landing on TV, cable and in other ancillary venues.

As they demonstrated in their previous collaborations — among them the Oscar-nominated "Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter" and the Oscar-winning "Common Threads: Stories From the Quilt," Reid and Hoffman tackle controversial issues with passion and conviction.

The strategy in each of the four histories presented in "Journey" is direct confrontation between the perpetrators of crime and their victim's families. Peter and Linda Biehl, parents of slain American Fulbright scholar Amy Biehl, face two of their daughter's killers when they travel to South Africa. In one of the docu's emotional highlights, the Biehls consent to meet the family of one of the young men responsible for her 1993 death in a Cape Town suburb.

Eric Taylor, a former security officer who is white, requested pardon for his part in the murder of the Cradlock Four, a group of black anti-



**FINDING FORGIVENESS:** *Cynthia Ngewu was one of the South Africans to testify at the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings.*

of crime, white and black, were motivated to kill as an expression of outrage that had little to do with their immediate victims. Without much editorializing, the filmmakers illustrate the need for forgiveness as well as the difficulty, and perhaps impossibility, of implementing amnesty.

Interspersed with the factual exposition and wrenching testimonies are revelatory statements from Glenda Wildschut and Mary Burton, two TRC commissioners, and from Jann Tuner, a journalist covering the TRC hearings. Offering a useful chapter in oral history, "Long Night's Journey Into Day" demonstrates the impossibility of separating the private from the public dimensions of politics, and the pain involved in trying to account for behavior that cannot withstand rational examination.