

***Rhythm City* zooms in on child abuse**

Issued by [eMedia](#)

14 Aug 2014

Five out of seven children in South Africa are abused by their parent figures. One child is raped every three minutes. There are 60 reported cases of child rape every day. More than 88% of child rapes are never reported. This is according to a report by trade union Solidarity released in 2009.



Rhythm City, a socially relevant production, this August tackles child abuse, a persistent social ill head-on with Buhle's abuse storyline. Five year old Buhle is the son of music mogul Miles Vilakazi (Peter Sepuma) and businesswoman Lucilla Vilakazi (Keabetswe Motsilinyane).

The Vilakazi family, a seemingly well placed high class family, will portray this storyline to demonstrate that abuse is a human condition no family is immune to. The story begins when five year old Buhle comes back home for his father's 60th birthday. Due to circumstances, Buhle had been placed in the care of Connie (Lucilla's sister).

On his return, Buhle seems unhappy and his mother Lu and Victoria are suspicious. Miles collapses when Victoria says she thinks Buhle has been abused. Buhle is examined by a doctor, but no physical signs of abuse are found, but the doctor recommends that they consult a child psychologist. Buhle opens up to the counsellor and she finds out who has been sexually abusing him.

Buhle goes for an HIV test and Miles and Lucilla have to make a decision of whether or not they want to press charges and it takes an emotional toll on both of them.

"Child abuse is a multi-faceted social ill whose biggest victims are the most vulnerable members of the family: children. When addressing abuse, it is critical to trace it to its origins in order to have a full understanding of how it occurs, and essentially how to prevent it," said Harriet Gavshon, MD for Quizzical Pictures.

According to Monde Twala, Group Head, e.tv Channels Division: "Television allows us to mirror reality, inform and educate viewers. We are honoured to have a chance to contribute to the fight against child abuse. At e.tv we commission shows that have the ability to transcend beyond entertainment by tackling issues that are pertinent to the everyday lives of our viewers," emphasised Monde Twala.

Switch your mind back to the human faces behind these facts; the children and the perpetrators. How can a vulnerable child be subjected to such cruelty at home, a place of safety? What interpersonal dynamics are at play in this undesirable status quo? Can there be an amicable solution that will help the child heal and preserve the family structure?

Catch the story as it unravels on *Rhythm City*, weekdays at 6.30pm on e.tv and etv HD (Channel 104) on OpenView HD.

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