



A film by Madeleine Bazil

*grandpa
Ernest
speaks*



Grandpa Ernest Speaks is a poetic 29' documentary short film about memory and how we witness, archive, and transmit it.

Year: 2021

Runtime: 29:22

Format & Aspect Ratio: HD, 16:9

Audio: Stereo

Language: English

Production Budget: >\$1000USD / R17,000

Funding Support: University of Cape Town; Self-raised

Countries of Production: South Africa; United States; Czechia

Genre: Personal/self-reflexive; poetic; historical; auto/biographical

Themes: Family, migration, memory, identity, archive

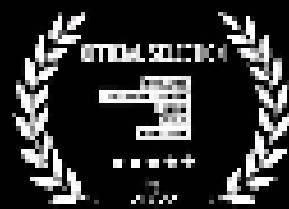
Seeking: Festivals, sales agent, distribution & impact partners

Writer, Director, DOP, Editor: Madeleine Bazil

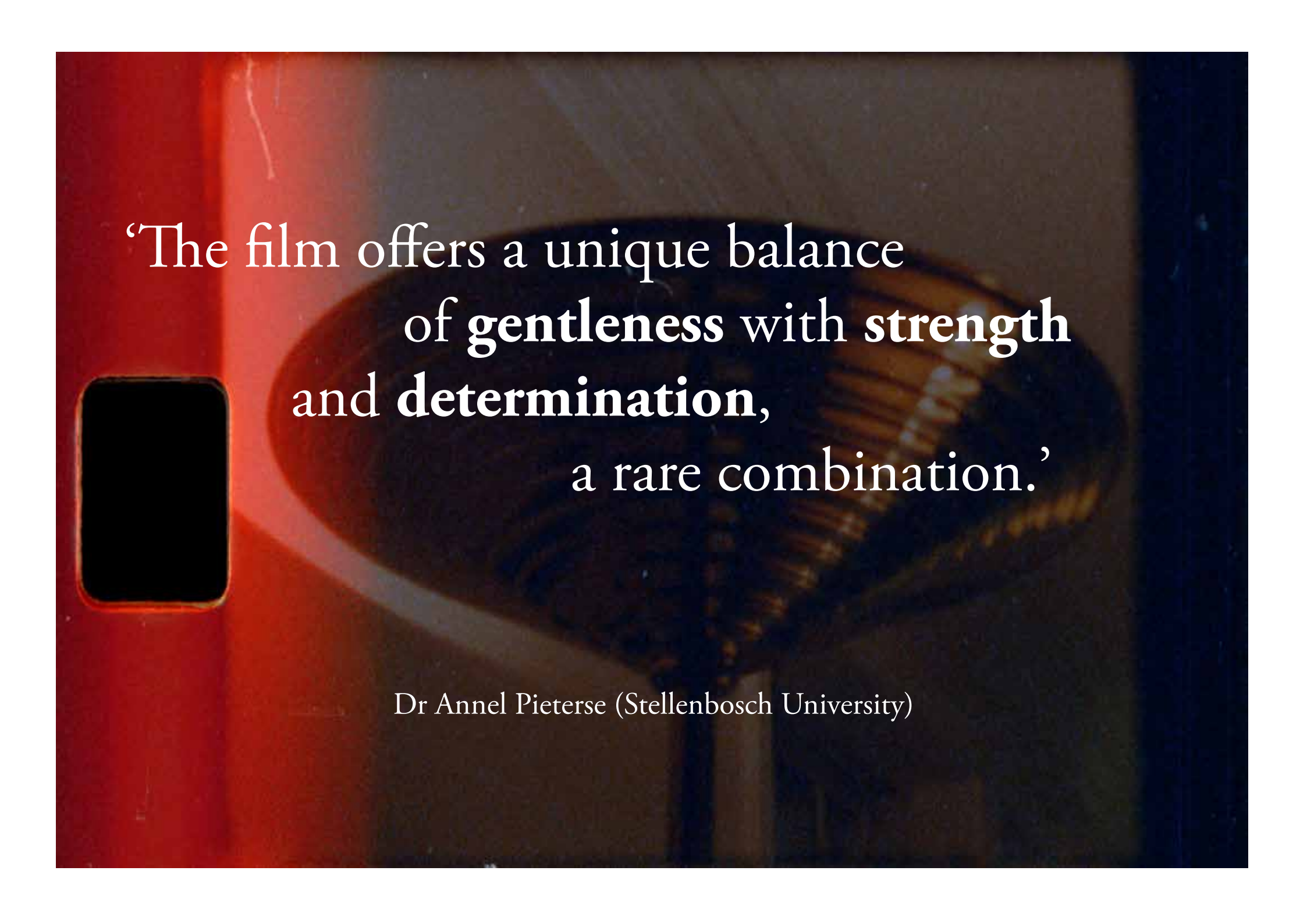
Creative Producer: Khalid Shamis S.A.G.E.

Executive Producers: Julia Cain, Liani Maasdorp, Khalid Shamis

Original Score: Ted Bazil



bit.ly/gestrailer



‘The film offers a unique balance
of **gentleness** with **strength**
and **determination**,
a rare combination.’

Dr Annel Pieterse (Stellenbosch University)

Synopsis:

In 1939, a young Jewish man named **Ernest Lowy** makes a bold and narrow escape from his native Czechoslovakia, seeking safety and opportunity for his family as World War II intensifies. In the late 1980s, an elderly Ernest recounts his life story over the course of a 75-minute cassette tape at home in **New York City**. It's the first and only time his children and grandchildren hear him speak of the Holocaust, or of his life before immigrating to the US. Another three decades later, filmmaker **Madeleine Bazil** decides to finally do something with the audio memoir of the late great-grandfather she never knew.

We follow Bazil over three years as she charts a journey to retrace Ernest's steps across two continents: investigating the man himself, as well as how Ernest's life story and the trauma he underwent have a ripple effect on present-day family dynamics. Collaging together a multiplicity of testimonies, archival artefacts, and perspectives, the documentary exemplifies the fragmented nonlinearity of memory as well as reflects the complexities and layers of our own individual identities. **A 29' poetic and self-reflexive documentary, Grandpa Ernest Speaks considers the nature of posttraumatic memory; how it is transmitted, archived and witnessed; and how each generation and descendant carries and considers memory in their own way.**



Director




Madeleine Bazil (b. 1995, USA) is a multidisciplinary artist interested in memory, intimacy, and the ways we navigate worlds—real and imagined.

She holds an MA in Documentary Arts from the University of Cape Town and an undergraduate degree in English Literature from the University of St Andrews.

Her visual work has been shown in South Africa, the UK, US, and Czechia.

madeleinebazil.com
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A blurred street scene, likely from a film, showing a car and buildings. The image is dark and has a grainy, cinematic quality. Overlaid on the image is white text. On the left side, there is a small, rounded rectangular box with a thin orange border.

‘Thoughtful use of
documentary technique combines with
a **nuanced poetic presentation**
of what is an intensely
subjective experience.’

Dr Tanja Sakota (University of the Witwatersrand)

madeleinebazil.com/GES

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