

Document Citation

Title	De aanslag
Author(s)	Tom Waller
Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	1986 Feb 12
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	De aanslag (The assault), Rademakers, Fons, 1986

Wednesday, February 12, 1986

De aanslag VARIETY
(The Assault) 2/12/86
(DUTCH-COLOR)

A Cannon Films release of a Fons Rademakers production. Produced and directed by Rademakers. Screenplay, Gerard Soeteman, based on the novel by Harry Mulisch. Stars Derek de Lint, Monique van de Ven, John Kraaykamp Sr., Huub van der Lubbe. Camera (color), Theo van de Sande; music, Jurriaan Andriessen; assistant director, Lili Rademakers; sound & editing, Kees Linthorst; art direction, Dorus van der Linden; costumes, Anne Marie van Beverwijk. Reviewed at Cannon showroom, Amsterdam, Jan. 20, 1986. Running time: 140 MINS.

Anton Steenwijk Derek de Lint
Truus Coster/

Saskia de Graaff . . . Monique van de Ven
Cor Takes John Kraaykamp Sr.
Fake Ploeg Huub van der Lubbe
Anton Steenwijk

(12 years old) Marc van Uchelen
Mrs. Beumer Elly Weller
Karin Korteweg Ina van der Molen
Liesbeth Mies de Heer

Amsterdam — Collaboration of author Harry Mulisch, scripter Gerard Soeteman and helmer Fons Rademakers results in a gripping film, "The Assault," which, notwithstanding the specifically Dutch story, has universal themes and should have appeal in many countries.

The story starts in 1945. Part of Holland is already liberated, but the Germans are still in command in Haarlem, 20 miles from Amsterdam. A sadistic Dutch Nazi-policeman is liquidated by the resistance and his body is found in front of the Steenwijk home. As a reprisal the house is burned down and 19 people are shot, including the Steenwijk family, except for Anton, 12 years old.

He is adopted by an uncle in Amsterdam, becomes a successful anesthetist, marries (twice) and has two children. He should be a contented man, but his whole life is marked by the night of the assault, and by encounters, partly by chance, with people who were connected with that night.

"The Assault" treats important issues, but the pic is never highbrow or morbid. It stays primarily a whodunnit. Pic has lots of intriguing twists, focusing on many individuals, unraveling over a period of nearly 40 years what happened during that night in 1945.

The most difficult part is that of the grown-up Anton Steenwijk. The part of 12-year-old Anton is mastered with astonishing ease by 14-year-old Marc van Uchelen. Derek de Lint then takes over. Anton is a man who does not make things happen. They happen to him. He's the center of the story, but a soft center. De Lint successfully evades the perils of this part, and delivers a convincing performance.

Monique van de Ven plays two characters: a member of the resistance and Anton's first wife. She is moving in a taxing scene as the extraordinary resistance woman, and credibly ordinary as young wife and mother. John Kraaykamp as one resistance fighter whose war will not end as long as he lives, impressively creates a tormented character.

Historical newsreel shots are used sparingly, as is voiceover narration. Through these devices the narrative is kept taut and pic never sags during nearly two-and-a-half-hours of running time. This is due partly to subtle changes of pace in the acting and editing of sequences, but much of the credit should go to Soeteman's remarkable scenario which translates Mulisch's writing into cinematic storytelling.

Technical credits are outstanding.

—Wall.