

The New Zealand Herald

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RAIN OF THE CHILDREN

★★★★★

Rated M; 102 minutes. Out Thursday.

It's nearly 30 years since Vincent Ward made *In Spring One Plants Alone*, the film which was to launch his career. As a callow young man, Ward spent 18 months living with his subject, a tortured Tuhoe woman called Puhi, who cared for her schizophrenic son in a shack in the Urewera Ranges. There is a spell-binding scene in his extraordinary new film *Rain of the Children*, in which he pushes open the shattered door of that same shack three decades later ...

you can almost see the ghosts flitting around the room. This film is like nothing else you will ever see — a stunning blend of docu-drama, cultural history and detective story as Ward attempts to solve the mystery of Puhi's life — what happened to her 13 other babies, her rain of children. Weaving threads from the tragic colonial history of Tuhoe, the cult of the enigmatic Rua Kenana and the devastating story of Puhi herself, *Rain of the Children* is Ward's most personal film to date. One of the Tuhoe interviewees aptly describes it as Vincent's taonga. A thing to be treasured.

— *Cliff Taylor*