

THE TIMES PLAYLIST

DAVID CHATER'S CHOICES

Dispatches: The Lost Girls of South Africa

Channel 4, 9pm

The statistics are simply unbelievable. Two hundred thousand children a year are raped in South Africa. Or put it another way, one in three girls in South Africa will finish school, whereas half of all South African schoolgirls will be victims of rape. As many as 96 per cent of child rapes are never reported to the police, largely through fear of reprisal, and fewer than 1 per cent ever results in a successful prosecution. Often the victims are assaulted by a close relative and many of the perpetrators are themselves children: a rape councillor tells of one 5-year-old girl who was gang raped by seven boys aged between 9 and 14. In this distressing documentary child rape victims describe what happened to them, while tears stream down their faces. Truly harrowing.