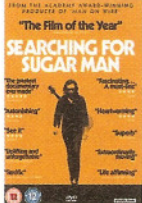


Searching For Sugar Man

★★★★

StudioCanal OPTD 2480

It doesn't come much sweeter than this



How did a man produced by both Dennis Coffey (legendary Funk Brother)

and Steve Rowland (board-master for both The Herd and Pretty Things) fail to make one iota of impact in both the US and UK, yet become a seismic influence upon a generation of Apartheid-era South African youths in the 80s? When a copy of his 1970 debut LP, *Cold Fact*, made its way to the Rainbow Nation, Rodriguez became the nation's Elvis and Dylan rolled into one: a singer-songwriter whose laidback observations on life around him earned radio bans, yet urged those who heard them to rebel against the regime.

As far as writer Craig Bartholomew-Strydom was concerned, rumours that this mythical character had shot himself on stage during an ill-received gig might have been embellished, but were certainly close to the truth. Setting out to discover how Rodriguez had really died, he followed numerous dead-ends before tracing leads to Detroit – where, to his amazement, his hero was actually alive and well, working in manual labour.

For most, this would be the end of the story; for Rodriguez, however, it was just the beginning. Utterly unaware of his stature in South Africa, and with Bartholomew-Strydom searching for decades' worth of missing royalties sent to the singer's US record label, Sussex (owner Clarence Avant getting visibly agitated when asked about these on camera), the time was right for him to return to the stage. Sold-out concerts in South Africa were greeted like homecomings, with the star – who still lives in the same Detroit apartment he's

occupied for 40 years –
taking it all with astounding
grace. *Jason Draper*



Rodriguez:
stone Cold Fact