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The Hunt



Release Date (DVD) **July 24 2012**

Studio **Music Video Distribution**

Director **Thomas Szczepanski**

Writer **Thomas Szczepanski**

Starring **Zurriel De Peslouan, Jellali Mouina, Sarah Lucide**

Synopsis **About an under cover reporter commissioned to write a story about a series of gruesome murders. His investigation leads him to a secret society of wealthy businessman who hunt humans for money. Caught in a spiral of violence he is forced to participate in the game until he discovers that he has become the hunted.**

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ATING:

[BD Review] 'The Hunt' Shoots the American Screenplay Right Between the Eyes



Posted by John Marrone on August 16, 2012 @ 11:25am
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When Alex, a French writer, receives a final ultimatum from his editor to come up with a story that will boost ratings, he chases down a dangerous lead from a prostitute in search of video evidence of corruption, and ends up stumbling across a private game amongst the rich, where humans are hunted as prey in the woodlands, for large sums of money. What transpires next mortally shoots the standard American screenplay right between the eyes.

This obscure and low budget release from relatively unknown French director Thomas Szczepanski comes to us all from MVD – a distribution company known for questionable releases riddled with bad films nobody would otherwise take a second look at. But **The Hunt** is an exception to that rule. Most easily and oddly described as a cross between *Hostel* and *Eyes Wide Shut*, *The Hunt* approaches the “torture and kill for money and sport” scenario and turns it on its head, coming at it from a completely original perspective. And while the story starts off generic and familiar, its a guarantee that you have no idea how this plays out by the end of the film.

Without spoiling anything but the set-up, Alex is down on his luck – perhaps its writers block – but doggy porn isn't grasping the fans the way it used to, and he is off his game. His editor in chief explains that unless he comes up with

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something to grab people's attention – something violent, involving arms dealing perhaps, with someone famous involved – he's out. Its then that Alex approaches a girlfriend who also works as a prostitute and dominatrix for the rich and famous, begging for some sort of lead on some dirt. She clues him into a particularly rich and abusive client who fits the bill perfectly.

After breaking into his home with the intention of finding video evidence, Alex instead stumbles across a bag. Inside the bag is a blood crusted hunting knife, a large sum of money, a hooded mask, and a phone – which starts to ring. Being in the right place at the right time (or perhaps exactly the opposite), he hears about a meeting place and time, and decides to steal the bag and intercept. Hereafter, Alex steps deeper and deeper into a situation he soon can not easily escape. Having infiltrated and inadvertently joined a group of masked men who are hunting humans for money in the mountains, he must now see it through if he is to survive. Not as one of the hunted. But as one of the hunters.

The Hunt plays out beautifully, well paced and delicately shot by DP Anna Naigeon and camera operator Sylvan Bourjac, wiping away any of the grime or amateurism a low budget film would normally stain viewers with. The acting is just emotional enough, and the sounds (such as struggling to breathe from a mouth without a tongue) of survival rise above the script. The music is sometimes reminiscent of John Carpenter's early work (*Assault on Precinct 13*), and the chases mimicking how you might see a tiger chase down a gazelle – its a visceral experience that you feel and become embedded in, as opposed to reading subtitles and being told a story verbally – and this works, top to bottom.

The air of danger and survival is fairly palpable, which gives *The Hunt* a worthy score in my book. The gore and graphic violence headed by David Scherer has its see-through moments at times (for instance, discolored latex across the throat), but there is an ample amount of blood splashing from injuries, as you'd expect from a French horror film. Its not anywhere near the power of *Inside*, or *Martyrs*, in comparison, but you wont be left without the attempted violence you'd expect from a film like this.

As far as special features, the DVD that is available now comes with nothing extra, not even a trailer. But, its being sold at a very modest price (just above ten dollars), which is a relief in itself for the new releases department.

What is most likeable about *The Hunt*, is how it all plays out. While I'm dying to spill what makes this screenplay so outstanding from the main, and unpredictable, to do so would ruin the film. At 74 minutes, it flies by and wastes no time with unnecessary filler. It pretty much takes the American 90 minute script format, as Syd Field might propose, and shoves it up your ass and does its own thing. While some who are conditioned to Hollywood endings might cry foul, its a fresh step away from expectations, and makes *The Hunt* an enjoyable horror film that stands out from the pack.

Official Score: **3 / 5**

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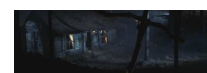
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