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THE HUNTERS

(JAGARNA)

(SWEDISH)

A Sonet release (in Sweden) of a Spice Prods. production, in association with TV4, Sandrew Film, Filmhuset Sverig, Filmteknik, TV 1000 and Spice Filmfinans, with participation of Peter Hald and the Swedish Film Institute. (International sales: Nordisk, Copenhagen.) Produced by Joakim Hansson, Bjorn Carlstrom.

Directed by Kjell Sundvall. Screenplay, Sundvall, Bjorn Carlstrom. Camera (color), Kjell Lageroos; editor, Darek Hodor; music, Bjorn J:son Lindh; production design, Stig Boqvist; costume design, Karin Sundvall; sound (Dolby DTS), Michael Lechner, Mats Lindskog. Reviewed at Astoria Cinema, Stockholm, Jan. 12, 1996. (In Berlin Film Festival — market.) Running time: **105 MIN.**

Erik	Rolf Lassgard
Leif	Lennart Jahkel
Tomme	Jarmo Makinen
Ove	Tomas Norstrom
Stig	Thomas Hedengran
Hakan	Goran Forsmark
Eilert	Rolf Degerlund
Raimo	Harry Nyman
Lena	Editha Domingo
Anna	Helena Bergstrom

Taut and violent, "The Hunters" is the best Swedish action-thriller since Bo Widerberg's "The Man on the Roof" 20 years ago. Gutsy pic will shoot to kill at the local box office, and buyers on foreign soil should be willing prey.

After years in Stockholm, Erik
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(Rolf Lassgard, in another cop role) returns north to his home village, following an incident in which he shot a man and was himself wounded. His father, whom he despised, has since died, so Erik stays with his younger brother Leif (Lennart Jahkel) and takes a job at the local police station.

Investigating complaints from the Laplanders that their reindeer are being killed, Erik discovers a group of locals are going out on regular shooting parties to make some extra coin. Worse, his own brother is the leader, and the local cops are turning a blind eye to events.

Refusing to lie low, Erik soon becomes unpopular among the villagers, and events escalate to beatings, rape and multiple murders. In the end, Erik and Leif go *mano a mano*.

Though helmer/co-writer Kjell Sundvall doesn't dwell on the killings and beatings, by Swedish standards "The Hunters" comes across as an extremely violent effort, partly due to the sustained atmosphere and tension. Mood is amplified by the continual use of mobile camerawork, plus effective use of closeups to show people's reactions under stress. Opening scene of reindeer being slaughtered is for strong stomachs only.

The movie nearly manages to make the landscape an extra character in the action, utilizing the natural beauty of northern Sweden without making it look too idyllic. Perfs are good overall, though few of the protagonists are given much psychological depth, apart from the two brothers. Helena Bergstrom ("House of Angels") has only a small part as a district attorney.

—Gunnar Rehlin