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# **Klaani: Tarina Sammakoit- ten Suvusta**

**(The Clan: Tale Of The Frogs)  
(FINNISH-COLOR)**

Berlin, Feb. 21.

A Villealfa Filmproductions Oy production. Produced by Jaakko Talaskivi, Anssi Mänttäri. Directed by Mika Kaurismäki. Features entire cast. Screenplay, Aki Kaurismäki, Mika Kaurismäki, from a novel by Tauno Kaukonen; camera (color), Tomo Salminen; sound, Mikael Sieves; music, Anssi Tikanmäki; art director, Matti Jaaranen; costumes, Irma Sarjanen. Reviewed at Berlin Film Fest (Market), Feb. 20, 1985. Running time: **95 MINS.**

Alex Sammakko (Frog) . . . Markku Halme  
Miriam Andersson . . . . . Minna Soisalo  
Samuel Sammakko . . . . . Juhani Niemelä  
Leevi Sammakko . . . . . Karl Väänänen  
Benjamin Sammakko . . . . . Antti Litja  
Birger Andersson . . . . . Mikko Majanlahti  
Robert Andersson . . . . . Sakari Rouvinen  
Crewcut (Police Inspector) . . . Lasse Pöysti

“Sammakko” means “frog” in Finnish, and the “Frog” family, a group of petty criminals and dead-beats, living in the apparently idyllic surroundings of rural Finland, are at the center of this curiously affecting thriller.

The Frogs have always been on the wrong side of the law, and consequently in and out of prison. The film begins when two of them manage to escape while being transported by guards, and head back for their home turf, pursued by the cops. Youngest member of the Frog clan is Alexander, who's seen what's happened to his alcoholic father and to other members of the family, and who wants to go straight himself. Besides, he's in love with Miriam whose family is almost as hopeless as his; the two of them want to find a new way. Naturally, Alexander comes under pressure to behave as a good Frog should, but, despite the antagonism of the local cops, who think every Frog is a bad apple, he makes it.

Shot in sumptuous locations during Finland's brief, beautiful summer, “The Clan” is distinguished by fine acting and an authentic feel. Plotting is a bit rambling, but helmer Mika Kaurismäki, making his second feature, shows a fine feel for atmosphere and character. Particularly outstanding is Juhani Niemelä as the young hero's pathetic, hopelessly alcoholic father who, though on his last legs, carries out his defiance of the authorities literally to the grave.

Outside Scandinavia, the film has some possibilities on its unusual setting and bizarre characters, though only time will tell if, commercially speaking, these Frogs have legs.

—*Strat.*