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After Darkness

(SWISS-BRITISH-COLOR)

Berlin, Feb. 19.

A T&C Film AG (Zurich)-Green Man Prods.-Philm Inc. coproduction. Produced by Marcel Hoehn. Executive producer, Rudolf Santschi. Directed and written by Dominique Othenin-Girard, Sergio Guerraz. Stars John Hurt. Camera (Eastmancolor), William Lubtchansky; editor, Daniela Roderer; sound, Luc Yerslu; art director, Nicolas Meylan; music, Susanne Pisieur, Giacomo Peier; costumes, Denise Fusco. Reviewed at Berlin Film Festival (in competition), Feb. 19, 1985. Running time: **104 MINS.**

Peter Huninger John Hurt
Laurence Huninger Julian Sands
Pascale Victoria Abril
Elisabeth Huninger Pamela Salem
Dr. Coles William Jacques
Twins Michel & Philippe Herzog

Overwrought melodrama about madness and guilt, "After Darkness" is an English-track Swiss-British coproduction whose chief distinction is yet another socko performance from the prodigious John Hurt.

He plays Peter Huninger, a professor of anthropology, who comes to Geneva where his younger brother, Laurence, has been in an insane asylum, apparently as a result of a severe childhood trauma when his twin brother was killed in a bizarre accident. Peter, against the wishes of his sensible wife, releases his brother and rents a shabby, vast apartment for them to live in.

It soon becomes clear that Peter is just as batty as Laurence, especially when a charming young student (Spanish thesp Victoria Abril) happens on the scene and takes a shine to Laurence. It all ends in murder and retribution, with none of the mystery solved.

Audiences probably won't care much, for writer-directors Dominique Othenin-Girard and Sergio Guerraz have concocted a turgid piece which has a few moments of invention and genuine drama, but which is mostly familiar and overdone dramatics. As a suspense thriller, the pic is not suspenseful or thrilling enough and as a serious psychological drama, it's just silly.

As the disturbed Laurence, Julian Sands copes quite well with an impossible part; Abril shows she can handle English-language roles with confidence and charm; but the film, such as it is, belongs to Hurt, one of the most remarkable film actors around right now and able, during the course of this otherwise unremarkable film, to turn dross into gold. The only mystery is why he accepted such a script in the first place. — *Strat.*