



SCREAMFEST REVIEW – THE HUNTED (2013)

by [Courtney Howard](#)

- October 14, 2013



THE HUNTED

Written and Directed by: Josh Stewart

Starring: Josh Stewart, Nikki Deloach, Skipp Suddath, Ronnie Gene Blevins

By now, we've seen tons of found footage horror films flood our cinematic landscape. From 1999's *THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT* to the latest *PARANORMAL ACTIVITY*, there's no place the cinematic subgenre hasn't gone. Triple threat Josh Stewart writes, directs, and stars in *THE HUNTED*, a chilling found footage thriller set in the West Virginian woods. Though it doesn't exactly blaze new territory within the genre (and comparisons to *THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT* will be inevitable), it is 88 minutes of unrelenting terror – and the third act will have you holding your breath and hiding behind the person next to you.

Based on Stewart's own personal harrowing adventure, the film follows hunting enthusiasts Jake (Stewart) and Stevie (Ronnie Gene Blevins) as they head deep into the West Virginia woods to shoot a pilot for the Outdoor Channel. Outfitted with a bow, a knife and multiple cameras placed throughout the wilderness, the two have given themselves three days to capture and kill "Movie Star," a monster buck that's been haunting the area. But guess what?! Something else has been haunting those woods too. Before they can even catch sight of their prey, a much more malevolent force crashes their party – and it seeks revenge.



If you've never had the urge to go hunting, you definitely never will after seeing this film. It's sadistically fun to see how the duo initially looks at the woods as a place of creative freedom, but once their creation sours, it morphs into a place of imprisonment where trees appear to be prison cages. Tension, tone and atmosphere build at a brisk pace and then explode into fireworks during the final act. While you (and possibly PETA) may worry at the outset for the buck's safety, never fear, as there are only a few moments where that type of anxiety comes into play. There's also an adequate (and very necessary) amount of tension release humor peppered throughout. Blevins and Stewart do a terrific job acting as both hunters and the hunted. Both characters represent the two opposing types of people in their audience – those, like Stevie, who's can't handle the scares and those, like Jake, who are much braver souls.

Walter Werzowa (who also composed the music) and John Luker's stellar sound design comes to the forefront of this terrifying campfire tale. Snapping branches and footsteps on crackling leaves have never been more ominous and foreboding. Screams seem to travel through and, at times, surround the audience, making the forest feel inescapable. It will have you sinking deep into your seat, praying for the relief of daytime to come quickly. William Yeh's crisp cuts also help sustain the picture's fluidity and energy.

For a self-confessed wuss like me, *THE HUNTED* grabbed me by the throat and wouldn't let go. Even avid horror enthusiasts are bound to find favor with this. A pickup for distribution by Blumhouse will hopefully be a no-brainer as this is tailor-made for that company's oeuvre and audience.

4.5 out of 5

THE HUNTED played *Screamfest* on October 10. For more information on *Screamfest*, go [here](#).