

The Hunted (2014) Review | Horror Society

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Starring: Josh Stewart, Ronnie Gene Blevins, Skipp Sudduth, Katherine Von Till, Nikki Deloach, Patrick Rizzotti

Director: Josh Stewart

Writer: Josh Stewart

Running time: 89 minutes

Rated: PG-13 (for brief language and some terror)

Reviewed by Michael Juvinall

Read out Exclusive interview with [Josh Stewart here!](#)

In 1960, *Psycho* made people afraid to take a shower. In 1975, *Jaws* kept swimmers out of the oceans. In 1979, *Alien* set the bar for terror in outer space. Now, in 2014, *The Hunted* will make you think twice about going into the woods. I'm not saying *The Hunted* is on the same level as those films, but it does have an intensity that's similar to what made those classics so great. *The Hunted* marks the directorial debut of actor Josh Stewart (*The Collector*, *The Collection*, *The Dark Knight Rises*). Not only does he direct, but he wrote the script, produced the film, and starred in it as well, which is no small feat for a guy getting his feet wet behind the camera. That type of personal involvement in the film makes for a much stronger and more personal project on every level. For a first time director, Stewart shows a natural predilection for storytelling and filmmaking.

Many horror films these days come with the alleged statement “Based on actual events”. Many times this is only a marketing ploy to play mind tricks with an audience, to make a film seem scarier if they think it really happened. *The Hunted* carries the same statement before the film opens, but from researching the movie and talking to Stewart himself, he claims that everything in the film except for one key scene actually was based on an experience that he and his roommate had. I for one believe that it really happened and that DOES make the movie all the more frightening.

In *The Hunted* we are introduced to Jake (Josh Stewart), a lifelong hunter that has a dream to launch his own hunting show on an outdoors network. Along with his best friend and professional cameraman Stevie (Ronnie Gene Blevins-*The Dark Knight Rises*), he leaves his family behind for a three day hunting trip to the remote West Virginia woods to find a legendary buck named “Movie Star”. With only three days to get his shot and armed with only his bow and arrow, Jake must drop “Movie Star” on camera if he has any chance of impressing the producers and landing his own hunting show. But things take a turn for the worse when the two realize they’re not alone in the woods as the hunters have now become *The Hunted*.

The film utilizes the found footage format and I know that may turn some people off but all I can say is give the film a chance before you blow it off without seeing it only because it’s found footage, you’ll be doing yourself a great disservice. Not only does found footage make sense for this film, it enhances the tension and creepiness. Going with found footage works for *The Hunted* because it’s utilized properly and makes it all the more believable in the end.

Josh Stewart has crafted a very well-made shocker. This film has so many things going for it. As I stated previously,

Stewart’s personal involvement in the story only adds to the depth of the film. The characters are fleshed out well. We’re invested in these two guys and we’re rooting for Josh to get his own hunting show, and that makes the scares cut even deeper when the proverbial shit hits the fan.

The West Virginia wilderness becomes a character in itself. Using real locations immensely aided in the fright factor. The fog shrouded hollows and deep woods at night are just downright creepy and added another level of tension to the film.

Admittedly, I'm not a hunter but everything used in the film from the hunting gear, tactics, and clothing were totally authentic and portrayed hunters in the proper light. The film was aided from support by many big names in the hunting industry. With Josh Stewart being a lifelong outdoorsman and having hunted and fished in the same locales where the movie was filmed, he wanted to make the hunting part of the film be as authentic as possible.

The film does have a couple of missteps, but they are minor and don't detract from the overall enjoyment of the movie. Firstly, the film takes a while to get moving, most of the action and frights are not until the halfway point and after. Also, there are a couple jump cut sequences where you're asking what just happened – minor stuff.



Another tip, you'll have to keep your volume turned up if you want to hear because much of the dialogue is whispered, but that actually makes the scares pop even more when they do happen.

For a first time director, Josh Stewart shows a lot of potential as a filmmaker. *The Hunted* is

a real spooker and will definitely make you look over your shoulder the next time you venture into the woods. With top-notch frights, a great story and characters, you can't go wrong by giving this a watch the night before you go on your next hunting or camping trip. I look forward to Stewart flexing his filmmaking muscles in the future.



4 out of 5 Pentagrams!

Watch the trailer for *The Hunted* here,