

A FILM BY **THOMAS VINTERBERG**

M A D S   M I K K E L S E N

# THE HUNT

**PRESSBOOK**



OFFICIAL SELECTION  
**COMPETITION**  
FESTIVAL DE CANNES





# THE HUNT

## Cannes Official Selection - Competition

THE HUNT (2012) is a disturbing depiction of how a lie becomes the truth when gossip, doubt and malice are allowed to flourish and ignite a witch-hunt that soon threatens to destroy an innocent man's life.

Mads Mikkelsen plays Lucas, a former school teacher who has been forced to start over having overcome a tough divorce and the loss of his job. Just as things are starting to go his way, his life is shattered. An untruthful remark throws the small community into a collective state of hysteria. The lie is spreading and Lucas is forced to fight a lonely fight for his life and his dignity.

Co-founder of the Dogme movement and director of the award-winning international hit FESTEN (THE CELEBRATION), Thomas Vinterberg delivers yet another powerful drama that is sure to leave its mark. Vinterberg wrote the screenplay together with fellow writer-director Tobias Lindholm. THE HUNT reestablishes their successful

collaboration which began on the critically acclaimed SUBMARINO which premiered in competition at the 2010 Berlin Film Festival. Among others, SUBMARINO received the prestigious Nordic Council Film Award.

THE HUNT is produced by Morten Kaufmann and Sisse Graum Jørgensen for Zentropa Entertainments in co-production with Film I Väst and Zentropa International Sweden with support from The Danish Film Institute, DR, Eurimages, Nordisk Film & TV Fond, Svenska Film Institutet, SVT and the MEDIA Programme of the European Union. Nordic distribution by Nordisk Film Distribution. International sales by TrustNordisk.

THE HUNT is photographed by Charlotte Bruus Christensen, edited by Anne Østerud and Janus Billeskov Jansen and sound is by Kristian Selin Eidnes Andersen. With a budget of approximately €UR 2,7 million THE HUNT was filmed on location in Denmark.

## SYNOPSIS

Following a tough divorce, 40-year-old Lucas has a new girlfriend, a new job and is in the process of reestablishing his relationship with his teenage son, Marcus. But things go awry. Just a passing remark - a random lie. And as the snow falls and the Christmas lights are lit, the lie spreads like a virus. The shock and mistrust get out of hand, and the small community suddenly finds itself in a collective state of hysteria, while Lucas fights a lonely fight for his life his and dignity.





## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

On a dark winter's night in 1999, there was a knock on my door. A renowned Danish child-psychologist stood outside in the snow with some documents raving about children and their fantasies. He spoke about concepts such as "repressed memory", and even more disturbing, about his theory that "thought is a virus". I didn't let him in. Didn't read the documents. Went to bed.

Ten years later I needed a psychologist. I called him, and as a belated form of politeness, I read the documents. And was shocked. Spellbound. And I felt that here was a story that needed to be told. A story of a modern-day witch-hunt. THE HUNT is the result of this reading.





## FILMOGRAPHIES

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## THOMAS VINTERBERG

Director and Screenwriter

Celebrated director Thomas Vinterberg graduated from the Danish Film School in 1993. His graduation film *LAST ROUND* was an early example of his extraordinary talent and reach; it won a string of awards and was nominated for a student Oscar®. Immediately after came the award-winning *THE BOY WHO WALKED BACKWARDS* (1995) which, among others, won at Clermont-Ferrand, and a Robert for Best Short Film.

In 1996 Vinterberg directed his first feature *THE BIGGEST*

*HEROES*. The film took home three Robert awards. In 1995 Vinterberg and Lars von Trier wrote the *DOGME 95* manifesto. Vinterberg's 1998 Dogme film, *FESTEN* (The Celebration) was the first film of the movement. It received a multitude of international awards including the special jury prize at Cannes and the Fassbinder Award at the European Film Awards, as well as the award for Best Foreign Language Film from both the Los Angeles and the New York film critics. In addition, *FESTEN* won seven Robert awards and three Bodil awards. In 2008, Vinterberg and von Trier, along with their 'Dogme brothers' Kristian Levring and Søren Kragh-Jacobsen, received the EFA award for Outstanding European Achievement in World Cinema.

Vinterberg has directed two English-language films, *IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE* (2003), with Joaquin Phoenix, Claire Danes and Sean Penn, and *DEAR WENDY* (2005) starring Jamie Bell which was written by Lars von Trier and won the Silver St. George at the Moscow Film Festival. He returned to the Danish language with the comedy, *WHEN A MAN COMES HOME* (2007), followed by *SUBMARINO* (2010). The latter was in the main competition at the Berlinale in February 2010. *SUBMARINO* was awarded the Nordic



Council's Film Award in 2010 and in 2011 it received five Robert awards and 15 nominations.

In addition, Thomas Vinterberg has written and directed critically acclaimed plays for the national stage at Austria's Burgtheater Wien, which are now playing to sold-out audiences around Europe. He has also directed music videos for Blur and Metallica.





## MADS MIKKELSEN

Lucas

Internationally acclaimed and multi-award winning actor Mads Mikkelsen is the top male star in his native Denmark. Mads Mikkelsen was born in 1965. After attending The Drama School at Aarhus Theatre, he made his film debut in the movie *PUSHER* (1996), which was directed by Nicolas Winding Refn, with whom he also made *BLEEDER* (1999) and *PUSHER II* (2004). Later, he played the leading role in the Emmy Award-winning Danish TV show *UNIT ONE* (2000-2004). Mads Mikkelsen showcased his comic

talents with his leading roles in *THE GREEN BUTCHERS* (2003) and *ADAM'S APPLES* (2006). Most recently, he starred in Nikolaj Arcel's double Golden Bear winner and box office hit *A ROYAL AFFAIR* (2012).

Mads Mikkelsen began his international career with his role as Tristan in the movie *KING ARTHUR* (2004) but his international breakthrough came when he appeared as the Bond villain Le Chiffre in *CASINO ROYALE* (2006). That same year, he took the leading role in the Oscar®-nominated *AFTER THE WEDDING* directed by Academy Award® Winner Susanne Bier. Since then Mads Mikkelsen has appeared in several significant roles in international feature films such as Nicolas Winding Refn's *VALHALLA RISING* (2009), *COCO CHANEL AND IGOR STRAVINSKY* (2009), *CLASH OF THE TITANS* (2010) and *THE THREE MUSKETEERS* (2011). In 2011, Mads Mikkelsen was awarded the prestigious European Film Award for Achievement in World Cinema in recognition of his unique contribution to the world of film.





## THOMAS BO LARSEN

Theo

Thomas Bo Larsen is one of Denmark's busiest and best-known actors. He has performed in both plays and on television and is particularly well known for his big-screen roles. Bo Larsen trained as an actor at The Danish National School of Theatre and Contemporary Dance class of 1991. His breakthrough performance was as the leading male character in Vinterberg's Oscar-nominated® short, LAST ROUND (1993). Several important Danish films followed, such as PUSHER (1996), THE BAD SEEDS (1996),

THE BIGGEST HEROES (1996), FESTEN (1998) (THE CELEBRATION), GONE WITH THE FISH (1999) FLICKERING LIGHTS (2000) and THE SUN KING (2005). He won a Robert award in 1997 for Best Actor in THE BIGGEST HEROES, and in 1999, yet another Robert for Supporting Actor in FESTEN. In addition, Thomas Bo Larsen has done a great deal of television work and is known particularly for his recurring roles in TAXA (1997-1999), THE KINGDOM II (1997) and EDDERKOPPEN (2000). Thomas Bo Larsen has appeared in numerous productions for The Royal Danish Theater and on many other stages.



## SUSSE WOLD

Grethe

Susse Wold graduated as an actress in Copenhagen in 1960. After drama school, she quickly became one of the leading actresses at The Royal Danish Theatre, but many of the other Copenhagen theatres have also benefited from her unique talents.

She has played a large number of different parts - ranging from drama to musicals and comedies. She has played Amanda in Noël Coward's "Private Lives" (in almost 1.000 performances) both in Stockholm and in Copenhagen.

Her credits include "Orlando", a monodrama by Robert Wilson based on the novel by Virginia Woolf and the role of Karen Blixen in the production "To Love your Destiny", based upon Blixen's letters from Africa. She has performed "The Snow Queen" by Hans Christian Andersen all over Denmark.

Susse Wold has appeared in numerous TV-productions as well as in a large number of films and radio plays.

For her worldwide readings of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy-tales in both Danish and English she has been awarded "The Hans Christian Andersen Medal" as well as "The Hans Christian Andersen Prize" and in 2004 she was honoured with the title "Hans Christian Andersen Ambassador".

President of The Danish AIDS Foundation since 1985, Susse Wold has been honoured with almost every award an actress can receive. The Queen of Denmark has made her a "Knight of First Class of the Order of the Dannebrog".







## TOBIAS LINDHOLM

### Scriptwriter

Tobias Lindholm (b.1977) is considered by many to be the 'golden boy' of Danish film and television. Five years after graduating from the National Danish Film School, Lindholm's capacity for storytelling and his ability to captivate an audience has already generated numerous awards and firmly established him as one of the driving forces in the Danish industry.

Lindholm started out writing several episodes of DR's drama series, SOMMER in 2007. In 2008-2011 Lindholm

co-wrote BORGEN, which was seen by 1,5 million Danish viewers every Sunday and is now an international success. He debuted as a screenwriter with Thomas Vinterberg's SUBMARINO (2010), which went on to receive the Nordic Council's Film Award.

Tobias Lindholm had his own debut as film director in 2010, when, with Michael Noer, he wrote and directed the prison drama R. The filming took place in the state prison at Horsens and garnered a great deal of recognition for authenticity and its unique use of reality and realism in a fictional story. The film went on to win several awards including eight Robert Awards and the FIPRESCI-prize at the Gothenburg Film Festival 2010. In addition, Lindholm received a special Bodil award for the SUBMARINO and R scripts. He recently completed A HIJACKING which is expected to premiere at the end of 2012. A HIJACKING was filmed on the east coast of Africa and will be Tobias Lindholm's second feature film as a director.





## SISSE GRAUM JØRGENSEN

Producer

Sisse Graum Jørgensen is one of Denmark's most successful and prolific producers. In addition to Thomas Vinterberg's *THE HUNT* and *DEAR WENDY* (2005) Graum Jørgensen has produced films for such widely acclaimed directors as: Susanne Bier: the yet to be released *LOVE IS ALL YOU NEED* (2012), *IN A BETTER WORLD* (2010) which won the Oscar® for Best Foreign Language Film, Golden Globe® for Best Foreign Language Film and a European Film Award for Best Director; Oscar® nominated *AFTER*

*THE WEDDING* (2006) and *BROTHERS* (2004); Lone Scherfig: *JUST LIKE HOME* (2007) and *WILBUR WANTS TO KILL HIMSELF* (2002); Pernille Fischer Christensen's FIPRESCI recipient at the 2012 Berlinale *A FAMILY* (2010); Kristian Levring's entry for the Toronto International Film Festival and San Sebastian Film Festival *FEAR ME NOT* (2008) and Niels Arden Oplev's Crystal Bear winner *WE SHALL OVERCOME* (2006).

In addition, Graum Jørgensen was the co-producer of Andrea Arnold's Cannes Jury Special Prize winner *RED ROAD* (2006) and David McKenzie's Sundance entry *PERFECT SENSE* (2011).

Most recently, Sisse Graum Jørgensen produced Nikolaj Arcel's box office smash and double Berlin Golden Bear winner, *A ROYAL AFFAIR* (2012).

European Film Promotion selected Sisse Graum Jørgensen for the prestigious title "Producer on the Move" in 2003 and Screen International featured her in their 2004 "Talent Watch". In 2011, Graum Jørgensen became a member of the Producers Branch of AMPAS (The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences).





## MORTEN KAUFMANN

### Producer

Industrious independent producer Morten Kaufmann's first collaboration with Thomas Vinterberg was the multi-award winning short film *THE BOY WHO WALKED BACKWARDS*. Since then the pair have worked together in various capacities on virtually all of Vinterberg's productions. Following *THE BIGGEST HEROES* (1996) Kaufmann line produced Vinterberg's *FESTEN (THE CELEBRATION)* in 1998 and *IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE* in 2002. In 2007 he not only produced but also co-wrote Thomas Vinterberg's

*WHEN A MAN COMES HOME*. In addition, Kaufmann produced Vinterberg's *SUBMARINO* (2010), which won several awards, among them the prestigious Nordic Council Film Award.

Morten Kaufmann (1963) graduated as a producer from The Danish Film School in 1995. Shortly after, he began working at Nimbus Film where his talent for producing soon flourished. In addition to his continuing collaboration with Vinterberg, Kaufmann has produced a host of short films and several highly acclaimed award-winning features including Ole Christian Madsen's *DOGME*-film *KIRA'S REASON: A LOVE STORY* (2001), and Søren Kragh Jacobsen's *DOGME*-film *MIFUNE'S LAST SONG* (1999). Kaufmann has also been behind such extraordinary successes as Natasha Arthy's *MIRACLE* (2000), Dagur Kári's *DARK HORSE* (2005) and Ole Christian Madsen's *PRAGUE* (2006) and *FLAME AND CITRON* (2008).

In 2011 Morten Kaufmann formed the production company Toolbox Film in collaboration with producer colleague Signe Leick Jensen.









## CAST

MADS MIKKELSEN

*Lucas*

THOMAS BO LARSEN

*Theo*

ANNIKA WEDDERKOPP

*Klara*

LASSE FOGELSTRØM

*Marcus*

SUSSE WOLD

*Grethe*

ANNE LOUISE HASSING

*Agnes*

LARS RANTHE

*Bruun*

ALEXANDRA RAPAPORT

*Nadja*

## CREW

*Director:* Thomas Vinterberg

*Screenplay:* Thomas Vinterberg & Tobias Lindholm

*Producers:* Morten Kaufmann & Sisse Graum Jørgensen

*Director of Photography:* Charlotte Bruus Christensen

*Editor:* Anne Østerud & Janus Billeskov Jansen

*Sound Design:* Kristian Selin Eidnes Andersen & Thomas Jæger

*Composer:* Nikolaj Egelund

*Production Designer:* Torben Stig Nielsen

*Costume Design:* Manon Rasmussen

*Make-up Design:* Bjørg Serup

*Casting:* Jette Termann & Tanja Grunwald





# INTERVIEW

BY MIKE GOODRIDGE

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*Excerpts from an interview originally written by Mike Goodridge for the Danish Film Institute and published in the May 2012 issue of FILM.*

**Thomas Vinterberg has always sought new ways to push his artistic limits. Now, the Danish director is bringing a powerful drama to the world's most prestigious film festival. The Hunt, about a man wrongly accused who is exposed to the hatred of everyone in his small town, marks a return to the purity of vision he had at the beginning of his career, the director tells Mike Goodridge.**

In the frenzy of excitement that greeted Thomas Vinterberg's international smash FESTEN (The Celebration) in 1998, he received numerous entreaties from all manner of people. One was a Danish psychiatrist who handed him a file of cases and said he had a responsibility to explore the other side of the abuse issues in the film. Overwhelmed with travel, development and new projects, he shelved it. Eight years later, Vinterberg was cleaning up his desk and came across the doctor's file. "I read it and was totally stunned by it," he explains. "I felt like I had to do this movie."

The film that evolved from that chance discovery is The Hunt, the director's seventh feature, and one which is bound to generate the international acclaim and controversy that he aroused with FESTEN 14 years ago. The subject this time is a false accusation against a mild-mannered kindergarten teacher called Lucas (played by Mads Mikkelsen). In the panic and hysteria that follows the accusation Lucas's life comes crashing down.

No instance of abuse wrongdoing takes place in The Hunt. It is a more classic story of an unjustly accused man. Lucas – who, Vinterberg says, is unquestionably innocent – becomes the target of hatred by all in the small rural town where the film is set. He is initially presented as a kind and beloved man but is vilified overnight, abandoned by his lifelong friends and physically assaulted.

Vinterberg, 43, also found himself probing wider contemporary issues like the viral nature of thought and identity. "It's uncontrollable," he says. "Especially in the world today where communication is so easy, people are being judged morally in all sorts of different media. You can tell stories about another person that very quickly become the identity of that person. The people in this town give Lucas a mark and create an identity around him that he will



never escape. I find that really interesting and frightening.”

## PORTRAIT OF A SCANDINAVIAN MAN

Central to the success of *The Hunt* is a powerful performance by Denmark’s biggest star Mikkelsen who subverts his hyper-masculine persona to play the hapless Lucas. It is the first time Vinterberg and Mikkelsen have collaborated and Vinterberg describes the process as “absolutely wonderful.”

“This character is in a way a portrait of a modern Scandinavian man,” says Vinterberg. “He is warm, friendly, helpful and humble. He does everything people ask him to, he is being run over by his ex-wife. He is castrated in a way. And the journey we made with Mads was to develop him from this person into the conflict of being a man. How does he keep his dignity without being violent? How does he manage this cold and brutal reality without taking a step from his Scandinavian character?”

“This very manly man, Mads, came into the film with all his beauty and muscles and we decided to flip the character and make him a humble schoolteacher. We

worked constantly at not trying to create a myth out of this person but to stay in real life, and Mads is an expert at that. He is constantly demanding answers. Why am I doing that? Could I do this? Could I wear these? He would call me at any time asking different questions about the scenes and coming up with new lines. And when an actor gets the feeling that he knows the character through conversation and improvisation, then all the small details come. He feels calm enough to disappear into the unknown.”

Vinterberg recalls a pivotal scene in the film when, on Christmas Eve, Lucas goes to the local church service and faces a congregation of people who hate him.

“Mads wept all day in every take in exactly the same way,” says the director. “I’ve never seen anything so professional. The scene was all mapped out very precisely but we shot it from many different angles and he has to go through several stages – determination, collapse, anger, relief. He wept for eight hours and there are very few actors that can do that.”









## CONFUSING SUCCESS

Vinterberg describes THE HUNT as a return of sorts to the purity of vision he had at the beginning of his career. He still considers his graduate film LAST ROUND his best. "After that I did THE BIGGEST HEROES and FESTEN and those films were all very close to me in the sense that I can see myself in a very naked way in them," he explains.

The outsized success of FESTEN was confusing, he explains. "It didn't give me much. Artistically it took away my focus for quite some time. I was like a football player after a big goal and the camera was pointing at me for way too long. Now, I feel I am back and actually looking at my stories and looking at the world to find stories. Now I'm constantly trying to find this vulnerable pure quality from my graduate film, where there was no speculation about the future and you are very honestly trying to regard people in certain situations."

## LIKE A BICYCLE TEAM

The film which grounded Vinterberg again was SUBMARINO, a gut wrenching study of two brothers wracked by addiction. The film was selected for competition

at Berlin 2010 and earned him his best reviews since FESTEN. "With SUBMARINO, I felt I sort of came back. If you consider FESTEN like an explosion, the dust had to settle for a bit and I felt I could continue with what I was doing before, knowing a little bit more about how things worked."

SUBMARINO also saw him teamed up with hot new Danish writer Tobias Lindholm on the screenplay. Lindholm was fresh out of film school when he was drafted in to write the adaptation but has since co-written two seasons of the hit TV series Borgen and directed two of his own films R (with Michael Noer) and the forthcoming A HIJACKING. It was only natural for Vinterberg to turn to Lindholm again on THE HUNT.

"We are like a bicycle team when we are writing," he smiles. "Sometimes he is in front and I am following him and sometimes I am in front. We map out the story for quite some time together. We do a 10-page version, then a 20-page version and when we have an idea of the whole story, we start writing. The front bicycle writes 10 pages very fast without looking back and then the other one rewrites it. At the end you have a script which is a Lindholm/Vinterberg script which I then change to make my own."



The script of *THE HUNT* approaches the story from an unusual angle in that it sticks closely to the Lucas character. Scenes you'd expect in classic witch-hunt movies – the townspeople getting together to fuel their rage, the police interrogation of the suspect – are not there.

"We tried to stay very close to the main character and avoid making a case study," he says. "This is fiction and we communicate through the heart and then it goes to the brain and back again. So we had to follow the emotional story of this person."

## DEMONS AND VICTIMS

Also, it's an unusual story in that, for all the drama, everyone is innocent and thinking they are doing the right thing. Vinterberg is a parent himself and understands why and how adults become so aggressively protective of their children at the first whiff that they are in danger.

"The father of the little girl believes in his daughter like every parents should do, and I totally understand him," he muses. "Everybody has the feeling that you know your child, but there is this cliché about kids that they don't lie and in this film, we claim that they do: they invent stories,

they often lie to make the grown-ups happy and in this case she is saying what is expected of her."

"Imagine sitting in front of a policeman or a psychologist or your parents who keep on asking you the same questions. What did you see? Did you see this? Did you see that? And imagine that after the third time, it becomes part of your imagination that it actually happened. As a child especially, it is more difficult to divide fiction from reality.

"So to some extent, the kids here are the demons of the film because they destroy a man's life, but it's very important for me to emphasise that in a case like this, the kids are also the victims. They are the ones we should protect the most."

*By Mike Goodridge*





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