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REEL WORLD



Kill shot

A solid action-comedy, *The Hunt* abandoned in theaters

***The Hunt* can't seem to catch a break. It finally got** released last week, right in the midst of a national emergency. Not surprisingly, very few people wanted to risk exposure to COVID-19 by sitting next to people in an enclosed space.

by
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The Hunt
Starring Hilary Swank
and Betty Gilpin.
Directed by Craig
Zobel. Cinemark 14,
Feather River Cinemas.
Rated R.

Game, the 1924 book by Richard Connell that the film is loosely based on.

Was it a joke? Will they actually hunt?

As things turn out, a hunt is on, and those who voted for President Trump will be in the crosshairs. A dozen MAGA types wake up in a field, find a case of weapons and are immediately met with gunfire and arrows, forcing them to fight for their lives.

Oh, my god. Pretty controversial, right? Nah, not really. The point of this movie is that too many people, from both the right and left, act like total a-holes when it comes to their political ideologies. (Hey, I count myself as one of them from time to time.) Just about every character in this film behaves badly, regardless

of political affiliation. The movie is a satire of our out-of-hand, social-media-fueled times. It's funny (in places), bloody and suspenseful.

There are moments when it feels like the film-makers are saying, "Hey, we were just ragging on Republicans, but now we'll rag on Democrats! So, don't get too mad at us!" Those obvious attempts at balance drag the movie down a bit.

The hunt in question is masterminded by Athena (played by Hilary Swank). You don't see her for a large swath of the film, but she shows up eventually (and is involved in a great fight scene toward the end). The movie primarily belongs to Betty Gilpin (from *GLOW* on Netflix) as Crystal, who is on the hunted side, which is not good for the hunters. Betty can throw down, and there's little that scares her.

Gilpin has all the makings of an action hero. She has a great deadpan delivery to punctuate her smack-downs, and along with her arsenal of unique facial expressions, the sympathetic hero has a real depth behind her eyes. I'd say at least 80 percent of the reason I like this movie is because of Gilpin.

Some familiar faces show up as well, including Ike Barinholtz, Ethan Suplee, Emma Roberts and Amy Madigan. However, don't get too attached to anybody in this movie. Given the storyline, the cast thins out fast.

Swank, a two-time Oscar winner, shows that she can bring the funk whether she's working for Clint Eastwood (who directed her in *Million Dollar Baby*) or Craig Zobel (the director of this one). She creates a sinister villain in Athena, who is just as memorable as the protagonist.

Due to the coronavirus, *The Hunt* is getting an early streaming release date and will be available to rent on the major TV platforms starting Friday (March 20). It's the perfect selection for your quarantine watch list. □