Whale caller, serial killer and detectives

By Daniel Dercksen

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This week on the big screen; a kelp-horn-blowing man is deeply drawn to a very particular whale in the South African film *The Whale Caller*, a CIA interrogator finds herself at the centre of a devastating biological attack on London in *Unlocked*, a detective hunts down a serial killer in *The Snowman*, a once-successful businesswoman gets a young writer to pen her life story in the comedy *The Last Word*, and a newly released prison gangster is forced by the leaders of his gang to orchestrate a major crime in *Shot Caller*.
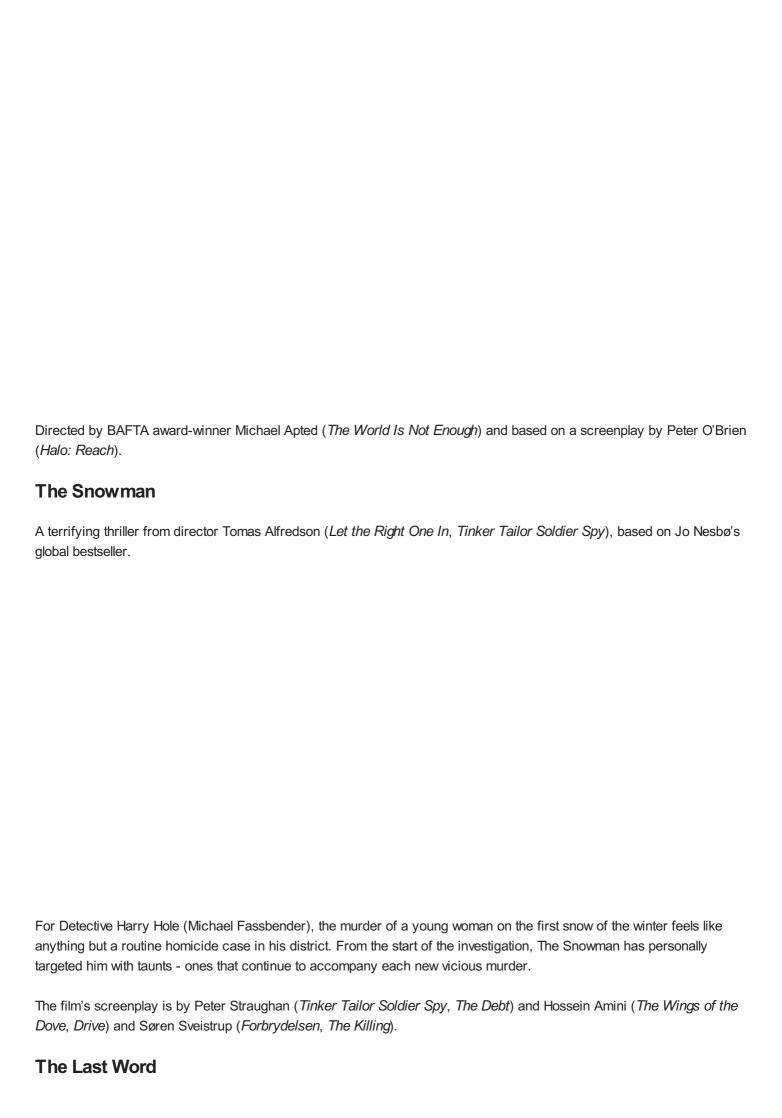
The Whale Caller

Based on the acclaimed book of the same title by Zakes Mda and adapted for the screen by Zola Maseko*, The Whale Caller* is an enchanting, romantic comedy of sorts, told through lyrical and magical storytelling.

Set in Hermanus, the scenic whale watching capital of South Africa, this is a vibrant tale of the new South Africa, with all of its challenges and complexities. It is about whales and nature. But above all, it is about people.

Unlocked

When a CIA interrogator unwittingly provides information to terrorists, she must race against the clock to stop a biological attack on London.

Directed by BAFTA award-winner Michael Apted (*The World Is Not Enough*) and based on a screenplay by Peter O'Brien (*Halo: Reach*).

The Snowman

A terrifying thriller from director Tomas Alfredson (*Let the Right One In*, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*), based on Jo Nesbø's global bestseller.

For Detective Harry Hole (Michael Fassbender), the murder of a young woman on the first snow of the winter feels like anything but a routine homicide case in his district. From the start of the investigation, The Snowman has personally targeted him with taunts - ones that continue to accompany each new vicious murder.

The film's screenplay is by Peter Straughan (*Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, *The Debt*) and Hossein Amini (*The Wings of the Dove*, *Drive*) and Søren Sveistrup (*Forbrydelsen*, *The Killing*).

The Last Word

A once successful businesswoman in tight control of every aspect of her life, Harriet Lauler (Shirley MacLaine), is suddenly inspired to engage a young local writer Anne Sherman (Amanda Seyfried) to pen her life's story.

As the journey unfolds, the two women develop a unique bond which alters not only Harriet's legacy, but also Anne's future.

Directed by Mark Pellington (*The Mothman Prophecies*, *Henry Poole Is Here*) from a script by Stuart Ross Fink.

Shot Caller

This crime thriller follows a Pasadena financier (Nicolaj Coster-Waldau) who's thrown into prison after a drunk-driving accident. A fish out of water, he is forced to do the unimaginable to survive within the prison gang hierarchy where one wrong move can be your last.

The gritty crime thriller is directed by Ric Roman Waugh (*Snitch*, *That Which I Love Destroys Me*) from his own screenplay.

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ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za

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