BEFORE WE DIE

The English adaption of the Swedish series “Innan vi dör”
When her married lover and fellow police officer Sean Hardacre goes missing under mysterious circumstances, Detective Hannah Laing launches an urgent manhunt. She manages to contact one of Sean’s confidential sources: ‘Issy’, and with her partner starts investigating the Mimica family. They discover that the close-knit Croatian clan plans to smuggle a massive quantity of cocaine into the country, but when Hannah finds out the informant is her son Christian, she becomes conflicted about the investigation. Christian’s carefully prepared cover story is put to the test, but far more drastic action is needed to preserve his cover and protect himself.

Based on the eponymous noir Swedish series Before We Die is breathtaking crime thriller, full of heart-stopping jeopardy and unpredictable twists.
“Before We Die is a fantastic concept and a stand out piece of storytelling – I fell in love with the idea when I first read the scripts for the Swedish original a few years back, and always thought there was something universal at its core which would translate very powerfully into a must-see piece of English speaking drama. The series uses the architecture and grammar of a high octane serialised thriller to tell the story of a fractured relationship between a mother and her son. As such it is ultimately a compelling piece of character driven psychological drama.

The original series was really strong but it was often steeped into archetypal Swedish and Nordic crime tropes (a violent war between rival biker gangs as the backdrop for the main plotline) which do not have a similar resonance in the UK and US, so I always felt it was a perfect candidate for adaptation. The UK version sharpens the focus of the premise by concentrating exclusively on the main mother and son plotline, pitting two dysfunctional families against each other across the criminal divide and removing the sub plots which have no cultural or societal resonance for an English and American audience. The result is a much pacier rollercoaster thriller with a sharp, taut, vertical plot line developing without any ancillary ‘red herring’ crime sub-plots. This allows us to focus on character psychology without sacrificing pace. The tone, style and art direction create a sumptuous, glossy, cinematic vision which makes the series utterly irresistible.”
Cast
Hannah Laing, in her fifties, has been unable to acquire any of the niceties associated with the wisdom of the middle years. She is friendless. Overloaded and beleaguered by work. Engaged in a clandestine relationship. Estranged from her son. BWD is undoubtedly a thriller, a psychological dark night of the soul and it is also an exploration into how a leading character seeks to find themselves through forgiveness, connection to their child, courage to stand up to injustice and personal paranoia, vengeance for a terrible wrong and learning that bad people, frightening, amoral men and women might have areas in their lives that are not only enviable, but desirable. Hannah Laing is a fantastic, flawed, multi-faceted character. It’s been a privilege to be part of this show.

Lesley Sharp about her role as Hannah Laing

Lesley Sharp

Hannah Laing is a Detective Inspector with the South Western Police’s Organised Crime Unit and is fiercely resisting a transfer to desk duties as retirement approaches. She has become a by-word amongst her colleagues for hard-core parenting, having engineered the arrest of her son, Christian, which led to him serving a 21-month prison sentence for possession with intent to supply. Divorced from Christian’s father and estranged from her son, Hannah now lives alone but she’s having an affair with a married fellow officer, Sean Hardacre.
I was immediately drawn to the role of Christian as there was this intoxicating combination of a character with an unwavering determination met with obstacles of immense proportion. You sensed that the stakes for this person were his own life and yet he is by no means a superhero, without flaws. He is a normal guy with fears and inconsistencies but his purpose, his cause is so deep rooted that it forces him to break through his own limits. What we feel are the real life implications of things that are often glossed over on television, of grief, guilt, paranoia and love. Through the pages of the script, I sensed the gut-wrenching tension that Christian is pushed to operate under.

Patrick Gibson about his role as Christian Radic
Christian Radic is Hannah’s British-born son of a Croatian father, who is trying to put his life back together having gone off the rails following his parents’ divorce. He’s working as a dish-washer at the Vino Mondana restaurant, after being introduced to the family that owns it by Stefan Vargic, a small-time criminal whom he met in jail. Christian refuses to have contact with his mother, but he’s still close to her boyfriend, Sean, and he’s determined to make amends for his mistakes by helping Sean investigate the Croatian crime family that now employs him, who he suspects are using the restaurant to launder drug money.
Before we Die is a heavyweight drama. An intelligent, labyrinthine script which marries intense family drama with high stakes international crime. Billy Murdoch operates in a grey area between legitimate police procedure and barely legal paramilitary improvisation. He is a maverick who exists on the fringe of the investigative team. As the drama unfolds and his relationship with Hannah strengthens, he is drawn out of his shell and becomes more exposed emotionally and physically. As enigmatic characters go, Billy is right up there, and it was a challenge and a pleasure to play the man.

Vincent Regan about his role as Billy Murdoch

Vincent Regan
Billy Murdoch has been seconded to the OCU from the National Crime Agency as a specialist in Eastern European drug gangs. He isn’t a regular police officer but is employed by the security services. Divorced, with a sixteen-year-old who ‘hates my guts’, Billy is a lone operator, who uses his contacts and his background in military intelligence to circumnavigate the police’s labyrinthine bureaucracy and give his colleagues in the OCU ‘plausible deniability’.

Vincent Regan as Billy Murdoch
Eagle Eye creates bespoke British drama made with the very best talents, both on and off screen, from around the world. Utilising in depth knowledge of the global market, Eagle Eye specialise in adapting hit international series for English speaking audiences. We also adapt books, both well known and hidden gems and are currently working up a number of original scripted series. Our established reputation for spotting the world’s best stories and story tellers, coupled with our unrivalled first hand knowledge of the best programme makers from around the globe, means our scripted series are distinctive premium brands, combining the highest production values with a unique look and feel.
As a private subsidiary of one of the biggest and most renowned television broadcasters in Europe, ZDF Enterprises is responsible for the worldwide distribution and the implementation of international coproductions of ZDF program brands as well as establishing itself as an independent market player in the national and international environment. Headquartered in Mainz in the heart of Germany, ZDF Enterprises comprises of three divisions: ZDFE.junior, ZDFE.unscripted and ZDF.drama.

ZDFE.drama is the home to series and event movies covering a wide range of genres, spanning from crime to comedy and drama in its multilanguage catalogue. We draw our strengths from being part of ZDF as well as from co-producing and financing high-end projects from third party producers around the globe.

Our latest hits includes Hide & Seek (ICTV Ukraine), Freud (ORF / Netflix) and Top Dog (TV4 Sweden).
Format: 6 x 52’
Broadcaster: Channel 4 / UK
Director: Jan Matthys
Writer: Matt Baker
Cast: Lesley Sharp, Patrick Gibson, Vincent Regan
Production Company: Eagle Eye Drama
BEFORE WE DIE
COMING SOON