

- [FAQs](#)
- [Contact us](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [ScreenBase](#)
- [Box Office](#)

- [Register now](#)
- [Sign in](#)

SCREENDAILY

The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out The Window And Disappeared

13 February, 2014 | By Demetrios Matheou



Dir: Felix Herngren. Sweden. 2013. 114mins

It might take a while to say the title, but it's only seconds before this Swedish comic gem gets a laugh. That's when Allan Karlsson (Robert Gustafsson) blows up the fox who killed his cat, by hiding sticks of dynamite inside a pack of sausages. Like much of the humour of this film, it's broad verging on slapstick, but delivered with such deadpan panache that it's irresistible.

Adapter and director Felix Herngren keeps things moving pretty seamlessly between the past and present, has a good eye for the madcap, and maintains a constant breezy mood.

The film itself could be the same. With the current enthusiasm for all things Scandinavian, it only takes a little shrewd marketing for this to enjoy a breakout, international distribution.

Based on the Swedish bestseller by Jonas Jonasson, it follows the many misadventures past and present of a man who, a little like Forrest Gump, succeeds in life despite evident drawbacks. Karlsson isn't the brightest bulb in the box, nor is he particularly sane – that fox is only the latest victim of his penchant for explosives - but he has an

innate common sense and a good heart, that over his long life has earned him some surprising friends and allies.

The fox incident lands him in a retirement home. But as the staff prepare to celebrate his 100th birthday, the indefatigable and restless chap climbs out of the window, takes himself to the bus station and gets the first ride out of town. He manages to board with a stranger's suitcase full of cash, and for the next two hours murderous crooks and an inept policeman will be on his trail.

"Many have shouted at me over the years, from stationmasters to dictators," Allan declares. While on the road he recalls the famous people he's met – Franco and Stalin, Truman and Reagan, Gorbachev – and the historic moments in which he's played an unlikely role: the Spanish Civil War, the invention of the atomic bomb, the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall. His funniest companion, though, is fictional: Albert Einstein's idiot brother, a fellow gulag inmate whose dim brain can't compute Allan's simple plan for escape.

While Gump lived through his mother's dictum that "life is a box of chocolates", Allan frequently pulls out his mother's deathbed observation that "life's what it is, and will be what it will be." His stoicism, while all around him is chaotic and absurd, is beautifully captured by Gustafsson. One of Sweden's most popular comedians, as well as an actor, he easily delineates the character from a teenager through to his century.

Another comedy that this evokes, of course, is *Zelig*. It may not have the technical or narrative sophistication of Woody Allen's film, but adapter and director Felix Herngren keeps things moving pretty seamlessly between the past and present, has a good eye for the madcap, and maintains a constant breezy mood. At its Berlinale Special screening, the laughter often went through the roof.

Production companies: Nice Flx Pictures Produktion, Film i Väst, TV4, Buena Vista International Sweden, Nordsvensk Filmunderhållning

International sales: StudioCanal International, www.studiocanal.com

Producers: Malte Forssell, Felix Herngren, Henrik Jansson-Schweizer, Patrick Nebout

Script: Felix Herngren, Hans Ingemansson, based on the novel by Jonas Jonasson

Cinematography: Göran Hallberg,

Editor: Henrik Källberg

Music: Matti Bye

Production designer: Mikael Varhelyi

Main cast: Robert Gustafsson, Iwar Wiklander, David Wiberg, Mia Skäringer, Jens Hultén

Like 2

Tweet 1

