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Locating Nordic Noir from Finland

A close look at crime series *Karppi* and modern Finnish Nordic Noir

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1. Introduction

Nordic Noir has become a household term for crime fiction that takes place in the Nordic countries and it has become a genre of its' own. When you hear it you probably think about Swedish Noirs like *Wallander* (1995-2013) or *The girl with the dragon tattoo* (Oplev 2009/ Fincher 2011) or Danish Noirs like *The Killing* (2007-2012). However, you might not think of anything from Iceland or Finland. The two remote countries to the north and east has been lagging behind a bit when it comes to developing the genre.

For this essay I will focus on Finland, a country that just recently started producing TV-series in the Nordic Noir style, starting with *Sorjonen/Bordertown* (2016-) and continuing with *Karppi/Deadwind* (2018-) that recently got picked up by Netflix for worldwide distribution. I will begin by defining the term Nordic Noir and what its' international role is. I will also examine Nordic Noir in Finland so far and then take a closer look at *Karppi/Deadwind* and analyze what it's about, what reception it got abroad and how it was produced. For this analyzis I also interviewed the creator of the series, Rike Jokela to see if this show might be the big breakthrough for Finland's contribution to the genre before I end with a short look at the future of Finnish Noir.



Kenneth Branagh in BBC: s Wallander (2008-2016). Photo: BBC

2. Defining Nordic Noir

When defining Nordic Noir, Oxford Online Dictionary says it's:

“A type of Scandinavian crime fiction and television drama that typically features dark storylines and bleak urban settings”. (Oxford Dictionaries, 2018)

The definition is a bit simplified. First, you must argue whether Finland and Iceland are a part of Scandinavia or not. Generally, Scandinavia includes Sweden, Denmark and Norway while the Nordic countries also includes Finland and Iceland. Second, the term is not limited to television but can also include literature, films and other medias.

Winston Cook-Wilson writes about Nordic Noir in the American music magazine Spin and describes the genre as fiction about a self-sacrificing cop or cop duo, usually as wild off-cycle as the Nordic weather, with an increasingly weakened judgement since they never rest. What usually starts with a murder unfolds to be something much bigger and of course the most important part is the Nordic settings (Cook-Wilson, 2018).

One could define Nordic Noir as:

A type of crime fiction in literature, cinema, TV and other media from the Nordic countries, usually with a dark setting.

One could also say that a deeper definition would include the following trademarks:

- Usually one or two main characters that are or have been cops
(There are exceptions such as Norwegian child care worker gone private detective Varg Veum and Swedish journalist Annika Bengtzon.)
- The stories originate from the Nordic countries and uses typical elements such as nature, weather and culture of the North.
- The stories usually start with a murder and develops to something much bigger, with the bad guys often being big companies or people with power.

- The stories often use urban settings as their main environment, such as big cities (e.g. Malmö, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Oslo) or small towns (e.g. Ystad, Bergen).
- The style is usually dark and cold and takes place during the winter season. (There are exceptions here as well, such as Swedish series *Morden i Sandhamn/The Sandhamn murders* (2010-) that takes place in the archipelago of Stockholm during the summer.)
- The genre has a tradition of being left wing political and is often telling stories about fighting the big guys, such as large companies, the political system or even the police force itself.

Noir is the French word for Black which means that the dark and eerie tone is important to the genre, therefore it can be discussed whether shows like *Morden i Sandhamn* (2010-) fits into the genre or not.

The genre started with a series of crime novels by the Swedish couple Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö, between 1965 and 1975. They centered around detective Martin Beck and between 1967 and 2018, 49 films and TV-films has been made about him, as well as a parody film. Sweden has since long been in the front with exports like *Wallander* and the genre exploded internationally with Swedish Stieg Larsson's bestselling *Millennium Trilogy* starting with the novel *Män som hatar kvinnor/The Girl with the dragon tattoo* (2005), which later became major motion pictures both in Sweden (*Män som hatar kvinnor*, Oplev 2009) and the USA (*The Girl with the dragon tattoo*, Fincher, 2011).

Modern day Nordic Noir has moved towards the TV Screen and after the *Wallander* series, the genre got a new start with the Danish show *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007-2012) that premiered in 2007. It also resulted in an American remake, AMC: s *The Killing* (2011-2014). With *Forbrydelsen* we saw a female lead for the first time, Sofie Grabol as Sarah Lund. In 2011 the massive hit co-production between Sweden and Denmark, *Bron/Broen/The Bridge* (2011-2018) featured another female lead detective, Swedish Saga Norén, played by Sofia Helin. Teamed up with Danish Martin Rohde, played by Kim Bodnia, the two detectives solve a series of gruesome murders with the large cities of Malmö, Sweden and Copenhagen, Denmark as backdrops. The series was remade both in the USA and Mexico (*The Bridge*, 2013-2014) and in the UK and France (*The Tunnel*, 2013-).

Iceland got their first hit with *Ófærð/Trapped* (2015-) and in 2016 Finland would join the Nordic Noir family with *Sorjonen/Bordertown* (2016-). This paved way for a new type of Nordic Noir with a Finnish touch. The latest addition to this is *Karppi/Deadwind* (2018) which became the first Finnish TV series ever to gain worldwide distribution by Netflix (Gustafsson, 2018). The Nordic Noir genre is up for another turn as we see a new wave of crime fiction from the country in the east.



Saga Norén (Sofia Helin) and Henrik Sabroe (Thure Lindhart) in a promotional shot for season four of Bron/Broen/The Bridge. Photo: SVT

3. An international phenomenon

Olof Hedling writes that Nordic Noir is a familiar brand in both North America and Europe since the 1990s but that the *Millennium* trilogy paved the way for a breakthrough and a more extensive awareness of the brand (Hedling, 2014, p 2-3). It is true that Nordic Noir has gained more popularity outside of the Nordic countries borders and it has also had effect on the crime genre in general. In the past ten years we have seen a shift in crime fiction, for example in the UK, a country famous for mystery puzzles such as Agatha Christies' *Miss Marple* and *Hercule Poirot* or, for that matter, Ian Flemings' world renowned agent *James Bond*. In the recent years these gentlemen detectives and secret agents has moved out of the way for a new darker sort of crime series such as *Top of the lake* (2013-), *Broadchurch* (2013-2017), *Happy Valley* (2014-2016) and *Hinterland* (2013-). These shows echoes from their Scandinavian predecessors with darker themes of child murder, sexual abuse and government conspiracies (Cook-Wilson, 2018). The shows also focus on one or two police officers rather than detectives and agents and uses the landscapes in a new way. In the USA, the stamp of Nordic Noir can be visible, not only in the remake of *The Bridge* but also in shows like *True Detective* (2014-).



Woody Harrelson and Matthew McConaughey in HBO: s *True Detective*. Photo: HBO

4. Nordic Noir in Finland

Finland introduced crime fiction later than the other Nordic countries (Bergman, 2014, p. 158). The Finnish crime fiction is also different from neighboring countries and follows more of the same tradition as Iceland, building on the Old Norse Sagas using a plain language, strong female characters, violence, gloomy moods and ‘exotic’ Nordic settings (Bergman, 2014, p. 152). Finland first experienced a golden age of the genre during World War II, when Finland was fighting the Soviet Union and the border with Russia has played an important part since then (Bergman, 2014. p. 158). The most successful crime writer from Finland is Matti Joensuu with his ten novels about detective Timo Harjunpää (1976-2010) which was later remade into six TV-films (1983-2010).

In 2009-2010 Rike and Juha Jokela made *Virta/River* (2010), which is the first known attempt to make Nordic Noir in Finland even if the term was not established yet (Jokela, 2018). After *Forbrydelsen* a new wave would come, even from Finland and first out after *Virta* would be *Sorjonen/Bordertown* (2016-) which centers around detective inspector Kari Sorjonen, leading the Serious Crime Unit in small town of Lappeenranta near the Russian border. It was the first Finnish series to reach a larger audience internationally. Winston Cook-Wilson at Spin calls the show an “unexpected diamond in the rough” and says that the harsh Finnish language and the landscapes are unique to the show but that its greatest power is the character building (Cook-Wilson, 2018).

Something that makes Finnish crime stories stand out from the other Nordic countries is that humor is a vital element (Nykänen, 2018). Finnish author Harri Nykänen says Finland is usually known as the darkest, pitch-black corner of the Nordic countries with the highest crime rate and suicide rate than its neighbors and with more weapons in private ownership per capita (Nykänen, 2018).

It is true that Finland has the highest suicide rate of the Nordic countries (WHO, 2018), and that Finland also had the highest rate of homicide per 100.000 inhabitants, among the five countries, according to UNODC Global Study on Homicide 2013 (UNODC, 2014). It is also true that Finland has more civilian owned firearms than its neighboring countries, according to Small Arms Surveys report on Civilian Firearms Holdings from 2017 (Small Arms Survey,

2017). These factors might be the key to why Finland has a need to “lighten things up” with humor, even if it often is a dark sense of humor.

Rike Jokela, the creator of *River*, started to develop his next crime show, *Karppi/Deadwind* (2018-), already 2012. However, things move slowly in Finland because of the new format and genre and at that time the concept of Nordic Noir was not established in Finland. Rike Jokela states that “we just started developing the same kind of stuff at the same time” (Jokela, 2018).



Ville Virtanen as Kari Sorjonen in Sorjonen/Bordertown (2016-)

5. A close look at *Karppi/Deadwind*

5.1. Story

Karppi/Deadwind centers around detective Sofia Karppi (Pihla Viitala), of the Helsinki police. Recently widowed she is left alone with a son and a step-daughter. Back at work she's teamed up with rookie Sakari Nurmi (Lauri Tilkanen) and their first case is the missing Anna Bergdahl whose body is soon found buried at a building site. As the investigation progresses the duo gets tangled up in a web of lies, love affairs, industrial espionage, kidnappings, childhood sex abuse, religious sects, German gangsters and environmental activists. All this while Sofia is trying to manage her grief and personal life.



Sakari Nurmi (Lauri Tilkanen) & Sofia Karppi (Pihla Viitala). Photo: Dionysos Films

5.2. Production

The show is created and directed by Rike Jokela (1964-) and although based in Helsinki, the series is a European effort produced by Helsinki-based Dionysos Films and German production company H&V Entertainment while distributed by the French company About Premium Content. This, of course, opens for discussion about nationality and transnationality since co-production is in general considered transnational but also challenges the constructed unity and narrative of a national cinema (Eleftheriotis, 2001. p. 127).

The show premiered on March 14th, 2018 on YLE TV2 and 800.000 Finns saw the show during the first week, giving it a strong opening (Pham, 2018). On August 23rd, 2018 it premiered worldwide on Netflix. The show was also nominated for the Nordisk Film & TV Fond award for outstanding writing of a Nordic Drama Series (Nordisk Film & TV Fond Prize nominees and jury unveiled, 2018).

5.3. Sofia Karppi

The character of Sofia Karppi has been called a character worth watching and investigating in (Hirons, 2018) and a gruff 50-year old cop caught in a young working mothers' body (Cobb, 2018). Sofia Karppi is often compared to other female Noir heroes. Paul Hirons at *The Killing Times* calls Karppi a potent mix of Saga Norén and Sarah Lund (Hirons, 2018). At *Heaven of Horror*, Karina Adelgaard compares Karppi to both Noomi Rapace's and Rooney Mara's versions of Lisbeth Salander from *The girl with the dragon tattoo* (Adelgaard, 2018) and Genevieve van Voorhis at *Bustle* even compares her to Olivia Benson from US show *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* (1999-) (Voorhis 2018). Jokela says Karppi is a mixture of every female cop we have seen and liked but that all three writers, as well as actress Pihla Viitala had important parts to play when creating the character (Jokela, 2018). However, Jokela says, they did use the lead character in the American version of *The Killing* (2011-2014), Sarah Linden as well as Catherine Cawood from the BBC One crime series *Happy Valley* (2014-) as sources of inspiration (Jokela, 2018).



Sofia Karppi. Photo: Dionysos Films

5.4. Praise and criticism

When the series premiered on Netflix, people all over the world watched it and while BBC named it one of nine shows to watch on Netflix in August (Mullan, 2018) among big names like *Better Call Saul* (2015-) and *Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan* (2018-), Alex Strachan at TV Worth watching called it a hypnotic thriller (Strachan, 2018) and Cia Edström at Gothenburg Film Festival called it classic Nordic Noir at its finest (Edström, 2018). On the other hand, the series got critique for following the conventions a bit too much. The Daily Dot wrote that the show delivers exactly what the genre calls for, no more and no less (Strait, 2018), and Malin Slotte at Hufvudstadsbladet writes that the show consists only of genre conventions (Slotte, 2018). In a similar manner, Paul Hirons at The Killing Times writes that one could argue that the writers follow the template a little too closely, especially when it comes to the character of Sofia Karppi (Hirons, 2018) and Anupam Kant Verma at Firstpost means that the writers just ticked off boxes on a Nordic Noir Checklist (Kant Verma, Anupam, 2018). Rike Jokela admits to the critique and says that there are certain conventions that need to be there for this type of show (Jokela, 2018).

5.5. Comparisons and influences

It's not hard to compare *Karppi* to other Nordic thrillers such as *Bron*, *Forbrydelsen* or even *Wallander* and Alex Strachan at TV Worth Watching writes that both *Karppi* and *Bron* look like it probably would have done if Ingmar Bergman had made serialized dramas for the small screen (Strachan, 2018). Rike Jokela says that shows like *Forbrydelsen* and *Bron* were late discovered in Finland, but they did influence both him and the Finnish production landscape. He considers *Forbrydelsen* to be a big step away from classic *Beck* and *Wallander*. Jokela says he saw *Bron* after a recommendation from a friend, one year before it was even aired in Finland (Jokela, 2018). *Forbrydelsen* was aired already in 2007 but at the small channel YLE 5. When it had its second run in March 2013, Jokela saw it for the first time. He says that it's the Finnish broadcasters' fault that Nordic Noir didn't even come to Finland until 2013 (Jokela, 2018). Another revolutionary shift, Jokela says, is that with Netflix and other streaming services, people now watch shows online and not on television.

Thanks to Netflix he could also follow the American version of *The Killing*, which he claims to be his all-time favorite crime show (Jokela, 2018).

Although Jokela admits that both the Danish and American versions of *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* helped the process of *Karppi* a lot, the major influence is not a Nordic Noir, nor a crime show but a classic Hollywood thriller; David Fincher's *Seven* (Fincher, 1995). Jokela says that *Seven* started it all and worked as an influence also for *Forbrydelsen, The Killing* and *Bron* and that's why you can find similar elements in these type of shows (Jokela, 2018).

5.6. Helsinki Noir

As any other Nordic Noir, the settings play a vital part in *Karppi*. The series uses Finland's capital Helsinki as main backdrop, while using the countryside and the fictive town of Rönnevik as secondary settings. Helsinki is a perfect setting for the story, with its' Finnish architecture and toned-down color scheme. City of Helsinki says that *Karppi* portrays Helsinki as a city with interesting contrasts and an urban roughness combined with the turn of the seasons as well as the proximity to the sea and nature (City of Helsinki, 2018). While it sounds like a tourist brochure of Helsinki it is true that the show offers a perfect mix of grey urban city views, snowy roads and icy lakes. In *Drama Quarterly*, Jokela says that the cold weather was a challenge and almost became a character itself (Pickard, 2018). The weather combined with the beautiful photography by Anssi Leino makes the show feel like a perfect noir thriller. Jonathon Wilson at *Ready Steady Cut* writes that the shows' muted color palette and frequent use of long, wide shots gives an eerie atmosphere (Wilson, 2018) and even Taylor Antrim from *Vogue* says that the photography, with its steely northern light, is classic Nordic Noir (Antrim, 2018). Jokela says that it's important to show Helsinki as a place struggling with climate change. The weather is changing all the time, and this became a part of the storytelling (Jokela, 2018).



The harsh Nordic climate plays a vital part in the series. Photos: Dionysos Films

5.7. *Karppi* as Nordic Noir

Karppi matches all the criteria that were listed in chapter two. It’s about two cops and it starts with a murder, developing to something much bigger. One of the “bad guys” is a big German company and while the series political angle can be discussed there’s both our hero’s struggle against the chief of police, the small man versus the big company and a message about climate change as well as feminism. The story is typically Finnish, and the show uses the Finnish climate as a character of its own, creating the perfect Noir setting. It uses the urban setting of Helsinki as well as small town Rönnevik and the countryside in between. However, Rike Jokela prefers to not call the show a Nordic Noir. Jokela says the inspiration comes mainly from British and American crime shows and that *Karppi* is a perfect mix of American, British and Nordic shows with a sense of Finnish storytelling and humor. If anything, Jokela says, *Karppi* is more of a “Helsinki Noir” (Jokela, 2018).



Karppi – Nordic Noir or Helsinki Noir? Photo: Dionysos Films

6. The future of Finnish Noir

Although Finland has been slow at the start, things are starting to happen. In Drama Quarterly Rike Jokela says that Finnish dramas are becoming more international and that the budgets are slowly increasing, while he also talks about some problems that needs to be solved, like TV-channels and production companies giving the writers too little freedom (Pickard, 2018). When I asked Jokela why Finland hasn't started producing these series until now he says that the production flow is still slow and that, in comparison to countries like Sweden and Denmark, the national broadcaster YLE is not producing this kind of shows, but rather independent production companies (Jokela, 2018).

Will *Sorjonen* and *Karppi* pave the way for a new wave of Finnish Noir? Jokela says it's all about the quality of the content. If Netflix-viewers all around the world likes *Karppi*, it will help up-coming shows to break through as well. Since streaming services like Netflix and HBO, Apple TV and Amazon changes the way we watch TV today, this will help people all over the world to watch new series (Jokela, 2018).

As a matter of fact, the successes of *Sorjonen* and *Karppi* has made an impact. There are several planned TV-productions by Finnish production companies with stories that can be included in the Nordic Noir-genre:

- Bullets (2018-) – produced by Finnish production company Vertigo, recently premiered in Finnish Streaming service Elisa Viihde.
- Arctic Circle (2018-) – produced by Finnish production company Yellow Film & TV and German production company Bavaria Film. Premieres on Elisa Viihde, Christmas 2018.
- Cold Courage – In development by Nordic company Modern Times Group as a Viaplay Exclusive.
- Dark light – In development by Finnish production company Vertigo.
- Hard Diplomacy – In development by Finnish production company Fire Monkey Ltd. for MTV3.
- Layla – In development by Finnish production company Vertigo.
- Polar Night – In development by Finnish production company Mogul Movies Ltd.

- Sherlock North – In development by Finnish-American production company Snapper Films.
- Sphere of Shadows – In development by Finnish production company Zodiak Finland for Elisa Viihde.

Maybe the success of series like *Sorjonen* and *Karppi* will create opportunities for Helsinki and Finland, as these types of crime series tends to attract tourists. TV & film-tourism has become a growing niche within the tourist market (Reijnders, 2009). Whether it's *Wallander* tours in Ystad or *Inspector Morse*-tours in Oxford, it always seems to be a tourism industry for this. The earliest example of course being 221 B Baker Street in London, home of detective Sherlock Holmes, that's been attracting crowds of tourists since the early 20th century (Reijnders, 2009). This, of course, is an opportunity for the local tourism even though it has effects on the society as well, such as traffic congestions, parking shortages, issues of privacy and changes in communities' atmospheres as well as inflated prices (Hedling, 2010). However, if wisely managed, the Finnish Noir could be a new thriving tourism business.



Iina Kuustonen in Arctic Circle. Photo: IMDB

7. Conclusion

When I started my research, one of my main goals was to find out why we don't hear that much from Finland when it comes to film and TV in general, and Nordic Noir in particular. Thanks to my interview with Rike Jokela, the creator of *Karppi*, I got some information on why Finland started later to produce Nordic Noir, then the other Nordic countries.

During my research I also found that Finland, although starting a bit late, is now steaming ahead to compete with its neighboring countries in the Noir genre. I found that approximately ten productions within the genre of Nordic Noir are in production or development right now. I am positive that *Sorjonen* and *Karppi* is just the beginning of what will be a new wave of Noir from Finland. Their style is different from the Swedish and Danish and it will be a whole new take on the genre. A subgenre of Finnish Noir, or as Jukela says in *Karppi's* case, Helsinki Noir.

Finland still has a long way to go, and to really compete with Sweden and Denmark there are a few things that must be done:

- The projects will need bigger budgets.
- There must be a bigger international appeal, that *Karppi* right now is clearing the path for.
- The writers need to keep their freedom to tell the stories.
- The stories need to stay true to their culture and the Finnish way of telling them.
- There should be more room for transnational Co-productions. Both *Karppi* and upcoming *Arctic Circle* are Co-produced with Germany. A way to secure financing and distribution.
- The production flow needs to be stream-lined for faster production outlets.
- Better production support from the state, such as YLE.
- A bigger focus on streaming services than on traditional Television.

When trying to find Nordic Noir in Finland I found a genre and a concept that is still new but has had two successful series paving the way for a new wave of Finnish Noir. There are still obstacles to overcome if Finland shall be able to compete with other Nordic countries with a big production of the Noir genre, such as Sweden and Denmark. Something is brewing right now, and I am sure we will see a lot more Nordic Noir from Finland in the years to come.



Karppi. Photo: Dionysos Films

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My own interviews

Jokela, Rike, creator of *Karppi*. 2018. Interviewed by the author, October 22nd.

Appendix 1 – Interview with Rike Jokela

This interview was conducted by the author via e-mail with Rike Jokela October the 22nd, 2018.

Interview about Karppi and Nordic Noir in Finland

Robin Sörbom
Lund University
Malmö, Sweden

Rike Jokela
Writer, Director
Creator of *Karppi/Deadwind*
Helsinki, Finland

1. Why do you think the Nordic Noir genre has become so popular? What is it with the Nordic countries and crime that makes such perfect partners?

I think there are three main reasons.

First: For the rest of the world Nordic Noir is just exotic and little different compared with American and British crime shows that have been there for ever.

Second: Nordic coldness and nature are a good starting point for a crime story. You don't need to make everything to look "scary" because it's already there for free. Crime stories base on suspense and it's easier to create it here naturally compared to the places where the sun is shining all day long.

Third: I think Nordic dark humor helps in creating crime stories. Fortunately our life here is quite safe and therefore our crimes in fiction are more fantasy than based on real life. Yet to make up such things you need humor. Otherwise it would be too distressing. And of course there has been some really good Nordic crime shows during last years: Good writing, good acting and good directing.

Perfect partners:

I think one reason many fantasy crime stories are made in the Nordic is that living here is safe. Murder stories are very entertaining because we humans like to be exited and a tv-show offers a safe way to do it. Our crime stories aren't very realistic because the Nordic audiences don't want to watch rude street violence in fiction because it's not our daily life - fortunately. Serial killers, "salanders" and "norens" in Nordic stories are fantasy characters just like in they are in Game of Thrones.

2. Finland was late on the ball with Nordic Noir. There was pretty much no Nordic Noir in Finland before Sorjonen/Bordertown (2016). How come we see a rise in the genre from Finland right now?

We did a crime show "Virta" (= River) 2009-2010. I think it was our the first attempt to make

“nordic noir” although I am not sure if the term was even known here that time. Our budget then was 1/10 of Swedish shows which limited a lot of our writing.

I think *Forbrydelsen* changed everything - for me at least. It was a huge step forward from *Becks* and *Wallanders* that were still more like book adaptation kind of shows. *Forbrydelsen* was totally different. But almost everyone in Finland saw it just many years after, including me

We started developing *Karppi/Deadwind* in the end of 2012. Because that kind of long format was new, I guess it took some time for the Finnish broadcasters to adapt new ideas. I heard that our colleagues started developing *Sorjonen/Bordertown* about the same time. *Forbrydelsen* was not a big thing in Finland. Just few people saw it when it was aired on Finland's Swedish channel. It was actually same thing with *Bro/Bron* when it was aired here until in summer 2013. A year before that my cinematographer in *Virta* called me and said he has bought a really good blu-ray called *Bro/Bron*. He told me you've gotta see it and specially a specific part in a certain episode because “they have stolen the same scene from *Seven* that we did in *Virta*”. I went to buy the only copy they had in the store and this is how I met the *Bridge* in the first time. And I loved the first season.

That time most of the film makers in Finland didn't know Nordic Noir at all. We just started developing the same kind of stuff at the same time. But later when *The Bridge* become a hit in Finland, it raised the level and forced our broadcasters re-think about everything. That was good because the budgets got a little better - we're still behind compared to the others. All this “developing hell” took many years. Finally when the first season of *Karppi* was premiered in March 2018, *The fourth season of the Bridge* has already been seen on tv! Thing happened so slow in Finland.

I saw *Forbrydelsen* in March 2013 when it was aired second time in Finland. The premiere in 2007 was aired only in Finland's Swedish channel called *Yle Fem*. So nobody saw it then and nobody knew anything about Nordic Noir for many years. It is Finnish national broadcaster's “fault” that Nordic Noirs started here in 2013 and not in 2007. That time we only saw *Män som hatar kvinnor*, which was a success both as a film and a book. It's one of my favorites too. Then I watched *The Killing (USA)* when it was released in Netflix. It is maybe my all time crime show favorite and sure it had an influence to our writing too. *Two Killing* shows helped us to structure a long format. *The Bride* is based on a little different structure and that's why it didn't influence our writing.

Still I always like to mention that the movie *Seven* has been the only real influence to me. It was already with *Virta* series and it's with *Karppi* too. Another big reason why it's happening now also in Finland is because of new streaming services. Half of the shows are seen online and not in traditional channels. We are making now also some international shows and that's why the production companies are not dependent on the national broadcasting company only. The trend in Finland is different as in Denmark for example. Drama is made now just in independent companies and not anymore in YLE.

It's also good to understand, Finland is not a “real” Scandinavian country but a weird place on the edge of Europe. That's why we always are a bit late in everything but that's okay. We are used to it and don't care so much.

3. Generally, Finland has a very small export of film and TV. Karppi is the first Finnish show to get worldwide distribution via Netflix. Do you think the distribution of Karppi and the interest from Netflix will make way for more films and TV shows from Finland to reach outside of the Finnish borders?

I hope so. But it's all about the content. If we can make good ones, and our Broadcasters and online service companies (mobile) allow them to travel, they will.

If the Netflix viewers like Karppi, it will help next shows who are trying to make a breakthrough. So far we have got nice feedback from all over the world, especially from South Europe and South America. I think our female main character, an independent single mother who is chasing bad guys, is still something different over there. People seem to identify to Sofia Karppi which makes us very happy. It's really interesting in reading Twitter comments #Deadwind and #Karppi.

Netflix, HBO, next maybe Apple and Amazon are changing the way of watching "tv" but they also are helping people to watch shows from other countries. Bing watching is now the way hard core fans want to explore shows, including myself. Everywhere, even in the USA, they have started to watch more foreign shows. The world is getting smaller and shows travel in spite of their origin. I believe if there is a good story, there is a way to get it seen world wide which is really good.

4. Looking at Karppi you can see signs of other Nordic Noir shows such as Bron/Broen/The Bridge and Forbrydelsen/The Killing. Paul Hirons at The Killing Times says Sofia Karppi is a perfect mix of Saga Norén and Sarah Lund. Karina Adelgaard at Heaven of horror compares her to both Noomi Rapace's and Rooney Mara's takes on Lisbeth Salander from The girl with the dragon tattoo. Genevive Van Voorhis from Bustle compares her to Olivia Benson from US show Law & Order: Special victims' unit. Alex Strachan from TV Worth Watching says that Bron and Karppi is examples of what it would have looked like if Ingmar Bergman made "serialized dramas for the small screen". According to IMDB Trivia, Karppi pays homage to both Kubrick's The Shining and Jonathan Demme's Silence of the lambs. In an interview you said that both versions of The Killing have been an influence and that you also based your character Karppi on a previous character from Virta/River.

So, with all this said, where did you find the inspiration for Karppi as a series and Karppi as a character? Do you think that it is good or bad to compare it to other series or characters too much? Is it because she is a female lead character that people tend to compare her to others such as Saga Norén or Olivia Benson?

Wow! You have studied the issue well!

You are right too. Have you ever read this kind of comparisons about male heroes of crime shows? No, you haven't.

I also think that the reason for comparisons is, there has not been many modern female detective characters. If you are a crime series fan, you probably can name all of them including some novel/film characters like Lisbeth Salander.

It's also true that Sofia Karppi is a mixture of every female cop we have seen and *liked* so far. We are three creators in Karppi and everyone has had an impact to the character. Also the actress Pihla Viitala has also put an important part of herself to Sofia. Karppi was written for her and it would have been different if someone else was casted. It's true that Sofia Karppi was first "born" when I began to imagine what would "Anne Nordin" a 25 year old character from Virta series (played by Laura Birn), be like 10 years after. "Nordin" was a talented but really difficult young cop and person. At the time we wrote her, any of those now iconic female Nordic Noir characters was not there.

Later when we got to know Sarah Lund and Saga Noren, we too noticed some similarities but didn't want to change just to make Karppi different. Our basic idea was to tell about an over confident woman, who has lost her husband, who is now a single mother but still has a passion to her job. We felt that was a very good main conflict in her what we wanted to study. We also tried to write Karppi like same we would write any male character.

Two female characters we watched to get ideas were Sarah Linden in The Killing (USA) and the main character in British Happy Valley. As much we like the nordic women in their roles, we wanted to add some Finnish (black) humor to our hero and also make her a woman who is suffering much (about loosing her husband) but trying not to show it. She cannot ask help that is also her flaw. We wanted this wall to collapse and then see Sofia showing emotions. This gave us the main theme for our series which is *how can you survive if you loose the loved one*. This theme will be in all three seasons.

Karppi is also a love story about Karppi and Nurmi when other nordic crime shows are more about one main character. This aspect of Karppi is liked specially in South Europe and South America. For some reason they see this angle more which is nice because that's what we wanted to say: Two lonely guys sitting in a car at night in a dark cold city, side by side but don't see that the one is next to you. This is something nordic viewers seem to miss for some reason. Maybe it's a little too "romantic" to them?

I don't mind if people compare Sofia Karppi to any of those great characters and wonderful actresses. A crime show is always a compilation of cliches that you just try to vary a little. It's not "art", but it's entertainment for a certain reason. Still you can deal with real issues and themes in the genre but you don't have to invent the genre again. Like you don't have to change everything if you are making a family sitcom. It's allowed to put there a dad, mom and two kids if you want, but you can play with sexes if you feel so - but it's still a family sitcom. In a comedy there has to be something funny and in a crime show there has to be something thrilling. If there is no suspense, it's not a this kind of thrilling crime series any more. Then it can be a British afternoon "who dunnit?" tv-series that is an other genre.

We decided, we try to create a very traditional thrilling crime series, where there are a detective couple who are forced together and try to get alone when chasing the bad guy. (This is fantasy too because "the couple" doesn't exist in real world). We wanted to see them in a traditional buddy movie structure where they slowly become friends. The biggest influence to us actually was not any tv series but David Fincher's Seven that has been also a huge influence to Forbrydelsen, Bro/Bron and The Killing (USA). Seven is the main reason for having similar elements in all these shows. All of them were influenced by that one movie and I think there is nothing bad with that.

5. I have read a lot of reviews on Karppi, both professional and amateurs and they have been very mixed. Some love it and some hate it. Some say it's a new and refreshing take on the Nordic Noir genre and some say it's like the creators watched every other Nordic Noir piece ever and just took all the ingredients and put it in to one new series, coming up with nothing new at all. While Malin Slotte in Hufvudstadsbladet called it boring, BBC's Eddie Mullan says it's a rebirth of the genre.

How would you say that Karppi fits in the Nordic Noir tradition and what makes it stand out from it? When you started, was your goal to make it a perfect Nordic Noir series?

Well, I find it quite odd if some ordinary viewer spends 10 hours watching the whole series just trying to find holes in the story for his/her online "review". If I start watching something and don't like it after the first episode of even sometimes after first minutes, I stop watching and try to find something else. I don't understand what a person is really trying to say, why is he/she so pissed about a tv-program? It's just a fucking show and there are thousands of them every day.

The critics of course are right. It's true that Karppi is a composition of everything we have seen and liked. But it's subconscious. You cannot write a story putting peaces together from other stories, it's just not possible. The more you watch them the more you notice the routines. If there is a couple, there has to be something to make a main conflict between them to make drama possible. If there is a murder, the hero cop needs to solve it. And he/she has to make a hell lot of mistakes before solving it only in the end. Any good drama character has to have flaws, something that haunts him/her but also something good that we can relate to. Same goes with tv cops.

How Karppi fits in the tradition?

I don't know the answer. Like any other crime show?

Our goal was and still is to tell "Helsinki Noir stories". Helsinki in "a character" in the show, who is struggling in the climate change. The weather is changing all the time which we took part of the story telling. We are trying to show Helsinki not as it is but more as a fictional place for our crimeseries. It's hard to tell how it works especially to foreign viewers but we hope it does.

For us Nordic Noir is actually not an issue.

If it helps the audience to find Karppi, it is fine. We feel Karppi is more like an American and British kind of crime show than Nordic because we've have watched them so much. We have only seen Forbrudelsen, Bro/Bron, Beck, Wallander, Nobel, Borgen and Follow the money. Much more we've watch Homeland, Breaking Bad and all that stuff. This is the reason why The Killing (USA) is also one of my favorites. It takes something from Nordic Noir, mixes it with American Sevenstyle movie making and ends up something fresh I like. In Karppi we are trying to mix little Nordic, then more stuff from US and UK and then use those elements with our Finnish way of story telling and observing things. Myself I don't think Karppi as Nordic Noir but if NN the right name to get the show watched, then let it be.