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RED NIGHTS

A FILM BY
LAURENT COURTAUD
& JULIEN CARBON

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& JULIEN CARBON

HONG KONG, CHINA/FRANCE, 2009
FRENCH, CANTONESE, MANDARIN
98 MINUTES

WORLD SALES



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SYNOPSIS

A CANTONESE OPERA TELLS THE TRAGEDY OF THE JADE EXECUTIONER, WHO HAD CREATED A POISON THAT KILLED BY GIVING THE ULTIMATE PLEASURE. THIS LEGEND HAPPENS AGAIN NOWADAYS WHEN A FRENCH WOMAN ESCAPES TO HONG KONG AFTER HAVING KILLED HER LOVER TO TAKE AN ANTIQUE HOLDING THE INFAMOUS POTION. SHE BECOMES THE HAND OF FATE THAT PITS A TAIWANESE GANGSTER AGAINST AN EPICUREAN WOMAN MURDERER WHO SEES HERSELF AS A NEW INCARNATION OF THE JADE EXECUTIONER.

DIRECTORS' NOTE OF INTENT



“ Les Nuits Rouges du Bourreau de Jade ”. “Red Nights Of The Jade Executioner”. The French title reminds of double bills cinemas that screened Italian “Gialli” and Chinese “Wu Xia Pian”. The end of the 60s, when genre and exploitation cinema gave us transgressive and deviant pictures, filled with revenge crazed heroes and luscious femme fatales that fueled the fantasies of little boys. We were those little boys.

Our film however is not a nostalgic homage, nor is it a detached and ironic take on these genre films we grew up with. “Red Nights” was made to be a stylish thriller build upon defining elements and moods we love in this particular kind of films, without being a catalog of quotations.

Even though we play with this heritage, the film is built to be enjoyable as it is, from a first degree of vision down, without needing any knowledge of the references we play with.

The project originated from the idea to transpose a traditional “Giallo” intrigue in a Hong Kong context. Maybe because we discovered them at the same time, we have always felt strong connections between Italian and Hong Kong genre films. The same capacity to provide entertainment and rule their respective markets in the 70s, the same recreation of deviant and revolutionary genres, from a baroque restructuration of the “whodunit” that would give birth to the Italian “Giallo”, to the gory romantic swordsmen fantasies of Hong Kong. Despite these similarities however, and a common taste for exploitation, these cinemas never really connected with each other.

But one just needs to wander at night along the mid-levels lanes on Hong Kong island, a maze of stairs and narrow streets connecting ancient theatres, temples and high tech buildings with silent mansions hidden among the trees up along the peak, to know this is a perfect playground for a maniac killer in trench coat hunting attractive but terrified victims “à la Mario Bava”.

Our intention was not to copy a “Giallo” and all its elements, but put ourselves in the same creative constraints of budget and locations transcended by a strong visual style and delicious as well as memorable perversions. We wanted to revive the twisted plots and the bloody operatic style of these Italian films in this new context. Here we could structure them around Hong-Kongese archetypal characters but with a visual treatment closer to Japanese genre films of the 60s that would integrate actual (Cantonese) opera to formalize some parts of the story.

And above all, we wanted to use Hong Kong like a feminine and mysterious beauty, a luscious background for a confrontation between exceptional and fascinating women.

CARRIE NG

BIOGRAPHIE

One of the most beloved actresses of contemporary Hong Kong cinema, Carrie Ng has become over the years a prominent figure of the territory’s New Wave, appearing in many of the films that redefined genre cinema for the whole world. Her breakthrough happened in 1988, when she was nominated at the Hong Kong Film Awards as Best Supporting Actress for her smashing performance in Ringo Lam’s “City on Fire”, the heist thriller that would later inspire Tarantino’s “Reservoir Dogs”. After that film, she worked with the most talented Chinese directors of the time, including Kirk Wong, Tsui

Hark, Chu Yuan and Taiwanese New Wave master Edward Yang. She gained fame in the West for her flamboyant performances in Category III films (violent B-movies locally rated +18) that took Hong Kong by storm at the end of the eighties, with titles like “Sentenced to Hang” (1989, the first film to get the Category III rating) and “Naked Killer”. In 1993 Carrie won the Taiwan Golden Horse for Best Actress for her performance in Clarence Fok’s “Remains of a Woman” and in 1999 got the Hong Kong Film Award for Supporting Actress for her part in Jacob’s Cheung drama “The Kid”.



SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

CITY ON FIRE BY RINGO LAM	1987
GUNMEN BY KIRK WONG	1988
DIARY OF A BIG MAN BY CHU YUAN	1988
SENTENCED TO HANG BY TAYLOR WONG	1989
BLOOD-STAINED TRADEWIND BY CHU YUAN	1990
DRAGON FROM RUSSIA BY CLARENCE FOK	1990
SEX AND ZEN BY MICHAEL MAK	1991
JUSTICE, MY FOOT! BY JOHNNIE TO	1992
TAKING MANHATTAN BY KIRK WONG	1992
NAKED KILLER BY CLARENCE FOK	1992
DAYS OF TOMORROW BY JEFFREY LAU	1993
REMAINS OF A WOMAN BY CLARENCE FOK	1993
THE LOVERS BY TSUI HARK	1994
C'EST LA VIE MON CHERI BY DEREK YEE	1994
ROCK 'N ROLL COP BY KIRK WONG	1994
MAHJONG BY EDWARD YANG	1996
THE KID BY JACOB CHEUNG	1999
GLASS TEARS BY LAI MIU-SUET	2001
RED NIGHTS BY JULIEN CARBON, LAURENT COURTHAUD	2009

JACK KAO

BIOGRAPHIE

Taiwanese star Jack Kao is famous around the world for his long collaboration with film master Hou Hsiao-hsien that started in 1987 with “Daughter of the Nile”. They would later work together on six more films (so far!), including “A City Of Sadness”, that won the Golden Lion at the Venezia Film Festival in 1989 and “Goodbye, South, Goodbye” in 1996, for which Jack Kao wrote the original story. Known as the most famous actor of Taiwanese New Wave, Jack has also worked with some of the best directors in Hong Kong, including Daniel Lee, Tsui Hark, Johnnie To and Ringo Lam.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

DAUGHTER OF THE NILE BY HOU HSIAO-HSIEN	1987
A CITY OF SADNESS BY HOU HSIAO-HSIEN	1989
ISLAND OF FIRE BY CHU YEN-PING	1990
DUST OF ANGELS BY HSU HSIAO-MING	1992
IN THE HEAT OF SUMMER BY TEDDY CHAN	1994
WHAT PRICE SURVIVAL BY DANIEL LEE	1994
GOOD MEN, GOOD WOMEN BY HOU HSIAO-HSIEN	1995
GOODBYE, SOUTH, GOODBYE BY HOU HSIAO-HSIEN	1996
FULL ALERT BY RINGO LAM	1997
FLOWERS OF SHANGHAI BY HOU HSIAO-HSIEN	1998
MOONLIGHT EXPRESS BY DANIEL LEE	1999
TIME AND TIDE BY TSUI HARK	2000
MILLENNIUM MAMBO BY HOU HSIAO-HSIEN	2001
THROW DOWN BY JOHNNIE TO	2004
SILVER MEDALIST BY NING HAO	2009
SHINJUKU INCIDENT BY DEREK YEE	2009
RED NIGHTS BY JULIEN CARBON, LAURENT COURTIAUD	2009

FREDERIQUE BEL

BIOGRAPHIE

Revealed to French audience in “The Blonde Minute”, a series of comedic shorts that was programmed from 2004 to 2006, Frédérique Bel quickly shifted to cinema, where she appeared in local smash-hit comedies like “Camping” (2006) and “Safari” (2009). Frédérique has

also starred in several films by critics favorite Emmanuel Mouret, including “Change of Address” in 2006. She recently appeared in Luc Besson’s “The Extraordinary Adventures of Adèle Blanc-Sec”.



SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

CAMPING BY FABIEN ONTENIENTE	2006
CHANGE OF ADDRESS BY EMMANUEL MOURET	2006
SHALL WE KISS ? BY EMMANUEL MOURET	2008
VAMPIRE PARTY BY STEPHEN CAFIERO, VINCENT LOBELLE	2008
VILAINE BY JEAN-PATRICK BENES, ALLAN MAUDUIT	2008
SAFARI BY OLIVIER BAROUX	2009
FAIS-MOI PLAISIR BY EMMANUEL MOURET	2009
RED NIGHTS BY JULIEN CARBON, LAURENT COURTIAUD	2009
THE EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES OF ADELE BLANC-SEC BY LUC BESSON	2010

CARBON & COURTIAUD

BIOGRAPHIE

Julien Carbon and Laurent Courtiaud met in 1990 and helped through their work for several movie magazines French audiences know more about modern Asian cinema and especially Hong Kong films. In 1995, while Laurent was teaching screenplay to film adaptation at Louis Lumière National Film School and Julien worked for Jean-Pierre Dionnet with film acquisition they decided to write films, then later become directors.

In 1996 one of their screenplays, “Psionics” (a story about the department of paranormal affairs in mainland China) was bought by Tsui Hark who invited them to come and work with him in Hong Kong at Film Workshop, his company. This screenplay was followed by development work on many projects like a Godzilla for Toho and adaptations of Japanese comic books such as Golgo XIII and Lupin III. Through these years of training along Tsui Hark, Carbon and Courtiaud settled in Hong Kong and explored the many faces of the city.

In 1998 Johnnie To, who was producing stylish cop stories in the tradition of those by John Woo or Ringo Lam hired Laurent and Julien to write a mainstream thriller as a vehicle for the biggest local star, actor singer Andy Lau. The film, “Running Out Of Time” went on to be a major Box office and video hit and gathered a large number of awards, among them best screenplay and the Best Actor award that had until then eluded Andy Lau throughout his long career.

The success of the film allowed Carbon and Courtiaud to work in a different way on their next four screenplays and write “on and from the field”. While working on an original screenplay for Wong Kar-wai, they became part of the “In The Mood For Love” production crew and were sent to Cambodia to prepare for the film’s shooting in Angkor. For Kit Wong’s Black Door, a horror film shot in Canada, they wrote the script and worked on location in Vancouver. Then they flew to meet Tsui Hark in Bangkok and assist him on the set during the filming of “Black Mask II”. After this they were hired by Michelle Yeoh to write “The Touch”, a collaboration that would send them through China and to Tibet where they worked at the foot of the Potala palace. To paraphrase one of their models, Hunter S. Thompson, it was the beginning of “Gonzo Screenwriting”.

Since that time, they have also written an adaptation of the Capcom video game “Onimusha” for Davis Films as well as a transposition of the Tristan and Isolde’s story in Ancient China as a lavish Wu Xia Pian. They were also hired as script and dialogues consultant for “Red Steel”, an adventure game produced by Ubisoft for the Wii Nintendo Console.

In 2007, along with their long time partner Cantonese director Kit Wong, they set up a Hong Kong based production company, Red East Pictures, and a creative label, The Ubiks, and invested in a RED digital camera. They aimed to use their in-

ternational experience and their access to talented Hong Kong crews to develop internationally financed genre films with a unique Asian touch and a worldwide appeal.

“Red Nights” is the first product of this system, a film with a distinct style, shot on digital format with the highest technical requirements with a mixed Hong Kong, Taiwanese, French and Belgian crew cast and financing.

As “Red Nights” begins to appear in festivals worldwide, starting with Toronto International Film Festival, Julien and Laurent are already entering pre-production for their new project “3 Days Away”, a romantic thriller set in Hong Kong with a western cast.





CAST

FRÉDÉRIQUE BEL
CARRIE NG
CAROLE BRANA
STEPHEN WONG
JACK KAO

CREDITS

SCREENPLAY	Julien Carbon & Laurent Courtiaud
CINEMATOGRAPHER	Ng Man-ching
EDITOR	Sébastien Prangère
PRODUCTION DESIGNER	Horace Ma
SOUND	François Sempé
MUSIC	Seppuku Paradigm
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS	Ada Wu & Alexis Dantec
PRODUCER	Kit Wong, Patrick Quinet, Philippe Carcassonne
PRODUCTION	Red East Pictures / The French Connection, 34 rue du Louvre, 75001 Paris, France T. (33-1) 4265-1050 dantec@thefrench.fr

