

BAD GUY

A film by
Kim Ki-Duk

Starring
Cho Je-Hyun, Seo Won
Kim Yoon-Tae, Choi Duk-Moon

Produced by
Lee Seung-Jai

100 mins. Dolby SRD
Korean with English subtitles

Opening February 18, 2005
Cinema Village

U.S. Distribution

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CAST AND CREW

Han-gi: **CHO Je-Hyun**
Sun-hwa: **SEO Won**
Jung-tae: **KIM Yoon-Tae**
Myung-soo: **CHOI Duk-Moon**
Hyun-ja: **CHOI Yoon-Young**
Min-jung: **SHIN Yoo-Jin**
Eun-hye: **KIM Jung-Young**

Director: **Kim Ki-Duk**
Executive Producer: **Kim Seung-Beom**
Line Producer: **Ahn Sang-Hoon**
Producer: **Lee Seung-Jai**
Screenplay: **Kim Ki-Duk**
Assistant Director: **Cho Chang-Ho**
Cinematography: **Hwang Chol-Hyun**
Lighting: **Park Min**
Editing: **Ham Sung-Won**
Art Director: **Kim Sun-Ju**
Set Design: **Oh Sang-Man**
Makeup/Costumes: **Jeon Hong-Ju**
Props: **Chung Min-Young**
Original Music: **Park Ho-Jun**
Sound: **Choi Dae-Sung**
Stills: **Im Hoon**

AWARDS

BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2002

Nominated, Golden Berlin Bear

CATALONIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, SITGES, SPAIN 2002

Winner, Orient Express Award

GRAND BELL AWARDS, SOUTH KOREA 2002

Winner, Grand Bell Award

Winner, Best New Actress, Won Seo

BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2004

Winner, Best Director

Kim Ki-Duk won the best director award for Samaritan Girl at the 54th Berlin Film Festival. It is the first time a South Korean director has received an award at the Berlin Film Festival.

SYNOPSIS

Kim Ki-Duk, the award-winning director of *The Isle* and *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter... and Spring*, has created a lurid fable of obsessive love, using a potent mix of dark romance, surrealist technique, and violent action. With *Bad Guy*, Kim paints a picture of a dark, hauntingly unforgettable neon-lit world, where two unlikely lovers meet on their own lonely street.

While strutting through Downtown Seoul, Han-gi, a local gangland pimp, spots young Sun-hwa, a pretty, middle-class college student, waiting on a park bench. He sits next to her, creating a disparate scene of two classes in soft harmony, until she sneers at his advances and rushes into the arms of her preppy boyfriend. Offended, he grabs her and forcefully kisses her. Sun-hwa demands an apology, and when Han-Gi refuses, he is beaten by a group of soldiers who had witnessed the assault. As a final insult, Sun-hwa spits in his face while he is restrained, humiliating him.

Soon after, Sun-hwa makes the mistake of taking a seemingly forgotten wallet filled with cash. She is apprehended by the owner, and forced to pay a huge sum or be turned into the police. With no money, she signs a contract that results in her being sold into prostitution to repay the debt.

Whisked away to the neon colors of a Seoul brothel, her introduction to street life is harsh and cold, her teacher an iron-hearted woman with only disdain for the untrained Sun-hwa. As she is brought into her drab room for her first encounter, we learn who is really behind her imprisonment. Watching from behind a double mirror in her room, sits Han-gi, the 'Bad Guy.'

As Sun-hwa descends further and further into street life, she takes on the full-fledged traits of a john-luring prostitute. Han-gi's curtain parts to reveal Sun-hwa's harsh education through the mirror, and his tears, creeping through the hardness of his thuggish face, expose his growing feelings for her. Han-gi's language is reduced to facial gestures, his throat marked with the long lash of a scar straight across from ear to ear.

After a failed escape attempt, Sun-hwa is taken to the seashore by Han-gi. Here she is confronted with a series of mysterious torn photographs that seem to suggest a hidden past or even a possible pre-determined future between Han-gi and herself. The film turns even further away from traditional narrative structure as we see Han-gi survive several attempts on his life that would have killed any mortal man. We begin to see the world of *Bad Guy* less as a concrete reality and more as a canvas that has been strung to challenge our concepts of Love and Fate.

Bad Guy marks a striking direction for Kim Ki-Duk and modern Korean cinema. Only Kim Ki-Duk's brilliant eye could transcend the conventions of traditional narrative to expose the virile beauty of pained yet true love, no matter what dark street it may be confined to.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

“Everyone wishes to be born into an honest life, to live and die an honest life. But then there are events that strike without warning, acts by other people that thrust you into a life that you never expected, a life to which you become accustomed against your will. In 2001, in this frenzied city, despite my best efforts to contain it, I discovered, to my surprise, that I too am living as a bad man. Here, there is a bad man who from birth until death has emanated an air of misfortune. A man covered in blackness... who with untarnished eyes drags a woman into misfortune. An act so cruel that it seems like divine will. In this film I wanted to show the destiny behind this event.” - Kim Ki-duk

WRITER/DIRECTOR KIM KI-DUK

Kim Ki-Duk was born in Bonghwa, north of Kyungsang Province, and grew up in a mountainous village. When he turned nine, he moved to Seoul with his parents. He entered an agricultural training school, but he was forced to give up junior high after his older brother was dismissed from school. Going through factories during his adolescent years, he joined the marines when he turned 20.

Kim adapted well to military life, spending five years as a noncommissioned officer. This experience may have served as material for the rich details of brotherhood shared among the men of his films. The relationships between Hong-san and Chung-hae in *Wild Animals*, and Chang-gook and Ji-hum in *Address Unknown* are two examples. This also evolves into the kind of sisterhood shown between the two women in *Birdcage Inn*.

In 1990, with only a plane ticket to his name, he left for Paris. When Kim first arrived in Paris he considered production by manual labor the only worthwhile thing in life, while regarding culture as a mere luxury, but his experiences in the city inspired him with new views. He managed to earn a living by organizing ateliers and selling his paintings.

Upon his return from France, Kim focused on developing a film script for the next six months. He received the good news that two of his scripts had been selected in a contest. Unfamiliar with composition, not to mention spelling, he diligently worked on his scripts while urging himself to focus on matters of immediate concern and not on a distant future that seemed beyond his reach.

Accordingly, Kim's film life began in a manner quite different from the channels other filmmakers took. Free of any institutional education in film, he never served as an assistant director or developed film mania. But this is precisely the reason for the freedom he was able to embrace as a filmmaker. His films can be considered as autobiographical writing with a film camera. This is why Kim describes each and every one of his films as a 'sequence' within his entire body of work.

BIOGRAPHY

- 1960 Born in North Kyongsang Province, Korea
- 1990-2 Studied fine arts in Paris, France
- 1993 Won the award for best screenplay from the Educational Institute of Screenwriting with *A Painter and A Criminal Condemned to Death*
- 1994 Won third prize for best screenplay from the Korean Film Commission with *Double Exposure*
- 1995 Won the award for best screenplay from the Korean Film Commission with *Jaywalking*
- 1996 Made directorial debut with the film *Crocodile*
- 1997 Writer, art director and director for *Wild Animals*
- 1998 Writer, art director and director for *Birdcage Inn*
- 1999 Writer, art director and director for *The Isle*
- 1999 *Address Unknown* selected by the Pusan Film Festival's Pusan Promotion Plan (PPP) for development
- 2000 Writer, art director and director for *Real Fiction*
- 2001 Writer, art director and director for *Address Unknown* and *Bad Guy*

FILMOGRAPHY

- 1996 *Crocodile*
- 1997 *Wild Animals*
- 1998 *Birdcage Inn*
- 2000 *The Isle*
- 2000 *Real Fiction*
- 2001 *Address Unknown*
- 2001 *Bad Guy*
- 2003 *Spring, Summer, Winter, Fall... and Spring*
- 2004 *Samaritan Girl*
- 2005 *3-Iron*

Kim's debut feature, *Crocodile*, represents his life and his experiences, signaling the beginning of a series of films that can be identified as the unique cinema of Kim Ki-Duk. The cruelty that has become his trademark is impregnated with the harsh reality that has inundated his life of some forty-odd years.

In *Crocodile*, Kim attempts to reverse the metaphor of Korea's new capitalist prosperity represented through the Han River by revealing an 'abnormal' world behind all the positive development and order, while also disclosing the endangered lives of the crocodiles caught within a dangerous structure of exploitation. Originally titled *The Two Crocodiles*, *Wild Animals* also presents the most open and embracing city in Europe, Paris, as a place far from the safe 'preserve' for wild animals such as North Korean soldier Hong-san (*Red Mountain*), and untalented painter Chung-hae (*Blue Sea*).

The angry energy overflowing from his earlier works shifts to a careful fantasy seeking co-existence and reconciliation in *Birdcage Inn*. In this film, Kim attempts to draw in sex as a 'part of life' and transform it into a 'medium for understanding each other.'

His fourth feature, *The Isle*, serves as a significant turning point for Kim. Once again the views directed at his film were divided into extremes, yet his entrance into competition at Venice, and the international sales, became an opportunity for Kim to be acknowledged as 'a filmmaker who may not be fully understood but should be accepted as talented.' An Italian journalist commented on *The Isle*, stating that "the distinction between loving or not loving someone has become meaningless."

The characters in his films continue to betray and challenge the audience by shifting between good and evil, beauty and ugliness. Likewise, instead of defining them as good or bad, we as an audience are urged to suspect the boundaries of class, gender, normality and abnormality, order and disorder, the center and the margins themselves. Kim comments that "films do not change reality but rather the conscious state of an individual."

The cruel reality he expresses may be feared by the audience and abhorred by the critics, yet if the energy that inundates his films should be acknowledged as dark and wrongful, it cannot just be a matter of his films. Rather it must be seen as his attempt to address the cruelty of our lives and of the world we live in.

Address Unknown traces our cruelty back to the history of colonialism and the Korean War. He takes us to that reality, into the direction of self-reform. Such modest effort for Kim is a starting point, foreseeing the revolution of the world. Like Antonin Artaud, who at the beginning of the 20th century introduced the theater of cruelty as a means to find a cure for himself and others, Kim, whose films are filled with destruction, rape and murder, uses bloody terror and sadism not as a means to an end but as a sacrifice for returning humanity to a state before being defiled by a cruel reality.

This is the reason why Kim responds to the hateful criticism directed at him by saying, "Have you ever really seen the lives I present through my films? Have you ever truly looked into the desperate messages contained in my work?" He adds that filmmaking to him is "a process to change his own misunderstandings into an understanding." Through film, he has finally begun to experience the beauty and warmth the world has to give. He explains that filmmaking to him is repeating the process of "kidnapping those of the mainstream into my own space, then introducing myself as a human being also asking them to shake my hand so that they will be able to forgive my threatening position."

What Kim Ki-Duk truly longs for is a gentle touch that will soothe his ragged inner world, yet keep his spirit intact. Sincere criticism along with encouragement from the heart is also a necessity. This enigmatic filmmaker is adding to his filmography with incredible energy and at an amazing pace, but it is yet to be seen whether he will continue the diabolic desire and aesthetics that disappeared with Kim Ki-Young. Embracing every possibility, once again he sets sail with his next feature, *Bad Guy*.

AN INTERVIEW WITH KIM KI-DUK

South Korean director, Kim Ki-Duk, is one of a rare kind. Having no educational background in film or the arts, a school dropout and then working in factories and serving in the army, he has become in the last six years one of the most celebrated directors in the international festival circuit. He finished his first feature *Crocodile* in 1996, about a mysterious man who collects the bodies of suicides out of Seoul's Han River. Kim's new and radical perspective on Korean society alienated many viewers but also generated a small but firm group of passionate fans. The focus on marginal people and spaces and a decidedly anti-mainstream aesthetic also marked his later films. Although, all were failures at the Korean box-office, they helped to garner Kim a cult following in Europe, where festivals continued to show his films. *Birdcage Inn* (1998) was the first film to attract international attention, followed by the controversial *The Isle* in 2000. Kim's violent exploration of the 'universal war' between man and woman shocked audiences at the Sundance and Venice film festivals. At the same time it was praised for its unique aesthetic, surreal imagery and sheer poetic beauty. Next came the directorial tour de force, *Real Fiction*, a film shot in 200 minutes by simultaneously running 10 motion picture cameras and two digital video cameras about the real or imagined killing spree of a man. *Address Unknown* (2001) is Kim Ki-Duk's most political film so far which traces the scars left by the Korean war of the 1950s and its contemporary reverberations on a US Army base. The latest work by South Korea's most famous director abroad is also his most successful in Korea. *Bad Guy* again stars Cho Jae-Hyun, who has played in five of Kim's movies and meanwhile has become a TV celebrity. At the 2002 Berlin International Film Festival, *Bad Guy* was part of the competition.

VOLKER HUMMEL: Mr. Kim, you once said that the starting point for all your films is hatred. What kind of rage drives your new movie *Bad Guy*?

KIM KI-DUK: I used the word 'hatred' in a larger context, and I really don't think you should take that word out of context. The kind of hatred I was talking about was not a specific one, directed against one thing or person. Instead it is the kind of feeling that I get as I live my life and see things that I do not understand. That's why I make movies: I see something which I do not understand and then I make a film in order to comprehend it. So maybe it's better to talk about a misunderstanding that I have instead of hatred.

VH: What was it that you tried to find out about the world through *Bad Guy*?

KKD: The question that I was trying to ask is, why is it that though everyone is born the same, with equal rights and equal qualities, we are divided and categorized as we grow older. Why are we judged according to our looks and appearances? Why does it become important if we are good-looking or ugly, if we have money or not? According to these standards, which are imposed after we are born and grown up, we become divided into ranks and social classes that don't get along with each other. I wanted to ask if it's really impossible for these classes to get along and for their worlds to merge.

VH: Did you find an answer to your question?

KKD: My answer is that human beings must respect each other, regardless of class, appearance or money. That would be my answer, but my intention in making the movie was to confront the audience with the question. I'm sure everyone will find their own answer.

VH: As often in your films, the main protagonist of *Bad Guy*, the pimp Han-gi (played by Cho Jae-Hyun), is a silent figure, unable to communicate or express himself. His only language seems to be violence. What is the reason for this silence?

KKD: The reason that in my movies there are people who do not talk is because something deeply wounded them. They had their trust in other human beings destroyed because of promises that were not kept. They were told things like “I love you,” and the person who said it did not really mean it. Because of these disappointments they lost their faith and trust and stopped talking altogether. The violence that they turn to, I prefer to call a kind of body language. I would like to think of it as more of a physical expression rather than just negative violence. The scars and wounds which mark my figures are the signs of experiences which young people go through, in an age when they can not really respond to outside traumas. They cannot protect themselves against physical abuse, for example from their parents, or verbal abuse or when they see their parents fight. Or when you walk in the street and someone beats you up. When those kinds of things happen, you are helpless and you cannot do anything about it. These experiences remain as scars for those people. I personally had experiences like these. For instance, in the past, some kids who were younger than me but physically stronger beat me up. I could not defend myself. Also, in the marines, because some of the soldiers were in a higher rank, they beat me up for no logical reason. In the process of having gone through experiences like this I ask myself, Why does this have to be? These questions stayed with me until I became a director and now I express how I think and feel about these things.

VH: Would you describe your films as autobiographical?

KKD: In the case of *Bad Guy* I first have to say that I really don't like people like Hang-gi, but there was an incident when I met somebody who worked in the red light district. He beat me up for no reason, and at the time I hated that man. In that situation I did not understand him at all, but I wanted to try and do so. Through this movie I tried to probe into the character's psyche to find out what makes him do these things.

VH: What about the rumors that Hollywood wants to do a remake of *Bad Guy* with you as director?

KKD: I would like to make a Hollywood version of *Bad Guy* using American actors like, for example, Brad Pitt. But that is my own personal wish; no one from Hollywood has contacted me yet.

VH: Don't you think your very personal and violent aesthetics would collide with the Hollywood system?

KKD: On the outside it looks as if there is a strict code to which Hollywood movies conform, but I think in reality it is not like that. They do express what they want to express, but not in a direct way. So it looks as if they are inside their boundaries but they are not. That's why I want to work there, to use their method to subvert it. But if it's possible I would also like to make a French version of *Bad Guy*, in a French way.

VH: The only Hollywood movie which I can now think of as concerning itself with similar topics as *Bad Guy*, i.e. men who use their bodies to express themselves, is *Fight Club*. Do you see any similarities?

KKD: Unfortunately I have not seen *Fight Club*. From what I've heard about it, I would think it's closer to my film *Real Fiction*, a movie that was shot in only three hours and 20 minutes. It's about a man who goes out to kill all the people that he hates – but in the end it's shown that his killing spree was only a dream. A little bit like *American Psycho*.

VH: You've described your films as "semi-abstract." What does this mean?

KKD: My concept of semi-abstract movie making is about doing more than just presenting reality. To the world as we see it, I try to add our thoughts and feelings.

VH: Before turning to film you worked as a painter. The Isle especially seems more concerned with surreal imagery and less with narrative. In Bad Guy, the paintings of Egon Schiele play a certain role.

KKD: I spent two years as a painter on the beaches of Montpellier in France. I didn't have any official exhibitions or anything; I just painted by myself and exhibited my work on the streets. I also had some street-exhibitions in Munich, Germany, where I got to know the work of Egon Schiele. The reason I chose his paintings [i.e. their reproductions in a book] in Bad Guy is because at first glance they look vulgar and appear to deal with obscene subjects. But if you actually look at them closely, they are very honest. They show images of people who are wrapped up in desire. Originally I liked Gustav Klimt more, but as I looked more and more at Schiele's work, I moved on to him.

VH: Schiele very often painted whores and 'fallen women,' similar to the female figures in The Isle, Address Unknown and Bad Guy. What fascinates you about women who, in one way or another, are forced to sell their bodies?

KKD: I think of women as being on a higher level than men. They have something to offer that men always need, that they will even pay for. Most people will probably disagree with me, but the way I think about it, the relationship between men and women is itself a kind of prostitution, even if no money does change hands. When trouble occurs between men and women it generates the energy that makes the world go round. It's a universal conflict, but in a way it also reflects cultural differences. In the case of Europe I think that it's been quite a while since things have been stable, there has been little trouble between the sexes. So if you look at European movies, they reflect this status quo, they are more low-key. Asian movies are much more volatile and violent because the conflict between males and females is still very strong.

VH: Has there been as much feminist outrage about Bad Guy as there has been about your previous films?

KKD: Yes, definitely. 90% of the female critics gave a negative review about the movie. But if you look at the audience of the film, 80% of the people who came to see it were women. If you look at all the specialists and critics, they mostly viewed the film in a negative way but the general audience is very receptive to it. They understand it. If you think of my film as Kim Ki-Duk creating the misfortune of the woman it depicts, then that's very dangerous. But if you think of it as the depiction of a problem that already existed in society than you cannot really hate Bad Guy.

VH: In Korea, Bad Guy is your most successful film to date. Do you consider economic success as an artistic failure?

KKD: The success of the film is because of the main actor, Cho Jae-Hyun. He suddenly became famous because he was in a TV series which became very popular in Korea. So it's not all my fault.

Volker Hummel is a freelance journalist from Hamburg, Germany, and writes on literature and film. He is also author of *The Vortex*. ©Volker Hummel, February 2002

NOTES FROM KIM KI-DUK

Kim discussed the controversial cruelty in his earlier films through an interpreter, saying, “Those kinds of cruel acts are metaphors meant to contrast my meaning and question of what is life. In terms of historical development of films it is necessary to have violence in films. In American films violence is too much like a mannerism.

“The biggest problem for Americans understanding Korean movies is Americans love action films. But all action films have the same plot. To save one person, 10 people can die. It’s okay. To create one superhero, American films naturally accept the loss of lots of extra lives. For example, the movie *Speed* with Keanu Reeves. He saves probably 10 people who were passengers on that bus. But the movie doesn’t show how many people have accidents or are killed by this bus. I think Americans, if they understand the weakness of American films, those people can easily understand my films.”

While some considered his new movie a change of pace, Kim obliquely commented, “I believe inside of myself I have both a violent and a peaceful side and in my films I sometimes deliver one side more strongly and other times I deliver the other.” But accusations that his works are misogynistic or violent don’t worry him. “I don’t worry about American criticism because for the most part Americans don’t buy my other films such as *Coast Guard* and *Address Unknown*.

“I don’t think it’s really necessary to divide things into good and bad. It’s better to understand every character as a human being rather than define who’s the good guy and who’s the bad guy. The reason Americans like to have the good side clearly defined is much like their politics. For example, look at the Iraq war. They label Iraq as being bad, then American politicians can easily justify this war.... I understand that there are so many American people against the war that one can’t make sweeping generalizations.”

On North Korea’s weapons of mass destruction Kim said, “I would ask Americans to try and understand a different viewpoint. I would really like to ask, who really has the most weapons? Isn’t it the Americans?”

“One important thing we need to understand: there is no absolute evil. If there even were absolutely evil people, we should try to change them and not destroy them... to kill a person is not the end. Revenge is part of a never-ending cycle.... I believe if we help the North Koreans through their famine, that things will come to a more peaceful ending.

“Of course, there are so many things and circumstances—political and so on—I don’t understand, but I would like to say, just as it says in the Bible, we should learn to love each other.”

Kim also hopes, “International audiences will watch my films and reflect on their past and plan a better, more beautiful life in the future.”

SELECTED CAST FILMOGRAPHY

CHO JAE-HYUN, born: June 30, 1965 Seoul, Korea

Sword in the Moon (2003)	Yun, Gyu-yeob
Venus (2002)	Ishihara
Bad Guy (2001)	Han-gi
Address Unknown (2001)	Dog Eyes
The Isle (2000)	Mang-Chee
Dogme #7 - Interview (2000)	
The Face (1999)	Kim Jae-mok
Spring in My Hometown (1998)	
Wind Echoing in My Being (1997)	Young man
Crocodile (1996)	Crocodile
Wild Animals (1996)	Cheong-hae

A surprising performance in a role without any dialogue. At the Pusan International Film Festival, programmers from Berlin, Cannes, Rotterdam, and Karlovy Vary all commented on Cho Jae-hyun's acting, and they all did so with the same words: "Great actor!" His stunning performance making use of only his eyes and face epitomized perfectly the sort of "bad guy" director Kim Ki-duk set out to depict. As Kim Ki-duk sets on the path to international fame, Cho Jae-hyun is proving a perfect companion, with the skills to recreate the "Kim Ki-duk persona" to perfection. In a national poll conducted by a Korean film magazine, Cho was selected as the nation's most underrated actor.

WON SEO, born: November 26, 1979, South Korea

Bad Guy (2001)	Sun-hwa
The Isle (2000)	

We have seen this actress once before, when she played the young prostitute in Kim Ki-duk's acclaimed film *The Isle*. In *Bad Guy* she was faced with many challenging scenes, from the first customer she receives in the brothel to the episodes where she screams at Han-gi. Throughout the shooting of this film, she kept to herself and did not speak to the other actors in order to prepare herself mentally for the challenge. Following in the steps of Suh Jung, she has transformed into a striking new Kim Ki-duk heroine. Born in 1981, Won Seo is a graduate of Seoul University of the Arts.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Production Year: 2001

Country of Production: Korea

Running time: 100 minutes

Aspect ratio: 1.85 : 1

Color, 35mm