

Luxury Car
(*Jiang Cheng Xia Ri*)

Directed by Wang Chao
Mandarin (Wuhanese), with subtitles in English
China, 2006, 88 minutes

STORY

In this emotionally taut narrative, Li Qi Ming travels from his small village to the city of Wuhan, determined to fulfill his wife's last wish of seeing her son. But instead of finding his son, he discovers his daughter working as a karaoke bar escort, forcing him to come to terms with their long-estranged relationship and the tenuous future of his family. Director Wang Chao uses Li Qi Ming to represent the painful reality of thousands of parents who have lost contact with their children through rural exodus and political upheaval in China.

CAST

<i>Li Qi Ming (The Father)</i>	Wu You Cai
<i>Li Yan Hong (The Daughter)</i>	Tian Yuan
<i>He Ge</i>	Huang He
<i>Old Policeman</i>	Li Yi Qing

CREW

Director	Wang Chao
Writer	Wang Chao
Producers	Sylvain Bursztejn
	Mao Yong Hong
Cinematographer	Liu Yong Hong
Editor	Tao Wen
Sound	Wang Ran
Music	Xiao He

Distributed by The Global Film Initiative

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR: WANG CHAO

Wang Chao was born in Nanjing, China in 1964. In 1994, he received his university diploma from the Beijing Film Academy. After graduating, he worked for 5 years as a factory worker, writing poems in his spare time. From 1995 to 1998, he was the assistant to Chen Kaige, the director of *Farewell My Concubine* (1993) and *The Emperor and the Assassin* (1998). He has also been a cinema critic, specializing in foreign films. His previous feature films include *The Orphan of Anyang* (2001) and *Night and Day* (2004). *Luxury Car* is his third feature film.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"Spring Festival (Chinese new year) is the most important holiday of the year for the Chinese people. Last year, I was unable to go home and spend the holiday with my family like most Chinese people do.

I'm still not married, and last year my girlfriend and I separated. My parents are worried about me. They would like me to have a family soon, but I haven't always lived up to their expectations. My parents live in Nanking, a charming city in Southern China. I left fifteen years ago, to study and then to make films in Peking. Up until 2001, before I shot *The Orphan of Anyang*, my work in Peking took up all my time. I only went home twice in ten years. I was also uncomfortable about seeing my parents before I'd succeeded at something. I came home in spring of 2001, and curiously this was directly related to the fact that *The Orphan of Anyang* had been selected for the Directors' Fortnight in Cannes. According to Chinese law, I had to return to my place of birth to apply for a passport. When I saw my parents that year, I realized just how much they had aged since I'd been gone. My parents have great hopes for me, as all Chinese parents do for their children. But I don't pay enough attention to them.

In Spring of 2002, I couldn't go to Nanking because I was in France for the release of *The Orphan of Anyang*. It was the first time I'd spent Chinese New Year in Paris. I thought of my two old parents back in Nanking, so far away from me. I knew they were thinking a great deal about me too. They missed me, though they took solace in the fact that I was in Paris for the screening of my film. They'd waited for this moment for so many years.

But I finally made it back to Nanking in Spring of 2003 and was able to spend time with my parents after eight years of being apart.

Last year, I was editing *Night and Day* in Peking. Before New Year, I called my parents because I wanted to spend three days with them to celebrate the holiday. But they told me my work came first, and I shouldn't fall behind to come see them. A few phone calls would be enough.

Over the following months, I was totally wrapped up in post-production work for *Night and Day*. Then, when I was back in China waiting to hear from the Cannes Film Festival, I forgot all about my parents. In late April, when I learned the film would not be going to Cannes, I became very depressed and thought even less about them.

In mid-May, my sister called me from Nanking with the news that my mother was sick, she had cancer. This news greatly worried me. My sister told me my mother had had an operation. Her

(more)

condition was stable and she was convalescing. I was by no means reassured. I interrogated my sister, I did not understand why I hadn't been informed about my mother's illness before the operation. My sister told me it was my parents' decision to keep it from me, to wait until the operation was over and my mother was out of danger. They were afraid that if I learned the news, I'd be so worried I would neglect my work.

This gave me a shock that was both subtle and violent. Fifteen years ago I left Nanking, but what meaning could my work possibly have in comparison to my mother's illness? I had created and filmed *The Orphan of Anyang*, which was widely regarded as a work filled with compassion for the suffering of the Chinese people. But, after my mother's operation, I realized that I had actually never shown an ounce of concern for the people I cared about most. I began to doubt my supposed humanity. I'm the unworthy son of wonderful parents. They're like parents all over the world, they have high hopes for their children, but at the same time, they do their best to conceal their expectations, their worries, their deterioration and their death. *The Orphan of Anyang* couldn't even offer them any consolation as it was made without authorization, and so it couldn't be seen in China. Since I left Chen Kaige's film company to make my own films, I've had no stable job or address. I often think that if I were to disappear one day, my parents would have no idea how to find me. Even if they came to Peking, they'd be completely lost.

In China, since 1949, through rural exodus and political upheavals like the 1989 events in Tiananmen Square, tens of thousands of families have lost track of their children.

My precarious lifestyle, the exploding cities, my lack of closeness with my parents – these things got me thinking about all the missing young people out there, and the parents who have lost their children, and I decided to make *Luxury Car*. One day, while I was working on my screenplay alone in a house I was renting in Peking, I began to cry.

This film tells the story of a father who leaves the mountainous region where he lives and sets out for the big city in the hopes of tracking down his lost son. His wife, who has terminal cancer, wants to see her son again and asks her husband to find him. In the city, the father joins his daughter, who has become a prostitute, though he doesn't know it. The two of them decide to bring the lost boy home.

This year, I went home to Nanking in the spring. I saw my mother. She's no longer simply an old woman, but a sick woman. She'd lost her hair to chemotherapy, so she found a wool bonnet that she had knitted for her own mother when she was little. The bonnet looks very nice on her. "Mom, that bonnet is really pretty on you", I told her. She laughed. She was so innocent. I lowered my head so she couldn't see my tears.

From the bottom of my heart, I dedicate this film to all the Chinese parents who have lost a child, and to the ghosts of the lost youngsters.

And I dedicate it most of all to my father and my mother."

ABOUT THE FILM: LUXURY CAR

REVIEWS

“Mainland Chinese helmer Wang Chao finally attains an almost perfect balance between style and content in "Luxury Car," a tightly written and beautifully played drama...” -*Derek Elley, Variety*

“...the performances are subtle and smart, especially Wu as the cagey father. As the wayward daughter, Chinese pop star Tian is both tender and seductive.” -*Duane Byrge, The Hollywood Reporter*

“By any relevant measure—plot, casting, performance, pace—the film is not just noteworthy by the standards of one festival: it is an outstanding film, perhaps a great film, one that will be watched many years from now.” -*Edinburgh International Film Festival*

FESTIVALS & AWARDS

2007

CINE NOVO FILM FESTIVAL (Belgium)
 RIO DE JANEIRO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (Brazil)
 HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (China)
 COPENHAGEN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (Denmark)
 LA FOA FILM FESTIVAL (France)
 CINEMANILA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (Philippines)
 BUCHAREST ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL (Romania)
 GRANADA FILM FESTIVAL CINES DEL SUR (Spain)
 INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF LAS PALMAS DE GRAN CANARIA (Spain)
 BANGKOK INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (Thailand)
 ESKISEHIR INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (Turkey)
 INTERNATIONAL ISTANBUL FILM FESTIVAL (Turkey)

2006

Prix Un Certain Regard, CANNES FILM FESTIVAL (France)
 MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (Australia)
 BRUSSELS L'AGE D'OR PRIZE / CINEDÉCOUVERTES (Belgium)
 FILMFEST HAMBURG (Germany)
 ATHENS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (Greece)
 INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF KERALA (India)
 ROME ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL (Italy)
 RABAT FRENCH INSTITUTE (Morocco)
 WARSAW INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (Poland)
 VLADIVOSTOK INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (Russia)
 INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL BRATISLAVA (Slovakia)
 PUSAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (South Korea)
 SOTCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (Sweden)
 EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (UK)
 AFI FEST (USA)

U.S. DISTRIBUTOR: THE GLOBAL FILM INITIATIVE

Luxury Car is part the Global Lens film series and can be seen through public screenings of Global Lens 2008 at participating venues across the United States and Canada. After 2008, it is available in home video and for educational purchase, along with all films in the series, through First Run Features and First Run/Icarus Films.

The Global Film Initiative is a U.S.-based, 501(c)3 organization specializing in the acquisition, distribution and support of independent film from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Founded in 2002 with the mission of promoting cross-cultural understanding through cinema, each year the Initiative awards numerous grants to deserving filmmakers from around the world, and supports a touring film series entitled Global Lens. For more information about the Global Lens film series or Global Film Initiative programs, please use the following links:

Global Lens 2008	www.globalfilm.org/calendar.php
First Run Features (general distribution)	www.firstrunfeatures.com/glc1.html
First Run/Icarus Films (educational distribution)	www.frif.com
Global Film Initiative programs	www.globalfilm.org/programs.htm

Contact:

The Global Film Initiative
 444 De Haro Street, Suite 124
 San Francisco, CA 94107
 Phone: (415) 934-9500
 Fax: (415) 934-9501
gfi-info@globalfilm.org
www.globalfilm.org