



IRON CROWS

I'm not scared.

I could die today, tomorrow or a day later.

*"...Perhaps the most important achievement of this powerful film is the courage, dignity and humility of our heroes trapped in a seemingly endless cycle of crushing poverty. **This film is a tour de force!**" – IDFA 2009 Jury's comment*

Short synopsis

Everyday some 20,000 people in Chittagong, a small port city of southern Bangladesh risk their lives for 2 dollars. They dismantle retired old ships from all over the world. An average of 20 workers dies in Chittagong every year. Despite the harsh working environment full of contaminants and toxic gases, the ships are gifts from God. A twenty one year old Belal who left home ten years ago, a skilled worker Rufik who has devoted all his thirty two years In Chittagong and a twelve year young child laborer Ekramul tell a heart-breaking story of their lives with breathtaking views of the ship breaking yards.



Full synopsis

PHP is the best conditioned ship breaking site in Chittagong, a home to the world renowned ship breaking industry. However, the workers risk their lives while wrestling with thousands tons of iron pieces at the yards full of asbestos and toxic gases. There is always a chance for explosion while burning the waste oils trapped in stacks of iron. The workers could easily get crushed and killed while cutting or moving iron plates.

A forty nine year old Rufik is the head of a six member family. His income as a skilled gas cutter is 50 dollars a month. Although he spends his off days in woods 1.5 hours walk away gathering firewood, his income is never enough to pay for his daughter's wedding. A baby daughter is born blind from a twenty one year old Belal while working with his younger brother in Chittagong. Belal almost lost his life by a heavy iron piece falling toward him. However, he can't afford to go home to see his new born baby.

Most workers are from the north, the poorest part of Bangladesh that suffers from the chronic floods and cyclones. Those who collect waste oils and toxic asbestos are twelve year young laborers. The young boys also pull heavy metal wires. Despite the poor meals without much nutrition they eat at the dirty dormitory, the boys are happy for feeding their hungry stomachs. Nothing from a dismantled old ship is a waste. A rusty piece

of iron and even waste oils mixed with mud are all recycled and sold through auctions. A half of the world retired ships are dismantled in Chittagong. Chittagong's ship breaking industry provides 85% of the domestic needs of iron in Bangladesh where no iron is produced in. One day a new retired ship comes to PHP. This life risking ship breaking job is a hope for the workers and their families.



Reviews

"The powerful visual images of this film are extraordinary. It immerse the audience in the lives of what Frantz Fanon called 'The Wretched of the Earth'. This film accomplishes something very rare and unique. In vivid and harsh reality the audience can almost smell the burning of oil, the fluidity of dirty mud. The constant and very real danger and fear of the workers makes you cringe. Against this endless and devastating background the film narrates the story of our heroes, and heroes they are, pushed from the urgency of extreme poverty to continuously risk their lives to support their famalies on less than 2 UDS a day. Perhaps the most important achievement of this powerful film is the courage, dignity and humilty of our heroes trapped in a seemingly endless cycle of crushing poverty. This film is a tour de force!" -IDFA 2009 Jury's comment-

"Bong-Nam Park made a portrait of the workers of the world's largest ship demolition factory in Bangladesh. Just like in Last Train Home, the distance between work and native village propels the narrative forward: parents and children are living apart for economical reasons, what leads to heart-breaking scenes. There is a difference in style: Director Park eschew effects to build up the emotions and when tears are flowing the camera zooms in." -Volkskrant-

Director's biography



Bong-Nam Park is a producer/director Born in 1966 and majored Korean history at Seoul National University. Over the last 15 years as an independent filmmaker, Park has directed and produced around 30 documentaries for the audiences of Korean broadcasters including KBS and EBS. Despite the diversity of the subjects he has chosen for his filmmaking, Park's interest has always been focused on Asia and the people of Asia. Having won the best mid-length award at IDFA, the largest documentary film festival with his international debut ***Iron Crows***, Park is now working on his next project ***Hungry River***, a sequel to Iron Crows in which he will record the young children of Kurigram for 3 years until they become old enough to start working at the ship breaking yards. Besides being a filmmaker, he is also actively involved in activities to promote and support Korea's documentary scene. Park has led the education department of Korea Independent Producer's Association since 2007.

Selected filmography (All documentaries)

- Feature documentary *Iron Crows* (2009)
- TV series Insight Asia, KBS: 2 episodes from *A human land* (2009)
- HD TV series, EBS: *Islamic culture* - 13 episodes (2005)
- KBS special documentary series: *The slow foods* (2003)
- KBS special documentary series: *The world of clay houses* (2003)
- KBS special documentary series: *Asian road, a lost trade route* (2002)

Awards

- Award for the best Mid-length documentary, 2009, IDFA (International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam) for *Iron Crows*
- The programme of the year, 2005, KBI (Korea Broadcasting Institute) for HD TV series *Islamic culture*, EBS
- The producer of the year, 2004 KIPA (Korea Independent Producer's Association) for *Islamic culture*, EBS
- The programme of the year, 2003, KIPA (Korea Independent Producer's Association) for *The slow foods*, KBS

Screenings

- Film Forum New York 2010 (scheduled)
- Zagreb Dox 2010, Main competition (selected)
- SXSW 2010, South by Global (selected)
- One World International Film Festival 2010 (selected)
- Planete Doc Riview Film Festival 2010, Mid-length competition (selected)
- Lemosos Documentary Film Festival 2010 (selected)
- International Documentary Festival Amsterdam 2009, Mid-length competition (screened)

Credits

Cast

Gas cutters: Rufik, Belal, Akdal, Shahajahin
Wire pullers: Yunus, Ekramul, Saiful, Mojib, Ronju
Foremen: Forahad, Sultan, Noir Husein, Didar, Alam

Production Staffs

Executive Producer: Kyung-Ran Kang (FNS)
Producer /Marketing: Min-Chul Kim
Director: Bong-Nam Park
Screenplay: Ye-Won Moon, Bong-Nam Park
Cinematographers: Yeon-Taek Seo, Syed Munna
Assistant camera: Jahanghir
Sound recording: Jae-Seon Lee
Editor: Bong-Nam Park
Music: Coral Sand (Yong-Jin Jung, Jong-Yun We),
Jae-Kyoung Song
Sound mixing: Jee-Won Park
Still camera: Saiful Hug Omi
Photo editor: Soo-Jeong Song
Color grading: Heon-Soo Kim
Translation: Mahbub (Bengali-Korean),
Lai Tjong Chan (English-Korean),
Lizette Potgieter (Proofread)
Subtitle editor: Min-Chul Kim
Narration: Bong-Nam Park

Production details

Original title: Iron Crows
Genre: Feature documentary
Running Time: 59'50" / 75'00" (Available by March 2010)
Language: Bengali with English subtitles
Country of production: South Korea
Year of production: 2009
Shooting format: HDCAM 1080i (Sony HD 750)/ Partly HDV (Cannon XHA1)
Aspect ratio: 16:9
Screening format available: HDCAM / BETA PAL / BETA NTSC
Color: Color
Sound: Stereo (59'50" TV version) / 5.1 Ch. (75'00" theatrical version)
Produced by FNS (Frontline News Service)
World Sales: Cat&Docs, CreativeEAST

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