



NEW RELEASES

Broker

Hirokazu Koreeda's Cannes-winning feature, his first to be shot in Korea, focuses on the semi-illicit world of adoption markets. So-young leaves her recently born child at a church where Dong-soo works. Once an orphan, he now takes some of the abandoned infants and, with the help of black marketeer Sang-hyun, sells them at a high price to parents desperate for a child of their own. But when So-young regrets her decision and returns to the church, her discovery of what is to happen to her child and the money involved leads her to join in the enterprise. Little do the three know that their movements are being monitored by two cops.

Like Koreeda's 2018 Palme d'Or winner *Shoplifters*, *Broker* steers clear of pat moral judgements in favour of a deeper understanding of his characters' motivations, which prove far more complex than they initially seem. Cannes Best Actor winner Song Kang-ho is riveting as Sang-hyun, while fellow *Parasite* alumnus, cinematographer Hong Kyung-pyo, brings a crispness to the images.

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Hirokazu Koreeda on 'Broker'

While preparing *Broker*, I was able to hear their stories. They had grown up in orphanages, their parents having given up raising them for various reasons. There were some kids among them who asked themselves, 'Was it really a good thing for me to be born?', and couldn't give any definite answer to this most fundamental question about life.

Hearing that, there was nothing more I could say. What is the use of repeating easy words of solace? Could I really declare to them that there is no one on Earth who didn't deserve to be born?

For the sake of these kids, who must stubbornly live their lives fighting against the inner and outer voices that say you should never have been born, what kind of film can I offer? In the making of this work, that question always stood at the centre.

Broker is a film in which I attempted to look directly at life, and stepped into the characters in order to speak directly with my own voice. It's a film that resembles a prayer, or a fervent wish.

What was the starting point for Broker?

From the time I was shooting *Like Father, Like Son*, I began developing a strong interest in matters such as 'baby hatch' and 'adoption.' I think my interest was strengthened by the fact that my child was born around that time. In Japan, I became familiar with the topic of 'baby hatch' through a book and later even had an opportunity to take part in an in-depth programme covering this subject. During my own research I learned that a similar thing called 'baby box' existed in Korea, and that it was more frequently used and considered a topic of social discussion compared to Japan. Around that time I was talking to Song Kang-ho, Gang Dong-weon, and Doona Bae on whether we should get together for a film in Korea. With them, I thought it would be possible to turn this motif that I have strong interest in into a film. So in the fall of 2016, I wrote a 4-5 page simple plot

synopsis titled *Cradle* with these three cast in my mind. That's how I began with *Broker*.

What kind of story did you hope to tell through Broker?

During my scriptwriting and research in Korea, I was able to hear the stories of the children who had been left in a baby box. Watching the children desperately questioning themselves, 'Was it really a good thing for me to be born?', I was filled with the urge to make a film that could answer that question. From the beginning, I thought it would be a story of a broker selling children entrusted in a baby box but at the same time, also a story of how two women 'become mothers' through their relationship with the baby. With this topic, I did not want to come to an ending where the abandoned children regret being born, or the mother regretting having the child. I wanted the film to be able to directly deliver the message, 'It was good to be born.' In that sense, *Broker* is a film about 'life'.

What are the reasons behind your decision to cast the actors Song Kang-ho, Gang Dong-weon, Doona Bae, Lee Ji-eun, and Lee Joo-young?

First of all, for the character of Sang-hyun I had Song Kang-ho in my mind from when I first began structuring the screenplay. I thought this character, both materialistic looking but at the same time humane, could highlight the two faces of actor Song Kang-ho in an attractive way. In the case of Gang Dong-weon, I had been much impressed by the film *Secret Reunion*. I particularly remember his eyes in that film, which were sharp but also seemed to me somewhat lonely. I also wanted to shoot the feeling of sadness carried on his wide back. As for Doona Bae, I forwarded the initial 4-5 page plot summary to her. Then later when she happened to be in Japan, we discussed how we would love to turn this story into a film. Doona Bae is truly a genius at filling in the tiny gaps that cannot be covered by acting alone. For example, the subtly expressed gap in a single line of dialogue, or between two lines. I fell completely for Lee Ji-eun's nuanced acting in the drama *My Mister*. It was amazing the way she maintained such restrained acting throughout the entire length of the TV drama, and more than anything her slightly husky voice was very attractive. To cast the character of Detective Lee, I watched a huge number of talented actors in their twenties. Among those, I saw actress Lee Joo-young in the drama *Itaewon Class* and the film *A Quiet Dream*. I thought her upright yet cheerful image would be the perfect match for Detective Lee.

During the shoot, were there any problems communicating with the actors and crew in a different language?

There can be trouble communicating even among people who speak the same language. Even when I work in Japan, that often happens. The important thing is to think about how you can overcome it. In that sense, to be in the same space and to see that this cut came out well, or that acting came out really well, to overcome language in this way was an extremely pleasant experience.

What kind of film do you hope Broker becomes to its audience?

I think it's entirely up to the audience how they view this film. However I can say with assurance that every actor who appears in this film, including the baby, was truly remarkable. It's a film where you can feel joy from the performances. I hope that people watching the film enjoy that aspect of it as much as possible.

Production notes

BROKER

Directed by: Hirokazu Koreeda
©: Zip Cinema, Ltd CJ ENM Co.
Production Company: Zip Cinema
Presented by: Ltd CJ ENM Co.
Executive Producer: Miky Lee
Co-executive Producer: Kang Ho-sung
Produced by: Lee Eu-gene
Co-producers: Song Dae-chan, Miyuki Fukuma, Yoon Hye-joon
Financing Executive: Si Yeon-jae
Screenplay by: Hirokazu Koreeda
Director of Photography: Hong Kyung-pyo
Gaffer: Park Cheong-woo
Visual Effects Supervisor: Baek Sang-hoon
Special Effects by: Jung Do-ahn
Edited by: Hirokazu Koreeda
Production Designer: Lee Mok-won
Costume Designer: Choi Se-yeon
Make-up & Hair Designer: Kim Seo-young
Special Make-up Effects: Kwak Tae-yong
Music by: Jung Jae-il
Sound Supervisor: Choi Tae-young
Production Sound Mixer: Eun Hee-soo

Cast

Song Kang-ho (*Sang-hyun*)
Gang Dong-weon (*Dong-soo*)
Doona Bae (*Su-jin*)
Lee Ji-eun (*So-young*)
Lee Joo-young (*Detective Lee*)
Lim Seung-soo (*Hae-jin*)
Song Sae-byeok (*director of orphanage*)
Kim Sun-young (*wife of orphanage director*)
Lee Mu-saeng (*Sun-ho*)
Lee Dong-hwi (*Mr Song*)
Kim Sae-byuk (*Mrs Song*)
Baek Hyun-jin (*Detective Choi*)
Jung Ah-young (*Jung-ae*)
Oh Hee-joon (*Choi's assistant*)
Ryoo Kyung-soo (*Tae-ho*)
Park Kang-sub (*Si-woo*)
Park Hae-joon (*Mr Yoon*)
Jung Ji-woo (*Mrs Yoon*)
Kang Gil-woo (*Mr Lim*)
Kim Ye-eun (*Mrs Lim*)
Choi Hee-jin (*Mi-sook*)
Lee Ye-seo (*Ye-seo*)

South Korea 2022
129 mins

A Picturehouse Entertainment release

NEW RELEASES

Creature

Continues from Fri 24 Feb

Broker

Continues from Fri 24 Feb

Close

From Fri 3 Mar

IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

Preview: Suzume + Q&A with Makoto Shinkai

Wed 1 Mar 18:00

Doctor Who: The Sea Devils + Q&A with Katy Manning

Sat 4 Mar 12:00

Glasgow Film Festival Preview: How to Blow Up a Pipeline

Sun 5 Mar 19:50

TV Preview: Inside No. 9 + Q&A with Steve Pemberton, Reece Shearsmith and Adam Tandy

Mon 6 Mar 18:15

WOW Festival Presents Prima Facie + panel discussion

Wed 8 Mar 18:15

Preview: Winners + Q&A with director Hassan Nazer

Thu 9 Mar 18:15

Mark Kermode Live in 3D at the BFI

Mon 13 Mar 18:30

Preview: Rye Lane + Q&A with director Raine Allen-Miller

Monday 13 March 20:45

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