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Sons of the Neon Night

(Feng Lin Huo Shan)

Press Kit

Introduction

Sons of the Neon Night presents a visually captivating and thematically complex thriller, set against the backdrop of a snowbound, neon-lit dystopian Hong Kong. Merging crime, loyalty, and familial drama with the strategic insights of Sun Tzu's "The Art of War," this film expands the conventional boundaries of the crime genre. Under the direction of visionary filmmaker Juno Mak, it delves into the intricate interplay of justice and corruption, medicine and drugs, as well as light and darkness, in a city teetering on the brink of collapse.

LOG LINE

In a snowbound, dystopian Hong Kong, an heir to a pharmaceutical company strives to dismantle his family's criminal legacy after his patriarch's assassination triggers chaos, betrayal, and ruthless power struggles in the underworld.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

In a snow-blanketed Hong Kong that echoes the dystopian qualities of Gotham City, a turbulent chain of events begins. A violent shootout erupts between police and criminals, igniting chaos and casualties. A hospital, overwhelmed with the wounded, becomes the target of a deranged assailant who detonates a human bomb, leading to further devastation. Among the dead is a powerful businessman whose roots trace back to the opium trade. Although his family's empire spans various industries, he remains the hidden leader of a notorious drug cartel, secretly detained in the very hospital where the chaos unfolds. As the seemingly coincidental disaster unfolds, questions arise about a deeper, sinister web of intrigue lurking beneath the surface. With law enforcement in disarray and rival factions vying for dominance, the youngest son becomes embroiled in a conflict where he is determined to dismantle his family's criminal legacy. However, his mission is jeopardized by his fugitive older brother and the ruthless lieutenants loyal to their deceased father, each maneuvering to seize control. *Sons of the Neon Night* weaves a riveting tale of ambition and familial strife where loyalty, betrayal, and power collide in an ultimate battle for legacy.

LONG SYNOPSIS

This is not the Hong Kong we recognize—it is a snow-clad, polluted metropolis on the brink of collapse that echoes the dystopian qualities of Gotham City. The oppressive atmosphere is suffocating, marred by pollution and nuclear waste. Corruption permeates every aspect of society, from the fragmented police force to the teetering healthcare system and the drug shortages that leave citizens in dire straits. Despite the dazzling glow of neon lights, they merely cast an oppressive shadow, revealing the harsh realities of life in this broken city.

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Amidst this turmoil, the chairman's youngest son is propelled into the spotlight. Unlike his predecessors, he is eager to cleanse his family name of its criminal affiliations. Yet his path to leadership is fraught with obstacles—his fugitive elder brother and the deceased patriarch's loyal followers stand in his way. Bearing the weight of his legacy, he must navigate this treacherous landscape to emerge triumphant. The film's evocative Chinese title, "Feng Lin Huo Shan" ("Wind, Forest, Fire, Mountain"), draws inspiration from Sun Tzu's timeless military treatise, "The Art of War." In this evocative narrative, Hong Kong's neon-lit streets become a battleground where kinship and ambition collide, echoing the complex strategies of warfare.

This harrowing tale explores the themes of power, legacy, and moral decay, as the characters navigate a treacherous world where alliances are fleeting and trust is a scarce commodity. Will the young heir rise to the occasion, or will the tragic events lead to his family's ultimate downfall? Set against the backdrop of a city at war with itself, this gripping drama delves into the dark underbelly of ambition and the consequences of a life rooted in crime.

A REIMAGINED HONG KONG

This reinterpretation of Hong Kong unveils a stark contrast to the vibrant city we recognize—it emerges as a snow-covered, polluted metropolis teetering on the edge of collapse. In this chilling landscape, law enforcement is rendered ineffective, institutions crumble, and an unsettling glow from neon lights permeates the city's decay. The film's bleak, wintry backdrop powerfully accentuates its exploration of moral ambiguity, isolation, and the harsh realities of the drug underworld. By reimagining Hong Kong as a realm of both physical and emotional chill, the film elevates the crime thriller genre, offering a visually striking and thought-provoking experience.

UNCONVENTIONAL CHARACTERS

The film challenges crime genre conventions through its morally ambiguous characters:

- A drug lord's heir striving for a "drug-free" future.
- An anti-drug officer torn between duty and familial loyalty.
- A hitman who accepts death as his inevitable destiny.
- A disillusioned detective questioning the meaning of justice.
- A psychiatrist turned pharmacist who is also the soulmate and loyal supporter of the heir.

THE DUALITY OF "DRUG" AND "MEDICINE"

This film delves into the intricate distinction between addiction to illegal substances and the use of legitimate medicine, drawing parallels to Hong Kong's pre-colonial period when opium was considered a legal "foreign medicine." As the issue of addiction weaves its way through society, the tension between two brothers—one advocating for recognized pharmaceuticals and the other defending the drug trade—challenges audiences to grapple with complex questions of morality, legality, and power.

TITLE SIGNIFICANCE

The Chinese title *風林火山* (*Feng Lin Huo Shan*) derives from Sun Tzu's "The Art of War," symbolizing the relentless strategies employed by its characters. The English title, *Sons of the Neon Night*, reflects a generation raised beneath the glow of neon lights but entrapped in the depths of the underworld—inviting contemplation on the philosophical question: Can light exist without darkness?

Production Crew Introductions

SION MICHEL'S CINEMATOGRAPHY

Having served as a second-unit cinematographer on *Memoirs of a Geisha* (2005), Sion Michel is also known for his work on *The Old Way* (2023), *Heartfall Arises* (2016), and *The Unbearable Lightness of Inspector Fan* (2015). Michel brings a refined sensibility to the screen, seamlessly blending realism with visual poetry.

CHANG SUK PING WILLIAM'S EDITING

Chang Suk Ping William is a renowned Hong Kong film editor, his editing gives the film a lyrical rhythm, blurring the boundaries between time and emotion. Known for his work on *In the Mood for Love* (2000), *2046* (2004) and *The Grandmaster* (2013) and *The Last Dance* (2024).

NATE CONNELLY'MUSIC

British composer Nate Connally, who began his collaboration with director Juno Mak on his debut feature *Rigor Mortis* (2013), returns to craft an original score that is both atmospheric and emotionally charged. Seamlessly blending ambient textures with haunting electronic undertones, Connally's music deepens the film's psychological landscape and reinforces its fragile, morally ambiguous world. Connally's continued partnership with Mak highlights a shared artistic vision, with his evocative compositions once again playing a crucial role in shaping the film's emotional resonance.

SAKAMOTO RYUICHI'S THEME SONG

The film's theme song was created by Sakamoto Ryuichi before his passing. It enriches the film's narrative with its lyrical and melancholic essence. This poignant musical score acts as a counterpoint to the film's bleak, cold, and morally ambiguous atmosphere, deepening the emotional resonance of the story. Sakamoto's ability to evoke a sense of longing and introspection through his composition enhances the viewer's experience, inviting them to reflect on the complex themes presented throughout the film. His artistic legacy lives on in this piece, which underscores the film's exploration of humanity's darker corners.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In *Sons of the Neon Night*, characters move beyond familiar stereotypes. There are no lonely detectives or ruthless villains, instead, they're shaped by distinct moral compasses and intricate, layered relationships within a sophisticated, complex world. Their bonds remain intentionally ambiguous, no one knows who truly supports whom, or if betrayal lurks beneath the surface. The film avoids neat resolutions, emphasizing instead the ripple effects of seemingly minor actions within a chaotic, crime-ridden environment. Characters navigate a shifting reality where good and evil blur together, encouraging audiences to deeply consider individual motivations and their consequences.

The film's setting amplifies this ambiguity; *Sons of the Neon Night* exists in perpetual cold and snow, intentionally reflecting how environment profoundly influences behavior. Unlike hotter climates, which might incite aggression, the constant cold drives characters toward calm and calculated responses, discouraging impulsive violence. Conflict manifests subtly through silence, meaningful pauses, and quiet interactions rather than explosive confrontations. Characters remain casually composed even during extreme scenarios—like engaging in relaxed banter while planting a bomb—highlighting how routine danger has become their everyday reality. Like Icelanders unfazed by the Northern Lights, these characters are accustomed to their harsh surroundings - snowfall isn't wondrous, it's just another day in a world where survival demands detachment.

My film represents the butterfly effect where one decision can disrupt an entire city's equilibrium. This world is evolving from darkness to light, from drugs to medicine, yet who defines what is just? There are no clear heroes or villains - only choices and consequences. In the end, it's up to the audience to discern who the true mastermind is.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

JUNO MAK

Visionary Filmmaker & Multidisciplinary Artist

Hong Kong-born Juno Mak is a singular creative force—acclaimed director, actor, producer, and musician—whose bold artistry transcends mediums. Emerging as a groundbreaking pop artist in 2002, Mak quickly expanded into cinema, delivering standout performances in *Dream Home* (2010) and *Revenge: A Love Story* (2010), the latter earning him the Best Actor Award at the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival.

His directorial debut, *Rigor Mortis* (2013), a modern reimagining of the *Mr. Vampire* legacy, premiered to global acclaim, winning the FIPRESCI Award at Golden Horse in Taiwan and the Jury Award at Gerardmer Film Festival in France, and earning nine nominations at the Hong Kong Film Awards. The film solidified Mak as a visionary, earning him the Yahoo! Buzz Award for Best Director.

ABOUT THE CAST

TAKESHI KANESHIRO (as Moreton Li)

Takeshi Kaneshiro is a celebrated Taiwanese-Japanese actor and singer, renowned for his versatility and international appeal. Rising to fame in the early 1990s as a pop idol, he quickly transitioned to film, earning critical acclaim for roles in iconic movies such as *Chungking Express* (1994), *House of Flying Daggers* (2004), and *Red Cliff* (2008).

TONY LEUNG KA FAI (as Ti Man Kit)

A 4-time Hong Kong Film Award winner for Best Actor, Leung gained international recognition through roles in films like Jean-Jacques Annaud's *The Lover* (1992) and Johnnie To's Cannes-nominated *Election* (2005). Leung has appeared in over 100 films, having worked with renowned directors such as Wong Kar Wai and Tsui Hark.

SEAN LAU (as Wong Chi Tat)

18-time nominee and 4-time winner at the Hong Kong Film Awards, Lau is best known for his award-winning performances in *C'est la vie, mon cheri* (1993), *Mad Detective* (2007), the *Overheard* film series (2009–2014), and *Life Without Principle* (2011). His subtle but emotive performance in *Papa* (2024) won him Best Actor again at the Hong Kong Film Awards 2025.

LOUIS KOO (as Ching Man Sing)

Koo has collaborated frequently with Johnnie To, starring in films such as *Throw Down* (2004), *Election 2* (2006), and *Drug War* (2012). He won the Hong Kong Film Award for Best Actor for his role in *Paradox* (2017). Beyond acting, he is also a film producer and the founder of One Cool Film Production, supporting local talent and the cinematic arts.

GAO YUAN YUAN (as Siyan Lau)

Gao gained international recognition for her roles in films such as *Beijing Bicycle* (2001), *Shanghai Dreams* (2005), and *City of Life and Death* (2009). She is also a frequent collaborator with Johnnie To, having starred in his *Don't Go Breaking My Heart* (2011), *Romancing in Thin Air* (2012), *Blind Detective* (2013), and *Don't Go Breaking My Heart 2* (2014).

Credit Block

Sons Company Ltd. Sil-Metropole Organisation Ltd. JQ Pictures Holdings Ltd. Shaw Brothers Pictures International Ltd. Present Fortis Films(China) Limited Co-Present

A Sons Company Ltd. Production

A Juno Mak Film

Starring: Takeshi Kaneshiro, Sean Lau, Tony Leung Ka Fai, Louis Koo, Gao Yuan Yuan

Co-starring: Alex To, Nina Paw, Wilson Lam Chun Yin, Lo Lowell Kwok, Jiang Pei Yao

Other Cast: Michelle Wai, Zulian Kam Kwok Leung, Lo Hoi Pang, Lau Wing Carl Ng, Lloyd Hutchinson, Danny Summer

Production Designer: Juno Mak

Art Director: Yee Chung Man, Chau Sai Hung Ambrose, Jona Sees

Costume Designer: SoMad

Main Cast Costume Design: Uma Wang

Director of Cinematography: Sion Michel, Richard Bluck

Gaffer: Cheung Yuk Chuen, Lee Kim Kiu

Visual Effects Supervisors: Enoch Chan

Action Choreographer: Tang Sui Wa (H.K.S.A.)

Car Stunts: Cheung Wai Shun (H.K.S.A.)

Theme Music By Sakamoto Ryuichi

Music By Nate Connally

Edited By Chang Suk Ping William

Sound Designer: Dhanarat Dhitrojana, Kaikangwol Rungsakorn

Screenplay By Chou Man Yu

Production Managers: Seung Yu Hang, Lam Yee Mei May

Associate Producers: Leer Cheng, Virgina Lok Yee Ling, Ray Pang

Administration Producers: Iris Woo, Li Hao

Co-Producers: Thomas Hui To, Shirley Yeung

Chief Consultant: Deng Wugui

Written/Produced/Directed By Juno Mak

Producer: Catherine Hun

Executive Producers: Ding Kai, Li Ruigang, Flora Cheng

Executive Producer/Produced By Qin Hong

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