

ZORBA PRODUCTION & SU:M present



# Mrs. B.

A North-Korean Woman

A film by JERO YUN

INTERNATIONAL SALES DOC & FILM INTERNATIONAL - PRODUCER GUILLAUME DE LA BOULAYE - COPRODUCER JAEKEUN CHA - DIRECTION JERO YUN - CINEMATOGRAPHERS JERO YUN, TAWAN ARUN - EDITORS NADIA BEN RACHID, PAULINE CASALIS, SOPHIE POULEAU, JEAN-MARIE LENGELLÉ - SOUND MIXING JULES WYSOSKI - MUSIC MATHIEU REGNAULT

CNC ARTE B.C.P.F. JICA

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SCRIPTWRITER-DIRECTOR  
**JERO YUN**

PRODUCTION  
**ZORBA PRODUCTION  
SU:M**

PRODUCER  
**GUILLAUME DE LA BOULAYE**

COPRODUCER  
**JAE KEUN CHA**

CAMERA AND SOUND RECORDING  
**JERO YUN  
TAWAN ARUN**

EDITING  
**NADIA BEN RACHID  
PAULINE CASALIS  
SOPHIE POULEAU  
JEAN-MARIE LENGELLE**

MUSIC  
**MATHIEU REGNAULT**

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## SCREENINGS, CANNES

**SATURDAY, MAY 14<sup>TH</sup> AT 16:00 - ALEXANDRE 3 (CROISSETTE)**

**MONDAY, MAY AT 16<sup>TH</sup> 17:00 - LE RAIMU**

**THURSDAY, MAY 19<sup>TH</sup> AT 11:00 - STUDIO 13 (PRESENTATION + DISCUSSION)**

**THURSDAY, MAY 19<sup>TH</sup> AT 20:00 - ARCADES 1 (PRESENTATION + DISCUSSION)**

# Synopsis

Mrs. B., a North Korean woman, was forcibly sold to a Chinese farmer by her smugglers. To earn a living in China and help her family, who remained in North Korea, Mrs. B. turned to drug trafficking. She succeeds in getting her husband and sons smuggled into South Korea and then leaves herself with a group of illegal migrants to join her children at last. At the end of long and dangerous travels, Mrs. B. is held by the intelligence service as soon as she crosses the border into South Korea. Her life takes a completely unexpected turn than the one she'd dreamed of.



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# History of two Koreas

Korea was freed from Japanese occupation at the end of World War II by the United States south of the 38th parallel and by the Soviet Union north of it. The origin of the Korean war is subject to divergent interpretations: for Seoul, the war was set off by a North Korean aggression enacted according to a pre-established plan organized by Moscow. For Pyongyang, crossing the 38th parallel was in answer to a surprise attack of the South Korean army under the command of the Americans. In reality, the multiplication of cross-border raids was a reflection of increasing tension between the two powers. The fratricide ended on July 27th, 1953 with the signing of the armistice by the North Korean forces, China and the United Nations. The war claimed two million victims, displaced millions of persons, and separated hundreds of thousands of families. The peninsula has been divided ever since by a demilitarized zone along the 38th parallel. Today, South Korea is governed by a democratic regime, is the 11th power in the world and counts 50 million inhabitants. North Korea is ruled by a totalitarian regime and has an estimated population of 25 million. North Korea is increasingly isolated internationally because of its nuclear provocations, and the food shortage situation in the country has become catastrophic in the past few years. According to Amnesty International, more than 1500 North Koreans seek refuge in South Korea each year by passing illegally through China. But they are arrested by the Chinese authorities – China being Pyongyang's only ally of significance – and sent back to North Korea where they are subjected to extremely severe sanctions.



# Interview with Jero Yun

How did Mrs. B., a North Korean Woman, come about?

As a result of the searches I made for North Korean refugees in China, I decided, working together with the filmmaker and interactive designer Tawan Arun, to create a cross-media project entitled *The Smuggler*. The project includes the feature-length documentary *Mrs. B., a North Korean Woman*, and a web documentary, *The Long Way South*. My goal from the outset was to reach as many publics as possible by any possible means to share this incredible reality.

How did you meet Mrs. B.?

I met her via a network of smugglers working between North Korea, China, South Korea and the United States and with whom I spent time when I was filming my preceding work, *Looking for North Koreans* (2013). I felt a real need to share a different point of view regarding North Koreans, our “enemy brothers”. Mrs. B. first of all put me in contact with North Korean refugees living clandestinely in China. She put me up at her farm (at her Chinese husband’s home, in fact) for several weeks and that’s where she told me her fascinating story. Little by little, she became the main character of the film.





Your work is basically focused on North/South Korean relations; what do you think the future will be between these two countries?

In my opinion, reconciliation will become possible when both governments accept their political wrongdoings and objectively recognize the historical facts. The conflict between two ideologies, which caused the division of the country, goes back to the liberation of Korea in 1945, following 40 years of Japanese occupation. Today, each government continues to maintain its ideology and its version of history. To this end, they both use propaganda, and namely education and the media. In the North, capitalism is the country's enemy; in the South, communism is a crime.

You really accompanied the North Korean refugees on their illegal migration. Can you tell us your feelings about the trip?

During this terrifying journey across China, Laos and Thailand, at the end of which we were arrested by the Thai police, I didn't have time to realize what was happening to me. I was caught in the spiral of a multitude of smugglers who ordered us to get into all kinds of vehicles, to walk in the jungle, to climb mountains.... I had lost any possibility of distancing myself from the ordeal. As if I had boarded a bus with no brakes, as if I had made an irreversible choice, as if there was only the destination and no stops along the way, as if it was too late to regret having embarked on the journey or to go back. I just went on, like the North Koreans, without being able to think. I only remember what I felt: fear, thirst, hunger, exhaustion.

What is Mrs. B.'s situation today?

She is still in South Korea, waiting for the accusations of spying hanging over her to be waived. But her life has changed since the end of the film shoot. She has decided she no longer wants to live under the same roof as her North Korean husband, and she has lost all hope of living with her Chinese husband. She lives in a suburb of Seoul, she has a job and she cares for her two children. She is still in contact with both husbands, but my feeling is that she has decided to live, at last, for herself.

# Jero Yun Biography



Jero Yun was born in 1980 at Busan (South Korea). After studying art, he went to France when he was 21 to study at the Fine Arts School in Nancy (Beaux-Arts de Nancy), and then at the National Decorative Arts School in Paris, video/photo section (Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Paris). In 2008, he became a resident at the Le Fresnoy National Studio of Contemporary Arts (Studio National des Arts Contemporains Le Fresnoy) where he made his first films, which have been shown at several international film festivals.

In 2010, he shot *Promise*, a documentary on the woman who took him in when he arrived in France. This woman, who has no legal papers and who runs an inn for illegal immigrants in the Paris region, is the first person of North Korean origin that Jero had ever met. A relationship just short of mother-son between these two “enemies” grew so strong that Jero promised the woman that he would find her son, who was stuck in China. After this film, which won the Grand Prix 2011 awarded by the Asiana International Short Film Festival (Seoul), Jero Yun scoured the Chinese territory along the North Korean border for three months looking for the lost son. He didn’t find him, but he did discover the clandestine world of North Koreans in China, with its share of people smugglers and traffickers, hopes and disillusiones, which he filmed with a hidden camera. His film, *Looking for North Koreans* (2013), has been awarded prizes in many festivals. As a result of his searches, he embarked on a cross-media project entitled *The Smuggler*, working with the filmmaker and interactive designer, Tawan Arun. The project includes the feature-length documentary, *Mrs. B., a North Korean Woman*; its first Korean premiere is at the Jeonju Festival 2016 (Competition) and its international premiere will take place at the Cannes Festival 2016 (ACID).

Jero Yun has also filmed two shorts, *The Pig*, presented at the Quinzaine des Réalisateurs 2013 (Directors’ Fortnight), Cannes Film Festival, and *Hitchhiker*, Quinzaine des Réalisateurs 2016 (Directors’ Fortnight), Cannes Film Festival.

He is currently working on several feature-length fiction films, including *Le Secret de mon père* (*The Secret of My Father*), which he wrote during a residency at the Cinéfondation and at the Moulin d’Andé.

## FILMOGRAPHY

2016	<b>HITCHHIKER</b> (Short Film)
2016	<b>MRS. B. A NORTH KOREAN WOMAN</b> (Feature Film), Zorba
2013	<b>THE PIG</b> (Short Film), Taipei Factory
2013	<b>LOOKING FOR NORTH KOREANS</b> (Feature Film), Zorba
2010	<b>PROMISE</b> (Short Film), Zorba
2010	<b>RED ROAD</b> (Short Film), Le Fresnoy & Zorba
2009	<b>IN THE DARK</b> (Short Film), Le Fresnoy