

# ***THE TRANSPORTER***

Ex-Special Forces operator Frank Martin lives what seems to be a quiet life along the French Mediterranean, hiring himself out as a mercenary “transporter” who moves goods – human or otherwise – from one place to another. No questions asked.

Carrying out mysterious and sometimes dangerous tasks in his tricked-out BMW, Frank adheres to a strict set of rules, which he never breaks. Rule One: Never change the deal. Rule Two: No names – Frank doesn’t want to know whom he’s working for, or what he’s transporting. Rule Three: Never look in the package.

Frank’s newest transport seems no different from the countless ones he’s done in the past. He has been hired by an American known only as “Wall Street” (see Rule Two) to make a delivery, but when Frank stops along route, he notices his “package” is moving. Violating Rule Three, Frank looks inside the bag, finding its contents to be a beautiful, gagged woman.

Frank’s steadfast adherence to his other two rules – which make up his basic code of survival – also quickly falls, hurtling him and his new companion on a road leading to shocking secrets, deadly complications, and the last thing Frank ever expected to come to believe: that rules are made to be broken.

Twentieth Century Fox presents a Europacorp Production, in coproduction with TF1 Films Productions in association with Current Entertainment and Canal +, starring Jason Statham and Shu Qi in *THE TRANSPORTER*. François Berleand and Matt Schulze also star. The director is Cory Yuen, the screenplay is by Luc Besson & Robert Mark Kamen, and the artistic director is Louis Leterrier. The producers are Luc Besson & Steven Chasman. The director of photography is Pierre Morel, and the production designer is Hugues Tissandier. The editor is Nicolas Trembasiewicz, and the original score is by Stanley Clarke.

With previous credits including Guy Ritchie’s audaciously funny “Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels” and “Snatch,” actor Jason Statham isn’t the most obvious choice as Hollywood’s newest action star. But after a meeting early last year with renowned filmmaker Luc Besson (“La Femme Nikita,” “The Professional”), Statham was set on a path that would lead him to the title role of the highly self-sufficient and occasionally lethal “transporter” in Besson’s latest production.

Statham’s manager, Steven Chasman (who also serves as a producer on THE TRANSPORTER), previously collaborated with Besson on “Kiss of the Dragon,” released by Twentieth Century Fox last summer. Knowing that Besson had a great eye for talent – Natalie Portman is among his discoveries – Chasman approached Besson about meeting Statham. Besson was so impressed with the actor that he agreed to co-write, with Robert Mark Kamen, a thriller *written especially for* Statham.

For Statham, a lifelong Besson fan, the confab with the filmmaker was a memorable experience. “I couldn’t believe I was sitting in a room with Luc Besson, discussing a part in his next movie!” he recalls. “The fact that he wanted to write it for me was almost unbelievable. How privileged can an actor get?”

Besson’s co-writer, Robert Mark Kamen, who served in the same capacity on “Kiss of the Dragon” and Besson’s science-fiction hit “The Fifth Element,” also was impressed with Statham. “Jason has something that most movie action heroes lack: a humanity and decency that come through even though his character, Frank, is as hard-boiled as they come,” Kamen notes. “Luc thought Jason had not only the action chops to attract audiences vicariously, but the right amount of simpatico to get them emotionally.”

Kamen also saw specific qualities in Statham’s work in “Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels” and “Snatch” that would become intrinsic to the character of Frank in THE TRANSPORTER. “When I watched Jason in the Guy Ritchie films, I immediately noticed that Jason really knew how to be still; you’re drawn to him in those films because he is staying so quiet and motionless. So when he does something on screen, you’re really watching – he just grabs you.”

Statham notes that Frank’s stillness adds balance to the character’s physical prowess, softening the hard edges of typical screen action heroes. “Frank likes to keep

things simple,” the actor notes. “He lives a quiet life in the south of France; he’s built a wall around himself. Most important, he has a set of rules he never breaks.

“Frank’s not a murderer or an assassin; he’s something completely different,” Statham adds. “He could easily break the necks of those who go up against him, but he instead inflicts minimal damage to incapacitate them temporarily, not permanently. I like to call Frank, ‘The Thinking Man’s Fighting Machine’ because his technique is very stylish. He doesn’t want to kill anybody, and he certainly doesn’t enjoy the combat he often finds himself in.”

Since Besson and Kamen wrote the part of Frank for Statham, it’s not surprising that that actor himself possesses an impressive athleticism, honed by years of training in boxing, martial arts (“soft” and “hard” forms), kickboxing, and scuba diving. “Jason is physically gifted as well as a terrific actor,” says THE TRANSPORTER director Cory Yuen, one of the world’s foremost action choreographers, whose work has been seen in “X-Men” and “Kiss of the Dragon.”

“I was excited about finally having the chance to put some of my physical training to work on screen,” Statham laughs. “I never had the chance to do it in Guy [Ritchie]’s films.”

Yuen put Statham through his paces, especially during an eight-week training / rehearsal period during which the actor worked intensively with the director’s hand-picked team of fighting / action choreographers. Yuen devised elaborate and creative action scenes, one including an ingenious use of oil to ward off deadly assassins, as well as a set piece involving a sweater that Frank transforms into a deadly weapon. “With each film I try and create action sequences that audiences haven’t seen before,” Yuen explains. “The action should have some kind of flair and meaning. I’m not interested in pyrotechnics and combat for their own sakes.”

While Yuen worked on THE TRANSPORTER’s myriad action scenes, artistic director Louis Leterrier oversaw many of the more intimate, dramatic moments. Leaving the film in the hands of his chosen helmers, Luc Besson made only sporadic appearances on the set. However he did shoot a key underwater sequence that utilized his widely-hailed skills in underwater filming (evidenced in the Besson-directed films “Atlantis” and “The Big Blue.”), as well as Statham’s background as a diver.

To bring even more verisimilitude to the sequence, Statham trained with an ex-Marine diver in underwater caves near Marseilles. As the character, Frank, has nerves of steel, the Marine diver decided to test Statham's limits and "cool" by taking away his flashlight, leaving the actor sightless in the pitch black environment. "When you dive," Statham explains, "you have to be able to relax, even under extreme pressure. You can't get flustered."

Joining Statham in this scene, and throughout much of the film, was Shu Qi, who plays Lai, the "package" that forever changes Frank's orderly life. In casting the role, Besson and producer Steven Chasman were intent on finding an experienced and talented actor who nonetheless would be new to most audiences. And while Shu is one of Asia's leading actresses with over forty film credits, she is as yet unknown to much of the rest of the world.

Chasman traveled to Malaysia, where Shu Qi was shooting a picture. Upon meeting her, he was immediately impressed. "Shu Qi is a real star," says Chasman. "She is beautiful and has incredible on-screen presence."

Shu was also game for much of the demanding action and stunt work, including riding in the trunk of a car, inside a large bag. Perhaps her greatest "stunt," though, was learning English with the help of an ever-present coach, as she shot the movie. "I think it was the hardest thing I ever did for a movie!" she laughs.

Veteran French actor François Berleand portrays Tarconi, a police detective who suspects Frank's transporting activities are somehow connected to illegal activities in the area. Tarconi and Frank respect each other, despite being on opposite sides of the law. In fact, the detective is the closest thing the reclusive Frank has to a friend.

For the villains, screenwriters Luc Besson & Robert Mark Kamen chose to go in an unexpected direction, creating a ruthless killer known only as "Wall Street" (played by Matt Schulze, from "The Fast and the Furious") and an Asian crime lord called Mr. Kwai. (Ric Young, who made memorably villainous appearances as a torturer on "Alias.") "We thought it would be kind of off-center and fun to use non-French characters," says Kamen. "Wall Street and Kwai are complete parasites, coming from anywhere in the world to conduct unsavory if not deadly business. And it doesn't matter to them where they do it."

The Southern France locales these characters choose to operate are hardly the gorgeous, sun-kissed paradises we know from countless films past. “It’s the south of France of shipping containers, oil bins, and small nondescript houses and boats,” notes Kamen. “It’s not the James Bond-South of France.”

Kamen and Besson have known each other for ten years, most recently joining forces on “Kiss of the Dragon.” According to Kamen, the writing process for THE TRANSPORTER was a whirlwind of intensity and creativity, a “fast and furious” collaboration that had them working non-stop. “All we did was write, sleep and eat,” remembers Kamen. “It is always a rush working off Luc’s great bursts of creative energy.”

While Besson and Kamen were in sync on virtually every aspect of the story, initially there was one specific area of disagreement. “At first, Luc didn’t like the title ‘The Transporter’,” says Kamen, because in French ‘transporteur’ has a lowly connotation. But I insisted that it was a great title – it’s what the guy does. He delivers, no questions asked.”

### **ABOUT THE CAST**

JASON STATHAM (Frank) made his on-screen debut in the highly successful British film “Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels,” directed by Guy Ritchie. Shortly after, he teamed again with Ritchie on the gangster film “Snatch,” as boxing promoter Turkish. The film also starred Brad Pitt and Benicio Del Toro.

Statham recently co-starred in the action sci-fi thriller “The One” opposite Jet Li, and also starred alongside “Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels” cast member Vinnie Jones in “The Mean Machine.” He currently is working on “The Italian Job,” also starring Mark Wahlberg, Edward Norton and Charlize Theron.

Before acting, Jason earned recognition as a world-class diver. He was a member of the British national diving squad for ten years and participated in the 1988 Seoul, South Korea Olympics.

SHU QI (Lai) has made 45 movies in a six-year period. Her breakthrough came when Hou Hsiao-hsien cast her in “Millenium Mambo” as Vicky, a nightclub hostess torn between two men. “Millenium Mambo” put Shu Qi under the tutelage of director Hou, a serious cinefile who almost single-handedly put Taiwanese art films on the global map. Some of her recent films include “For Bad Boys Only,” directed by Raymond Yip, “Martial Angels,” directed by Clarence Fok and “Skyline Cruisers,” directed by Wilson Yip.

Shu appeared with Jackie Chan in the romantic-comedy “Gorgeous” and starred in the Hong Kong horror film box-office hit “Visible Secret.” She currently plays one of the three nubile nymphets who can kick butt as well as curl on mascara in Hong Kong’s answer to “Charlie’s Angels,” “Virtual Twilight.”

Shu Qi has proved her acting credibility by winning the prestigious Golden Horse awards in Taiwan (regarded as the “Asian Oscars”) for best supporting actress. She has also received a nomination for Best Actress from the Golden Horse Awards.

FRANÇOIS BERLEAND (Tarconi) is one of France’s most recognized and distinguished actors, appearing in over 100 films, as well as numerous stage productions. His many notable credits include “Seventh Heaven,” as a sleazy psychoanalyst; “My Little Business,” “Romance” and director Louis Malle’s acclaimed “Au revoir les enfants.”

MATT SCHULZE (Wall Street) was recently selected by *GQ* magazine as one of the top ten men to watch in Hollywood. Born in St. Louis, Schulze arrived in Los Angeles just a few years ago and immediately landed a role in the feature film “Blade.” He went on to star in such films as “Boys and Girls,” “The Fast and the Furious,” and “Blade 2.”

From an early age, Schulze has been into music, and studied guitar and the viola at the Atlanta Institute of Music. During this time he taught music classes to up to 65 students. He is still an avid music fan and today writes songs as well as poetry. In addition, he is an enthusiastic abstract art fan and numbers among his heroes Jackson Pollock and Basquiat.

## **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

CORY YUEN (Director) has over 30 Hong Kong feature releases to his credit, and has mastered every aspect of filmmaking, either as director, star, writer, producer, or action choreographer. His first U.S. project was the hit action comedy “Lethal Weapon 4” in which he served as martial arts choreographer. He also served as martial arts choreographer in “Romeo Must Die,” starring Jet Li. Additionally, Yuen directed second unit for Twentieth Century Fox’s science fiction action film “X-Men.”

An alumnus from the prestigious Chinese Opera Academy, Yuen was one of the Seven Little Fortunes, a performing troupe that included fellow classmates Jackie Chan and Sammo Hung. By the late 70s, he and the others had all gravitated toward film. For the next two decades Yuen was involved in some of the most popular films ever produced in Hong Kong, including “Hero,” “The Black Rose,” “Mahjong Dragon,” “High Risk,” “My Father is a Hero,” “The Bodyguard from Beijing,” and “Fong Sai-Yunk I and II,” the latter four starring Jet Li.

LUC BESSON (Producer, Co-Writer) was born in Paris on March 18, 1959, and spent most of his childhood living in the idyllic settings of various Mediterranean hideaways where his parents worked as diving instructors.

With Besson's surroundings and family influences, it seemed assured that he would embark on a similar maritime career. From the age of 10, after an encounter with a friendly dolphin, Besson was determined to become a marine biologist, specializing in the study of the species.

Besson studied for this life plan throughout his teens until, at 17, a diving accident prevented him from ever diving again. His long-held dream cut short, Besson redirected his sights, deciding that he would become a filmmaker.

Besson dropped out of school to seek work in the French film industry, and started making his own experimental films in super-8. At the age of 19, he moved to Los Angeles, where he lived for three months working in the American film industry.

In 1983, after three years of experience as an assistant director, Besson made his first feature, “Le Dernier Combat.” Selected for competition in the Avoriaz Science Fiction Film Festival, the film won two major awards from the festival jury, which included Alan J. Pakula and Jean-Jacques Annaud among its members. It was nominated for a Cesar Award and went on to win 12 awards around the world.

Besson's second film, “Subway,” starred Christopher Lambert in a Cesar-winning performance (one of 13 Cesar nominations garnered by the film), as a thief on the run who becomes involved with a fantastic subculture of Parisians living in the city's underground. The film gained Besson an international reputation, and is today regarded worldwide as a cult classic.

Besson's 1988 film “The Big Blue,” expressing the dreams of Besson's Mediterranean youth, cast Jean Reno as an Italian diver with an unquenchable love for the sea. Besson's first film to be made in English, boasting an international cast, was distributed in the U.S. in a version that suffered various unauthorized alterations, including a changed ending and to Eric Serra's score. The intact version of Besson's film, nominated for seven Cesars, was a huge success throughout most of the world and is one of the top five films in French history. His original director's cut was released on DVD last year.

Besson's “La Femme Nikita” was the director's first global sensation, a film that inspired remakes in both the U.S. and Hong Kong. The story of a feral, drug-addicted girl forced to train as a government hit-woman made international stars of leads Anne Parrilaud and Jean Reno, and spawned a new form of thriller: the neo-noir action film. This influence still reverberates throughout world cinema.

In 1991, Besson's “Atlantis,” hailed by U.S. critics as an undersea Fantasia and an aquatic dream, was filmed in 16 months all around the world. An exercise in pure film imagery, “Atlantis” dispensed with dialogue and narrative in order to wed Eric Serra's wall-to-wall score to undersea images – a cinematic translation of the filmmaker's own love for the world hidden beneath the ocean.

In 1993, Besson began pre-production on “The Fifth Element,” working for over a year refining the script from his own story, and with an international team of artists

visualizing its 23rd century setting and characters. When budget concerns put the project at a standstill, Besson turned his hand to another original screenplay, “The Professional.”

“The Professional” returned to the themes examined in “La Femme Nikita.” It starred Jean Reno and Natalie Portman in the story of a hit man who is civilized by his paternal love for a young girl orphaned by a renegade government agent, played by Gary Oldman. The picture was an immediate worldwide success and garnered Cesar nominations for Best Picture and for Besson as Best Director.

In 1997, Besson's sci-fi opus “The Fifth Element,” starring Bruce Willis, was released to critical acclaim and box office success. Besson also recently won a British Academy Award for producing “Nil By Mouth,” with Gary Oldman.

Besson’s eighth directorial effort, the historical epic “The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc,” starring Milla Jovovich in the title role, came in 1999. That year, he also produced “Taxi 2,” directed by Gérard Krawczyk, and “The Dancer,” helmed by Fred Garson.

Besson’s recent producing credits include “Kiss of the Dragon” (starring Jet Li and Bridget Fonda, and released by Twentieth Century Fox), “15 Août,” “Yamakasi,” “les Samourais des temps modernes,” and “Wasabi,” a film shot in France and Japan, starring Jean Reno and directed by Gérard Krawczyk. He is also the founder, with Pierre-Ange Le Pogam, of a European cinema studio named Europa, where he will not only produce between 4-8 films a year, but be involved in film distribution and foreign sales, video, and music publishing.

ROBERT MARK KAMEN (Writer) received his Ph.D in Anthropology from the prestigious University of Pennsylvania, before setting his sights on Hollywood. Kamen sold his first screenplay, “Crossings,” to Warner Brothers in 1978. Shortly thereafter his first produced feature film, the critically acclaimed “Taps,” he went on to write the hugely successful “The Karate Kid,” which turned into a three-film franchise, all of which he wrote.

Kamen then went on to write such films as “Gladiator,” “The Power Of One,” “Walk In The Clouds,” and the blockbuster “Lethal Weapon 3.” By the mid 90s, he had established himself as one of the most sought after writers in Hollywood, with credits

such as “The Devil’s Own” and “The Fifth Element.” He also assisted Luc Besson in writing “The Professional.”

Kamen co-wrote with Besson the Twentieth Century Fox release “Kiss Of The Dragon.” He is now writing and producing the television series “The Black Sash” for the WB network.

When Kamen is not at home in New York City or producing in Los Angeles, he spends time at his vineyard, the famed “Kamen Estate Winery” in Sonoma, California.

STEVEN CHASMAN (Producer) had his undergraduate education at the University of Pennsylvania before attending Emory University Law School in Atlanta, earning his law degree in 1991. Initially drawn to the practice of contract law, he worked for a few years in Baltimore, Maryland at the law firm Whiteford, Taylor & Preston.

However, the dry world of law was no match for the dynamic and interesting world of entertainment. In 1993, Chasman joined International Creative Management, a leading talent agency. There he helped to build the off-field careers of athletes such as Deion Sanders, Ken Griffey Jr. and Dennis Rodman. After six years at ICM, Chasman’s entrepreneurial spirit led him to start Current Entertainment.

Current Entertainment handles all types of talented performers from actors and musicians to directors and athletes. Current Entertainment’s clients include: action-film star Jet Li, Leelee Sobieski, Kris Kristofferson, Latin star Chayanne, French actor Tcheky Karyo, THE TRANSPORTER director Cory Yuen and basketball star/actor Dennis Rodman. Chasman produced “Kiss of the Dragon,” distributed by Twentieth Century Fox. He also produced “The One.”

LOUIS LETERRIER (Artistic Director) is a native of Paris. Leterrier developed a love of cinema at an early age, winning several awards for short films before turning eighteen.

He left France to study film at New York University’s prestigious Tisch School of the Arts. Leterrier served as an assistant director and worked on visual effects on Twentieth Century Fox’s “Alien Resurrection,” directed by fellow countryman Jean-Pierre Jeunet. He then was an assistant director on the French-U.S. co-production “The

Tourist Trap,” on Luc Besson’s historical epic “The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc,” and on the big-budget “Asterix and Obelix: Mission Cleopatra,” adapted from the famed comics.

Leterrier again assisted Besson on a commercial for L’Oreal, shortly after which the famed filmmaker approached Leterrier about THE TRANSPORTER.

PIERRE MOREL (Director of Photography) began his motion picture career as a focus puller, camera operator and Steadicam operator. He previously collaborated with Luc Besson on “The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc,” “Taxi” and “Taxi 2.” More recently, Morel was camera operator on Jonathan Demme’s upcoming “The Truth About Charlie.” THE TRANSPORTER marks his debut as a cinematographer.

HUGUES TISSANDIER (Production Designer) previously worked with Luc Besson on “The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc,” for which Tissandier received a César Award nomination and Las Vegas Film Critics Society Award nomination for Best Production Design. Other notable film credits include the hit comedy “Les Visiteurs,” “Le Dîner de cons” and “Le Jaguar.”

NICOLAS TREMBASIEWICZ (Editor) edited numerous music videos before joining forces with Luc Besson on “Kiss of the Dragon,” “Taxi 2,” “Yamakasi,” and “Wasabi.”

STANLEY CLARKE (Original Score) is one of the world's most celebrated bass players, has amassed an impressive list of composing credits for film and television. Among the features on which he worked are "The Best Man," "Down in the Delta," "Higher Learning," "What's Love Got to Do With It?" "Boyz 'N The Hood," "The Five Heartbeats," "Passenger 57," "Poetic Justice," "B.A.P.S." and "Dangerous Ground."

Clarke's credits also include the television movies "Marciano," "Funny Valentines," "The Cherokee Kid," "Relentless: The Mind of a Killer," "The Court Martial of Jackie Robinson," "Final Shot: The Hank Gathers Story," and "Blue Bayou." He also scored the music for the series "Hull High," "Out On the Edge," "A Man Called Hawk"

and "Pee-wee's Playhouse" as well as the opening sequence to Michael Jackson's video "Remember the Time."

Among Clarke's many honors is a Grammy® Award for the critically acclaimed album "No Mystery." He has been nominated for an additional seven Grammys plus three Emmy® Awards, was named Rolling Stone Magazine's Jazzman of the Year and Playboy Magazine's Bassist of the Year (for 10 consecutive years) and is in Guitar Magazine's "Gallery of the Greats."

Also a philanthropist, Clarke is a member of several non-profit organizations, such as the Jimi Hendrix Foundation, that enable young talent to pursue a career in the arts.

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