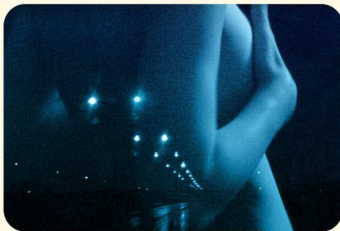
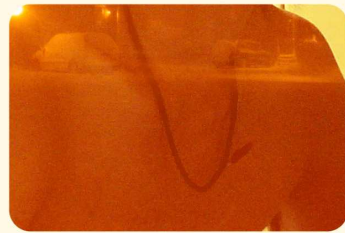


Locarno 2005  
Official Selection – Cinéastes du présent

A FILM BY  
FRANÇOIS ROTGER



# THE PASSENGER

DESIGNED BY NINA LAROCHE@L.O.U.K

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY FRANÇOIS ROTGER / CAST: YUSUKE ISEYA, GABRIELLE LAZURE, FRANÇOIS TROTTIER, KANEKO KUMI, RYO KASE, YOSUKE NATSUKI, VEROSHKA KNOGE / DP: GEORGES LECHAPTOIS / SET DESIGNER: VALERIE MASSADIAN / ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: SOLENE COMBEMALE / CONTINUITY: LOUIS SEBASTIEN / SOUND: DANA FARZANEHPOUR / EDITOR: NATHALIE LANGLADE / PRODUCTION MANAGER: THIERRY BAUDRAIS / PRODUCER: TOM DERCOURT FOR LES FILMS A UN DOLLAR / CO-PRODUCER (JAPAN): MARTIYA HIRAKAWA / CO-PRODUCERS (CANADA): TAN BAYD, STEPHANE RAYMOND

CREDITS NON CONTRACTUAL

**\* PRESS KIT \***

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Locarno 2005  
Official Selection – Cinéastes du présent

# THE PASSENGER

A film by  
**François Rotger**

With  
**Yusuke Iseya • Gabrielle Lazure  
François Trottier • Kumi Kaneko • Ryo Kase  
Yosuke Natsuki • Veroushka Knoge**

**Official Screening: 6.8.2005 18h30 FEVI**

**(No press screening)**

**Additional Screening: 7.8.2005 9h00 FEVI**

**Additional Screening: 8.8.2005 16h15 Otello Ascona**

Director François Rotger will be available for interviews  
Please contact the festival's press office  
or  
Uwe Lützen, FRENETIC FILMS, +41 (0) 78 648 36 66

Press kit and stills are available at  
the festival's site [www.pardo.ch](http://www.pardo.ch) or at [www.frenetic.ch](http://www.frenetic.ch)

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## **THE PASSENGER**

**INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL LOCARNO: Cinéastes du présent**

### **SYNOPSIS DEUTSCH**

Eine verbotene Leidenschaft. Kohji hat sich in seine Adoptivschwester Hiroko verliebt. Sein Vater, Naoki Sando, wirft ihn aus dem Haus und verstösst ihn. Auf der Strasse verkauft Kohji seinen Körper. Er wartet. Nach Jahren dann ein Anruf: Naoki Sando steckt tief in der Klemme. Sein alter Kollege Tanner hat einen beträchtlichen Geldbetrag mitgehen lassen und sich nach Kanada abgesetzt. Die Bosse von Naokis Yakuza-Gang wollen ihr Geld zurück, und zwar schnell.

Kohji bietet sich eine Möglichkeit, Hiroko wiederzusehen. Er macht sich auf den Weg in die Industriebrachen von Montreal, auf der Suche nach Tanner.

Dort trifft er Viv. In den Vierzigern, erfolgreich, hinreissend, hat Viv schon immer von ihrem Aussehen gelebt. Doch als Kohji sie lieben lernt, fällt alles auseinander.

Daheim in Japan läuft die Zeit davon. Der Druck auf Naoki Sando steigt. Als er ins Krankenhaus muss und Hiroko zurücklässt, erliegt sie dem tödlichen Charme von Akira, einem Yakuza-Killer.

Und dann gibt es da noch Tanner, ein Gespenst auf der Flucht mit seiner hysterischen jungen Geliebten Vera. Verstört. Ausser Kontrolle. Verdammt.

Kohji findet Tanner. Der Kreis schliesst sich.

Und nur Naoki Sando ist noch übrig. Ein Mann der Schatten und des Verrats, voll finsterner Geheimnisse. Und wo einst Hiroko war, findet sich nur noch eine Blutspur.

### **SYNOPSIS FRANÇAIS**

L'histoire d'une passion interdite: Kohji est amoureux de sa sœur adoptive Hiroko. Son père, Naoki Sando, le met à la porte et le déshérite. Errant dans les rues, Kohji fait commerce de son corps et attend. Les années passent. Un jour, il reçoit un appel de son père qui a des ennuis: son vieil ami, Tanner, a volé une coquette somme d'argent avant de s'enfuir au Canada. Les patrons de Naoki, des Yakuza, réclament leur argent. Tout de suite.

Pour Kohji, c'est un moyen de revoir Hiroko. Il se lance donc à la recherche de Tanner dans les friches industrielles des faubourgs de Montréal.

C'est alors qu'il tombe sur Viv. La quarantaine, brillante, d'une étonnante beauté, Viv a toujours misé sur son physique. Mais quand elle rencontre Kohji et qu'ils font l'amour, son univers s'effrite.

Pendant ce temps-là, au Japon, le compte à rebours s'accélère. Et la pression que subit Naoki Sando ne cesse de croître. Malade, il est emmené à l'hôpital, laissant Hiroko seule et à la merci du charme fatal d'Akira, un tueur Yakuza aussi dangereux que séduisant. On en revient alors à Tanner, fantôme en fuite avec sa petite amie hystérique, Vera. Terrifié, incontrôlable, maudit.

Kohji retrouve Tanner. La boucle est bouclée.

Naoki Sando est désormais seul. Il n'est plus que l'ombre de lui-même, enfermé dans ses sombres secrets et ses mensonges. Il n'a plus rien hormis la tache de sang qui lui rappelle le souvenir de sa fille Hiroko.

## **THE PASSENGER**

**INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL LOCARNO: Cinéastes du présent**

### **ENGLISH SYNOPSIS**

As a boy Kohji is taken under the wing of Naoki Sando, a Yakuza operative. When he falls in love with his 'adoptive' father's beautiful daughter Hiroko, Naoki Sando disowns him. On the streets, Kohji sells his body and waits. Years pass, then there's a call. Naoki Sando's in big trouble. His old colleague Tanner has stolen a serious amount of cash and fled to Canada. Naoki's Yakuza bosses want their money back. Fast.

It's a way of re-establishing communication with Naoki Sando. And perhaps a way of seeing Hiroki again. Kohji leaves for the industrial wastelands of Montreal. Searching for Tanner. And finding his ex-wife Viv - in her 40s, successful, beautiful. She and Kohji share a brief, intensely animal, sexual union, then part. Kohji is alone again. Hunting.

Back in Japan, time is running out. The pressure on Naoki Sando is building. Sick, he is taken to hospital, leaving Hiroko alone, open to the lethal charms of Akira, a Yakuza hitman as deadly as he is attractive.

And then there's Tanner, a ghost on the run with his hysterical young lover Vera. Terrified. Out of control. Doomed.

Kohji finds Tanner. And kills him. The circle closes. A zero. Tanner was innocent.

And only Naoki Sando is left. A man of shadows and treachery, full of dark secrets. Left with nothing but an empty room stained with his daughter's blood.

## **THE PASSENGER**

**INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL LOCARNO: Cinéastes du présent**

### **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

It begins with a personal story. A very close friend. He came from Japan, part French on his mother's side. Eurasian. Everyone used to say we were strangely alike. A boy my age, living almost in the same house, only a hundred yards away. His father's car almost identical to my father's. At the same school, always in the same class, often on the same table. My mother prepared our afternoon tea. His disappeared without trace.

We moved, and I called him every day, sometimes he came to visit, always unannounced. Through the week he paid for his train ticket without using his father's money. He used to say he had found a way of getting enough cash...

I met him again almost ten years later, for several days, in London. We had to find him a place to sleep, he was "on a mission for his father", so he could earn the right to return home.

His father and sister were now in Haneda, in Japan. He was an exile.

We still looked alike, we were doing what we wanted with our lives. His seemed more difficult than mine. He practically never slept in the same bed two days running.

We didn't talk enough, I never knew what his "mission" consisted of. I didn't understand why he was so determined to see his father again. I knew what sort of a guy he was.

He left, and I never had the time to find out more. Sometimes his life was so close to mine, in London. I still don't understand it.

I didn't really search to discover the truth. As he disappeared overnight, I preferred to invent a story. I have added several other friends, people who have shared my life, in London, in Amsterdam.

I have the feeling that despite the little I really know of them, there's a great deal of their lives in this script, in this film. And a little of mine. If they are alive today, I'm certain that we are still alike.

There are few explanations in this film, and even fewer reflections or theories on prostitution. It's not a film about prostitution. It's a film that deals with failure, with betrayal, with disappointed hopes. A film about shattered love.

An open-ended film. A film that gives one more chance to my lost friend.

**THE PASSENGER**

**INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL LOCARNO: Cinéastes du présent**

**CAST**

Kohji..... YUSUKE ISEYA  
Viv..... GABRIELLE LAZURE  
Marc Tanner..... FRANÇOIS TROTTIER  
Hiroko..... KUMI KANEKO  
Akira..... RYO KASE  
Naoki Sando..... YOSUKE NATSUKI  
Vera..... VEROUSHKA KNOGE

**CREW**

Written & Directed by..... FRANÇOIS ROTGER  
Director of photography..... GEORGE(S) LECHAPTOIS  
Set Design..... VALERIE MASSADIAN  
Assistant Director..... SOLENE COMBEMALE  
Continuity..... LOUIS SEBASTIEN  
Sound..... DANA FARZANEHPOUR  
Mixing..... OLIVIER DÔ HUU  
Editor..... NATHALIE LANGLADE  
Production Manager..... THIERRY BAUDRAIS  
Music..... DAN LEVY & IRINA LAZAREANU  
Producer..... TOM DERCOURT for LES FILMS A UN DOLLAR  
Co-Producer (Japan)..... MARIKO HIRAKAWA – RIVER FILMS  
Co-Producers (Canada)..... IAN BOYD – LES FILMS DE L'ISLE  
..... & STEPHANE RAYMOND – AVIVA COMMUNICATION  
With the Participation of..... CNC, TELEFILM CANADA, LA SODEC,  
..... WILD BUNCH, COFINOVA 1