

KINO
INTERNATIONAL

PRESENTS

UNTOLD SCANDAL

a film by E J-yong

Press Contact:

NEW YORK PRESS

Asian Press: DENTSU COMMUNICATIONS, Inc.
Telly Wong - TWong@dcinyc.com / (212) 660-6790
Kim Newman - KNewman@dcinyc.com / (212) 660-6799

All Other NY Press:

Rodrigo Brandão - rodrigo@kino.com / (212) 629-6880 xt.12

LOS ANGELES PRESS

Asian Press: TC:DM & ASSOCIATES
Winston Emano - wemano@tcdm-associates.com / (213) 624-7827
David Magdael - dmagdael@tcdm-associates.com / (213) 624-7827

All Other LA Press:

Jordan Moore - jordan@laemml.com / (310) 478-1041 xt.208

ALL OTHER MARKETS

Emily Brunt - ebrunt@kino.com / (212) 629-6880 xt.14

PRESSBOOK



CAST

BAE Yong-jun as Jo-won
LEE Mi-sook as Lady Cho
JEON Do-yeon as Lady Sook
CHO Hyeon-jae as Kwon In-ho
LEE Soh-yeon as LEE Soh-ok

CREW

Director - E J-yong
Screenplay - E J-yong, KIM Dae-woo, KIM Hyun-jung
Cinematography - KIM Byung-il
Lighting IM Jae-Young
Production Design - JUNG Ku-ho
Producer - OH Jung-wan
Co-producer - LEE Eu-gene
Executive Producer - LEE Kang-bok
Production Design - JUNG Ku-ho
Simultaneous Recording - LEE Seung-chul
Editing - KIM Yang-il, HAN Seung-ryong
Costumes - JUNG Ku-ho
Music - LEE Byung-woo

UNTOLD SCANDAL SPECS:

South Korea / Drama / 124 minutes
Color / 1.1:85 / Dolby Stereo
In Korean with English subtitles
Directed by E. J.-Yong



ABOUT UNTOLD SCANDAL:

Set near the end of the Chosun dynasty in late 19th-century Korea, UNTOLD SCANDAL reinvigorates the plot and characters from Choderlos de Laclos' French novel *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*.

By infusing UNTOLD SCANDAL with the perfect blend of cultural specificity and Machiavellian eroticism, director E J-yong turns de Laclos' controversial tale of conquest, love and betrayal into an exquisite Korean tragedy of manners. And as a serious and successful pastiche of a canonical European text, this box-office record-breaking Korean film also displays Mr. E's strong grasp of the difficulties of translating a novel from one culture to another.

Such understanding is exemplified by the calculated emersion of Christianity in the film's plot. The transformation of Korea's cultural landscape by the missionary work of Roman Catholics, which was part of a wider Western intervention in 18th-century Korea, plays an important role in the psychological fabric of UNTOLD SCANDAL—and was mostly absent from de Laclos' 1782 novel.

Synopsis:

Based on the novel *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Untold Scandal* is set in aristocratic 19th century Korea at the end of the Chosun Dynasty. The irresistible temptress Lady Cho (Lee Mi-Suk) asks her cad of a younger cousin, Jo-won (Bae Yong-Jun), to deflower the innocent young Soh-ok (Lee So-Yeon), who is to become her husband's concubine. But his attentions soon shift to the graceful and aloof Lady Sook (Jeon Do-Yeon) who lives according to her convictions as a Catholic. Jo-won becomes obsessed with seducing this chaste woman who has remained celibate for nine years since her husband's death. However, it proves to be more difficult than he expected when Chosun's notorious playboy sets out to conquer the most virtuous woman in the land ...



Untold Scandal: A subversive glimpse at 'The Way They Were'
By Mira Sun and Kyung (Kate) Lim Park

UNTOLD SCANDAL portrays Korean aristocrats at the turn of the 19th century during the Chosun Dynasty, the Victorian Age of Korean history. During the late 18th century, Korea underwent its second renaissance under the leadership of two enlightened monarchs, Kings Yeong-Jo and Jeong-Jo. New ideas and technology from the West were streaming into this hermit kingdom and Catholicism was gaining influence among young and reform-minded opinion makers. Prosperity was abundant, arts and culture were flourishing, and the public psyche was full of confidence and optimism. King Jeong-Jo's premature death in 1800 signified the end of an era and the society was soon engulfed by social and political upheavals that shook the long established class structure and social hierarchy.

On the morality front, by the 18th century Confucianism had been firmly established as the leading ideology to shape political, social and family structures. Upholding adherence to hierarchy and submission to authority, Confucianism also emphasized reason and rationality at the cost of repressing emotions, feelings and sexuality. Thus, hypocrisy was inevitable.

While sexuality was repressed in general, Confucian propriety and morality applied differently to men and women. Men would take wives and concubines in pious efforts to beget sons who would carry on the family name. Meanwhile, women were denied their sexuality and were taught to kill themselves rather than ruining their chastity. The government rewarded those women who never married after their would-be husbands had died prior to the scheduled weddings. Some of these widows were coerced to commit suicide or even killed by in-laws for larger government awards of land and prestige.

UNTOLD SCANDAL casts a subversive glimpse at the "official" history of this era. The Chosun society to which Director E J-Yong takes us is a surprising departure from what modern-day Koreans have thought as an age of innocence, gravity and oppression. In the film, the sublime and the vulgar co-exist, and aristocrats and servants alike seek and freely engage in sexual encounters. While the male elders of the clan are conducting solemn rituals of ancestral worship, a nude model performs oral sex on an aristocratic painter who has no worldly ambitions. Men would go through several combs and scissors to groom their mustaches every morning, while Confucianism advocated cultivating and grooming their "inner light" and downplaying the care of outer appearances.



Untold Scandal: A subversive glimpse at 'The Way They Were'
—continued—

Women in the film are even more shocking. First wives take young lovers as their sterile husbands take a round of wives, concubines and prostitutes. A young pregnant woman marries a powerful and rich politician double her age and would raise the child as his heir. Aristocratic wives who display exemplary modesty would spare nothing to get the most coveted fashionable hairdo. They may wear shapeless skirts but they make sure to compensate with short jackets with narrow sleeves that teasingly reveal curves and bosom.

In brief, UNTOLD SCANDAL turns upside down what we know of the Korean society during the late Chosun Dynasty. Yet this surprising spin on “the way they were” remains quite credible thanks to Director E J-Yong’s controlling vision and precision to details.

One of the many attractions that made UNTOLD SCANDAL the most talked-about Korean film of 2003 even before it had been released and eventually drew nearly 3.5 million viewers, was the audience’s heightened anticipation and excitement that the film offered a peek at sex and sexuality in a society of Victorian morality -- a drama of lust, sex, revenge and self-destruction.

For the younger generation in contemporary Korea who take sex and sexuality for granted, this age of innocence and repressed sexuality itself was enticing. This is an era when a man would make elaborate plans and wait for months just to get a first kiss from a woman, and when a woman underwent unbearable pains and agony before granting it. When a kiss and even a one-night stand on a first date today raise hardly anyone’s eyebrows, audiences could have found the kind of lovemaking in the film too slow and unrealistic. Responses of the younger generation were totally opposite, however. Being used to the kind of love that often lasts for a fleeting moment, they were moved by a love and passion condemned by society and sacrifices made by lovers.

If UNTOLD SCANDAL had ended there, it might have become just another sentimental story – only perhaps a more tedious one against the historical backdrop of the Chosun Dynasty. But another appeal of this film to the younger generation was its universal plot of calculated revenge—a raw display of human emotions of jealousy and cruelty that can be found in a society of any era.

The charm of UNTOLD SCANDAL was telling a familiar story in an innovative, intriguing and very Korean way. A great irony in modern life is that people often contradict themselves as they seek change and yet long for stability. UNTOLD SCANDAL is a bracing embodiment of this dilemma.

Mira Sun is an associate at Manhattan law firm Yi Cho & Bunstein, LLC and Kyung Lim Park is an MC, comedian and singer in Korea, currently studying acting at New York Film Academy.



UNTOLD SCADAL
Written and Directed by E J-yong

"One day, when I was listening to some Baroque music, I wondered what kind of dissonance would occur if that kind of music appeared in the background of a Korean historical drama. In most period dramas, you would hear traditional stringed instruments like the kayagum, or see broad humor in the style of folk characters like Bang-ja, stories about power factions in the palace or a wronged woman's lamentations, that kind of thing. I wanted to break out of the cliches and create a historical drama that was more stylish and sophisticated, visually and narratively, than movies set in contemporary times-like classic foreign films. 'Untold Scandal' is basically a love story, but it will be a unique amalgam of elegant eroticism and a new perspective on Chosun culture."
– E J-yong

Born in Seoul in 1965, graduate of Korean Academy of Film Art in 1991

FILMOGRAPHY:

2000 ASAKO IN RUBY SHOES
1998 AN AFFAIR
1994 TALES OF A CITY (Documentary)
1991 CIRCLE OF LIFE (Short)
1991 MY MOTHER'S SUMMER (Short)
1991 Homo Videocus (Short)



THE CHARACTERS:

BAE Yong-jun on Jo-won

Though adept in the scholarly arts of poetry, calligraphy and painting, Jo-won rejects a life in government for a hedonistic life. The most charming rake in all of Chosun seduces the ladies with his honeyed words, sharp wit and forceful personality. It is impossible to hate this calculating and ruthless philanderer because, deep down inside, he yearns for true love. He forms a secret alliance with his first love, Lady Cho, and turns on all of his intense charms and sexual magnetism to pursue the virtuous widow Lady Sook.

"Jo-won is fully qualified for a government post but rejects it for a life of freedom, indulging in the pleasure of women. The way that he pursues his own lifestyle no matter what the rest of the world says is quite similar to the tendencies of the present generation. I'm certainly making a huge change from my sensitive image from past television series, but I really enjoy revealing different aspects of my personality. I hope to be seen solely as my character Jo-won in the movie instead of my image as actor BAE Yong-Jun."

Filmography (Television):

"The Winter Love Song"
"Barefoot Youth"
"The First Love"
"Love's Greeting"
"The Sunny Side"
"Barefoot Youth"

KINO

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

THE CHARACTERS:

—continued—

LEE Mi-sook on Lady Cho

Lady Cho is a brilliant woman who mastered the classics on her own, and she is deeply resentful of the limited life she must lead as a woman. On the surface, she is a model wife of the nobility, while discreetly enjoying making sexual conquests. She controls the elaborate game of sex and intrigue with her commanding intelligence and sexual magnetism from behind the scenes.

"While shooting 'The Affair,' E J-Yong told me about 'Untold Scandal.' I instinctively felt that no one else could play the character of Lady Cho. In the context of the period, Lady Cho would have been seen as a wanton woman, but I think in today's point of view, she could be seen as a daring, admirable woman who was born in the wrong time and never got the chance to fully utilize her talents. As filming continues, I think of her more and more as an extraordinary woman."

Filmography:

"The Ooh-la-la Sisters" (2002)
"Besa Me Mucho" (2001)
"The Legend of Gingko" (2001)
"Gingko Bed 2" (2000)
"The Affair" (1998)
"Whale Hunt" (1988)
"House of Two Women" (1998)
"Winter Wanderer" (1987)
"The Winter was Warm That Year " (1984)

THE CHARACTERS:

—continued—

JEON Do-yeon on Lady Sook

After nine years as a chaste widow, who does not remarry and remains faithful to her late husband's memory, the government rewards her with a Gate of Devotion in recognition of her strict adherence to Confucian beliefs. Aloof and graceful like a white crane, this refined beauty holds strong convictions that belie her fragile exterior, such as her forbidden Catholic faith. As she gradually succumbs to Jo-won's advances, she discovers the passion that she had kept buried deep within her heart.

"I've played a lot of strong characters in the past, but I've always wanted to play a woman like Sook, who appears tranquil on the surface but has a lot of fire and passion inside. Her love is pure, and she takes dangerous risks as a woman of her class for this love. I've been completely charmed by her personality, the way that she is deceptively weak on the outside but strong as steel on the inside."

Filmography:

"No Blood, No Tears" (2002)

"I Wish I Had a Wife" (2001)

"Happy End" (1999)

"The Organ in My Heart" (1999)

"Contact" (1997)

"A Promise" (1997)

CHO Hyeon-jae on KWON In-ho

The youngest son of Lady Cho's next-door neighbor and high-ranking government official, In-ho is also Lady Sook's cousin. Unaware that he's playing right into Lady Cho's hand, he falls in love at first sight with Soh-ok and succumbs to Lady Cho's dangerous temptations.

Broadening his horizons as a young actor in his first film role, Cho Hyun-jae seems to be reflected in the character of In-ho, who experiences love and temptation for the first time and learns some hard life lessons in "Untold Scandal." As innocent as In-ho is at the beginning, his wounds are deep, and his character's development holds the key to the movie's unexpected outcome.

Television:

"The Great Ambition" (2002)

"Love Letter" (2003)

"First Love" (2003)



**PREVIOUS ADAPTATIONS OF CHODERLOS DE LACLOS'
Les Liaisons Dangereuses**

Dangerous Liaisons (2004)
–TV Mini Series–
Dir. Josee Dayan

Cruel Intentions (1999)
Dir. Roger Kumble

Dangerous Liaisons, The (1994)
Dir. Gary Halvorson

Valmont (1989)
Dir. Milos Forman

Dangerous Liaisons (1988)
Dir. Stephen Frears

Nebezpečné známosti (1980)
Dir. Miloslav Luther

Liaisons dangereuses, Les (1980)
Dir. Claude Barma

Kiken na kankei (1978)
Dir. Toshiya Fujita

Dangerous Liaisons 1960 (1959)
Dir. Roger Vadim