

CRIME: HONG KONG STYLE

Police Story (15) 警察故事

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Dir Jackie Chan/1985 HK/99 mins/ Jackie Chan, Maggie Cheung, Brigitte Lin

In Cantonese with English and Chinese subtitles

Hong Kong superstar Jackie Chan considers *Police Story* (1985) to be one of his very best films and he's not wrong. The film was developed following Chan's disappointment with *The Protector* (James Glickenhaus, 1985) which he felt had not showcased his talents in a productive and appealing manner. He therefore set about creating a vehicle that he felt would both display his acting talents and his athletic abilities. He also wished to make a film that he felt was less exploitative in terms of things such as female nudity. The film is also notable for the appearances of two of the most enduringly popular actresses in Hong Kong cinema, Brigitte Lin as Selina and Maggie Cheung as the hero's girlfriend May. An altogether more wholesome vehicle than *The Protector* (particularly in its US cut), *Police Story* also consolidated Chan's reputation as a fearless stuntman, something that would contribute greatly to his popularity. *Police Story* contains some of his most famous stunt work including a downhill car chase through a shanty town and a climactic sequence in a shopping mall where Chan smashes through countless panes of glass and slides down a pole through a series of live light bulbs resulting in severe burning to his hands. As he landed he also managed to dislocate his pelvis. As ever in Chan's films, these 'stunt accidents' are recorded and played under the final credits to show audiences just how far Jackie Chan is willing to go to entertain them. The result won Best Film at the 1986 Hong Kong Film Awards where the Jackie Chan Stunt Team was given the prize for Best Action Choreography.

The Protector had been Jackie Chan's second serious attempt to break into the American market as a leading action hero. The previous effort, *Battle Creek Brawl* (aka *The Big Brawl*, 1980) had also been a flop despite drawing on the talents of Robert Clouse who had been responsible for directing Bruce Lee's *Enter the Dragon* (1973). Chan would finally break the American market in 1996 with *Rumble in the Bronx*, a film shot in Vancouver, Canada by a Hong Kong crew under the direction of long-time Chan collaborator Stanley Tong. The version released in the US by New Line was heavily re-edited, with around 17 minutes being removed, and a new score and English voice-track added to appeal to American audiences. The result, according to Boxofficemojo.com, grossed \$32,392,047 in the US.

Following on from the success of *Rumble in the Bronx* Chan was seen as more bankable in the US and went on to make a series of films that achieved some



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success there. These included three *Rush Hour* films (1 in 1998, 2 in 2001 and 3 in 2007), *Shanghai Noon* (2000) and *Around the World in 80 Days* (2004). More recently he has returned to Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China, making films that were aimed at the lucrative Chinese market such as *Little Big Soldier* (2010) and *Dragon Blade* (2015), as well as further films in the *Police Story* franchise, *New Police Story* (2004) and *Police Story 2013* (2013). Today, Jackie Chan remains one of the world's most famous film stars and *Police Story* one of his most iconic works.

Andy Willis (Curator, *CRIME: Hong Kong Style*)

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