

(The Film)

The Characters

Yo Hinomura aka Crying Freeman

(Mark Dacascos)

Yo Hinomura is born in Japan, on the island Hokkaido. His father taught him pottery, an art in which the young man mastered. That's up to a stay in the USA when his destiny changes. Shortly after having witnessed a murder he got caught in a trap. He awakes in a secret cellar inhabited by shadows in traditional Chinese costumes. The nightmare started ....

Yo had to undergo a profound brainwash during which he gets tattooed with a giant dragon. Against his will he becomes the executioner of a secret Chinese sect, the "Freeman". A free man. His real alter ego in the comic does not care to justify this bloody acts.

To incarnate this strange personality an actor was needed of a beauty more or less equal to the one drawn by Ikegami, who has to physically fit in the role: athletic, knowledge of martial arts, who could handle all kinds of weapons without ever showing any vulnerability. It was quickly clear that the young actor Mark Dacascos corresponded in all points to that description.

Mark Dacascos: I am a martial artist and I have learnt my art from my father like Yo learnt his profession from his. I recognize myself very much in him ... even if I have never killed anybody!

Gans used his advantages out of this complete identification of the actor to the role. He especially demanded of Mark to lose 10 kilos (about 20 pounds) to get to the feverish and athletic appearance that belongs to the character.

The director had a mixture of Bruce Lee and Alan Delon in his mind, firstly the feline force, secondly combined with a dark beauty.. Other visions were present in his imagination, especially Tyrone Power, the lady-killer of the classic Hollywood movies like the Mark of Zorro or Arenas sanglantes. The director: I wanted that the Freeman reassembles a species of a torero, that he has a Hispanic grace in which the women fall in love at once.

Mark Dacascos made all his stunts himself without ever being doubled. You see him execute quick turns, climbing up doors, turning on bare ground and

fighting with sabres without ever spotting a camera trick which usually would have been necessary for that character.

**Nobody else than him would have been capable of that role!**

Emu O'Hara (Julie Condra)

How she was created by Ikegami and Koike, Emu is the daughter of a powerful Japanese business man. With the age of 29 she is painter, always innocent, lives a pointless life and secluded since the death of her parents ... For Gans it was certain that the character of Emu made some corrections necessary to win the international audience. In the Film, Emu O'Hara is Canadian, an orphan due to a mafia killing. Because of her innocence she can only inspire. You can state that Emu is lonely. Christophe Gans: I know that certain parts of the comic don't fit to the cinema. That's the reason why I resisted in evading the issue of sex in Emu's life. I really needed an American to get a exterior point of view to this Asiatic environment. Putting this aside I tried to get a physical view of Emu . That's when he found Julie Condra a very young actor of Texas. Only her short blond hair did not fit in the image, but the director found in her the double, nearly perfect to the rose created by Ikegami. With brown hair and styled with round glasses, Julie Condra got the necessary purity for her character.

Koh (Byron Mann)

The partner, bodyguard and mentor of the Freeman is a mystic character. Entirely devoted to the dragons, it is known that he has no pity for his protégé when he tries to betray their demands. To choose Bryon Mann for the incarnation of Koh was quickly made.

Gans:" Bryon presents himself to the audience in playing a role, that of an actor more mature than he really is. I had much confidence in him before I had even seen him in Vancouver: I thought to myself, I saw the son of the man I had chosen. I was impressed by this trick and the intelligence that steams out of him. Originally from Hongkong, Bryon Mann is a young actor who speaks Cantonese perfectly and could therefore perform his dialog in Chinese without being dubbed. He himself had written down several versions

of his character's fantastic speech addressing the newly tattooed Yo. In the movie, Koh shows, a cold view and a spotless elegance.

Equipped with a more determinant role line in the comic book, he is the guardian of the Freeman, and at the same time guide and ward.

A dilemma that grows really big on him which in the original is only a simple "sidekick".

#### Netah (Tcheky Karyo)

From the beginning on Nitta, the police officer, was one of the favorite characters of Christophe Gans. A suspicious Cop, bought by the yakuza and eaten up with the will to put hand on the Freeman, he ends up falling in the claw of the underhanded Lady Hanada.

In the first part of the movie played in Canada, Nitta becomes Netha a special agent in Asian affairs of Interpol. It was Tcheky Karyo the famous Uncle Bob of Nikita who put hand on the character, manifested the European touch to the film. At the same time dandy and cruel, Netah is torn between his duties as a police officer and corruption shown on the one side by Forge, the female cop and on the other side in the arms of Lady Hanada when he loses his soul.

#### Lady Hanada (Yoko Shimada)

Kimie Hanada, wife of the cruel Ryuiji Hanada is one of the most surprising characters of the comic book. Even if she appears only half of the second part of the comic book, she then always plays a determining role. Greedy for power, even more than her husband, she makes the inspector Netha fall in a trap. Detestable? Not really, up to the superb conspiracy with all the charm shown to the cop during the funeral ceremony. Fascinated by this great Japanese, who manipulates men how she likes it, reminds him of Lady Macbeth. Christophe Gans saw the chance to create a magnificent character of a praying mantis. The beautiful Yoko Shimada was chosen to incarnate that role. Christophe Gans: I knew that an Asian living in the USA could never move, speak or react like a real Japanese woman. The beauty and the natural

grace of Yoko Shimada created an authentic character which I could never have been able to create in all parts.

#### Ryuji Hanada (Masaya Kato)

Ryoichi Ikegami was obviously inspired by Clint Eastwood or rather Inspector Harry, to design Ryuji Hanada .... Ray Ban glasses on the nose and a 357 magnum in the hand, showing at least victims, it is not clear to the other characters of the comic book that Ryuji is only a gangster, the impressive appearance and the macho accessories are enough to show the natural cruelty. His incredible physical resistance did not permit to survive the first adventure designed of Crying Freeman. In the film the essential attributes of the character remains. Cruel, mocking, depraved and virtually indestructible, the Ryuji of the movie especially differs from his model by a pure, more tempting appearance and secretly pushed by his wife who is certainly the head of the couple. With his designed silhouette taken from the Japanese genre cinema of the sixties the ex-dress-man Masaya Kato showed the sexy arrogance of Toshiro Mifune of L'Ange Ives driven to a look of a black knight. By thinking of the gangsters of Hollywood's "Cape et d'épée" Gans got the idea of adding a beard that definitely reminds of a Duc de Guise. The result, the magnificent description, created one of those hated villains.

#### Inspector Forge (Rae Dawn Chong)

Created in all parts by Christophe Gans and his co-scriptwriter Thierry Cazals, Inspector Forge does not exist in the original comic book and had therefore no equivalent.

The character, originally written for the comedian Belinda Bauer, has a double reason to exist.

First, to help to show the character of Netah to find his true dimension on showing him the picture of an honourable police officer. And at the same time to solve some improbabilities of the comic book ... It is Forge who takes Emu to the City Hall where she recognizes again the mystery Freeman ... and not only the simple chance. With her relaxation and her habits as a solid actor of

series, the Canadian actor Rae Dawn Cho brings an undeniable “American” side to the character.

### The witch (Ivy Ng)

The witch that appears in the film is indeed the combination of two characters of the comic book. The one character, the alarming blind acupuncturer who causes the Freeman to obey. And the other character, the strange old gangster, the direct superior of the Freeman in the hierarchy of the dragons. Her repulsive aspect was made by Chris Nelson who was responsible for make-up effects, who tried to transfer the comedian Ivy Ng in “a royal cobra many hundred years old” according to the wishes of Gans. Rediscovery of the movie Ivy Ng never played in movies before the shooting of Crying Freeman. Singer of the formation in the Canton opera, she gave the character a perfectly fascinating arrogance.