

## Document Citation

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# BLACK RAIN

(Japan, 1989)

27th New York Film Festival--1989

Tuesday, September 26 at 9:00 p.m.

Wednesday, September 27 at 6:15 p.m.

Running time: 123 minutes

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Director.....	Shohei Imamura
Screenplay.....	Toshiro Ishido
	Shohei Imamura
Based on the novel "Black Rain" by.....	Masuji Ibuse
Producer.....	Hisa Iino
Cinematography.....	Takashi Kawamata
Editor.....	Hajime Okayasu
Music.....	Toru Takemitsu
Sound.....	Ken'ichi Benitani
Art Director.....	Hisao Inagaki
Lighting.....	Yasuo Iwaki

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## Cast:

Yasuko (the niece).....	Yoshiko Tanaka
Shigematsu (the uncle).....	Kazuo Kitamura
Shigeko (the aunt).....	Etsuko Ichihara
Shokichi.....	Shoichi Ozawa
Kotaro.....	Norihei Miki
Yuichi.....	Keisuke Ishida

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Shohei Imamura has adapted Ibuse's classic postwar novel about Hiroshima and its aftermath in a manner that fuses his own style of perverse shocks with the exquisite restraint of an Ozu or Mizoguchi. The atomic attack, recreated in horrific prelude, gives way to a subtle domestic drama ten years later, as the survivors become walking time-bombs of radiation's after-effects. Yasuko, a pretty young woman is of marrying age, but suitors retreat once they discover she has been splashed by the "black rain" of August 6, 1945. What is so achingly poignant is the attempt of each family member to protect the others from the harsh truth of his/her deterioration. This quietly perfect film is Imamura's most mature and compassionate work.

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## About the filmmaker:

Shohei Imamura was born in Tokyo in 1926. After graduating from Waseda University in 1951, he joined Shochiku Co., Ltd. as an assistant director at their Ofuna Studio. He worked under director Yasujiro Ozu on BAKUSHU and three

subsequent films. He then worked with director Yoshitaro Nomura until 1954 when he transferred to the Nikkatsu Studios where he began working as first assistant director under Yuzo Kawashima. With Kawashima, he co-authored the screenplay for that director's acclaimed film BAKUMATSU TAIYO-DEN.

In 1958 Imamura was finally allowed to direct. His first film, NUSUMARETA YOKUJO (STOLEN DESIRE), was a rather serious comedy describing the exhilarating life of Kochi Osaka's traveling group. His next feature, IN FRONT OF THE NISHI-GINZA STATION (1958) described the lives of poverty-stricken, yet admirable children of down-and-out neighborhoods. His PIGS AND BATTLESHIPS, made in 1961, described the lives of parasitic gangsters who made their base of operations around the American Naval Base at Yokosuka.

With these films, Imamura established himself as a first-rate director. But three years went by before he made his next film NIPPON KONCHU-KI (NIPPON INSECT STORY) (also known as THE INSECT WOMAN). It was during this three year period that he refused to work on any project which he found distasteful. He did complete the screenplay AKAI SATSUI (RED MURDEROUS ATTEMPT) but the studio refused to allow him to make the film. He went on to write a play "Parody - Gods and Hogs" which later became the original story for his film KAMIGAMI NO FUKAKI YOKUBO (GOD'S PROFOUND DESIRE) (1968).

Imamura's desire to pursue total realism, coupled with the decline of the motion picture industry in Japan, led to a series of documentaries: NINGEN JOHATSU (A MAN VANISHES) (1967), filmed mostly with hidden cameras and NIPPON SENGOSHI (POST WAR NIPPON) (1970), virtually a documentary treatment of his previous NIPPON KONCHU-KI. Other titles during this period include INTENTION OF MURDER (1964), the aforementioned GOD'S PROFOUND DESIRE (1968) and THE MAKING OF A PROSTITUTE (1975).

Imamura returned to directing fiction films in 1976 with FUKUSHU SURU WA WARENI ARI (VENGEANCE IS MINE) which he completed in 1979. VENGEANCE IS MINE won the "Kinema Junpo" (Japan's 'Oscar') for 1979 and was part of New Directors/New Films 1980. EIJANAIIKA (SWING ALONG) was completed in 1981. In 1983 Imamura directed THE BALLAD OF NARAYAMA which won the "Palme D'Or" at that year's Cannes Film Festival and was part of New Directors/New Films in 1984. In 1985 Imamura completed ZEGEN. Both ZEGEN and BLACK RAIN were selected for official competition at Cannes.