

Format
HD

Length
1 x 52 | 73 min

Genre
Human Interest

Production
2011 - 2013

Proposed Delivery
Oct 2013 (72min)
Oct 2013 (52min)

Producer
SINAE HA
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Director
WOORYOUNG CHOI
& SINAE HA

International Sales
FIRST HAND FILMS
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Co-producer
ITVS(USA)
NHK(JAPAN)
SBS(KOREA)

Pre-sales
NRK(NORWAY)
CHANNEL 8 (ISRAEL)

Supported by
KOCCA (KOREA)
BCPF (KOREA)
SJM (KOREA)

Broadcasted at
Global Voices –
PBS Network (USA)
NHK-BS1 (JAPAN)
NRK 2 (NORWAY)
SBS (KOREA)



Here Comes Uncle Joe

✓ SYNOPSIS

He is not their uncle, and his name is not Joe. But to the old ladies of An-dong, a rural community in southeastern Korea, Uncle Joe is the only contact they have to the modern world. Uncle Joe's delivery service is extraordinary. He reaches 15 isolated villages that have neither markets nor public transport and delivers to the clients' door – or even into their refrigerator – whatever they order.

As the young leave these rural communities to acquire higher education and to find high salary jobs in the cities, there are no services or people to support old people. Uncle Joe becomes the only man for the elderly. He serves his clients sincerely, and elderly customers take care for him as their sons.

However, his road taken isn't always happy. Because of their advanced years, Joe often encounters his elderly customers misery and death. His hope is to share his life with his old friends as long as he can do. The film follows Uncle Joe's delivery road from spring to winter with smiles, loves, and tears between one delivery man and 800 elderly.

BEST A.S.D PITCH AWARD (ASIAN SIDE OF THE DOC 2011)
BEST INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS AWARD (SUNNY SIDE OF THE DOC 2011)

✓ CHARACTER

Uncle Joe worked as a talented teacher in a high school, Seoul and a cram school in a city of Youngju. In 1995, he should leave his hometown and stay in An-dong because of a scandal. He fell in love with his student and they got married. This love affair totally changed his life. In 1997, the great recession in Korea happened and his small fruit shop never made a profit. So he considered this delivery work to get rid of an overstock of fruits in his small shop. When he first appeared in the countryside with an old truck, people regarded him as approaching danger because he was a stranger. Uncle Joe continuously ran around the villages and filled the residents' requests for supplying other goods. With his diligence, the attitudes of the residents in fifteen remote villages were gradually changed. It took three years to open their minds.

✓ THE ISSUE

A personal perspective will move away from the social discourse of the aging problem. In our present-day society, when money is the measure of everything, the elderly are looked upon as an economic liability and a social burden. Many old people, unable to bear this loneliness, commit suicide and die alone without any care. Uncle Joe helps them stay happier and healthier. This is their emotional wellness. In this film, we can meet strong social connections between Uncle Joe and the elderly, face with aging problems.

✓ STYLE & TONE

Here Comes Uncle Joe is a character- and narrative-driven documentary supported by several elder characters in An-dong villages. As time moves from spring to winter, we can taste the exotic scenery and bucolic countryside environment in Korea, far from the skyscrapers of the metropolitan city. The overall tone of the story though will be gentle, humorous and intimate. Two directors are an active observer and intimate interviewer. I put up observational cameras in his truck to catch happenings and use these tracking shots as a frame.

✓ AWARD

BEST LONG DOCUMENTARY AWARD (WORLD MOUNTAIN DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL OF QINGHAI 2014, CHINA)

BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE & BEST DIRECTOR OF NON-FICTION (TELAS- SAU PAULO INTERNATIONAL TV FESTIVAL 2014, BRAZIL)

BEST LONG DOCUMENTARY AWARD (GOLD PANDA DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL 2014, CHINA)



✓ TREATMENT

HERE COMES UNCLE JOE will follow Uncle Joe's delivery road from spring to winter and sees dramatic moments, which Uncle Joe and his old customers share their happiness, overcome unprecedented losses, and heal their loneliness by leaning against each other. Moreover, as he suddenly meets his old friend in 30 years, his emotional turmoil within himself and his family appear. The seasonal changes will reflect different aspects of the tensions from happiness to sadness.

When his old truck goes up mountains in the remote areas, Uncle Joe's journey starts. As the song played on his truck is echoed at the entrance of villages, old ladies slowly go out. This is a short moment to meet the only deliveryman, but it's the happiest moment for the elderly. They listen to news from the outside world, gives him their want list, and ask him for help.

We slowly steps into the sad side of his journey by focusing on a relationship between Uncle Joe and elderly people; Grandma Gi-sun and Grandpa Kim. They apparently look happy and vibrant, but feel loneliness by living apart from their sons and daughters. With the only deliveryman, they prepares for the last day. Uncle Joe knows that as times goes by, he should spend more time to take care of his old friends, not to sell his goods.

When he first appeared in the countryside with an old truck, people regarded him as approaching danger because he was a stranger. Uncle Joe continuously ran around the villages, and filled the residents' requests for supplying other goods every day. With his diligence, the attitudes of the residents were gradually changed. It took three years to open their minds.

However, as he is also getting older, he is slowly exhausted on his road. One day, Grandpa Kim's condition is getting worse with liver cirrhosis, and Grandma Gisun suddenly died on a field. With these incidents, he blames himself because he already knows their statements and gets a sign from them, but acts as if I don't know. Many thoughts whirl around in his mind whenever he faces with his elderly customers' accident, he feels loneliness in his small truck without anyone who talks about. At home, he feels a distance from his sons and wife, and his sides are only chicks.

We approach to Uncle Joe's secret why he goes around these villages with a heavy burden of responsibilities. He should leave his hometown because he fell in love with his student. After the teacher and student romance, he changed his job from a teacher to a merchant, and started his new life in An-dong, a new city, for his love.

However, as his sons enter a middle school, and his wife has her own job, he started feeling a distance from them. They spend their own time climbing, and traveling without Uncle Joe. With retracing the course of his life, we can see a wounded heart of Uncle Joe. He tries to overcome his grief by getting some wisdom and feeling extraordinary comforts from old people. These stories will spread in front of audience by crossing with lyrics and sounds, which come from on his car audio.

DIRECTOR'S / PRODUCER'S CV



Wooyoung Choi is a freelancer director and a member of Indie PD in Korea. He has worked on more than 15 major television productions in Korea made for, sold to, Korean major broadcasters including KBS, MBC, EBS and TVN.

He directed his first 60-minute documentary, '*Soul performance Gut*', supported by KBI in 2007. In the process, he is named one of the prolific directors in television documentary.

In 2008, his documentary, '*Searching for the legendary gigantic fish, Dotdom (KBS)*', is nominated as the best Wednesday Special Documentary in KBS. Recent highlights include the documentary series, '*Report in Samdong Elementary School for one hundred-eighty days (EBS)*', which suggest the interactive learning and observe students' attitude for six months.

With Crossing Borders in 2010 and IDFA Summer school in 2011, he develops his first international documentary, '*Here Comes Uncle Joe*' and this is awarded as the Best A.S.D Pitch in Asian Side and the Best Under 30's talents project in Sunny Side of the Doc in 2011.



Sinae Ha is a producer and co-director in this documentary, *Here Comes Uncle Joe*.

With a B.A specialized in Television production and journalism, she worked on Television production as a director for 3 years.

In planning team, she launched a 50-min weekly documentary program, '*Top Secret (KBS 1)*' and developed documentary series, '*Searching for Buddhism*' and '*The Last Paradise*' in 2006. From 2007 to 2008, she directed her first television program, '*Top Secret (KBS1)*', and a daily magazine program '*Issue Unlimited (KBS 2)*'.

In 2009, she became a member of Communication and Interaction lab in Graduate School of Culture Technology, KAIST and made a short narrative film, *Faceless*, produced in New York Film Academy. With M.S in Culture Technology in KAIST, she developed a cross-media management technology in 2010.