



BLACK COAL THIN ICE

**Autumn
Season
2015**

Release: 2014
Cert (UK): 15
Language: Mandarin
Runtime: 106 mins
Director: Diao Yinan
Writer: Diao Yinan
Cinematographer: Jingsong Dong
Cast: Liao Fan, Gwei Lun-Mei



Black Coal, Thin Ice (Chinese: 白日; pinyin: Bai Ri Yan Huo; literally: "Daylight Fireworks") is a 2014 Chinese thriller film written and directed by Diao Yinan, winner of the Golden Bear at the 64th Berlin IFF.

Set in northern China in 1999 and 2004. Zhang Lili (Fan Liao) is an ex-cop traumatised by a brutal shooting he witnessed five

years before while on the trail of a killer leaving chopped-up body parts in piles of coal. Now a drunk and a loser, he works as a security guard and becomes obsessed with a new case: corpses chopped up in the same way, but with a macabre new detail – the feet have ice-skates attached. With the weary indulgence of his former police colleagues, he begins to investigate and conceives an obsession with the first victim's beautiful and mysterious widow (Lun Mei Gwei), who works at a dry-cleaner's.

The film's Chinese title refers to the state of mind of the main characters and can also be read as a subtle metaphor for today's China, where unbelievable - or unimaginable - events happen, such as the crimes the film depicts. The contrast in the Chinese and English titles also reflects the difference between reality and dreams. As the director has stated: "Coal and ice are real; fireworks in daylight are surreal fantasy. They're two sides of the same coin."

Western reviewers have highlighted the film's visual qualities: "Puzzling out the whos, the whys and the WTFs of this marvelously oddball case takes a back seat to drinking in the film's dark, shining evocation of night and the city." (The Daily Telegraph)