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COVER STORY

LAWRENCE CHAU

LARGER THAN MEDIA

MEDIA &

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93RD OSCARS

THE YEAR OF... FINALLY

BUSINESS

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THE MAIN FACTOR FOR

BUSINESS SUCCESS

RELATIONSHIPS 101

DO WOMEN KNOW HOW

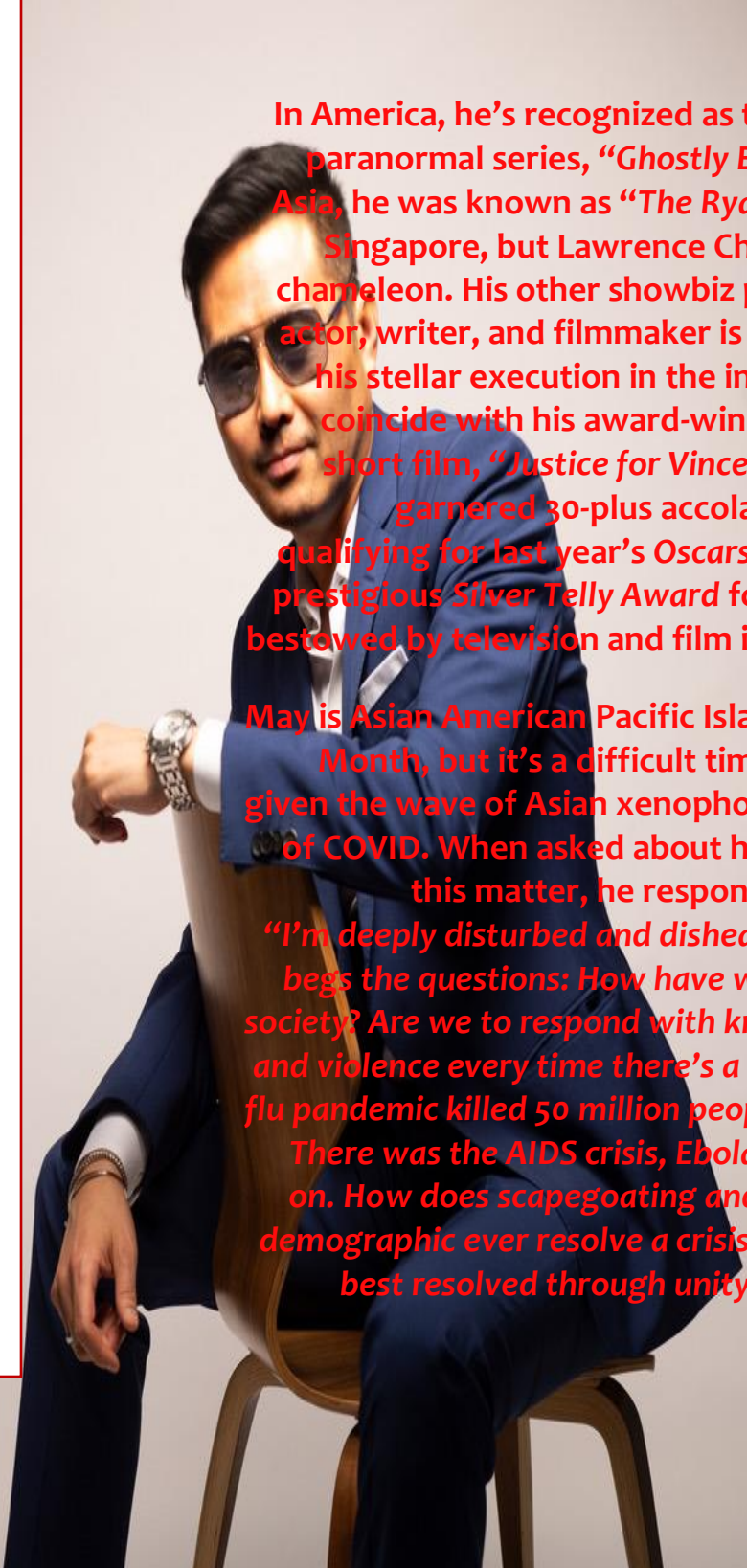
TO TREAT MEN?

COVER STORY

LARGER THAN MEDIA

Lawrence Chau's Anti-Hate Film Resonates In Time for AAPI Month

By Jules Lavallee



In America, he's recognized as the host of the paranormal series, "Ghostly Encounters;" in Asia, he was known as "The Ryan Seacrest" of Singapore, but Lawrence Chau personifies chameleon. His other showbiz personas as an actor, writer, and filmmaker is an example of his stellar execution in the industry as they coincide with his award-winning, anti-hate short film, "Justice for Vincent," which has garnered 30-plus accolades, including qualifying for last year's Oscars and earning a prestigious Silver Telly Award for social issues bestowed by television and film industry elites.

May is Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, but it's a difficult time to celebrate given the wave of Asian xenophobia in this Age of COVID. When asked about his thoughts on this matter, he responded by saying; "I'm deeply disturbed and disheartened by it. It begs the questions: How have we evolved as a society? Are we to respond with knee-jerk racism and violence every time there's a crisis? The 1918 flu pandemic killed 50 million people worldwide. There was the AIDS crisis, Ebola, SARS, and so on. How does scapegoating and demonizing a demographic ever resolve a crisis? Problems are best resolved through unity, not division."



This answer best describes the character and wisdom of someone who is larger than media as he uses his gift of writing and producing to relay messages like this one across the world. His film, **“Justice for Vincent (JFV)”** was written in 2016 and filmed in 2018. It successfully toured the film festival circuit throughout 2019 and 2020 — pre-COVID— yet its storyline centers around an Asian hate crime that jolted the Asian American community in 1982. When asked how he knew it would be so timely, this was his response...

“There was a dramatic rise in hate after the 2016 election where people of color and immigrants were being targeted; African Americans, Muslims, Hispanics, and Jewish people. I just had a gut feeling the Asian community would be next. The China Trade War was a precursor of sorts, and then the pandemic hit in 2020. So, yes, “JFV” eerily foreshadowed the Asian xenophobia we sadly see today. Doing “JFV” was a rallying cry to denounce hate, not just for the Asian American community, but for everyone. The film is a dramatic adaptation inspired by the real-life murder of Chinese American, Vincent Chin, who was allegedly mistaken for being Japanese and beaten to death with a baseball bat in Detroit in 1982 during the so-called “Japanese Auto Invasion” when racial and economic tensions rang high. His murder sparked what is believed to be the first Pan-Asian civil rights movement in America as the murderers were let off with a mere \$3000 fine and three-year probation. In writing the script, my message was universal: a mother’s loss is a mother’s loss; hate is hate; injustice is injustice. We also pay tribute to other hate crime victims like Matthew Shepard, Trayvon Martin and Heather Heyer in “JFV.” I just re-edited the film to include George Floyd, and also acknowledged the parallels between what happened to Chin and what’s going on with the racial backlash against the Asian American community at the moment, but I do so in a spirit of compassion and hope that people from all walks of life will come together to overcome hate and division.”



The Vincent Chin story has inspired projects by other filmmakers though Chau was the first to do a dramatic adaptation. Chau is pleased that others are shining a light on the Vincent Chin story as he feels it is definitely a story that needs to be told even at almost 40 years later. Documentaries had been directed by friends of Chau in the past, but his perspective in the drama genre was the first of its kind. Chau believes that the social justice stories of Asian Americans deserve to be told just as much as those about African Americans, Native Americans, and the Holocaust.

Chau not only is an independent filmmaker, he is also an actor and played the role of a character named Henry Lee, a fictional composite character who takes on the role of an activist that helps Vincent's mother, Lily Chin, in the drama film. With his brilliant twist, this character encapsulates all of the activists

involved with this true story. He was able to pull off a well-executed murder scene in the film with the help of A-list stunt coordinator, Steve Brown, who is known for his work in Wonder Woman, Deadpool, X-Men, Logan, Transformers, and The Equalizer. The film also features actor and actress, William McNamara and Elizabeth Sung.

Though Lawrence Chau is a world-renowned host, actor, writer, and filmmaker, it is his passion for social justice and the creativity in which he applies to tell the story of anti-hate for all of those who are victims to it that makes him Larger Than Media... dare we say, Larger Than Life. Chau plans to publicly showcase "JFV" in honor of AAPI heritage month this month of May 2021... his battle cry against the current wave of Asian xenophobia. Details will be announced on his social media: Facebook: @lawrencechau/ @lawrencechau-actor/ @JFV Instagram: @lawrencechauact Twitter: @lawrencechauact

To learn more about the film, visit www.jfvfilm.com.

