

Chi Muoi Lo

(Chee Moy Low)

Actor, Writer, Director, Producer & Manager



Forbes

Click on *Forbes* icon above for link to article.

MASTERING THE BUSINESS OF ACTING

"Chi desires to give everyone the best chance at making it!"

SHOWBIZ CHEATSHEET

"Power is information, and the industry does not want to tell people the truth. Because the truth will make them look bad."

Forbes Magazine

"Top-notch...Giving a voice to actors!"

VENTS MAGAZINE

"...Chi has coached some of the best actors in the world...he will take your business to the next level... don't miss out!"

VOICES OF COURAGE

"...inform and arm actors with practical tools and insight into the business of acting."

SCRIPT MAGAZINE

"...so inspiring...this is exciting...this is going to be good and affordable!"

UP AND ADAM!

"...young actors should not have to overpay to get the knowledge they need for success! Chi is sincere and authentic!"

THE MO KELLY SHOW

"...30 years of experience in the industry...information necessary for working actors and rising stars!"

TOO OPINIONATED

Since *Mastering the Business of Acting's* launch, its online presence has grown phenomenally. Sales have been going up steadily while Chi has been featured in many podcasts and other interviews. The series has already gotten a number of positive reviews from various publications and individuals. The team is excited for the upcoming live Q&A event taking place on May 10, 2022. The sky's the limit for this series, especially as we start teaming up with colleges across the country to include it in their curriculum.

Despite this past year and a half being exceptionally difficult for the entire industry, it has been Allen Edelman Management's most lucrative year to date thanks to Chi Muoi Lo's leadership. His client Karen Malina White booked Ryan Murphy's *Monster*, reprised her role as a series regular on *Proud Family: Louder and Prouder*, made ridiculous money for her work in thirteen episodes of Tyler Perry's *Bruh*, and also booked a lead role in a new TV movie.

Steven Krueger was one of the few actors in Hollywood who was booked for the entire year and half for series regular work on *Roswell: New Mexico* as well as on Showtime's *Yellowjackets*.

Along with Christopher Wolfe and Richard Whiten, Chi Muoi Lo's clients made this the best year in AEM's 20 year history.



Chi Muoi Lo at the world premiere of "Yellowjackets."



"I've known Chi since our high school days in Philadelphia, but it wasn't until 7 years ago that we reconnected.

Chi's knowledge of the business still continues to astound me. Because he has been an actor, producer, manager, and filmmaker, he's been on every side possible of the camera. That wealth of experience, coupled with his passion for the business is why he's a master teacher.

Having Chi as a manager is the best decision I've ever made. Chi fights for me on all fronts. Creatively, by getting me in the door and financially, by knowing the business better than the studios, he's my secret weapon! (Which I guess won't be so secret anymore!)"

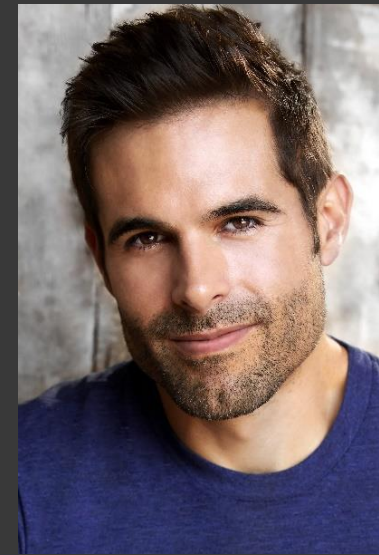
- Karen Malina White

Lean on Me, Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story, Malcolm & Eddie, The Proud Family: Louder and Prouder



"Chi fights and he fights hard. It's that simple. I don't think there's a quality you want more in a representative. He intentionally works with a small roster of clients so that he can devote as much of his attention as possible to getting his people the career they want. I don't meet too many other actors who get the kind of grit, determination, and passion from their agent or manager that I've gotten from Chi throughout our entire 10+ year relationship."

*- Steven Krueger
Yellowjackets, The Originals,
Roswell, New Mexico, Goosebumps*



"Chi is unlike any other person I've met in the business. No one has his work ethic, his experience and his capacity to innovate.

He lives and breathes the business. He works ultra-hard and doesn't stop. He's often called me in the morning with a solution to a problem he has somehow solved overnight.

His experience as an actor, writer, director, producer, and manager gives him a unique skill set that no one in this industry has. And finally, he's hungry. He has an insatiable need to learn and is constantly innovating his approach to the business.

*- Christopher Wolfe
Brooklyn Nine Nine, Parks and Recreation,
Modern Family, S.W.A.T.*

Chi Muoi Lo

At the age of 10, Chi discovered his love for acting. By the ninth grade, Chi knew that acting was in his blood, and he entered the High School for the Creative and Performing Arts as a drama major. At Temple University, he was a theater major but grew restless after one year and decided to accept a full scholarship from San Francisco's esteemed American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.). It was unprecedented for an eighteen-years old to be accepted to the Master's program there. By the age of 20, Chi had studied with 64 acting teachers.

Chi Muoi Lo is the owner of the production company, Black Hawk Entertainment and the CEO of the talent management company Allen Edelman Management.

Chi's debut as an actor-writer-director with the feature film *Catfish In Black Bean Sauce* was met with great success and made *Variety's* "Top 50 of 2001 Limited-Release Winner At The Box Office." His next project is a television series called *Life in Threes*, inspired by a true story, written to span 7 seasons with 13 episodes each season. He has also written a half hour comedy TV pilot, *Catfish In Black Bean Sauce* inspired from the feature film by the same name.

As an actor, Chi had great success right out of the gate after he landed in Los Angeles. Chi left his mark with his outstanding performance starring in the critically acclaimed and highly rated *Vanishing Son* mini-series and starred in *MOW Faith of My Father*. Chi has also appeared as Guest Lead on numerous shows such as on *Nip Tuck*, *The Player*, *CSI*, *NYPD Blue*, and many others. His film credits include *The Relic*, *Indecent Proposal*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and more.

While *Catfish In Black Bean Sauce* was a career achievement, Chi realized that he may have jumped into directing too soon, as it caused him to neglect his acting career. To get things back on track, he was determined to accomplish two things: purchase Allen Edelman Management, and create non-profit acting group that gave him a place to seriously work on his craft.





With his purchase of Allen Edelman Management, as a manager, he nurtured the careers of countless clients over the years. Through this nurturing, he has participated in well over three thousand phone calls- listening to actors de-brief him on their auditions, pitching, dealing with talent agents and casting agents, and negotiating series deals and film deals with studios' Business Affairs representatives.

To achieve his second goal, Chi soon became the founder of the acting group entitled Actor's Consortium, a private, not-for-profit, professional, ethnically diverse actors group. It was created in July of 2002 to provide its members with a productive and nurturing environment to polish their craft and sharpen their skills. Chi served as Artistic Director from July of 2002 to May of 2005. Chi remained an active member until 2019.

Chi taught a master class in acting, once a week, from 2004-2006. Later, Chi created a 14 week workshop entitled Audition & Camera Acting Master Class where he taught a limited number of actors a set of skills and techniques he developed over his own acting career. This 14 week workshop was first held once in 2007 and once in 2012. One final workshop session, initially planned for the summer of 2019, has developed into a seven episode streaming educational video project called Mastering The Business of Acting.

Chi has always felt, it is simply unacceptable for actors to spend thousands of dollars on training and still not know anything about the acting business. With all the knowledge he gained as an actor, writer, director and manager, something "clicked." The need to get this "knowledge" on tape to share with others was too overwhelming to ignore.

Mastering The Business of Acting has compiled in its seven episodes, thirteen hours of invaluable industry information rarely discussed so candidly. Mastering The Business of Acting is in many ways a lasting legacy he is able to share with generations of actors to come.

Most industry professionals have one perspective to draw from. However, his eclectic mix of professional achievements allowed Chi to see situations from not just one, but multiple angles. This in turn gave him a unique insight and understanding of the industry few others could match.

NALUDA

MAGAZINE

Interview with Actor, Director and Producer Chi Muoi Lo

April 22, 2021

Chi has experienced and seen how young vulnerable actors have been exploited in the entertainment industry and should not have to overpay to get the information and knowledge they need for success. That's why he decided to create his new program "Mastering the Business of Acting" that offers an invaluable experience centered around his teachings and guidance.

Chi covers a variety of topics ranging from how to break into the business to knowing how to maintain a successful acting career, including the art and business of auditioning, the constantly changing business of acting, and the new technological advancements that now all actors are expected to be experienced in.

What did you learn from your biggest failure?

You always need somebody to answer to. You need someone to see things that you cannot see just generally and within business as well. If you have all the power and are only listening to yourself, you're going to be wrong a lot and make lots of mistakes. Having someone else there will force you to reevaluate your decisions for your own good.

What's your advice for the newer actors/actresses?

If this is what you really want, find a good manager to guide you and realize that you were not taught about the business side of acting, so you are pretty much as blind as a bat. Recognize



Check out our interview with Actor, Director and Producer Chi Muoi Lo.

Follow Chi @masteringthebusinessofacting

that and get educated from products like **Mastering the Business of Acting** because learning the craft is only half the battle. The other half is probably more important.

What would you say are the greatest lessons you learned so far in this business?

You have to really, really love the business to survive it. Passion does evolve and you have to adapt or you will simply not make it.

How would your best friend describe you?

Compulsive, passionate, stingy with my time, a lover of information I value, generous, talkative, and with a mind that is all over the place.

What's next for Chi Muoi Lo in 2021?

My new show, *Life in Threes*. It's an epic story that spans seven decades, while three lives unravel in the present. *Life in Threes* tells the story of an 85-year-old Chinese woman, with early stage dementia, who moves into a nursing home in Philadelphia, in order to take care of one last piece of unfinished business, before the disease gets the best of her. It's there that she befriends a young Caucasian orderly and an African American nurse. She helps them make sense of their lives, as she recounts the story of her life's journey that begins in China, moves on to Vietnam, and ends in contemporary America. It's based on a true story and is going into pre-production in September. 7 seasons containing 13 episodes each.

What is your favorite healthy food?

My homemade fish sauce.

And your favorite cheat food?

Once a week, I'll have a small glass of Coca-Cola.

How would you explain your fashion style?

I learned how to dress up to go out just 7 years ago. I don't really like to dress up a lot in general, especially now since there's no need.

What is your own definition of happiness?

Doing what you love, being with people that you care about, and always having fun with whatever it is that you do. That way it never becomes work.

If you could meet someone living or dead, who would it be and why?

Einstein. It would be so fascinating learning about things I know nothing about from him. I have a deep admiration for him and his story.

Best advice ever given?

"What's the rush?"

Do you support any charity?

Yes, I love to give back.

Where do you see yourself and your career in 5 years from now?

Producing *Life in Threes* still. Ideally, I'll have other projects going on at the same time. I will be very happy seeing the place where *Mastering the Business of Acting* has gotten to. I expect it to be taught in high schools, under-grad programs, and acting classes around the world.

Favorite song? Why?

Both Sides Now by Joni Mitchell. I feel like you can't fully appreciate it until later on in your life. I just absolutely love it.

What do you think of Social Media?

There's good and bad in it. There's a lot of people who make it more of a bigger deal than it is. People who don't care about it, miss a big chunk of why it's important. I think there should be a good balance of how much you consume.

Where can we follow you?

Website: www.masteringthebusinessofacting.com

Instagram: [@masteringthebusinessofacting](https://www.instagram.com/masteringthebusinessofacting)

Facebook: [@masteringthebusinessofacting](https://www.facebook.com/masteringthebusinessofacting)

Twitter: [@MasteringActing](https://twitter.com/MasteringActing)

Rapid-Fire Questions (Favorites):

Book: Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

Quote: We wear the mask that grins and lies, It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes – Paul Laurence Dunbar

Movie: The Rainmaker (1956)

Tv Series: All in the Family

Favorite Food: Clams with my homemade fish sauce.

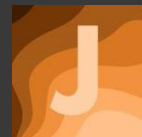
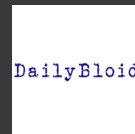
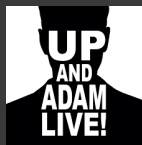
Travel Destination: Puerto Vallarta

Sports Team: Whichever one Tom Brady is in. I refuse to name the Patriots because of #Bellacheat.

Photo Credit: Hilary Jones

Media Mentions & Appearances

Click on logos below to see articles or podcasts about *Mastering the Business of Acting*.





Los Angeles Times

Humor, Pathos in Multicultural 'Catfish' Stew

By KEVIN THOMAS
JUNE 9, 2000 12 AM PT
TIMES STAFF WRITER

"Catfish in Black Bean Sauce" marks the ambitious feature debut of Vietnamese-born Chi Muoi Lo, who wrote, produced and directed this film as well as acted, in a leading role. Chi has spread himself too thin, resulting in an uneven picture but one that has plenty of substance and emotion.

Chi has been singularly fortunate in his stars, Mary Alice and Paul Winfield, veterans of such resources and presence that they make the entire film worth watching. What they can accomplish with a glance and a shrug is a pleasure to behold.

Alice and Winfield play a kindly middle-aged, middle-class African American couple, Dolores and Harold Williams, who were unable to have children of their own. While serving in Vietnam, Harold came to the rescue of a 10-year-old Vietnamese girl and her little brother, who were put up for adoption by their desperate mother. Dolores, a woman with a considerable sense of propriety, and the laid-back Harold have been outstanding parents, with their daughter Mai (Lauren Tom) married to another Vietnamese refugee (Tzi Ma) and their son Dwayne (Chi) a bank manager on the verge of presenting an engagement ring to Nina (Sanaa Lathan), a beautiful young

African American who puts in long hours at a medical clinic.

In an instant this image of cross-cultural solidarity and contentment is shattered when Mai joyfully announces that she has finally located her birth mother, due to arrive in a week. Dolores and Harold were under the impression that Mai had given up her search long ago, and her thoughtlessness in not preparing them leaves Dolores stunned and hurt yet determined to rise to the occasion with dignity. Their birth mother, Thanh (Kieu Chinh), while having been through a terrible ordeal and ecstatic at being reunited with her children, proves to be a haughty, critical woman.

The plan had been that Thanh should live with Mai and her husband, but Thanh insists on moving in with Dwayne and his roommate Michael (Tyler Christopher), although Dwayne barely remembers her and harbors deep resentment toward her for abandoning him.

In short, Chi has created a volatile situation ripe for both humor and pathos, and he discovers plenty of both. He should have quit while he was ahead. Instead, he throws in a murky and contrived subplot in which Dwayne finds himself in a curiously passionless relationship with Nina while becoming mightily upset that his hunky roomie has become involved with a pre-op Chinese transsexual, Samantha (Wing Chen). You're given the impression that Dwayne is struggling to deny his attraction to Michael, but Chi raises this possibility only to back away from it. That Thanh seems a latent racist, not at all pleased that Dwayne is engaged to Nina and eager to line up a Vietnamese girl for him, is quite enough of a complication; Michael and Samantha are a whole other movie.

Chi is on far surer ground as a writer-director in the film's more serious moments or at those times when the humor seems to arise naturally from a complicated predicament. He is a good director of actors, though a bit of a showoff himself, too eager to hog the spotlight. Yet in its theatrical way "Cat-fish in Black Bean Sauce" does end on a note of hard-earned wisdom and reconciliation.

* MPAA rating: PG-13, for brief strong language and sexual content. Times guidelines: some adult situations, suitable for mature older children.

'Catfish in Black Bean Sauce'

Paul Winfield: Harold Williams

Mary Alice: Dolores Williams

Chi Muoi Lo: Dwayne

Lauren Tom: Mai

A Blackhawk Entertainment release of an Iron Hill Pictures/Warwick Pictures production. Writer-producer-director Chi Muoi Lo. Cinematographer Dean Lent. Editor Dawn Hoggatt. Music Stanley A. Smith. Costumes Maral Kalinian. Production designer Skyler J. Adler. Running time: 1 hour, 52 minutes.

At selected theaters.

Los Angeles Times

The Catch of the Day

By EMORY HOLMES

JUNE 8, 2000 12 AM PT

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

The breakfast crowd at Al's Deli in Studio City is well into its omelets when film maker Chi Muoi Lo rushes in and settles himself into a booth at the rear of the restaurant. With his Old World charm, GQ style and raven-black bangs arcing hiply against his brow, Lo manages to project both smugness and edge.

The edginess is understandable. He is in the final days before the release Friday of his first feature film, "Catfish in Black Bean Sauce," a romantic comedy, for which he performs myriad roles as the films' director, writer, producer and star.

"People ask why did [I give] this movie this name," Lo begins, invoking the Vietnamese delicacy whose cultural pedigree is a metaphor for the central theme of his story. "I've been saying, 'Because it's outrageous.'

" 'Catfish in Black Bean Sauce' sounds like cuisine from the black American South or Vietnam. But the funny thing is [the dish] is really Chinese."

That Lo is able to derive both comedy and pathos out of such odd subtleties and misperceptions (about food, identity, sex and love-in-crisis) is one of his film's narrative delights. Race is never mentioned in a pejorative sense; rather, it is portrayed as it is in much of American life: an ever-present subtext, refocusing and coloring every scene.



“Catfish,” a low-budget (less than \$2 million) independent feature released by Black Hawk Entertainment, tells the story of Dwayne Williams (Lo), a Vietnamese American bank executive who, relatively late in life, undergoes an identity crisis.

From the age of 6, Dwayne has been raised with an African American family. His crisis occurs when he is abruptly reunited with his Vietnamese birth mother (KieuChinh) to the dismay of his African American adoptive mother (Mary Alice).

Lo has assembled a potent ensemble cast to give heft and wings to his little tale of love and angst among various ethnic groups. Dwayne’s adoptive father, Harold, is played with wit and poignancy by Paul Winfield. The supporting cast includes Tzi Ma (“Rush Hour”), Sanaa Lathan (“Love and Basketball”) and Lauren Tom (“Joy Luck Club”), who plays Dwayne’s equally conflicted big sister, Mai, who protects him and longs for a reunion with their lost Vietnamese mother.

The film has won numerous prizes on the festival circuit. Lo’s script for “Catfish” won the best screenplay award at this year’s Newport Beach Film Festival; it won the Grand Jury Award at the 1999 Florida Film Festival and best feature film honors at the Worldfest-Houston International Film Festival. “Catfish” also picked up the audience awards at both Florida and Houston.

The film stands out because of an ambitious script, with talking cats, brawling transvestites, Vietnamese opera stars and a smack-down between two loving moms among the curiosities.

“I don’t think I am that much of a good writer. I am more of a director-writer,” Lo says. “I do think that my characters are well [structured] because of my acting background. There is no [other] way I am going to get actors like Paul Winfield, Mary Alice and

KieuChinh on the budget I have.

“But my background is acting and I understand what actors think and want. And what every actor wants is a piece that will allow them to do great work.”

‘It’s All About People’

Lo explains: “All my characters have selfish and attractive traits, but race is secondary. We are a lot . . . smarter about race in our Generation 2000. I’d rather be annoyed with you because you are an [expletive] than annoyed with you because you are black. That’s the point. After all, it’s all about people.”

“Catfish” satirizes America’s obsession with race and appearances and endows the hyper-hip Dwayne with all the foibles and affectations of America’s prevailing cultural sensibility: hip-hop.

Dwayne speaks a quirky blend of Vietnamese and African American slang; he lives and works in a black community; and he is in love with a sweet, old-fashioned African American girl (Lathan), whom he understandably wants to marry.

““And, remember,” says Lo, “he [Dwayne] has his identity crisis at a very old age--at 26--when he realizes, ‘Wait a minute. I’m not black!’ ”

Lo’s own true story contains an oddly similar epiphany. His American journey began in 1978, when he and his family fled Vietnam after the fall of Saigon. “One of the wonderful things about being a child is you won’t remember bad things unless it’s very harsh or traumatic for you,” Lo says. “All I remember when we were leaving Vietnam were a lot of explosions. My mother said

there were 500 people on the boat, and we floated for 28 days.”

After near starvation on the boat and further ordeals in the refugee camps, Lo’s parents with their 10 sons and three daughters were moved to the U.S., sponsored by the Jewish League of America.

“The United States government decided there were three places where a Vietnamese could go: to Pennsylvania, Texas and California,” Lo recalls. “My family chose Pennsylvania, and they dropped us off in Philadelphia. That’s west Philly--totally African American. I had been brought up seeing American movies, and the only time I saw [blacks] it was in Africa. As a child, to me America meant white--period. We never knew how it really was, and so it was a total culture shock.”

Soon Lo began to adopt a distinct African American sensibility. “My friends were only African Americans. I had African American girlfriends and surrogate mothers.”

During this time Lo began to gravitate toward theater. “I started as a kid of 11 wanting to be an actor. It was the only thing I was good at. I went to the High School for the Performing Arts, Temple University for two years, then got a full scholarship to the American Conservatory Theater, one of the top drama schools in the country.”

Lo, however, soon felt alienated at A.C.T. “I was the only Asian actor, period, not only at A.C.T. but in every school I went to. A.C.T. is a very expensive school, but what they were cranking out was white actors. And by my second year, I was saying, ‘Excuse me. Excuse me. Why am I learning a Cockney accent?’ ”

After leaving A.C.T., he began to get roles in television and movies (“The Relic” and “Vanishing Son”); still there were seldom any parts that plumbed the lurking ambiguities behind the American monolith of race. “It’s really unfair because African Americans should learn Jamaican accents and South African accents. I should learn Vietnamese accents, Chinese accents, Japanese accents.

“But when I got out of school, the only roles offered to me were playing ‘an Asian.’ So, I learned to make the accent changes myself, because there is a big difference between a Japanese person speaking English and a Vietnamese person speaking English.”

Such frustrations and insights eventually resulted in his writing “Catfish.”

He peddled his unconventional script for more than two years. “They all said they loved the script, but I got turned down right and left. The [studios] were saying, ‘Love the story but, Chi, you’ve got a movie with an older couple, and you’ve got blacks, you’ve got Asians and the one white character you have in the movie might be gay. Are you crazy? You can’t make this movie.’ ”

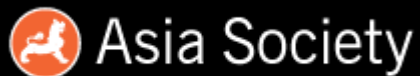
Rejection fostered obsession. “The more I got involved as a filmmaker, the more passionate I got. I couldn’t sleep anymore,” Lo recalls. “I

realized that if I didn’t make this film, I probably could not function. I went to my brothers, since I have nine of them, and told them what I wanted to do. They did not ask to read the script, they only said, ‘Why don’t you just tell us what it [is] about?’

“And I told them my film is about African Americans and Vietnamese Americans and Vietnamese, but beyond that, it’s a universal story. It’s a story of a mother and child, a story about relationships. And [I said] that I’m not doing this because I want to break the glass ceiling or move my career up a notch, although it would be nice.

“I’m doing this film because I have to tell this story. My objective is to entertain; if people walk away with something deeper, without my being brazen about it, then I will be very blessed. That was my pitch. I used my skills as an actor, and that helped a lot, and when I finished, they said, ‘OK. You’ve got your chance.’”





'Catfish in Black Sauce' - An Interview with Chi Muoi Lo

Chi Muoi Lo is the writer, director, producer, and star of *Catfish in Black Bean Sauce*, a new dramatic comedy about two Vietnamese orphans who are adopted by an African American couple and reunited with their birth mother after 20 years of separation. Featuring critically acclaimed actors Paul Winfield (*Sounder*, *Presumed Innocent*) and Lauren Tom (*The Joy Luck Club*), the film deals with issues of assimilation, adoption, and cross-cultural relationships. *Catfish in Black Bean Sauce* has also received a great



deal of praise and was the recipient of both the Best Screenplay Award at the Newport Beach Film Festival, and the Grand Jury Award at the 1999 Florida Film Festival.

Chi Muoi Lo was born in Phan Rang, Vietnam and fled to the United States as a refugee when he was six years old. After a stay in a refugee camp, Chi and his 12 brothers and sisters moved to Philadelphia, where Chi began to act in school plays. He continued to study acting, eventually accepting a scholarship at San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre. Most commonly known as the co-star of the sci-fi thriller *The Relic*, Chi's acting credits also include the film *Buffy: the Vampire Slayer*, the mini-series *Vanishing Son*, and the television shows *NYPD Blue*, and *Law & Order*. Asia Society caught up with the Los Angeles-based actor via phone.

How much of the story of *Catfish in Black Bean Sauce* is based on your own life story?

It's not my story, but it has similarity in the sense that my family and I are Vietnamese refugees and when we arrived in America, for some reason, the American government located us in West Philadelphia. West Philadelphia, as you know, is predominantly African American, and I grew up with African American friends, girlfriends, and surrogate mothers. So I combined these two stories together and I came up with *Catfish*.

How do the two cultures—Vietnamese and African American--interact both in the film and in your life? Your character in the film easily goes back and forth between these two cultures. Is that based on your own experiences?

Oh, sure. When you grow up in a predominantly African American environment, when all of your friends are African American and you want to be part of the group as well, you start picking up things and you start being part of that culture. But then an identity crisis happens sooner or later. My identity crisis happened when I went to college. Then I started to acknowledge my culture and who I am and all of that and eventually, you

start trying to find yourself in your own culture. Then it become very easy when you go back to being surrounded by African American culture then you can relate very easily. So that kind of combination. That's one thing that I found very interesting when I decided to play this role. When I wrote the film, it had more ebonics in it, but when I started to play the role as an actor, I realized it wouldn't work; it wasn't realistic because anyone who is 26 years old and if you do have those issues and you do speak a certain way, you do make a point to change your way of speaking with different people. It depends on who you're more comfortable with and what surroundings bring you back to your origins.

I thought the character of Mai (Lauren Tom) was really interesting because she is the older sister and was older when she came to the United States and wasn't as assimilated as your character [Dwayne] was. Do you think it is a common thing that age differences between siblings make for different degrees of assimilation?

Definitely, but it's interesting too that it's night and day between Dwayne and Mai but the minute you bring someone who just came over from Vietnam, then you can see that Mai is actually very Americanized, but you would never recognize that if you compare her only to Dwayne. And that's very common. I see that all the time. With someone who has just come from Vietnam, there's a whole different status thing and a whole different way of behavior compared to someone who came over when they were older or who has been here ten or twenty years. You look at Dwayne to Mai to Thanh [the mother in the film], that's three different generations and three different ways of behavior.

Can you explain the title of the film?

I have to be honest; I chose the title as a producer, more than anything. I went to eat and I ordered the catfish in black bean sauce and for whatever reason, I thought it was interesting and I made a joke out of it. And I came back to work and I told my assistant that I had come up with the title and the title is going to be *Catfish in Black Bean Sauce*, and as I was laughing telling him this, he thought, "Oh, wow, that's brilliant! I see it! I see what you mean!" and I thought, "Wait a minute," and I told the title to a few colleagues of mine and a lot of people starting thinking in their own way about it and asking, "What the hell is that?" So the title makes it a

conversation piece, so I kept that title. It is a Chinese dish, but you can interpret it anyway you like.

You wrote, produced, and directed this film. What was it like having so much control over the final project?

It was great and then not really great. I learned that ultimate power is not necessarily a good thing. You have to learn how to have somebody give you structure. I believe in final cuts; I believe in someone overseeing you. You have to have someone to answer to. Once I discovered that, I put myself into restrictions and forced myself to answer to my audience and to myself. Literally, when the film was over two hours, I said no. If you are going to go over an hour and forty minutes, whatever is over has to be wonderful to keep people there. So I shrunk it down to one hour and forty-seven minutes. So the seven minutes that are left I thought they were worth watching. So that's what I learned; that it's not a bad thing to have someone to answer to.

How did you finance the film?

Two investors and I actually had to go to my brothers and ask them to help out in order for me to make this movie because it was very hard for me to get this movie made. None of the studios wanted to do a movie like this.

There are so few roles for Asian Americans.

Definitely. You find that anyone of us who had made it or who got some wonderful roles have a hard time finding a second role to back it up to maintain our careers out there from Jason Scott Lee to John Lone to Russell Wong. Even I got a wonderful role in *Vanishing Son*, but we have a hard time. In a strange way, people have to produce their own things to fulfill their creativity or to continue their artistry.

Do you think this is changing? Do you think we will see more and more roles for Asian Americans?

A little bit, but not much. What you are seeing is that the studios are importing international stars like Jet Li and Chow Yun Fat. I am very thrilled about Chow Yun Fat, but I'm a bit worried about Jet Li and Jackie Chan. As much as we're fans and it's great they are out there, we don't want them to be the only voice because then it's just martial arts. We're still stuck back in the '70s, where we're associated only with martial arts. We can go beyond that. I would love to get Asian Americans aware that we need to go out and support these projects. If we don't, you're going to have this perpetuation of the cycle of studios saying that they can't sell, that no one is interested in these stories. And then they just import these international stars that really have nothing to do with Asian Americans. They produce the things that they think sell, which is martial arts.

What advice would you give other young Asian Americans just starting out. Is it true that you were the only Asian American in your acting school?

I was the only one. I took acting very seriously at a very young age. I

went to all these expensive schools and I was the only one there. If you do go to these schools, do speak up and demand that they teach you as Asian actors, not as Caucasian actors. This means that when the time comes to learn about dialects, do not follow the system where they teach you Irish dialect and Cockney dialect because you will never use them. We spent three to six months on these accents. Spend that chunk of time to learn the Chinese accent, the Japanese accent, the Vietnamese accent, because those kind of roles you will have to play and there is such a big difference in those accents. And beyond that, I think that [Asian American actors] really do need to go to school [for acting]. Do not fall into the trap of "I got a job and I didn't have to go to school," because it happens all the time. Hollywood in general does not respect actors and when it comes to Asian actors, they don't respect them at all. So they cast unknowns... and suddenly this Joe Schmoie thinks he can make it without learning the craft, but you can't.

First you have a hard time getting work because you're Asian but on top of that you don't know your craft, it's even worse, so schooling and training is important. It's a good foundation to help you survive when you don't get jobs, in your down time. The down time could be very painful for people and your confidence and your belief in yourself could go down the drain if you don't have a foundation in school to say, "I am good. I did accomplish this."

Who is your target audience for *Catfish in Black Bean Sauce*? Why should Asian Americans see this film?

I would just like to encourage Asian Americans to come out and see this movie. There's a group called "the first weekend club" for African Americans. African American films have a very great turnout the first weekend they open. The reason is African Americans are aware the first weekend is very crucial, so they all come out on the first weekend. It establishes how long the film can stay in the theaters. And I just want to encourage Asian Americans to do the same thing. If you want to get your story told more and see others besides martial arts, come out and see the film. You find a lot of Asian American kids are very easy to assimilate with the Caucasian culture. If you go to the movie theaters, there's a lot of Asian Americans at the movies, but they've assimilated so easily that they're fine with seeing the story told... from a white perspective. But I've been in America over two decades and I'm tired of that. I want to see [the story] from my perspective, or other people's perspective, and I think America is ready for that.

Interview conducted by Michelle Caswell of Asia Society. Asia Society Article



HollywoodSuite.com

Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Cult Film that Launched the Hit Series

October 15, 2018 By [Alison Zimmer](#)

Opening to middling box office and critical response upon its 1992 release, [Buffy the Vampire Slayer](#) didn't exactly scream franchise, especially well ahead of the vampiric golden age of film and television. A seemingly vapid valley girl, Buffy was an unlikely hero, and challenged the trope of a helpless blonde needing rescuing. The movie turned out to be just the beginning.

Joss Whedon, who would later create the television series of the same name, wrote *Buffy*'s screenplay but lost control of the project to director Fran Rubel Kuzui and her producing partner husband KazKuzui. Frustrated by their choices (including cutting many of his jokes and giving Donald Sutherland free reign), Whedon would vehemently disavow *Buffy* the movie, leaving his role as a production consultant partway through the shoot. Whedon would like to make it clear

that the film is not canon (though the screenplay would later be adapted into a graphic novel 'The Origin', which he does accept as canonical).

The series does build somewhat on the film – as the show begins, Buffy is a transfer student from a Los Angeles high school with a suspicious discipline record, and she once again joins the cheerleading squad. Both are gifts from the wonder that is Dolly Parton, produced by her company Sandollar Productions. Many of the rules and conventions around vampires shift from film to series, though – whether a budgetary limitation or artistic choice, the film's vampires simply fall to the ground upon their deaths, rather than turning to dust, in the finest CGI the late 1990s had to offer. In the film, “once you go vamp, you never go back,” their faces permanently altered, conspicuous fangs and all, compared to an occasional morph into attack mode in the show. Regrettably, Buffy's menstrual cramps as an indicator of nearby vampires did not make the jump to TV. While keeping a focus on vampires, the series' longevity demanded a diversification in villains, and saw all manner of demonic and supernatural foes.

Beyond relatively minor points of continuity, Rubel Kuzui's *Buffy* is decidedly lighter than the series, though the campy first season makes for a reasonable segue. Kristy Swanson's Buffy is brattier and rather one-note when compared to the definitive version played by Sarah Michelle Gellar, though it's hard to fault her – 90 minutes vs. 7 seasons of character development isn't a fair fight. Seth Green and Chi Muoi Lo are the only actors to appear in *Buffy* both film and television, both with minor roles as vampires. Whedon took particular exception to Donald Sutherland's portrayal of Buffy's watcher, often ad-libbing lines and refusing to stick to Whedon's script. The supporting cast is extremely of the era – Luke Perry on a brief loan from *Beverly Hills 90210*, Paul Reubens in one of his first appearances following his 1991 arrest, David Arquette being David Arquette, and Hillary Swank in her first film role.

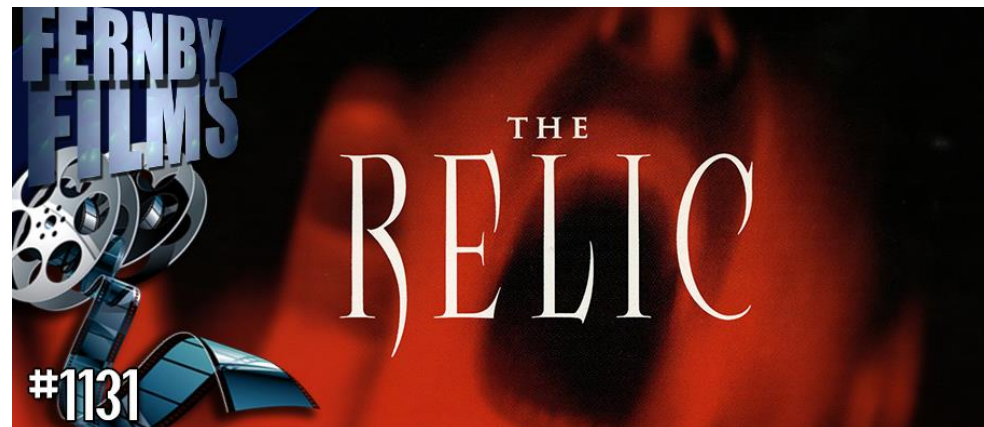
Buffy spawned not only the beloved series, but also the long-running spin-off *Angel* (Rebel Kuzui and Kuzui credited as executive producers for both shows, one would imagine contractually and against Whedon's wishes). Beyond the screen, Buffy's world has extended into an extensive array of comics, novels and video games. Whedon has been cagey about the idea of a reboot for years, and has kept himself busy writing and directing film and television for Marvel. Recently however, it seems increasingly likely that Buffy will be back, with a new reboot in development under Whedon's guidance. While Whedon's endorsement is promising, whether fans will embrace a new slayer and Scoobie Gang remains to be seen.



**FERNBY
FILMS**
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Movie Review – The Relic

January 11, 2016 Rodney Twelftree



– Summary –

Director: Peter Hyams

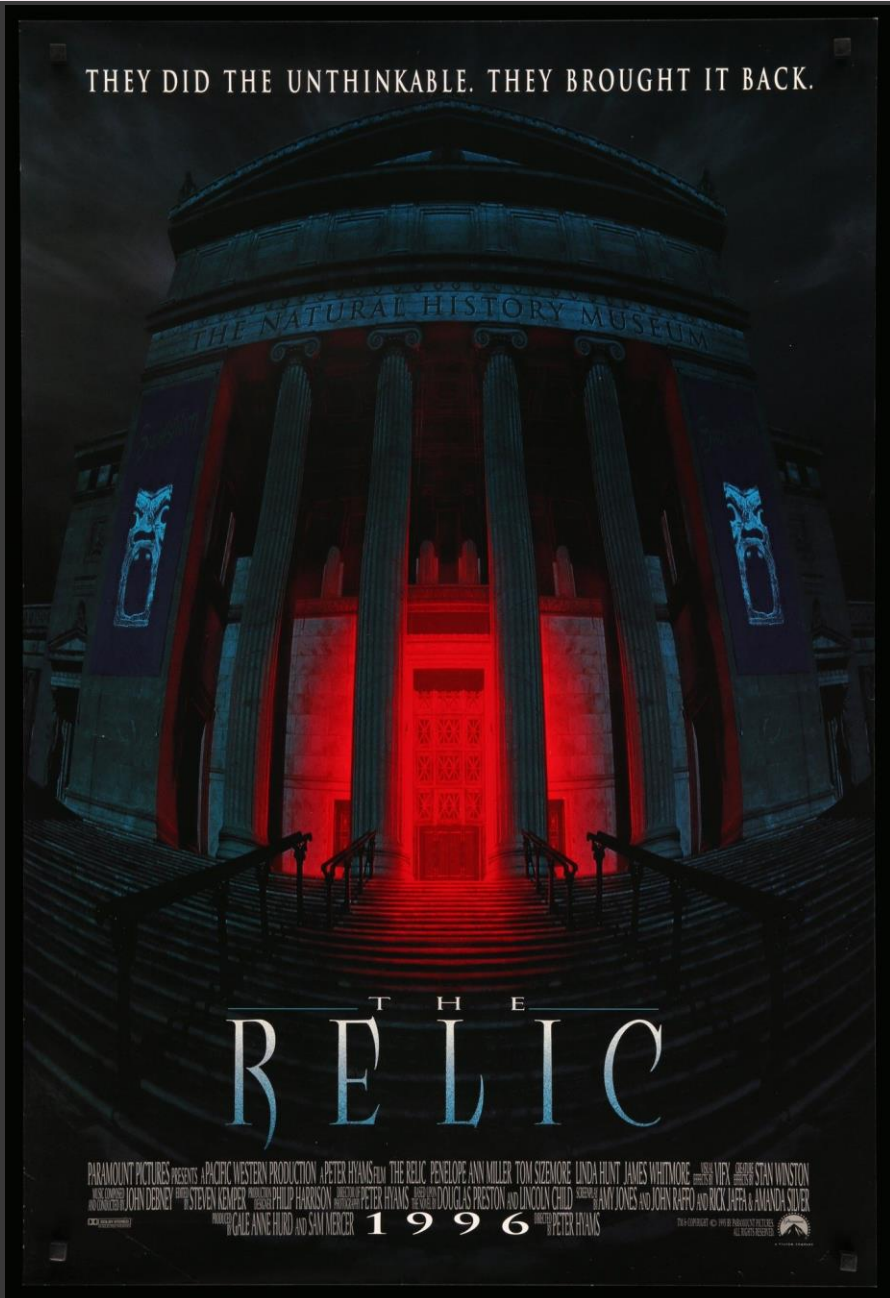
Year Of Release : 1997

Principal Cast : Tom Sizemore, Penelope Ann Miller, Linda Hunt, James Whitmore, Clayton Rohner, Chi Muoi Lo, Thomas Ryan, Frances X McCarthy, Constance Towers, John Kapelos.

Approx Running Time : 110 Minutes

Synopsis: A homicide detective and an anthropologist try to destroy a South American lizard-like god, who's on a people-eating rampage in a Chicago museum.

The original night at the museum. Back in the late 90's, before DVD was released to the mass market (yeah, that long ago), back when VHS was just beginning to come along in "HI-FI Stereo" and Laserdisc was too expensive for somebody in their early 20's, *The Relic* was my go-to film for audio demonstration. Early surround sound technology was still relatively expensive, and not everyone had it – I *did* – and so a film with as thunderous and cavernous a sound mix as this one was pure gold for demonstration purposes. *The Relic* is a tried-and-true creature feature, a bloody, schlocky, preposterous B-movie entity that delivers a few frights,



some nice decapitations and eviscerations, and demonstrates that lighting in a film can add *just* as much to the movie's atmosphere as its sound design.



The Relic was one of the first films I saw at a then-state-of-the-art digital theater in 1997, and although it was high hokum of the Hollywood variety, the direction from Peter Hyams and the creature work by legendary Stan Winston galvanised me in a way many films to that point had not. Set in the Chicago Museum of Natural History, *The Relic* involves a scientist (Penelope Ann Miller) and a police lieutenant (Tom Sizemore) cracking the riddle of a series of baffling murders within the building, all of which revolves around the mysteriously absent anthropologist John Whitney (Lewis Van Bergen), who has sent a pair of crates back from an expedition to Brazil. As the museum is set to hold a gala evening to open their latest exhibit, an enormous monster begins to send terror through the halls as it brutally kills as many people as it can get its claws into.

As far as a story goes, *The Relic* borrows liberally from such classics as *The Thing*, *Aliens*, even *Predator*, in giving life to its considerably monstrous creation. Credited to four screenwriters and adapted from the novel of the same name by Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child, *The*

Relic's B-movie DNA is present almost from the opening moments, as we see John Whitney imbibe some ju-ju juice from some far-flung Amazonian tribe, before cutting to Chicago and the ubiquitous Doctor Margo Green (Miller). Throw in the hard-bitten, superstitious cop (Sizemore), a wheelchair-bound professor (James Whitmore, better known as the tragic Brooks Hatlin in *The Shawshank Redemption*), a sleazy, scheming colleague of Green's in Greg Lee (Chi Muoi Lo), and a cavalcade of Chicago's finest boys in blue, and *The Relic* is a paint-by-numbers schlock thriller that offers scant creativity in its framework.

However, all is not lost – Peter Hyams' decision to film *The Relic* entirely using *natural* light – ie, only the light cast by whatever would practically be around, such as torches, moonlight, interior lighting etc – is reminiscent of Kubrick's similar methodology on *Barry Lyndon*. Although comparisons to Kubrick might be overblown in the case of Hyams (and saying that, Hyams *did* give us a sequel to *2001: A Space Odyssey*, so perhaps idolatry isn't far from the truth...) the fact is that *The Relic* works *because* of this unique visual style. I'd hate to have to watch movies doing it this way *all the time*, but for a 90-odd minute thrill-fest it is serviceable. In fact, it's *more* than serviceable, it's *terrific*. *The Relic*'s main anticipatory element is *atmosphere*: the script thunders with inanity and typical mid-90's masculinity, and the characters are decidedly one-note, meaning that all that's carrying the film in the end is its atmosphere and sense of horror.

Once the film's eponymous creature makes its appearance about the half-way mark, the film takes off. With the first half mired in inexplicably lengthy dialogue about DNA and fungus and creatures eating hormones and hypothalamuses (or whatever), it's not until we see the creature in its full, monstrous glory that *The Relic* kicks itself into top gear. From there, it becomes your typical run-and-scream horror flick, as the body count piles up and the science leaps out the way of the oncoming gore-train. Stan Winston's creature design here is *superb* – although we never *really* get much more than a glimpse of the monster, shrouded in darkness throughout most of the film, we get enough to stimulate the primal, fearful aspects of our brains and we naturally find this thing abhorrent. The fact it's accompanied by an exceptionally heavy LFE presence helps: every footstep, growl or animalistic hiss the creature makes is granted a thunderous bass frequency that threatens



even the hardest hi-end home cinema. As improbable as that might be, it's again a stylistic choice by Hyams (suited to his hyper-real sensibility, as displayed in his follow-up film, the turkey that was *The Musketeer*) that works for the film, even though it won't work for everyone.

What's most interesting in *The Relic* is that the two lead characters are primarily out of the story, or utterly ineffectual, for the majority of the movie. Sizemore's character is more like a supporting character for all he actually does here, while Penelope Miller's main job of Mrs Exposition is one that reduces her to a simple mouthpiece and *that's it*. Her *tete-a-tete* in the final act with confronting the creature is exciting, sure, but hardly the stuff of Ripley fronting up against the alien queen. If anything, it's the secondary character who provide the most fun here: Linda Hunt plays the museum's director with that earnest sardonic humor she's brilliant at, while Clayton Rohner's Sergeant Hollingsworth more than proves himself as a police officer as he actually accomplished most of the grunt work the movie throws up. By far the most *wasted* character is Whitmore's Professor Frock, who does a *far* better job delivering the scientific mumbo-jumbo on display than Miller ever does, and gives more to his character in his three minutes of screen time than Sizemore can muster over a two hour period.

The Relic is B-movie pulp dressed up with A-movie money, and in general everything works more often than it doesn't. The visual effects are good for the mid-90's (the monster is lit completely on fire at one point, and it's this sequence where you really say "holy f@ckballs this movie is awesome!" as you chow down more popcorn) and the film's visual and aural potency amplifies the pulp-inspired mixture of science and absolutely *bonkers* fiction. *The Relic* is a film that will lose much on the small screen, and deserves the biggest, loudest, widest playback experience you can muster. Stupidly entertaining, *The Relic* is a pre-millennial blast of gore and horror mixed with a loose police-procedural that offers visceral thrills within the context of nonsensical scientific believability.

Screenjabber.com

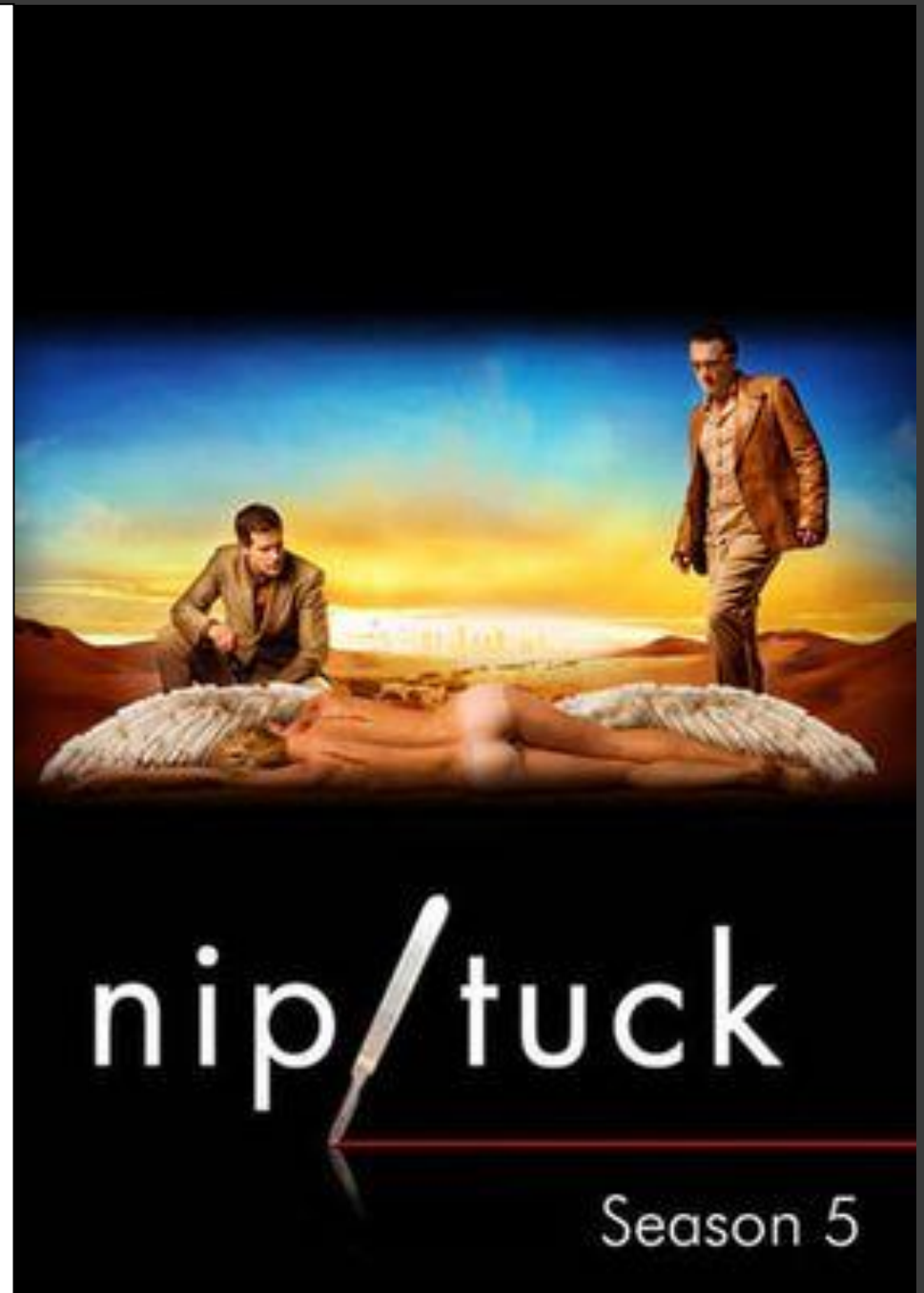
Nip/Tuck: Season 5 (DVD)

[Stuart OConnor](#) 31/01/2010 11:43pm

Nip/Tuck falls into the category of 'medical drama', but really, it falls into a category of its own. Heavily affected by the writers' strike, part 1 of season 5 was broadcasted in 2007 and the second part in 2009, resulting in this late release date. With a mammoth twenty-two episodes, the series returns with more glamour, money, tack and plastic than ever before. If you thought Nip/Tuck had exhausted every ridiculous storyline possible, you have not seen anything, until you see this series. Here is a little commentary of the season, which does not actually give any insight into the bigger storylines that are shockingly outrageous.

Season 5 sees Sean McNamara (Walsh) and Christian (Julian McMahon) relocate McNamara/Troy to Los Angeles. A clever move that should open a Pandora's box of clients, but the lives of the main cast (who all manage to move over from Miami) overshadow. Julia and Sean are divorced and Portia de Rossi stars as Julia's new significant other. AnnaLynne McCord plays de Rossi's overtly sexual daughter Eden, future porn star and potential murderer. Matt (Hensley) and Kimber (Carlson) have split up, with Matt left with a drug addiction and Kimber returning to porn.

In short, with no business, Sean and Christian are hired as medical consultants for a soap opera. Sean winds up a star on the show and Christian is desperate to match Sean's fame. Sean and Christian have further rivalry leading to the return of Gina and an affair involving Julia (one later dies and the other is shot). Matt finds true love, only to discover the worst. Sean

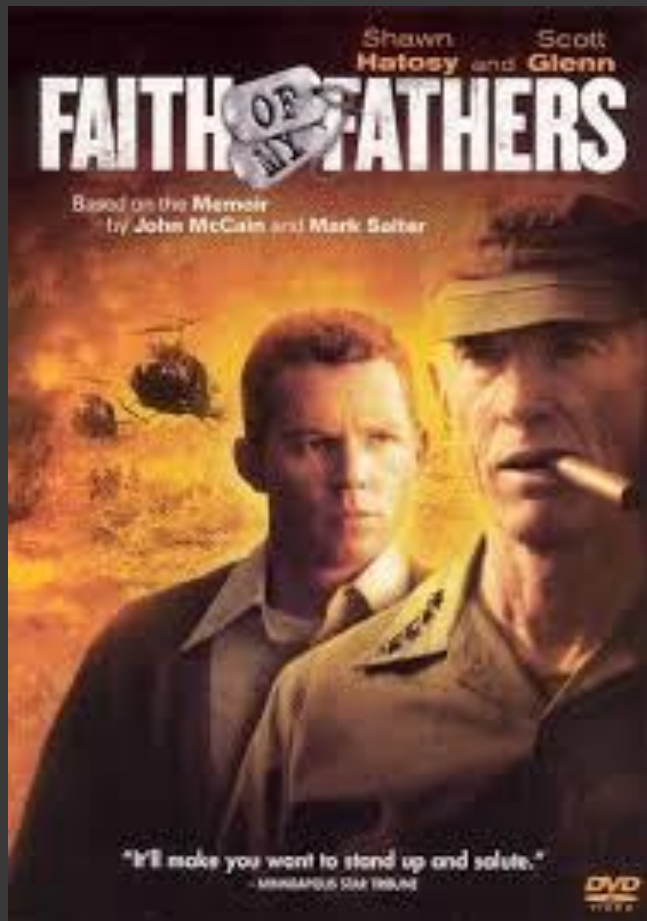




meets a new agent, portrayed by Sharon Gless, who gives the best performance of the season. Gless' storyline cannot be missed. It is truly Nip/Tuck at its ridiculous best, and honestly, something that I believe will only be seen once on television. To say the least, part one is not even borderline believable. Ryan Murphy went really wild there, and the fun does not stop in part two.

Sean teaches at medical school, picks up a prodigy and dates a student with an unusual fetish. Christian suffers from an unlikely disease, leading him to have an unexpected relationship. Julia moves to New York with Annie and Connor. There's a little enhancement for a toddler. Sean dates the wild new anaesthetist (Sackhoff). The series ends almost happily with a wedding, and some news that makes me feel like I've been watching a drawn out plot filler... But still leaves me excited for the next season. Notable patients include Jennifer Coolidge, Rosie O'Donnell, Elaine Hausman (all as returning characters), Chi Muoi Lo (as a tree trunk man) and Misha Collins.

Nip/Tuck has really pushed the boat out. Mildly believable drama has been replaced with the superfluous. It is highly enjoyable with a tolerable, open mind and an acceptance for the ludicrous. The acting, directing and production of this series are flawless. Those a fan of the plastic surgery scenes, the lavish sets and the music will also not be disappointed at all. Additionally, despite the actors growing older, this series has managed to fit more sex in than ever before. I desperately want to criticise the preposterous stories of season five, but it is so unbelievably entertaining and the ultimate escape on the sofa. If you are a fan, you will love season five. If you're not, you will still find this highly entertaining. Nonetheless, it is unsurprising that after this season, Nip/Tuck has begun winding down, with Ryan Murphy now concentrating on Glee.



THE NEW YORK TIMES TELEVISION REVIEW

Like Father, Like Son, Like Patriots

By Alessandra Stanley May 30, 2005

Correction Appended

"Faith of My Fathers," a Memorial Day movie based on Senator John McCain's best-selling memoir about his experience as a prisoner of war in Vietnam, is, fittingly enough, like a visit to Arlington National Cemetery: it is a

respectful, moving view of a veteran's effort to pay respects to his family and fellow P.O.W.'s. It is not complex or richly textured, because Memorial Day is not the time or place for psychological analysis or novelist interpretation.

Senator McCain, the Arizona Republican, spent five and half years in captivity, most of it in solitary confinement, and was repeatedly tortured by his North Vietnamese guards. His is a harrowing, almost incomprehensible story of endurance, and one that would be far less known had he not gone into politics and run for president in 2000. But because Senator McCain has said he may run again in 2008, the film, like the memoir he published in 1999, is also a powerful campaign spot -- a reminder that this potential presidential candidate comes with a wallop of a résumé.

His is a true story that is nonetheless molded to support a cause, and that cause is Mr. McCain's bona fides as a leader. "It's all about character, son," Mr. McCain's father, Adm. John S. McCain Jr. (Scott Glenn), known as Jack, tells young John (Shawn Hatosy) as he drops him off at the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis. "That's what it's always been about in the end."

The French, whose memories of World War II are bracketed by military defeat and civilian collaboration, say that someone had "a good war," meaning that the person behaved with honor during a murky, murderous period. For many Americans, the Vietnam War -- which began stealthily and ended in defeat -- was just as muddled. A generation later, politics, and even the war records of elected officials, became the crucible for that ambivalence.

President Bush's service in the Texas Air National Guard, and rumors that he received special treatment to get into the guard and avoid combat duty in Vietnam, dogged him throughout two presidential campaigns. Senator John Kerry had a "good war," in that he was decorated for heroism in battle, but as a candidate in 2004 he was more reticent about his antiwar activities, and confusion about that helped cost him the election. Former Senator Bob Kerrey of Nebraska also had a "good war" as a Navy Seal, even though he lost a leg in battle. His record came under suspicion and scrutiny in 2001, when former comrades said he and his men killed women and children during a 1969 nighttime raid.

Even Max Cleland, a former Democratic senator from Georgia, who left Vietnam a triple amputee, had to defend his record in 2004 when some conservatives argued that he was not technically a war hero because he was wounded in a grenade accident on base, and not in the heat of battle.

John McCain had one of the worst Vietnam experiences of any elected official, yet he unquestionably had a "good war." He felt honor-bound to turn down offers of an early

amnesty because it violated the rule that prisoners of war must be released according to time served in captivity; he did not want to dishonor his father by using his father's rank to jump ahead of fellow prisoners. At one point, after being beaten and hanged, Mr. McCain gave in and taped a confession, admitting that he was a "black criminal" and an "air pirate." The film shows him, newly released, apologizing to his father for that disgrace. "You were in your hellhole for 1,968 days," the four-star admiral replies. "You didn't leave anything back there that you have to regret."

Admiral McCain, a former commander in chief of Pacific forces in the Vietnam War and a World War II hero, was in charge of the bombing of Hanoi at the time his son's Navy fighter was shot down, and his own father had also been a four-star admiral. (The older McCains are the only four-star father and son in United States military history.) Senator McCain said he wrote his memoir to pay tribute to his father, who instilled the values that kept up his spirits during his long time in prison.

It is almost impossible for an actor not to be eclipsed by Scott Glenn in a military uniform, but Mr. Hatosy does a good job of portraying how a young arrogant pilot turned into a tough-as-nails prisoner of war.

And one of the film's most enjoyable scenes is a flashback to Senator McCain as a mediocre high school student in 1953. He is in the middle of a wrestling match when he sees his father, then a captain, watching stiffly from a balcony above the school gym. The elder McCain was summoned by the school principal, who wanted to alert him to his son's bad grades and disciplinary problems.

It's the kind of scene all too common in modern war movies: the black-sheep son who can never win his stern father's approval. In real life, their relationship was not at all dysfunctional or estranged.

"Did he break the honor code?" Captain McCain asks the principal, who is nonplussed by the question. "Did he lie, cheat or steal anything?" The officer cuts short the principal's outraged reply by saying tartly, "I would appreciate it if you call me if he breaks it."

Faith of My Fathers

A&E, tonight at 8, Eastern and Pacific times; 7, Central time.

Delia Fine, executive producer; Emilio Nuñez, supervising producer for A&E Network. Written by Peter Markle and William Bingham; Peter Markle, director; Tom Thayer, Traveler's Rest Films, and Howard Braunstein and Michael Jaffe, Jaffe-Braunstein Films, executive producers; Alan Barnette, producer. Distributed by Sony Pictures Television.

WITH: J.D. Evermore (Commander James Latimer), Shawn Hatosy (Lt. Cmdr. John McCain), Erin Cottrell (Carol), Korbi Dean (Roberta), Scott Glenn (Admiral Jack McCain), Chi Muoi Lo (Prick), Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa (Cat).

TELEVISION REVIEW Correction: June 6, 2005, Monday A television review last Monday about "Faith of My Fathers," a movie on A&E based on Senator John McCain's memoir about his experience as a prisoner of war in Vietnam, misstated the rarity of fathers and sons who have held four-star ranks in the United States military. Senator McCain's grandfather and father are not the only ones; at least three other sets of fathers and sons have held that distinction.

Los Angeles Times

TV REVIEWS:

Politically Correct Kung Fu in 'Son'

By CHRIS WILLMAN MARCH 2, 1994 12 AM PT

First "On Deadly Ground," and now the TV movie "Vanishing Son"--it's not often that we get *two* politically correct kung fu features in nearly the same week.

"Vanishing Son" (at 8 tonight on KTLA-TV Channel 5) handily allows you to feel bad for the plight of the immigrant, then to cheer as anyone who stands in the way of the immigrant gets hurt bad. In the non-martial arts, that's what they call a contrived double-whammy.

Russell Wong (the abusive husband in "The Joy Luck Club") and Chi Muoi Lo star as diametrically opposed Chinese brothers--one's Goofus, the other's Gallant--whose lives take very different paths once they smuggle themselves into America.

Well, not so *totally* different. Both come equipped with fists--and feet--of fury, and use them to escape being set upon by predators, which, fortunately, occurs at about 15-minute intervals. Trapped by Chinese soldiers during a Tian An Men Square-type protest, they kick their way out. Cornered stateside by jail mates, creditors or gangsters, they kick their way out. Disagreeing on employment opportunities--sensible Wong wants to stay straight, while hot-head LO goes for the gangsta plan--they kick the hell out of each other.



Imagine Bruce Lee starring in "Combination Platter" and you'll have the idea.

At least "Vanishing Son" has its heart in the right place, redressing a minor historical grievance. After directing "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story," which touched on the fact that the old series "Kung Fu" was originally designed for Lee, filmmaker Rob Cohen wanted to create a new show that would actually cast Asian Americans as Asians. "Son" is it, with three more installments scheduled to follow tonight's two-hour pilot (written and executive produced by Cohen, directed by John Nicolella).

Wong is handsome and limber enough, and Lo has some nice moments in the late going, crying over his life-long jealousy. But between the "Fingers"-like subplot--in which Wong instantly gets a gig as a concert violinist (if only he can protect his pinkies!) and romances the babe in the adjoining chair, all the post-"Godfather" juxtaposed-brothers stuff and token contemporary asides--like the gay character who speaks up only to inform the audience he's a gay character--"Son" doesn't take long to kick up some camp.

Look on the bright side, fu fans: The fight scenes *are* fun, and there's no David Carradine around to preach pseudo-pacifism.

Vanishing Son

Devotees of Bruce Lee should find plenty to like about this two-hour kickfest from the creative force behind last summer's "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story." But the telefilm is more than a rehash of kung fu matinees. By combining a host of forces pitted against its characters, with strong performances and an intelligent storyline, it will no doubt leave viewers salivating for the next installment.

By [Adam Sandler](#)

Devotees of Bruce Lee should find plenty to like about this two-hour kickfest from the creative force behind last summer's "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story." But the telefilm is more than a rehash of kung fu matinees. By combining a host of forces pitted against its characters, with strong performances and an intelligent storyline, it will no doubt leave viewers salivating for the next installment.

Brothers Jian-Wa (Russell Wong) and Wago Chang (Chi Muoi Lo) made a photo spread in Time magazine during a Tiananmen Square-type uprising that ostensibly convinced the feds in the U.S. they are worthy of American freedom. When the brothers escape from China under the cloak of political asylum, the classic good vs. evil struggle begins.

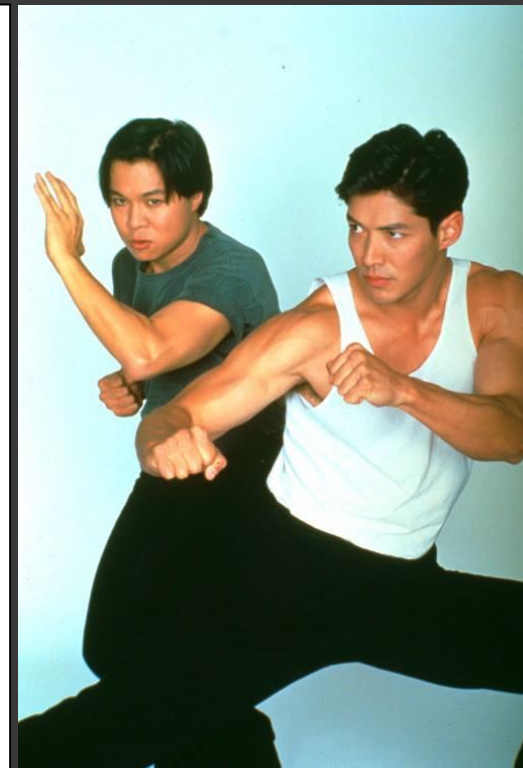
Wa, with his cover boy good looks, is a sort of Asian Clark Kent, trying to survive in the U.S. fighting the good fight and dealing with the racist inclinations of his new-found society and its wholesale abuse of immigrants.

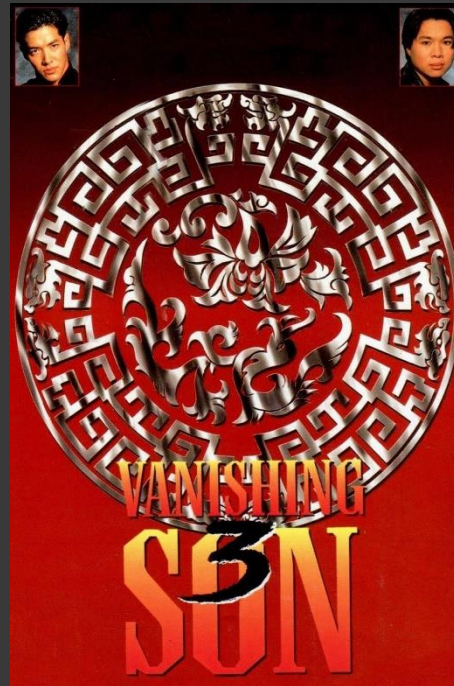
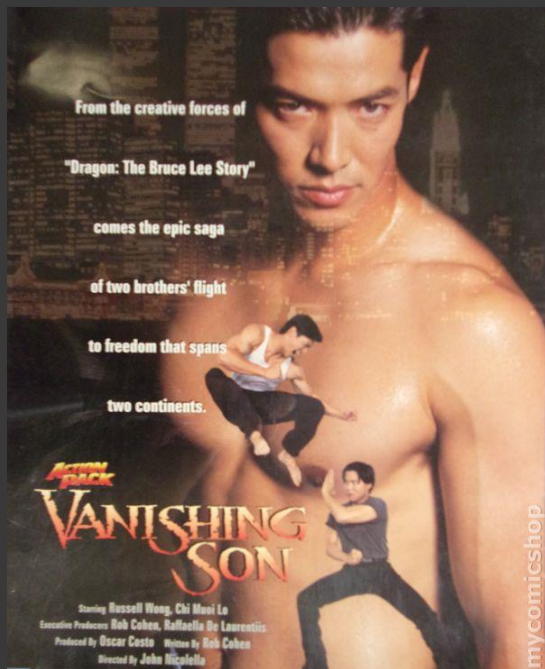
He does his best to steer his younger brother down a similarly straight path, but the inevitable clash ensues and Wago leaves his brother and finds acceptance in the underworld, becoming a member of a Vietnamese gang.

Scripter Rob Cohen weaves an intricate tale that chronicles the conflict and struggle of the two brothers, framed with foreign politics and topical subjects such as the much-publicized increase in the smuggling of Chinese immigrants into the U.S.

He deftly provides plenty of outside forces to keep the story interesting, including a love interest for Wa, who tosses her yuppie boyfriend for the sensitive violinist and martial-arts master.

The two hours move at a lively clip, but some of the fighting scenes and gang violence occasionally take on a cartoonish quality. Cohen keeps the thrust of surviving in the new world constant, providing just the right doses of conflict and triumph.



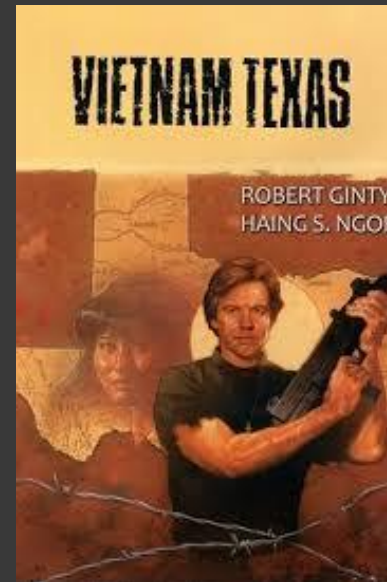
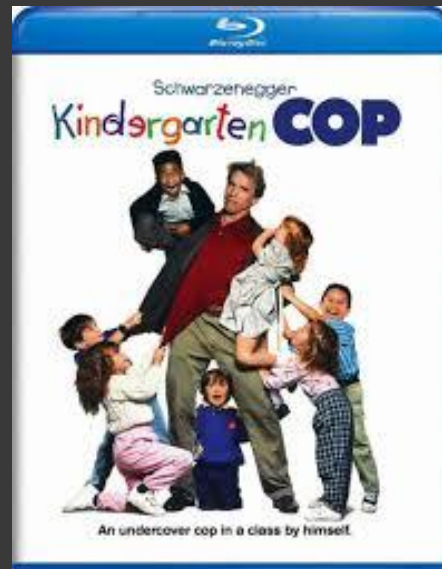
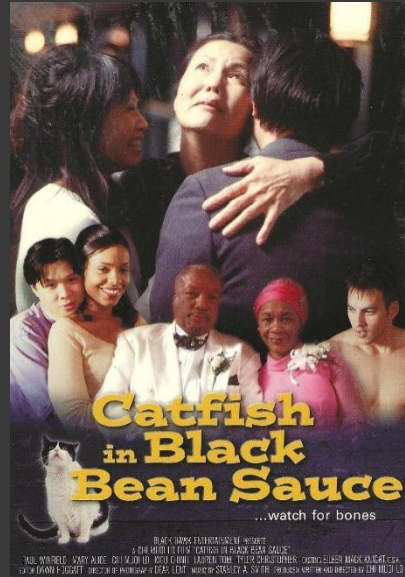
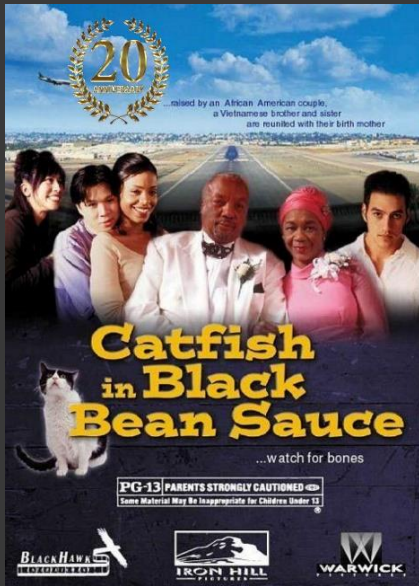


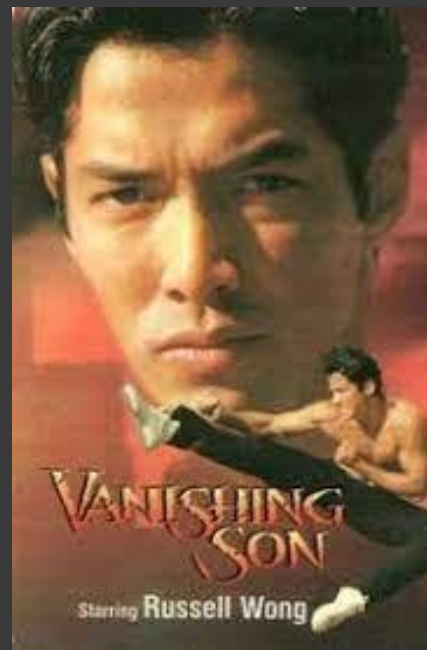
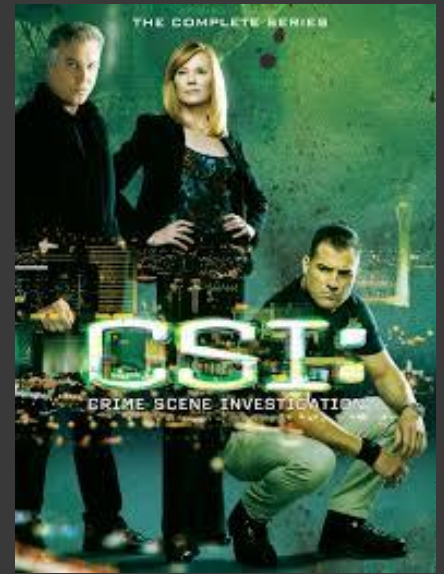
Both Lo and Wong are completely credible in their portrayal as struggling, headstrong immigrants. Wong, who was also in “The Joy Luck Club,” delivers a powerful performance as he moves through the Horatio Alger-like story.

Cohen’s scathing indictment of the treatment of immigrants, while never resorting to preaching, is a feat unto itself. Viewers get the gist without getting hit over the head a hundred times; that is saved for the actors.

Director John Nicolella guides his cast into both well-charted and untested territory, avoiding mistakes often made in the former, as in the lengthy fight scenes, and keeps the coverage of the new ground — Wa as a concert violinist and the Hong Kong-Vietnam political-based struggle — interesting and integral to the story.

Ending with Jian-Wa walking off into the sunset, the telefilm has set itself up for part two of the saga — there will be four parts to the “Vanishing Son” story — that will have some very tough shoes to fill. If the debut is any indication, subsequent adventures should garner widespread acceptance.





Chi's Upcoming Television Series:

"Life in Threes"

PREMISE

Life in Threes tells the story of three strangers. An 85 years old Chinese woman moves into a nursing home in Philadelphia in order to take care of one last piece of unfinished business before a disease gets the best of her. It's there that she befriends a young Caucasian orderly and an African American nurse. She helps them make sense of their lives as she recounts the story of her life's journey that begins in China, moves on to Vietnam, and ends in contemporary America.

LOG LINE

An epic story that spans seven decades, while three lives unravel in the present.



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Chi Muoi Lo's Demo Reel:

<https://vimeo.com/470699633>

Link to Clips on Active Pitch:

<https://activepitch.com/chimuoi>

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Check out the new "Mastering the Business of Acting" website: www.MasteringTheBusinessOfActing.com

"Mastering The Business of Acting" Testimonials: <https://fb.watch/3NjzNrzkB/>

"MBA" Trailers 1 & 2: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1povk8Yn_tlx1l7VtY2h_VbFYOGOz0KfZ?usp=sharing

"MBA" Trailer for Colleges: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1A2fVHfIUSZ7gKYTB5V_NPE_YUhRjM2C0?usp=sharing