



Written by
Tony G.X. Shi

Produced by
Naomi Shroff-Mehta

Andy Yi Li

WEI-LAI

未来

Directed by Robin Wang

Online Screener Link
<https://vimeo.com/668855862>

Code
546





Short Synopsis

After finally getting tired of being disciplined and not feeling loved by his family, Wei-Lai decides to offer himself up for adoption to his friend Luca's family as a form of revenge against his parents. In shock, Wei-Lai's parents question their own parenting skills, but agree to let Wei-Lai stay over at Luca's home for the weekend. Seeing that his first plan to get back at his parents has foiled, he escalates his plot of vengeance by painting his face white and humiliating his parents at the Chinese restaurant they work at. Eventually, after absorbing the damage he has done and how he has misunderstood his parents, Wei-Lai returns home on his own. In this heartfelt coming-of-age comedy, Wei-Lai and his parents come to terms with their identity and the way they define a loving environment on their own terms.

Logline

Tired of getting pushed and punished by his own parents, Wei-Lai, an 11-year-old Chinese American boy, decides to show up at his best friend's family and offer himself up for their adoption.

Specifications

Genre: Comedy, Drama, Family, Kids

Runtime: 13 minutes 39 seconds

Completion Date: March 27th, 2022

Production Budget: \$20000

Country of Origin: USA

Language: English, Mandarin Chinese

Shooting Format: Digital

Aspect Ratio: 1.78:1

Film Color: Color

Audio: 5.1

Available Screening Format:

DCP, DNxHD, H.264

Credits

Cast

Wei-Lai - Arthur Zhang

Luca - Benjamin Widner

Mr. Hao - Wang Zhan

Mrs. Hao - Eon Song

Mrs. Francis - Laura Chowenhill

Mr. Francis - Chris Devlin

Crew

Directed by Robin Wang

Written by Tony G.X. Shi

Produced by Andy Yi Li, Naomi Shroff-Mehta

Cinematography by Eris Zhao

Edited by Ted Beck, Zander Padget

Production Design by Yao Ge, Joy Tan

Art Director - Yihuan Zhang

Sound by Farrar Pace, David Willner

First Assistant Director - Justin Chor Yu Liu





Director's BIO

Zhongyu (Robin) Wang is an award-winning producer, director, and screenwriter. He graduated from Duke University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English (Highest Distinction) and is currently an MFA candidate in Film & Television Production at the University of Southern California.

As a director and producer, Robin has brought his works to over a hundred international film festivals worldwide. Among them, *Mother in the Mist*, the USC Thesis film he produced in 2021, won the DGA Student Film Award for Best Women Filmmaker, the Best Student Film Award at the American Pavillion at the Cannes Film Festival, and premiered at the 20th San Diego International Film Festival.

The short films he directed have been official selections of Oscar-qualifying film festivals such as LA Outfest, Urbanworld, deadCenter, and Bronzelens, with coverage from Variety, Deadline, and Moviemaker Magazine, and can be viewed on streaming platforms such as Dekkoo, PBS SoCal, Amazon Prime, and RokuTV. At USC, he is the Jack Oakie Scholar in Comedy Directing, the Irvin Kershner Scholar in Documentary Filmmaking, and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Full Production Grantee.

In Fall 2021, Robin was selected to direct *Wei-Lai*, one of the three USC-sponsored Thesis projects. The film has been an official selection at Bentonville Film Festival, Newport Beach Film Festival, Hollyshorts, and a Finalist for KCET – Fine Cut and CAA Moebius. He is currently co-directing *Jack and Lou*, a gangster romance feature film with the backing of Universal Studios.

As a storyteller, Robin is recognized for his coming-of-age Asian-themed comedies with a blend of bittersweet humor, twisted ethics, and heartfelt realities. As one who wanders on the margin of cultures, he wants to continue to explore the meaning of “home” and “homelessness” against the massive backdrop of cultural displacement and the Asian diaspora.

A photograph of a family (a man, a woman, and a young boy) sitting at a table in a restaurant, eating. The scene is dimly lit with warm, red light from string lanterns hanging above them. The boy is on the left, looking down at his food. The woman is in the center, looking towards the man. The man is on the right, looking towards the woman. They are all eating from bowls and using chopsticks. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some restaurant decor.

Director's Statement

“The color turquoise is derived from blue but also surpasses blue.” At three years old, I learned from my parents this Chinese idiom that is meant to spur me on to live a life better than theirs. But ironically, ever since I studied abroad and exposed myself to the diversity of world cultures, I felt that I was increasingly torn away from my parents. In my case, the color turquoise was not just derived from blue; it had become a completely different color.

In *Wei-Lai*, we see a Chinese immigrant boy trying to get adopted by a white American family; but essentially, this is a story about a displaced Chinese culture seeking adoption in the new American homeland.

Being uprooted from the geopolitical center of our home cultures, we are, just like Wei-Lai, seeking “adoption” in an exciting yet formidable new country. Yet, the process of finding the new “home” almost inevitably comes with a sacrifice. Wei-Lai’s story is a story about hurting in the process of finding love: the parents discipline him physically with their old practices, and, to retaliate, he wounds them emotionally. But with time, they all grow up to become better versions of themselves, recognizing what makes them a family and accepting the imperfections of their love for each other.

As life is full of laughs and pains, in this movie, we used laughs to look at pains. The pain of not knowing the grammar of love to speak to our father’s generation, and it always broke our hearts when we ended up hurting each other. And more than anyone, I made this film to speak to my own father. At a time when the Asian American community is attacked more than ever, I also hope to use this film as a call for our community’s self-healing, self-love, and self-acceptance. Our cultures, identities and selfhood do not exist in the ways other people look at us; they exist in each of our own hearts.





Recognitions & Awards

Bentonville Film Festival, 2022
(World Premiere)

Bronzelens Film Festival, 2022
(East Coast Premiere, Oscar-qualifying,
Best Student Film Nomination)

Newport Beach Film Festival, 2022
(West Coast Premiere)

Cordillera International Film Festival, 2022
(Best Student Film Nomination)

Tallgrass Film Festival, 2022

Hollyshorts Monthly Screening, 2022

Newfilmmakers Los Angeles, 2022

San Jose International Short Film Festival, 2022

Boston Asian American Film Festival, 2022

KCET Fine Cut, 2022
Finalist

New Vision Film Festival, 2022
Best Director
Audience Award

CAA Moebius, 2022
Finalist

First Look, 2022
Outstanding Screenwriting
Outstanding Producing (Nomination)
Best Comedy (Nomination)

Los Angeles Chinese Film Festival Screenwriting
Competition, 2021
Finalist



Behind The Scene





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