

Wu's fight for *Crazy Rich Asians* part of a bigger crusade

By Lindsey Bahr
AP Film Writer

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — Constance Wu had resigned herself to the fact that *Crazy Rich Asians* was not going to work out for her. She was under contract for her sitcom “Fresh Off the Boat,” both were filming in the fall, and that was that. *Crazy Rich Asians* would be the first studio-made Asian-American movie in 25 years, and Wu, who has established herself as a crusader for Asian-American representation in Hollywood, would have to sit this historic moment out.

But then, feeling “kind of dramatic,” and thinking about the significance of the project to her and an untold number of Asian Americans who make it a point to tell her their stories because of her tweets and “Fresh Off the Boat,” Wu decided to give it one last shot and composed an e-mail to *Crazy Rich Asians* director Jon M. Chu.

“I said, I know the dates don’t work out and whoever you cast, I will be the first in line and I will be their No. 1 fan and supporter, but I did want to let you know that I would put 110 percent of my heart into this project and I know what to do with it and how to carry a movie and if you can just wait for me, I don’t think you’ll regret it,” Wu, 36, said. “I did NOT think this e-mail would work. I did it more for me so that I felt that I had told my truth. But then he read it and said, ‘You guys, we’ve got to push the production.’”

Sitting in a restaurant at the Beverly Wilshire — a hotel famous for co-starring in another *Cinderella* story, *Pretty Woman* — and sipping on a “cocktail” of grapefruit juice and sparkling water, Wu describes how *Crazy Rich Asians* is also a kind of *Cinderella* story. Based on the first book in author Kevin Kwan’s popular trilogy, Wu’s character, Rachel Chu, is a middle-class economics professor from the U.S. who finds herself navigating the upper echelons of Singapore’s wealthy classes when her boyfriend, Nick Young, takes her home for a wedding and to meet his disapproving family and all the jealous women also vying for the attention of the “prince.”

“It’s a fairytale, it really is,” Wu said.

My Turn: The trouble with *The Mikado*

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the Japanese-American community in the Portland metropolitan area to inform them of the production.

At the end of the tense but mostly courteous dialogue, Smith agreed to talk with Marleen Wallingford, the president of the Portland chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, and meet with Yokoyama, who graciously volunteered to help them alter the script to remove Japanese words, phrases, and gibberish.

Yokoyama spent time with LOP going through the script and musical score to reinvent some of the orientalist phrases and musical tones. After that meeting, she concluded that “even with the changing of names, location, music, or wording in the libretto, the orientalist history and harmful nature of the piece can simply not be erased.” In short, she, like many Asian-American performers, would rather not ever have to deal with a work that is the epitome of orientalism again, nor the same tired arguments and history that accompanies it. As of this writing, the production is still set for September 20 through 30 at the Alpenrose Dairy Opera House.

It’s important to note that this type of cultural work and difficult dialogue with artistic groups is common in Portland arts. Working in a majority white state can be



“And there are a lot of different shoes in the movie!”

A native of Richmond, Virginia, and a classically-trained theater actress with a passion for musicals, Wu has been working toward a moment like this her whole life, and taking it very seriously. During the shoot, she wouldn’t go out with her co-stars for karaoke nights or have a drink after a long day of work. She wanted to be clear of mind and she’d already promised her director that she was going to give it her all.

tiring for artists of color. We carry not only the responsibility as artists who just want to do good work, but often have to be cultural consultants, the latter of which is usually unpaid, not acknowledged, and readily exploited.

Newest SpaceX booster flies again with Indonesia satellite

By Marcia Dunn
AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — SpaceX used its newest style booster for a second time to put a communications satellite into orbit for Indonesia.

The Falcon 9 rocket blasted off early in the morning August 7 from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

The first-stage booster previously soared in May, the first time out the gate for the upgraded rocket. After performing its latest job, the booster landed upright on a floating platform in the pitch-black Atlantic.

Each rocket in the new and improved line is intended for dozens of repeat flights. SpaceX is striving to lower launch costs through rocket recycling. SpaceX founder Elon Musk’s goal is for swift launch turnarounds using the same rocket, even twice within 24 hours. He says that could happen as early as next year.

She knew how unlikely it was that she’d ever get an opportunity as an Asian-American woman to lead a studio movie.

“Even a terrific actress like Sandra Oh was always No. 2 or No. 3 in the movie, she was never No. 1 unless it was an independent movie,” said Wu, who is not shy about saying that she only wants to go out for roles where she is the No. 1 star. It’s a drive that has made some uncomfortable.

“People are like, ‘Who do you think you are?’ And it’s like, I guess I think I’m a talented actor and I guess I’m not a person

U.S. students turn grief into tech startup after France attack

By Olga R. Rodriguez
The Associated Press

BERKELEY, Calif. — A group of California college students who were in France during a 2016 terrorist attack are turning their grief into tech tools to fight terrorism.

Anjali Banerjee and several University of California, Berkeley classmates were in Nice two years ago when a man plowed a truck through a crowd, killing 86 people.

They’ve built a startup called Archer that creates digital tools to help

Korean War dog tag belonged to Army medic

By Robert Burns
AP National
Security Writer

WASHINGTON — The lone military identification tag that North Korea provided with 55 boxes of human remains belonged to Master Sgt. Charles H. McDaniel, an Army medic from Indiana who was killed in combat with Chinese soldiers in November 1950.

The Army handed McDaniel’s slightly corroded dog tag to his sons, Charles Jr. and

CRAZY RICH CRUSADE. Constance Wu (top photo) plays Rachel in the Warner Bros. Pictures, SK Global Entertainment, and Starlight Culture contemporary romantic comedy *Crazy Rich Asians*, which opened in theaters last week. Wu, a native of Richmond, Virginia, knew how unlikely it was that she’d ever get an opportunity as an Asian-American woman to lead a studio movie, so she found a way to work in both *Crazy Rich Asians* and her sitcom, “Fresh Off the Boat.” Pictured in the bottom photo are (L-R) Henry Golding as Nick, Wu, and Sonoya Mizuno as Araminta. (Photos/Sanja Bucko, courtesy of Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. and Kimmel Distribution, LLC)

who is going to let you make me feel small anymore,” she said.

But Wu isn’t interested in making people feel comfortable at the expense of her truth, which is why at least part of her time is spent amplifying underrepresented voices on twitter, even knowing that it’s affected her employment opportunities.

Wu once heard from a friend that her liberal boyfriend said he didn’t like Wu’s politics.

“I’m like, ‘Does he not like my politics or does he not like that I have politics?’ And she asked him and he was like, ‘Oh I guess it’s that,’” Wu said.

Fame, she said, is silly in that regard. She thinks it’s “dumb” that she has a bigger voice than other people, like journalists or academics who are more studied in discourse on race and intersectionality. But, she also realized that while she has this platform, she can at least do some good with it.

Henry Golding, who plays Nick, is in awe of Wu’s fortitude.

“She’s such a role model for so many people. She has a backbone, which a lot of people don’t. She’s not afraid of saying what’s on her mind and really driving home what she thinks should be done, or what’s not happening in the industry that should be happening,” said Golding. “She’s going to go down as a real fighter and someone who can act the socks off anything. She is Rachel Chu.”

As for what’s next, Wu said she thinks she’s going to have a lot of choices in the coming years.

“I’m very privileged and lucky and I’m at a point where I can sort of get to decide where I want to go with my career,” Wu said.

And first up on her wishlist? A musical.

investigators, human-rights workers, and others tackle sanctions evasion, corruption, terrorism, and other global violence.

Amnesty International is using one of their tools to verify the authenticity of photographs documenting the massacre of Rohingya in Myanmar.

The students hope to turn their data analysis tool into a for-profit company. Banerjee says they were inspired to act after having to rely on each other and the people of Nice during the chaotic hours after the attack.

Larry, who were so young at the time that they have little memory of their father.

The dog tag is the first tangible touchstone of hope that some or all of the remains in the 55 boxes will be identifiable by the team of forensic experts, anthropologists, and other

TALKING STORY IN ASIAN AMERICA



■ Polo

Polo’s “Talking Story” column will return soon.



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