

Female directors of color find a spotlight at Sundance

By **Lindsey Bahr**
AP Film Writer

PARK CITY, Utah — Hollywood has an abysmal track record of hiring women of color to direct its biggest features. But at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival, they've been behind some of the buzziest films and secured some of the biggest distribution deals.

Gurinder Chadha's *Blinded by the Light* has been bought by New Line for \$15 million and Nisha Ganatra's *Late Night*, written by and starring Mindy Kaling, has been acquired by Amazon Studios for \$13 million.

Lulu Wang's *The Farewell* has also gone for \$6 million to A24. Wang says although she thinks of herself as a filmmaker first, that she does feel a responsibility to represent



DIVERSE DIRECTORS. Lulu Wang poses for a portrait to promote her film *The Farewell* during the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah. Among the 1,200 top films of the past 12 years, female directors of color are in the single digits, with only five black females, three Asian females, and one Latina, according to a study by USC Annenberg's Inclusion Initiative. But the 2019 Sundance Film Festival proved to be a referendum on the dismal industry statistics. (Photo by Taylor Jewell/Invision/AP)

because there are still so few Asian-American films made.

Stanford probes faculty ties to China gene-edited baby work

By **Marilynn Marchione**
AP Chief Medical Writer

Stanford University has started a review of interactions that some faculty members had with He Jiankui (HUH JEEN-qway), the Chinese scientist who claims to have helped make gene-edited babies. A school official said a review is underway.

Several professors including He's former research adviser have said they knew or

strongly suspected He wanted to try gene editing on embryos intended for pregnancy.

The work has been widely criticized since November, when He revealed the births of twins whose DNA he said he altered. Most scientists think gene editing for reproductive purposes is too risky to be tried yet because of the danger of harming other genes and because the DNA changes may be passed to future generations.

Strangers' suspicions rankle parents of mixed-race children

By **Jonathan J. Cooper**
The Associated Press

PHOENIX — Amberkatherine DeCory carried photos of her daughter's birth certificate in her diaper bag in case she had to prove that the lighter-skinned girl was really hers. Cydnee Rafferty gives her husband a letter explaining that he has permission to travel with their five-year-old biracial daughter.

Families like theirs were not surprised when they heard that Cindy McCain had reported a woman to police for possible human trafficking because the widow of senator John McCain saw her at the airport with a toddler of a different ethnicity. Officers investigated and found no evidence of wrongdoing.

Parents whose children have a different complexion say they regularly face suspicion and the assumption that they must be watching someone else's kids.

"This is a problem that, to be frank, well-meaning white people get themselves into," said Rafferty, who is African American and whose husband is white. "They think, 'If it doesn't make sense to me it must not be right.'"

After McCain's report, Rafferty posted to Twitter a selfie of her with her two children, ages five and five months.

"I know they don't look like me, but I assure you, I grew them in my belly," Rafferty wrote to McCain.

McCain claimed on Phoenix radio station KTAR that the woman was waiting for a man who bought the child to get off a plane and that her January 30 report to police had stopped the trafficking. She urged people to speak up if they see anything odd.

"I came in from a trip I'd been on," McCain said. "I spotted — it looked odd — it was a woman of a different ethnicity than the child, this little toddler she had. Something didn't click with me. I tell people 'trust your gut.'"

She said she spoke about her suspicions with police "and they went over and questioned her. And, by god, she was trafficking that kid."

Phoenix Police Sgt. Armando Carbajal confirmed that McCain requested a welfare check on a child at the airport, but said officers found "no evidence of criminal conduct or child endangerment."

McCain has declined interview requests and has not said if anything besides the difference in ethnicity led her to suspect trafficking. A spokesman for the McCain Institute for International Leadership at Arizona State University said McCain was

Tadashi Shoji ups the glam in lace, sequin, and velvet gowns

By **Leanne Italie**
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Tadashi Shoji mixed plus-size models with the usual ultra-thin ones at New York Fashion Week, rolling out evening gowns with high slits, capes, and *sari* influences in deep reds and blues, along with classic black.

Some of his touches were an ode to a favorite vacation spot, Southeast Asia, along with the monks of his religion, Buddhism, the designer said in a backstage interview.

"All the culture, history, architecture, costume. Those kind of stuff inspire me," Shoji said.

He elevated the glam factor with sequins, lace, and velvet. A one-shoulder gown in a silver and black print fell just below the knee in front but trailed on the runway in the back in grand fashion. He paired it with black evening gloves.

Other looks were tiered, including a pale pink confection that fell off the shoulder. Another was lace on top in long sleeves and an exposed neck with an ombre effect below the waist that turned from black to a burnt orange at the hem.



SHOJI SHOW. Model Shi Quing Wang attends the Tadashi Shoji Runway Show at Spring Studios during New York Fashion Week in New York. (Photo by Brent N. Clarke/Invision/AP)

He mixed satin and velvet for another one-shoulder gown with a full train and matching evening gloves. A bright red gown included a crossover sash. He went full silver sequins for another look worthy of a red carpet.

Shoji, who lives in Shanghai about half the

year, still gets a thrill when celebrities don his clothes. They include Octavia Spencer, Michelle Obama, and Katy Perry.

"It's so exciting," he said of seeing his creations on red carpets and during Obama's events as first lady. "I'm very fortunate."

AP writer Jill Dobson in New York contributed to this report.

to embrace her in their camp.

DeCory, a 38-year-old police officer outside Minneapolis who has African-American and Native-American ancestry, said the anxiety between mom and baby is a constant challenge for mixed-race families that isn't talked about enough.

She recalls being haunted by a terrifying vision she couldn't shake: Someone would question whether she was truly the mother of her daughter, and she wouldn't be able to prove it. She'd imagine her daughter, Mila, being placed between her and a white woman while someone in authority watched to see which way she crawled.

Until her daughter could speak, DeCory carried her birth certificate and even a photo of her giving birth, just in case she had to prove that her light-haired, blue-eyed child was truly her own. As Mila has gotten older, her hair has darkened. She's now 11.

DeCory didn't face the same anxieties with her other two children, who have darker skin closer to her own.

"I would get anxiety going out with her in public," DeCory said. "I was very reluctant to breastfeed her in public or do anything that would draw attention to me."

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