

FINAL PRODUCTION NOTES

Approved by Susan Morgan Cooper

MULBERRY CHILD

My mother wanted to show me China...

China showed me my mother.

**Written, Produced and Directed
by Susan Morgan Cooper**

**Based on the book
by Jian Ping**

Press Contact:

Kim Dixon

dominion3 Public Relations

1420 Camden Avenue # 5

Los Angeles, CA 90025

310.478.3393

kim@dominion3.com

www.dominion3.com

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Jian Ping was born in China in 1960 during widespread famine caused by the economic disaster of Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward. Tens of millions starved to death in the years preceding the charismatic leader's brutal and repressive Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and his call to crush the "Four Olds." Chaos became rampant as Mao empowered youth to revolution, threatening, humiliating, beating and killing anyone they chose to persecute.

Jian was tiny, premature, often sick and unwanted by an already overburdened mother of four. She was left in the care of her grandmother, Nainai, without whom she might surely have died. It wasn't that love was lacking. It was simply unstated, expressions of emotion considered bourgeois, essentially forbidden under Communist rule.

Her parents were devoted to the Party, her mother placing duty to Mao above her own children. Her father, equally staunch in his belief, survived torture at the hands of Japanese invaders when he was young. Suspected of giving secrets to the enemy in exchange for his life while in captivity, he was later exonerated. He gradually distinguished himself, eventually becoming Deputy Governor of the city province of Baicheng.

As danger escalated under Mao, neighbors indicted neighbors. Family members informed on one another. No one was safe. Without warning, Jian's father was arrested and imprisoned, old suspicions causing him to be publicly humiliated and labeled "Big Traitor." Jian's mother, a school administrator, was detained and forced to write daily self-recrimination. Strong-willed, she refused to submit to harassment by the Red Guards insisting she denounce and divorce her husband. She would not allow her children to be fatherless.

Forced to leave the Government compound, Jian's older siblings were sent to the countryside for re-education by peasants. Jian and Nainai were banished to a remote and primitive mud hut to endure harsh conditions and sub-zero temperatures. It was years before the Cultural Revolution came to an end and Mao Zedong died in 1976. For Jian, vivid memories remain of a little girl of eight dodging a barrage of epithets and rocks as she made her way to see her father in prison. She has long held the belief that she must always remain composed, neither showing vulnerability to those who might seek to harm her nor pain to those she loves.

As China moved forward, Jian resumed her education, earning an undergraduate degree in English, then immigrating to the United States to attain two masters degrees. She married and bore a baby girl who joined her mother in the States when she was five. As Jian worked hard to provide the trappings of a middle class American life for her daughter Lisa, ironically, a sense of disconnection seeming to build between them. Her eight-year odyssey to write her memoir, *Mulberry Child*, was born of a need to reveal her past under Mao and share Chinese family roots with Lisa. She was saddened when Lisa showed no interest in the book.

When Jian Ping and Lisa returned to China for a bittersweet family visit and the triumphant 2008 Beijing Olympics, Lisa agreed to read the manuscript. Tracing her family's history, she began to see her mother in a different light and accept her own heritage.

#####

LONG SYNOPSIS

During the ten-year period of the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), millions of Chinese citizens saw their reputations ruined, their lives destroyed. Tens of millions had already starved to death in the famines brought on by the economic disaster of Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward. Growing repression only deepened, chaos becoming rampant when the charismatic leader empowered youth to revolution, threatening, humiliating, beating, and killing anyone they chose to persecute under Mao's call to crush the "Four Olds."

Jian Ping was born in 1960, premature and unwanted by an already overburdened mother. Her parents were dedicated Communists, her mother placing duty to Mao and the Party above her own children. Had it not been for the tender care of her grandmother Nainai, little Jian might surely have died. It wasn't that love was lacking. It was simply unstated, expressions of emotion were not encouraged.

During the Cultural Revolution, Jian's father, a Deputy Governor of the city of Baicheng in North East China, was arrested and imprisoned, his only crime having been to survive torture at the hands of the Japanese when he was young. In spite of true devotion to the Party, Jian's mother, a school administrator, was detained, and forced to write self-recrimination day after day. Harassed by the Red Guards to denounce and divorce her husband as a traitor, Jian's mother refuses. No matter what the consequences, she will not allow her children to become fatherless. Her courageous resistance earns her the epithet of "granite head," typical of the childish name-calling so prevalent under Mao.

Neighbors indict neighbors. Family members inform on one another. No one is safe. Once held in esteem, Jian's father is labeled "Big Traitor"; Jian's older sister is intimidated into indicting her own mother to save herself. Little Jian at the age of seven is forced to denounce her father in school assembly.

The family is forced to leave the relative comfort of the Government compound and is banished to a primitive mud hut in a remote area of the city. Sub-zero temperatures become far crueler with no heating, running water or toilet. Under Mao's directive, her older siblings are sent to the countryside to be re-educated by peasants. Jian is left in isolation; her only companion her aged grandmother.

Jian Ping learns to keep her feelings locked inside. She is taught to hide her vulnerability from those who might endanger her, learning too, to conceal her pain to spare those she loves. Emotions must be held in check. Nothing is sacred except for Mao Zedong and the Communist Party. Years of possibility are destroyed. Today, the Cultural Revolution is viewed as a blight on China's history.

Mao Zedong died in 1976. For the first time in ten years, Jian and millions of other young Chinese students are allowed to take their college entrance exams. Education instills her with confidence, attaining an undergraduate degree in English at Jilin University in China before

immigrating to the United States to earn two masters degrees and become the woman she is today.

Jian Ping married and gave birth to a daughter, Lisa, whom she leaves with her husband's parents when she goes to America. At the age of five, Lisa joins Jian Ping in the States, where her mother works hard to give her all the trappings of a middle class American life. Ironically, a growing sense of disconnection builds between them, owing to differences in culture and background.

Those who experienced the Cultural Revolution rarely speak about it; it is still too painful and threatening to revisit. For Jian Ping, it is her uneasy relationship with her daughter that gives her the impetus to unlock her own difficult past. Chipping away at the stoicism that allowed her to survive, Jian Ping finds the courage to write the story of her family's triumph over adversity in her book, *Mulberry Child*.

It has always been difficult for Jian to open up, to tell her daughter how she feels, to reveal tender vulnerability or the depths of her love. It is an impediment brought on by the life she lived under Mao. After taking eight years to write *Mulberry Child*, Jian is saddened when Lisa takes no interest in the book, or her Chinese family roots.

As mother and daughter embark on a bittersweet trip to China for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Lisa agrees to read the manuscript. Tracing her mother's history during the Cultural Revolution, she begins to see her mother in a different light and accept her own heritage when she meets up with her family after a ten-year absence. Jian's father is gravely ill. Though he dies a few days later, he is able to celebrate his country's Olympic triumph with his daughter and granddaughter.

Jian Ping and Lisa witness the Closing Ceremony of the Beijing Olympics at the spectacular Bird's Nest Stadium. Jian is ecstatic when Lisa embraces both her countries proudly wrapping herself in the flags of China and the United States.

Award-winning filmmaker Susan Morgan Cooper explores this story in her unique hybrid of documentary and narrative feature film. Morgan Cooper uses rare archival footage and recently revealed photographs taken surreptitiously by Li Zhensheng when he served as a member of the Red Guards. Through dramatic re-enactment, she recreates the terrifying days when Mao was in power and a little girl feared for her family. What Morgan Cooper finds most compelling and enduring is what happens when the trauma of the past haunts the future. Mao is gone, but his legacy remains.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

“Elephant says hi to you.”

When Lisa Xia was a young teenager growing up in Chicago, her mother, Jian Ping, asked her to write a note to her grandparents to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Jian Ping had given birth to her daughter in China naming her Xia Yie, meaning Summer Leaf. Left in the care of her grandparents, as was the custom, she joined her mother in the United States when she was almost five. When the little girl began attending school, she changed her name to Lisa and assimilated into the culture of her new country. Over the years, she became much like any other young American child, her roots in China ostensibly forgotten.

Intelligent, even precocious, Lisa used her Chinese-English dictionary to select characters spelling out the words, “Everybody says hi to you.” In fact, she mistakenly wrote, “Elephant says hi to you.” That charming, little error spoke volumes to her mother. Not only had Lisa’s native language become foreign to her, Jian realized that there was so much she had never shared.

The idea that Lisa had no interest in her Chinese roots was painful to her mother. In part to create a bridge of understanding between the two, Jian Ping began to write her memoir, *Mulberry Child*. The book recalls her childhood during the Cultural Revolution and honors a family that struggled and survived a turbulent time when Mao Zedong was in power. Just as the mulberry tree faces the cruelty of the most unforgiving winters to blossom again in the spring, human spirit can face almost anything and endure.

“Life moves forward.”

Hesitating at first, Jian Ping began sifting through memories in what became an eight-year odyssey. She found documentation sparse at best. Red Guards had confiscated her father’s working journal. Putting her thoughts on paper was also antithetical to the tenets that were ingrained in her of not burdening others with your pain or opening yourself up to your enemies. Writing the book itself is a courageous act for one who lived through the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976.

“Writing in China is dangerous because anything personal can be taken and used against you,” said Jian, who recovered the journals she kept during high school and college in Beijing after Mao’s death. She had written her entries in Chinese shorthand so that no one else could decipher them. Assembling the book years later required painstaking transcription of the hieroglyphics she originally used to protect herself but were now mostly forgotten.

She returned to China several times to visit and record interviews with family members, reluctantly reawakening old wounds.

“I had to connect a lot of dots by interviewing my parents and siblings and bring them into a painful past,” said Jian. “The Cultural Revolution was a time when so many families suffered and people did not talk about it. We do not want to go back.”

Still, her family supported her writing, steeling themselves to delve into old memories, recalling details of what they had experienced individually and as a family. They had all survived the days of Mao when so many others did not, a tribute to their strength and spirit of endurance.

“My father and mother always say, ‘Life moves forward,” offered Jian Ping.

Examining history through the lens of a camera

Award-winning filmmaker Susan Morgan Cooper wrote, produced and directed the powerful documentary, *An Unlikely Weapon: The Eddie Adams Story*. The critically acclaimed film is a biopic of the extraordinary and conflicted life of the Pulitzer Prize winning war photographer who photographed a point-blank execution of a Viet Cong prisoner by a Vietnamese general. Adams’ split-second shot helped change world sentiment towards the Vietnam War and haunted Adams for the rest of his life.

Morgan Cooper first met Executive Producer Ellis Goodman at the Palm Springs international Film Festival. She read *Mulberry Child* and agreed to take it on as her next film. In mulling over the story to recreate it cinematically, questions began to occur. What is the lasting resonance of such a tumultuous time in history? How does it affect our children and grandchildren? While the publication of Eddie Adam’s shocking photograph immediately shifted world opinion, Mao’s legacy is only recently coming to light 35 years after his death. The country is emerging brilliantly from that time, but permanent scars remain in those who towed the line through belief in Mao or fear of him. Personal attachment and certainly romantic expression were considered bourgeois, anathema to the Communist doctrine.

“It may be unique to the Chinese that you don’t say ‘I love you,’” said Morgan Cooper. “That’s frowned upon. It’s seen as fake and phony. Not until recently has this generation begun to say, ‘I love you’ to someone they care for. They don’t express emotion. Love is expressed through actions not words.”

When Morgan Cooper met with Jian Ping and her daughter Lisa, the Welsh-born filmmaker noticed something that seemed to resonate with the notion that history lingers on, affecting future generations with lessons learned. There is an obvious love between mother and daughter but also a kind of “emotional disconnect” she finds fascinating. Morgan Cooper traced this seeming detachment to the trials Jian Ping went through during the Cultural Revolution.

“As a child, Jian Ping was taught to think of the bigger picture. Individual pain, suffering, and trauma was unimportant,” said Morgan Cooper. “You couldn’t express your feelings because you understood there was a bigger cause. I went to work with a sledgehammer and an ice pick. It took me an inordinate amount of time to crack Jian open. Jian can talk about anything except what she feels.”

“In the book, Jian’s mother wrote her father a poem,” said Morgan Cooper. “It made me cry knowing how repressed everyone was and how difficult it must have been for her to formulate her feelings in a poem. She was a very strong-willed woman, devoted to the party,

but not enough that she was willing to divorce her husband. Standing in opposition to the Red Guards' demand was highly unusual, especially for a woman."

It takes an enormous amount of trust to turn one's story over to another artist to realize. "Jian trusted me implicitly," said Morgan Cooper. "I have so much admiration for her having done that. " During the making of the film, a wonderful relationship blossomed between the filmmaker and Jian Ping, also known as Jennifer Hou Kwong.

While the book is dense and filled with detail, Jian had only a handful of faded photographs to offer. It would be up to Morgan Cooper to illustrate this rich story through the visual medium of film.

A Voyage of Exploration

"There was nothing in those photographs that told the story so I embarked upon this voyage of reenactment in order to bring its essence alive," said Morgan Cooper. "When I make a documentary, it's a voyage of exploration. I applaud someone who can go in with a definitive plan and stick to it. I have a framework, but I usually try and punch outside those lines. With that comes discovery."

Morgan Cooper began the process of collecting material for the film and hunted down rare archival footage from that era. Former White House photographer David Kennerly told her about photographs taken during the Cultural Revolution by Li Zhengsheng. Employed by a newspaper to shoot images to support Mao's propaganda machine, he wore a red armband signifying alliance with the Red Guards. The armband allowed him unfettered access to witness and record events and atrocities unbeknownst to the Red Guards. His negatives kept hidden under a floorboard of his apartment for over 40 years are now published in his book, *Red-Color News Soldier*. The images proved to be invaluable in the making of the film, *Mulberry Child*.

Morgan Cooper flew to China hoping to capture more than she found available when she arrived.

"Nothing in China looks like it did then except the Wan Building in the Government Compound where the family once lived," said Morgan Cooper. "It's a period piece. I couldn't film in the streets because the cars are modern and the demographics are different."

Jian Ping arranged for a driver and a RV to assist the crew on location. Inside the RV were a bowl of candy and a sack of slippers laid out on the floor as a courtesy for the three female passengers, Jian Ping, Morgan Cooper and Vietnamese-American cinematographer Quyen Tran.

"The Chinese don't use the brakes. They use the horn," said Morgan Cooper. "The footage we collected could be used for *French Connection 2* with hair-raising escapes from accidents. I was the only blonde in the group and whenever I would try and emerge from the camper, they would throw me back in and say, 'You not now!' If I had come out into the village, I would have alerted some kind of curiosity. They had never seen anyone like me."

Filming was done with a Canon 5D camera that looks like a still camera. It aroused very little interest from the villagers and allowed the shooting to be done with minimum disruption or fanfare.

A History that Remains Alive

The story begins when Jian Ping was born in 1960 at the beginning of a three-year famine in China. The pregnancy that brought her into the world was unwanted. Her mother had endured several pregnancies and was already raising five children. Hardworking, devout Communists, her parents did not need another child. And yet, here was little Jian, born prematurely and tiny as a kitten.

Her grandmother, Nainai, taught the sickly infant how to drink milk from a bottle. At nine months old, Jian contracted a case of pneumonia that took her to the brink of death. Her mother thought that she was already gone and laid down her to rest. But all that night, Nainai held her in her arms and brought her back to life.

Jian was six years old when the Cultural Revolution began. Her parents had already suffered poverty, famine, relocation, separation and war with the Japanese. While the Western world was protesting the Vietnam War and reveling in free love, China, already under Communist rule, moved into a much harsher and severely repressive ten-year period under the omnipotent Mao Zedong.

At first, Mao's powerful propaganda promised that life for the Chinese would be more affluent, that women would be educated and respected, that ideas and opinions would be accepted by a charismatic leader who inspired youth to lead the charge for a socialist society. In fact, what happened under his rule would prove quite the opposite.

Jian Ping's father, Hou Kai, was a young man when he served his country fighting the Japanese invasion. Captured, imprisoned and tortured, he managed to survive. He returned ravaged by starvation and abuse, but with renewed strength in his commitment to China and the Communist Party. After the end of the World War II, he was appointed county governor in the town of Mishan where he met Jian Ping's mother, Gu Wenxiu.

The two were introduced by Gu Wenxiu's Party co-worker. Marrying Hou Kai meant denying her mother's wishes that she accept a traditional arranged marriage to an older man. Disobeying one's elders was unthinkable, but Gui Wenxiu persisted. Headstrong and single-minded, she married a man she chose on her own, the couple bound by mutual attraction and dedication to the Party.

She, too, had barely escaped the threat of Japanese soldiers in a raid on her family home when she was young. After her father died, the family was left destitute. Gu Wenxiu was certain they would have starved to death had it not been for the support of the Party. She joined the revolution and was selected among a handful of the best and the brightest to be initiated as an official member of the Communist Party. Her initiation was held in a secret ceremony when the Party was still young and building strength.

Gu was well versed in the dangers of poverty, hunger and war. Now she was filled with a sense of pride and determination. For her, it was Party first, duty second, children last. Stern, controlled and controlling, she instilled fear in her young daughter, though not without an underlying love. It was a choice Gu would come to regret much later in life.

“She was firm like a pillar. Mother taught us by example that we should be composed and strong at all times,” wrote Jian Ping

While Gu stayed in Mishan to continue her studies, Kai took the children with him when he became the Deputy Director of Light Industry in Changchun. The family would soon be reunited there before Kai was once again sent off to Beijing to study with the Central Communist Party Institute.

As Mao’s Anti-Rightist Movement swept the country, even the slightest suspected infraction of Party politics was risky. Over a half a million people were labeled Rightists with consequences ranging from humiliation to imprisonment, hard labor to death.

When an accident at a power plant occurred while under his jurisdiction, Kai defended a co-worker. As a consequence, he was sent to the town of Baicheng in the north. Once Kai was established in the Government Compound, the family joined him. A step above dwellings of most of Baicheng’s citizens, the Compound was equipped with running water and a telephone.

Poverty was rampant, affecting everyone including now-respected officials like Kai. Nainai cared for the children enduring the pain of feet bound since she was a child. This excruciating and archaic tradition was thought to enhance a young girl’s beauty and desirability. Nainai suffered her entire life, though future generations would be spared the cruel practice.

When the Cultural Revolution began, China turned red. Flags, slogans and posters blared a new austerity. Young revolutionaries reveled in the authority granted them by Mao. However, they often ran rampant, threatening anyone they chose. No one was exempt. Everyone was under suspicion.

Jian Ping’s mother was Party Secretary at a middle school when the Red Guard took aim at the educational system. Gu and her associates were investigated and forced into “self-criticism.” Innocent and unwavering in her dedication to Mao and the Party, she denied any wrongdoing. Under constant surveillance, publicly humiliated as a traitor or “capitalist roadster,” she never relented. The Red Guard labeled her “granite head” for her unwillingness to give in to their persecution and divorce her husband. Still, she remained faithful to Mao and the Party.

In 1967 as the Cultural Revolution gained steam, Mao called for local government representatives to meet with him in Beijing. Kai was among them. Those whose history was besmirched in any way would be excluded. Before receiving audience with the Chairman, Kai was exposed for having survived the Japanese. Although the army he found him innocent of

wrongdoing well over 20 years before, he was again considered suspect and sent back to Baicheng under escort.

Word of his shame preceded his arrival. The Baicheng train station was festooned with posters labeling him a “Big Traitor” and a “Capitalist Roader.” As he stepped off the train, he was verbally and physically attacked. Without warning, the Red Guards arrested and imprisoned him. His family had been waiting for him to return. However, there was no sign of Kai. He had simply disappeared.

Jian’s earliest memories are of visiting her father in prison. Still a small child, she bravely went alone every day for weeks begging guards to allow her to see her father. Persistent, but innocent and too young to know any better, she was finally allowed to see him.

“The past in many ways is very vivid. It compels me to write,” said Jian Ping. “One of the days I visited my father when he was in detention, kids were throwing rocks at me, shouting and cursing. I was crying. My father was in no position to protect me, but as a child, I didn’t know. I was crying out to him, telling him all the wrongs that people were doing to me. I still remember his face. It was so painful. He was silent for a long time and then he put on a very cheerful face and said, ‘You know what? I have a solution for you. You join them.’”

To spare his little daughter in spite of further humiliation to himself, Jian’s father told her to be a revolutionary and shout, “Down with Hou Kai!”

“It occurred to me at that moment that he was no longer the dad in a high position who could protect me,” said Jian. “Even though I was only eight, I felt that I was so selfish to unload my burdens to him. He was already in so much pain. On that day, I decided that I would never complain to him or my mother and I never did. I learned to clam up, to keep everything inside. Even today, I have a hard time opening up to anybody. I am learning to communicate, to express my emotions. These are things that have lifelong impact on you.”

While Hou Kai was in detention, the family was forced to move from their relatively comfortable home in the Government Compound to a mud hut in a remote and desolate area of Northern China near the Russian border.

“It was a part of a low single story building made of mud and straw without heat or sanitation,” recalled Jian. “It was very cold in the winter. It was frozen when we moved in, but we managed to survive there for several years. The world had turned upside down. What had happened to us? What was going on? They wouldn’t explain anything to us.”

Jian’s mother couldn’t say a word because anything she said that was could be used against her. The children were told that they must believe in the Party and Chairman Mao as she did. Gu thought that Mao must not know what was going on and that it was opportunists who were causing the chaos that they used to their advantage. In the midst of the crisis, her mother remained composed and strong, telling her children that this was temporary and that things would get better. Ultimately, it did.

The Cultural Revolution ended with Mao's death in 1976. Jian Ping attended college in China in 1978. She continued her graduate studies in the United States where she settled and now lives in Chicago. She has returned to her homeland many times to visit her family and accompanied the film crew on location.

Reimagining Mulberry Child

"China was not a country that I was dying to visit, but when I got there, I felt absolutely at home," said Morgan Cooper. "The people were so kind. Everyone walks around with a smile on their face. I was in Beijing, Shantou in the south, and Baicheng in the north. In two weeks we covered a lot of territory."

Journalist Peter Arnett suggested that they visit the Great Cultural Revolution Museum in Shantou.

"I had all kinds of strategies to film at the museum, but when we got there, it was completely empty," said Morgan Cooper. "We knocked on the front door and thought it was closed until a man finally saw that we were trying to get in and opened the door."

The absence of visitors was quite telling to Morgan Cooper, confirming that the Chinese would prefer to leave the past behind. Inside, they found a trove bearing testimony to the Cultural Revolution.

"It was amazing to see a museum like this in China," said Morgan Cooper. "It has photographs of the atrocities and the abuse, memorabilia, old Mao badges and the little red books from that time."

The faded photographs Morgan Cooper had received from Jian Ping made it clear that she would have to take a different tack than what she had used in previous films.

"I think that Jian's grandmother Nainai was the only person that Jennifer felt really close to. She gets choked up whenever she talks about her," said Morgan Cooper. "The two pictures of her that I had to work with are almost completely bleached out. Instead of cutting back and forth to them and confusing the audience, I thought it better to find someone who embodied the same qualities. The woman we cast as Nainai (Yang Xue Juan) is loving and gentle. That's how the hybrid idea of filming reenactments came about."

It is interesting to note that Yang Xue Juan, who played the role of Nainai, moved to the United States only five years ago. Now 80 years old, she had experienced the Cultural Revolution much like Jian Ping and her family. It is only now that she is comfortable talking about it.

Filming in China confirmed that it was necessary to dramatize Jian Ping's story with actors. The crew returned to the United States to begin the next phase of production, filming live action narrative to weave into documentary material.

Casting the Film

"The casting process was fascinating," said Morgan Cooper. "I literally trawled the Unified District Schools to find a young girl to play little Jian." None of the girls she found were Northern Chinese. Casting Nainai also required that the woman who would play her had false teeth so that she could take them out. The odds of finding someone like that were very narrow."

"The culture is very polite and distant. You don't just go up to someone and say, 'I'm making a movie,'" said Morgan Cooper, who searched far and wide approaching passersby in Los Angeles' Chinatown to build her cast of eight characters. She held auditions in her home.

"At times I had up to thirty people in the house," said Morgan Cooper. They'd bring their aunts and their uncles and grandmothers and siblings so if I were casting one girl, there would be a houseful."

Her visitors would take their shoes off outside the house and line them up in the kitchen. Always polite, they inevitably arrived 45 minutes early.

"Eventually, a friend of Jennifer's called Jin Bin found both my young Jian and my teenage Jian. I was very lucky," said Morgan Cooper.

The mud hut and other structures were erected and filmed at Morgan Cooper's property in Los Angeles. All of the actors are first-timers. Christine Chiang, who plays the mother, Gu Wenxiu, is a newscaster on Chinese television and the granddaughter of Yang Xue Juan who plays Nainai. Bruce Akoni Yong, who plays the father Hou Kai, recalls his own mother's stories of the grandparents he never knew. They had been persecuted, stripped of their substantial holdings and killed during the Cultural Revolution.

Reflections

Jian Ping continues to grow closer to her daughter Lisa, who joined her mother to celebrate both of her countries at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Reading her mother's book and being involved in the film has helped her bridge the emotional gap between them. Now a successful young professional in public relations, Lisa's ability to speak Mandarin and her understanding the Chinese culture are a huge plus in her work.

"I knew about my mother's history in a very abstract way, almost the way you hear about atrocities in history class," said Lisa. "You feel bad about it and you wonder how humanity can act in such a way, but it's very distant feeling even if you know it relates to you in some way. For me, the story was never real until I read my mom's book."

"I think a function of being very reserved in your emotions is that you don't talk," she said. "Now in retrospect, I think she's cognizant that she holds her feelings back. I think it's a part of her personal experiences and also a part of many Asian cultures. It's honorable to hold your emotions in, to be strong and bear the burden yourself and not impart it onto other people. For those of us who grew up in a Western culture with Chinese parents and Chinese roots, you're constantly toggling between two worlds and two belief systems."

“If there’s any positive side about the hardships I lived through is that it made me stronger,” said Jian Ping. “ It made me able to face any difficulties I have encountered since then. I can always be composed and try to take one step at a time. It also made me much more appreciative of every step I manage to take.”

“I can relate to the Chinese having grown up in the British culture, which to a lesser degree is also repressed,” said Morgan Cooper. “Through these women we see distinctions between the effects of Communism vs. a free society Jian Ping was taught to be insignificant, small and invisible. Her daughter Lisa was taught that she’s the whole world. Anything is possible. She is free- spirited, independent, a wild card. Trying to understand one another is a process. Through the making of this film, both have told me that they’ve begun to communicate on a deeper level.”

#####

FILMMAKER Q & A – SUSAN MORGAN COOPER

Q. How or what prompted the idea for the film and how did it evolve? Please explain your inspiration and point of view when you first started developing MULBERRY CHILD.

SUSAN MORGAN COOPER: My last film, *An Unlikely Weapon*, was playing at the Palm Springs International Film Festival. Ellis Goodman came to see it and asked me to do this film. It was serendipity. He became my executive producer.

Ellis Goodman is the antithesis of any Hollywood stereotype. I trusted him from the start. He's British and was very genuine with me. This man has so much integrity. He is a prince. I am so lucky to have met him. The day after we met, I found out my brother had died. I firmly believe my brother sent him to watch over me.

First I read Jian Ping's book. It was an interesting subject and an interesting period in history. I flew to Chicago where Ellis introduced me to Jian and her daughter Lisa at a Chinese restaurant. I was immediately charmed by them. It was not until I met them that I found the angle for the film. They were blood family, yet their characters had developed in polar opposite worlds. I was fascinated by the complex dynamic between this mother raised in the repressive atmosphere of Communist China and a daughter she raised in the freedom of the United States. The rest is documentary history.

Q. What inspired you to become a filmmaker? Is this your first feature film? Please explain your history in filmmaking.

SUSAN MORGAN COOPER: I was an actress working with a director. One day, he invited me to a screening of his latest film. There were lots of celebrities there. I tried sneaking out when the film was over, but I heard the director call my name. He asked me what I thought. Because I was a kid and didn't know any better, I told him I thought the film needed a lot of work. He said, "Alright. Meet me at CBS Studios at 8.AM tomorrow." I went into the editing room and gave the editors my notes. It was in that editing room that I found my passion, much more than acting. Here one could take an actor's performance and with a beat or a reaction shot build an incredible moment. I was hooked.

I worked in editing on a few more films then one day during the Balkan War, I met a girl from Croatia who was suicidal. Even though I'd never operated a camera, I knew that if I made a film about her life, I could help her. We travelled back to Croatia and I made my first documentary. I did camera and sound myself. I think in all humility, that film saved her life. From then on, I was hooked...again. The next film I directed was about a photojournalist in Vietnam, but nothing fictional could compare to the exploration of real human beings and their psychology. I'd found my true passion.

I've spent years of my life in isolation in the editing room and I could not be happier. Having said that, I must make a narrative film next. Ten years ago, I made a documentary about Sergio Villasenor, a wonderful cop in East L.A., and how he took a bunch of gang kids off the streets and turned them into a championship roller hockey team. I promised Sergio and the kids that someday I would make their story into a real movie. I gave them my word so I must make their film. It's called *Road Runners*. It's a sports movie but it will be very gritty.

Q. What is MULBERRY CHILD about?

SUSAN MORGAN COOPER: One theme of the movie is the same as the book, the triumph of the human spirit over adversity, But then I became attracted to the theme of how one's past can haunt present and future generations.

Jian Ping had suffered all this emotional oppression during the Cultural Revolution but now was leading a successful, fulfilling life in the United States. However, there was a disconnect in her relationship with her daughter. Jian had grown up in repressed in China; her daughter had grown up in freedom in the United States. jian had been taught to be invisible, not to make waves, to obey authority. Her daughter learned to be outgoing and free spirited, to question authority. In her past, Jian had been constantly criticized and judged. Now she was critical and judgmental of her daughter. How could they better understand each other and truly communicate?

In making a documentary, you always effect change. In my last film, I think people were affected by Eddie Adams and left the theater wanting to make a difference. I think the process of making this film has brought about change for its subjects. They are more open to one another now. Hopefully, the audience can learn from them and examine their own relationships,

The Croatian girl in my very first documentary credits the making of the documentary with turning her life around. When I met her she was severely depressed and had no desire to live. Now she's happily adjusted in America, married to a lovely man and expecting her first child. Making documentaries is hard work and the fastest route to poverty I know. But the joy of making them comes when you have a positive effect on people's lives.

Q. Please elaborate a on your approach to making the film, including your influences (if any).

SUSAN MORGAN COOPER: My approach to making a documentary is always "a voyage of exploration." Yes, you have a basic structure, but you cannot be rigidly fixed. You have to be open to change and discovery. It helps that I'm a very spontaneous person. I'm very much "in the now." I'm the person you can call at 12 midnight to go for a moonlit hike.

Q: Where were the challenges in making this film?

SUSAN MORGAN COOPER: The main challenge in making this film was that it was difficult to film in China. Not wanting to make any waves, I went there with a Canon 5D recommended to me by photographer David Kennerly. Before I left, I had no idea what kind of reception I'd get in China. When I arrived, I was really surprised. The people could not have been kinder. I felt so at home, so relaxed. Nothing could have prepared me for how well we were treated. That trip taught me that no matter what the difference is in cultures, the things that unite us are far greater than those that divide us.

Physically I could not have filmed there without a lot of expense. I was making a period piece. Nothing looked the same as in the sixties...the buildings, the people. We travelled by camper way up north close to the Russian border. There we found a village of mud huts like the one the family was banished to during The Cultural Revolution. I took a few small pieces of the mud, put them in a plastic bag and brought them back to the States.

I built a Chinese mud hut like the ones in China on my property in the Hollywood Hills. I used earth and straw and then mixed in lime to get closer to the color of the earth in China. I was so proud of that set that it's hard for me to tear it down even now though the film is finished. I'm attached to that little house. It has memories. Once that was built, I was on a roll. I decided to build a jail set, then the apartment in the Government Compound. The sets are all still intact. My friends now refer to my grounds as Morgan Cooper Studios.

Q. Talk about the casting process.

SUSAN MORGAN COOPER: The casting process was unique. I'd scope Chinatown with my Chinese assist Rosa. I was looking for the grandmother. I'd jump out of moving cars chasing 80-year old ladies down the street trying to find one with charm but without teeth. We combed the L.A. Unified School District, libraries, The Boys and Girls Clubs for Little Jian. We'd prowl around playgrounds like predators searching for the perfect child. When I found a girl I liked, she'd turn out to be Vietnamese, Korean or painfully shy. After months of screen tests with so many cute little girls, a woman called Jin Bin found Jody Choi, my Little Jian. Jody hardly spoke, but when she smiled, she lit up Manhattan. It was love at first sight. The problem was that I could not stop her from smiling even in the saddest scenes. I'd have to wear her out to make her feel tired and sad."

The hair was a big deal. Christine Chiang, who played the mother, had highlights so I got her a wig. Bruce Yong, who played the father, had beautiful shoulder-length hair. I couldn't ask him to cut it. Solution: another wig. I became the hairdresser wrestling with everybody's hair before walking to the other side of the set to direct. I was totally "wigged out" before we even started shooting.

Filming in remote parts of China was a challenge as I was always told to hide until the locals worked this out. I guess a blonde Brit was too conspicuous, so I relinquished any sense of pride as I was literally thrown back in the camper and told to be quiet. Here in Hollywood on the sets on my property, I still felt out of control. I had to rely on a translator to communicate with Nainai. I'd say simply, "She needs to sit quietly." Then I would have to wait for four paragraphs of Chinese translation before I could yell, "Action!" It was a challenge, but my God, every one of these first time actors are so good, so genuine in their roles. It was worth all the searching and translating and "hair raising" experiences.

Q. And the music?

SUSAN MORGAN COOPER: Kyle Eastwood is family and very talented. Though he lives mainly in Paris, he and I made a pact. Whatever film I make, he writes the music. When I made my last film, I told Kyle that I loved the sparse score he and Michael Stephens had written for *Letters From Iwo Jima*. They listened and then wrote a killer score for *An Unlikely Weapon*. Kyle and Matt McGuire have written a wonderful score utilizing old Chinese instruments for *Mulberry Child*. Their score so heightens the events in the film. I'm fortunate, very fortunate.

Q. What is the most important message in this film for you and for audiences to take away with them?

SUSAN MORGAN COOPER: Love conquers all. Love for family is sometimes tough, but...love conquers all.

Q. What are some of your favorite films, and what or who are your other creative influences?

SUSAN MORGAN COOPER: I 'm drawn to Italian neorealism, films about working class people. My favorite is Vittorio De Sica's *The Bicycle Thief* where an honorable, hard-working man is forced to compromise his integrity. Recently, I was impressed by the direction and editing of *A King's Speech*. I think I'm attracted to films about repression, whether it be social or emotional. But sometimes I like a sweet, happy film like *Love Actually* and the way its love stories are interwoven.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

SUSAN MORGAN COOPER (Director/Writer/Producer)



Susan Morgan Cooper was born in a tiny village in Wales, where her parents produced plays to raise money for charity. Surrounded by theater since she was a child, she was drawn to become an actress. She attended the University of Wales and went on to appear in Repertory Theater, television shows and films in Wales before immigrating to the United States.

Shortly after arriving in America, she landed a small role in Clint Eastwood's *The Eiger Sanction*. She soon discovered, however, that film editing excited her much more than acting. When director/screenwriter Fred Walton (*When A Stranger Calls*) took her under his wing, she began consulting for him and later became associate producer on Walton's *Hadley's Rebellion*, starring Griffin O'Neal, William Devane and Charles Durning.

It was when she became intrigued with the story of a young Croatian girl displaced by the Balkan War that Morgan Cooper felt compelled to make her first documentary, *Mirjana, One Girl's Journey*.

Morgan Cooper next produced and directed the series, "Heroes and Sheroes," stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things, for Good Life Television.

She wrote, produced and directed *Sergio*, a documentary about a remarkable cop in East Los Angeles, who turned around the lives of a group of gang kids, grooming them into a winning roller hockey team. "I made a promise to them all that day I would make a real movie about them," said Morgan Cooper.

In 2005, she went to Italy to shoot the *Making of 'Shadows in the Sun*, documenting the filming of writer/producer director Brad Mirman's film starring Harvey Keitel, Joshua Jackson, Claire Forlani and Giancarlo Giannini.

She wrote, produced and directed *An Unlikely Weapon*, the award-winning feature documentary about the Pulitzer Prize winning photographer, Eddie Adams. Ironically, Morgan Cooper had used Adams' photographs in *Stringers*, an early dramatic short about a photographer in Vietnam. "I have always been interested in war photographers. Probably the one thing I can claim to share with Eddie Adams is a fascination with displaced and oppressed people," said Morgan Cooper.

Susan Morgan Cooper is developing a film with Fairplay Pictures, focusing on the true story of street children in Rio de Janeiro and the Death Squads that routinely murder them.

She is presently set to direct "Roadrunners," a feature film based on her documentary *Sergio*.

JIAN PING (AUTHOR of the memoir, MULBERRY CHILD)



Jian Ping, author/public speaker/publisher

Jian Ping was born and raised in China. She is the author of *Mulberry Child: A Memoir of China*. From a young girl being forced to live in a mud house during China's Cultural Revolution to a working mother in corporate America, an author and a public speaker, Jian's journey reflects the human spirit of resilience and triumph.

"I have to pinch myself, remembering the time when I only spoke Chinglish." Jian said at the commencement speech she gave at Loyola University Chicago.

Jian Ping is working on her next book, *From Changchun to Chicago*, in collaboration with her daughter, Lisa. It focuses on their social, cultural and generational conflicts. She is also writing a collection of short stories about the lives of Asian immigrants in the U.S. She has recently started a book publishing business.

Jian Ping obtained her bachelor's degree in English from Jilin University, China and dual master's degrees in Film and International Affairs from Ohio University. She lives with her husband and daughter in Chicago.

ELLIS GOODMAN (Executive Producer)



Ellis Goodman is a successful businessman with a background in public accounting, the beverage alcohol industry, commercial real estate, and is the owner/manager of American

Dream Pictures. In the late 1970s, Mr. Goodman was an investor/manager in the U.K. music industry, film production (*The Greek Tycoon*) and distribution (*Picnic at Hanging Rock*). He served on the Board of Cinema Chicago, and the Chicago International Film Festival for many years and was Chairman in 1994/95. He is the author of two books, and more recently has been co-executive producer of the documentary, *Louder Than A Bomb* and the U.K. produced thriller, *A Thousand Kisses Deep*. He was invested as a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth in 1996.

JON SISKEL (Consulting Producer)

Jon Siskel has developed, produced and directed documentaries filmed on location in Africa, Mongolia and Southeast Asia. Jon Siskel also developed, produced and directed *Head On*, a documentary on Drag Racing and *102 Minutes that Changed America*, a documentary on the 9/11 tragedy, which won three Emmys Awards in Los Angeles in September 2009. Most recently he and Greg Jacobs developed, produced and directed the award-winning documentary *Louder Than A Bomb*.

GREG JACOBS (Consulting Producer)

Greg Jacobs served as VP/Chief Creative Officer at Towers Productions, where he oversaw the content of more than two hundred documentaries on five different networks. Greg also produced, wrote, and supervised more than two dozen other shows, including a number of mini-series and specials for The History Channel, and two documentaries on the Iraq War for Discovery Times, and also co-produced *Head On*, *102 Minutes that Changed America* and *Louder Than A Bomb*.

LI ZHENSHENG (Archival Photographer)

Li Zhensheng was born in 1940 in Dalian, Liaoning Province, People's Republic of China. After early studies in cinematography at Changchun, Jilin, he began working as a photographer for the Heilongjiang Daily in northeastern China, where he stayed for over nineteen years before starting a teaching career at the International Political Science Institute of the University of Beijing.

His 2003 chronicle of the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) *Red-Color News Soldier: A Chinese Photographer's Odyssey Through the Cultural Revolution* (Phaidon 2003), has been translated into six languages and received the Overseas Press Club of America's Olivier Rebbot Award for Best Photographic Reporting from Abroad. An exhibition of his images from the Cultural Revolution has appeared in nearly every major European capital and continues to travel around the world.

His collection has been represented worldwide by Contact Press Images since 1999. He is based in Beijing, China and New York, USA.

QUYEN TRAN (Cinematographer)

Quyen Tran received fine art and photography training at the University of Virginia and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. before receiving an MFA in Cinematography from UCLA's Graduate Film School. At UCLA, Quyen won Best Cinematography three years in a row, photographing numerous short films and features which have screened at festivals including Sundance, Toronto, Telluride, Festroia, and Tribeca, among others.

Quyen has photographed films internationally, including South Africa, Thailand, Japan, China and Vietnam. She attended the 2010 Toronto International Film Festival with the narrative feature GIRLFRIEND. In between features she photographs commercials and documentaries, with clients including Nike, Sony, Hulu, and Apple. She is currently shooting three documentary features and is in pre-production for a narrative feature slated to shoot in Louisiana later this year.

SEAN VALLA (Editor)

Sean Valla has been working in feature editorial for the last 20 years. He started on ultra-low budget, non-union films and worked his way up from assistant, to first assistant, VFX editor to editor on features such as the *The Spiderman* series, *Drag Me To Hell*, *The Hurt Locker*, *Law Abiding Citizen*, *The Green Hornet*. Sean has worked as an editor on feature films, feature documentaries, short films, web series and is currently cutting a feature film entitled, *The Baytown Disco* with Billy Bob Thorton and Eva Longoria.

MIRANDA YOUSEF (Additional Editor)

Miranda Yousef is a feature documentary editor with credits on films that have played Sundance, Tribeca, PBS and HBO. She recently edited *Troubadours*, a music documentary about James Taylor, Carole King and the 1970s singer-songwriter scene in Los Angeles. The film premiered at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival in competition, and has been nominated for an Emmy award.

Miranda has been the only or lead editor on 2008 IDA Audience Award winner *Food Fight*; *Square Roots: The Story of SpongeBob Squarepants* (for Nickelodeon); and *Race*, an award-winning documentary about the unexpected re-election of New Orleans mayor Ray Nagin in 2006. In addition, she has been an associate/additional editor on films including Academy Award nominee Kirby Dick's 2009 release *Outrage*, *Dumbstruck* (2010 Palm Springs International Film Festival), and 2008 Sundance Film Festival favorite *I.O.U.S.A.*

She is currently working on *Burn*, a film about the Detroit Fire Department scheduled for release in 2012.

KYLE EASTWOOD (Composer)

Kyle Eastwood grew up in Carmel, California as the eldest son of actor Clint Eastwood. While doing his homework Kyle remembers listening to records of jazz stars such as Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Miles Davis playing in the house. His father had been attending the Monterey Jazz Festival since it began in 1958 and when his children were born it became a yearly family outing. Kyle's childhood had jazz as its soundtrack and he credits his father with introducing him to the joys of the bass line.

Kyle's first memory of playing music was when Clint taught him how to play the left hand bass line of "Boogie Woogie" while he played the right hand solo over the top. Initially studying film, Kyle soon realized that jazz was his true passion. After years of paying his dues gigging around Los Angeles and New York, his debut album *From There to Here* was released on Sony in 1998.

An accomplished composer, Kyle began working in film with a contribution to the score for *Mystic River*, a powerful drama which won two Academy Awards. In 2004, Kyle signed to Candid Records, one of the leading independent jazz labels in the UK, and released his second album *Paris Blue*. It resonates with swing, groove, and funk overtones. The album climbed to No. 1 on the French Jazz charts. That same year, Kyle composed three pieces of music for the Academy Award winning *Million Dollar Baby*.

Kyle's third album *Now* was released in 2006. It features songs written by Ben Cullum and collaborations with BBC Jazz Award winner pianist Andrew McCormack, as well as other musicians that make up the who's who of the London jazz scene. With tracks ranging from the post-modern jazz modalities of the title track, through the flirtatious melodies of "Let's Play" to the moody electronic groove of "September Nights," In 2007 and 2008, Kyle delivered *Now* to live audiences on 3 continents to sell-out crowds and international critical acclaim.

Kyle composed the soundtracks for a number of Clint Eastwood films including *Flags Of Our Fathers*, *Letters from Iwo Jima*, *Gran Torino* and *Invictus*. His album, *Metropolitain*, was released in the U.S. in 2009. Co-produced by Erin Davis (son of Miles) and Kyle's long term writing partner Michael Stevens, the album captured the attention of the jazz world with its forward thinking style and the gathering of some of the cream of today's jazz musicians.

At home in both Los Angeles and Paris, Kyle chose to record album, *Songs From The Chateau*, deep in classic Bordeaux country at the 15th Century Couronneau in Ligeux, A worldwide tour is scheduled for Japan, Europe and United States following the release of the album.

MATT McGUIRE (Composer)

From major recording studios at Capitol Records and Universal Studios in Los Angeles, to the world-renowned Carnegie Hall in New York City composer/producer Matt McGuire has enjoyed a successful career in the music profession spanning over 25 years.

McGuire moved from Northern California to Los Angeles at the age of 19 to attend the Grove School Of Music. While still in school, he began working in the local top-40 club scene and playing on various recording sessions and with rehearsal bands. He worked with Engelbert Humperdinck first as the singer's pianist and eventually became Music Director/Arranger touring the world and appearing on television shows hosted by Joan Rivers, Pat Sajak, Jerry Lewis and others. McGuire worked as a session pianist for "Murder, She Wrote," "Walker, Texas Ranger" and "Merv Griffin," among other television productions. He also arranged and co-produced an album for Al Martino.

In 1996, McGuire began working with bassist Kyle Eastwood, son of Clint Eastwood. They

formed a jazz quartet with and soon became the featured act at local hot spots such as The Baked Potato and Jack's. They went on to make prominent appearances at major festivals such as The Monterey Jazz Festival and at the esteemed Carnegie Hall. McGuire wrote five of ten cuts on the group's CD, recorded on the Sony/Columbia label.

McGuire moved to Los Angeles to focus on writing, producing, and arranging music. He founded MusicWerks Productions, Inc. and has since written and produced music for all the major television networks and composed for animated television shows including "Extreme Dinosaurs," "Pocket Dragon Adventures," "Sabrina," "Sonic X," "Winx Club," "G.I Joe," "Shaman King," "Chaotic," and "Yu-Gi-Oh! 5D's. Among his feature film credits are the scores and songs for the features *Titanic*, *The Legend Goes On*, *Monster Mash* and *Dennis The Menace - Cruise Control*. He recently contributed music to the scores of the epic Bollywood film releases *Lahore*, *Raajneeti* and *Aarakshan*.

MARK STOECKINGER (Sound Designer)

"I've always been fascinated by movies because of how captivating they can be; that's what inspired me to attend film school at USC. It was there that I was fortunate enough to be surrounded by students learning how to tell stories. During that time I was drawn to post-production because I felt that so much of a film is made during that part of the process. At that time I was also first exposed to how much sound could contribute to bringing a film to life.

Inspired by alumni such as Ben Burt and Walter Murch, I decided that I wanted to follow in their footsteps and create film sound. Since then, my goal has always been to work alongside filmmakers when deciding how to best integrate sound with the story being told. Because of this, I consider myself to be one of the filmmakers when creating the sound for a film.

Working in the area of sound has given me the opportunity to work with many directors, editors, producers and other sound professionals. These are the people that continue to provide me with insight into filmmaking and storytelling and help me become better at what I do."

ABOUT THE CAST

JACQUELINE BISSET



Nominated for four Golden Globe Awards and an Emmy, English born actress Jacqueline is best known for her roles in the films *Bullitt* (1968), *Airport* (1970), *The Deep* (1977), *Class* (1983), and the TV series *Nip/Tuck* in 2006. She has also appeared in several French productions and was nominated for a César Award for *La Cérémonie* (1995). She was awarded the Légion d'honneur in 2010.[1]

Bisset made her screen debut with a bit part in *The Knack ...and How to Get It* (1965). Her first speaking role was in the 1966 film *Cul-de-sac*, starring Donald Pleasence and directed by Roman Polanski. She was cast in the romance film *Two for the Road* (1967) starring Audrey Hepburn, and played her first lead role opposite James Brolin in *The Cape Town Affair* (1967). She participated in the 1966 James Bond satire, *Casino Royale*, as Miss Goodthighs. In 1968, she replaced Mia Farrow to star opposite Frank Sinatra in *The Detective*; Farrow and Sinatra had split shortly before production began and the role was given to Bisset, who received special billing in the film's credits.

Bisset's break-out role was as Steve McQueen's girlfriend in the hit action film *Bullitt*, also released in 1968. The following year she received her first Golden Globe nomination as New Star of the Year for her performance in *The Sweet Ride*, and played her first sexy "older woman" (at 25) in *The First Time* (1969).[9] She was one of the many stars in the blockbuster disaster film *Airport* (1970), a Best Picture nominee in which she acted opposite Dean Martin and Helen Hayes. She co-starred with Sean Connery in *Murder on the Orient Express* (1974).

LISA XIA



Lisa Xia was born in China, although raised by her mother largely in the U.S. She immigrated to New York in 1990, and growing up with an inherent international spirit, she developed an avid passion for seeing the world. To date, she has lived in or traveled to more than 35 countries, and speaks English, French, Mandarin and very poor Spanish.

After graduating from the prestigious Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, followed by the University of Illinois (B.S. Print & Editorial Journalism) and L'Institut Catholique de Paris (Diplome de Francais des Affaires), Lisa went on to specialize in public affairs, international/intergovernmental relations, and corporate responsibility and sustainability consulting. She currently works for Edelman, the world's largest independent PR agency, in the CSR & Sustainability consultancy arm in Chicago, Ill.

CHRISTINE CHIANG (Mother/Gu Wenxiu)

Christine Chiang began her career in television broadcasting in her native Taiwan where she worked as a News Reporter and Anchor for Super TV News Network. Moving to the United States, she continued working in television as a Time Anchor, News Editor and Reporter at Jade Channel in Norwalk, California. Since 2005, she has been a Prime Time News Anchor at KSCI-TV.

Chiang received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Western Language and Literature from Providence University in Taiwan. After moving to the U.S. she earned a Master of Science degree in Human Resource Development from Pittsburg State University.

BRUCE AKONI YONG (Father/Hou Kai)



Bruce Akoni Yong is a first generation American, born in Honolulu, Hawaii of Chinese ancestry. While he was still young, he and his mother moved to Lompoc, California where she taught chemistry and science. They moved to Santa Barbara in 1969 where Yong attended school and went on to earn his degree as a Doctor of Chiropractic. This is his first foray into acting.

Yong comes from an affluent and accomplished family. His grandfather received a scholarship to study in the United States at Purdue University in the early 1900s, an honor that was generally unheard of for a Chinese man. His grandmother also came to the United States at that time where she earned an advanced degree in music. The couple returned to their homeland where Yong's grandfather started a successful engineering company. Considered the Father of Engineering in China, his company built the first dam on the Yangtze River, the longest river in Asia.

Though one of Yong's four uncles was an air force squadron leader killed on a mission fighting the Japanese in China, the surviving children were educated at Ivy League schools in the United States. Yong's mother, the only girl in the family, graduated from the prestigious

Wheaton College in Massachusetts and attended graduate school at the University of Michigan.

As wealthy professionals and practicing Christians, Yong's family came under the scrutiny of Mao and the Communist Party in China. They were forced out of their three-story mansion and suffered under Communist oppression until their deaths. Though his mother tried to stay in contact with his grandparents, it became impossible to do so during the Cultural Revolution. Details of their fate remain unknown.

Yong continues to reside in Santa Barbara, California where he is a practicing chiropractor.

JUAN XUE YANG (Nainai)

Yang Xue Juan (Nainai) is thrilled to be making her screen debut at 80 years of age. She spent most of her life in the small city of Anshan in Liaoning Province, China, an area known as "The Golden Triangle." She raised her three children much on her own while her husband spent long hours sentenced to hard labor during the Cultural Revolution. Her children moved to the United States in 2001. She and her husband joined them just five years ago. She went to China when her husband passed away and later returned to Southern California to live with her daughter. She is proud to be a resident of her new country.

JODY CHOI (Little Jian)



Eight year old Jody Choi makes her film debut in *Mulberry Child*. She is joined by her brother Cody, 10, who plays a young boy who harasses Little Jian) shaming the little girl for her father's imprisonment. The entire Choi family will be seen in the film with her mother appearing as the landlady and father as a Red Guard. Jody auditioned for the role when her father learned about the production through a co-worker who is a friend of Jian Ping. Through the experience of working on the film, both Jody and her brother are now interested in doing more acting.

Jody and Cody were both born in the United States. Their grandparents fled from China during the Cultural Revolution and settled in Vietnam where their mother was born. Her father is also Chinese, born in Hong Kong. Her parents immigrated to the United States in the late 1980s. The family lives in Los Angeles.

CREDITS

CREW

Director/Producer/ Writer.....Susan Morgan Cooper
Executive Producer.....Ellis Goodman
Associate Producer.....Jian Ping
Consulting Producer.....Jon Siskel
Consulting Producer.....Greg Jacobs
Cinematographer.....Quyen Tran
Editors.....Sean Valla
Miranda Yousef
Composers.....Kyle Eastwood
Matt McGuire
Production Sound.....Tim Forrest
Post Producton SoundMark Stoeckinger
Archival Photographer.....Li Zhensheng

CAST

Lisa Xia.....Lisa Xia
Little Jian.....Jody Choi
Father/Hou Kai.....Bruce Akoni Yong
Mother/Gu Wenxiu.....Christine Chiang
Nainai.....Yang Juan Xue
Big Jian.....Vanessa Chiu
Ping.....Charlotte Kong
WenKayley Kong
Schoolmate.....Megan Kong
Mean Boy.....Cody Choi
Binbin.....Li Tian
Mrs. Zhang.....Lily Sang
Mr. Wang.....Vincent Lee
Old School Director.....Tony Li
Landlord's Wife..... Phannie Choi
Guard..... Eric Choi
Chauffeur.....Eddie Chiu
Red Guard.....Thomas Fung