

Deceitfully Funny, Artful and Accurate

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If there were ever a movie that followed a culture's mores so masterfully, yet so amusingly it is "*Deceitfully Funny*."

Deceitfully Funny, shot entirely in Phoenix, detailed the struggle of a young Asian woman's struggle to overcome her mother's heart-wrenching wish of marrying her daughter off—to a nice, well-established man. Oh yeah, did I mention that he had to be Asian?

From a well-to-do engineer to a businessman, it seems as if the mother's role as matchmaker supersedes her duty as a mother.

"Lot's of people at the wedding so we can show them how happy we are," the mother says as she paints prospects of husbandry as marital business, rather than marital bliss.

At 29, the very-much-Americanized Vietnamese daughter lives under traditional Vietnamese rules: she can't move out until she marries.

In pops the daughter's deceitfully funny, yet conniving ruse to move out of the house and be with the Caucasian man for whom she has fallen head over heels in love. The plan: pretend she is engaged to be married to one of her co-workers (who is gay in actuality), move out, divorce him and then be with the man she hopes to spend the rest of her life with.

But, of course, even with the greatest lie, the truth always prevails. The lie unraveled and the mother enraged until realizing she couldn't control her daughter's love life.

Writer-producer-director, Tiffany Dang says that her parent's tried to pre-arrange her own marriage, but as she grew older her parent's became more Americanized and open. Still, Dang says that she continues to see parents attempting to meddle in their children's marital affairs today.

"My message is directed to the older generation. It's hard for women to express themselves and how we, women, feel. We should be able to choose our own husbands," Dang says of the intent behind her film, which was shot in 18 days over one year's time.

In addition to covering the complexities of pre-arranged marriage, *Deceitfully Funny* also dealt with issues of racial stereotypes and traditions.

Racism, we hear about White people being racist all the time, even Black people being inclusive to those of their own race. What about Asian people being racist as well? Aside from her obvious aversion to anyone not Vietnamese, the mother also possessed racial stereotypes of specific cultures as well: a stereotype rooted in fear.

When visiting her daughter at work one day, the mother forewarned her daughter to be cautious around the Hungarian woman (who was one of the daughter's closest colleagues) because "her country used to be communist."

In addition to wanting to control her daughter's marital life, the mother also wanted to control what her daughter did for the rest of her life. That is: take care of her aging parents after they sell their clothing shop to finance her schooling.

Deceitfully Funny has been premiered in Tempe and Tucson. Showings in California and New York are also scheduled.

It won the 2004 Festival De Cine Granada Award for art direction in Spain and was chosen as part of the 2004 Palm Beach International Film Festival Selection.

People from all cultures are able to relate to the film, Dang says. Dang is delighted that so many people have expressed their gratitude for a film that says something about such a serious issue in such a funny way.

Of her films in general, Dang says that her characters are usually independent women who yearn to express themselves to society.

"We can also be part of a men's world, don't turn us [women] out," Dang says of her thought-provoking films.

Up next for Dang is an action film set to be shot in New York about a female Chinese superhero who is raised by monks.