JW: When my friend, Do Lee, introduced the topic to me one thing he mentioned, I remember is: The workers were being portrayed badly in social media. A lot of people called them terrible, terrible names like “Mongol mafia.” They said that they don't belong on our streets, there should be more law enforcement on delivery workers.

I thought that was totally wrong. Personally, I grew up in a migrant worker family. I know how hard it was when most of the time my father was absent because he had to migrate to another city to work, to support the family. And all the sacrifices they made to provide support their family wasn’t being valued in American society. So that's what really triggered me to think: the least I can do is use my camera to tell their story, so that a lot more people understand them as being just like any other human being. They’re just like other Americans here who work to support their family.

Q: Do Lee is in your film and gives testimony at a hearing. Isn’t he Korean American rather than Chinese?

JW: He's a Korean American, but he came here at a very young age, so he is more American. He feels a lot of connections from growing up in immigrant neighborhoods. Even as an American Korean, he still has had a lot of conflicts like other immigrants, who people see as outsiders in the community. So we share the same values.

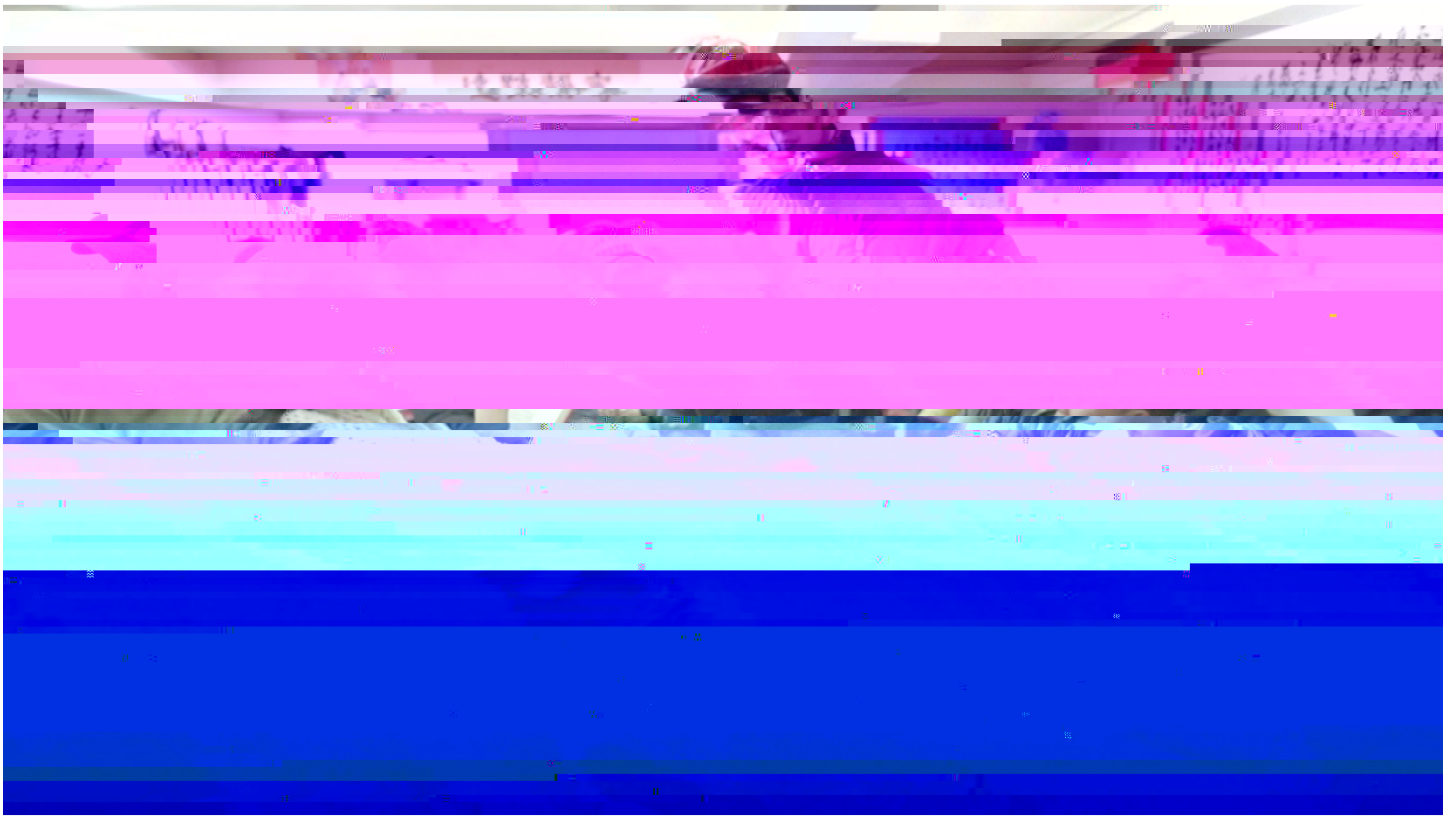
Q: Did he speak the language? Or did he need you to help win trust with them.

JW: Yes, but I'm the translator. He's really the one who provides strategy and analysis, connecting the outside world to our organization. And we had many volunteers working in the nonprofit organizations. They all have a passion to help workers.

Q: What's the name of your organization?

JW: It’s called the Biking Public Project. It existed before this research and was founded by some Asian bikers, especially Asian female bikers who kind of declared their existence in the biking world. The traditional biker world then was all middle class men. They founded this project and Do Lee brought in his dissertation research project about delivery workers. Then we kind of geared up, especially once I brought the documentary. They helped me do crowdfunding for a Kickstarter documentary and then the crackdown on e-bikes kind of like

Society, Transportation Alternatives, the Asian American Foundation, and many elected officials from the immigrant neighborhoods such as Jessica Ramos.



Filmmaker Jing Wang speaks at Hofstra University’s annual “Mayday At The Movies” event, May 4, 2022 (photo credit: Regional Labor Review)

Q: One thing my students asked after seeing the film was: Why no celebration, a party or something once the law was changed? Why did you just move on to the next thing?

JW: It's a political movement, you know. If it's a Hollywood film, there's all always a celebration and the good people work to change the world, they say” “Yay, we won!” But in the real world it's a really long, exhausting process and.

Like my friends, I mean there's times you're just really too exhausted to do anything. But the workers, they were talking about their own big dinner they were going to invite us to at the best restaurant in Chinatown.

Q: That never happened, because they all have to just go back to work?

JW: That's one cause. And there's also a lot of a conflict inside the Chinese community, a lot of a conflict during the campaign and it was February (2020) when we got the great news. Then the pandemic hit in March. In April, when they announced legalizing bikes in New York State, it was su(3ru (e)4 (br)ph.)-20 u (e)4 (br)phek?

get an increase in work again because of all the people staying home asking for deliveries, even though a lot of their restaurants shut down?

JW: Definitely since January, the beginning of the pandemic, the Chinese restaurants were already facing a real economic crisis. Many restaurants shut down -- especially those Mom and Pop small restaurants. And then the Asian hate crimes and a lot of robbery on street. The young workers were able to switch to platforms like Amazon. But the elderly workers really were out of the market because the restaurants they'd been working at for 15 to 20 years were just not able to survive. If no tourists go to Chinatown, there's no business. It's now changed, but the whole place is still suffering. It is only now slowly getting back. I see new shops open here and there, but a lot of landmark Chinatown restaurants were shut down.

Q: So they had very little opportunity, those older workers, to transition to anything else because there were so many closures of businesses. And they were nervous about their immigration status?

JW: Well, at that time, people really had at top of their list the health threat by COVID. And the robberies were the number one problem they were facing. When they delivered food, some people take their money, take the food and take their bike. That was the number one struggle for them during the pandemic.

A lot of those elderly workers have their own network in the sense that they get together as a group, they call each other about work schedules. Like I do two days this week, you do three days; or if some restaurant is looking for substitute riders. Like a while ago, I had an elderly friend in his late 70s. Half of the time he needs someone to take care of him, so he had us. And then, when he slowly recovered, he'd take over a bike and go to Chinatown to deliver for Chinese restaurants. It was really heartbreaking to talk to him at that stage, you know. He was always so supportive. During the movement, he was always trying his best to help us. But then I didn't know what I can do to help him, when we were in the lockdown quarantine situation.

Q: Let's talk about the last part of the film. At first, it's almost all men, especially older men. And then all of a sudden this young woman rider appears! Where did where did she come from?

JW: I'm an immigrant woman and a feminist. I'm saying this not just because it's my identity, but it really is.

During the Trump administration there was the #Me-Too movement, then the pandemic . And I'm an activist in this male- dominant Industry. I have lots of firsthand experience with the power dynamic between males and

then it's just really keep this film alive by showing it to college students and to the community. Every time there's community screening I'm so excited to see audience and to hear all the feedback. I make adjustments based on the feedback every time and push it forward. Last year, I started out doing the first community screening of the film when it was only 15 minutes long. Since then, after each screening we grow it longer.

I think the support from people has been the drive for me to keep moving forward and now luckily I have a lot of friends and I can use interns, like Chinese international students. In turn, they want to help me finish the film they were interned for me in the summer. But hopefully soon it is going to turn around. It won't stop us; we're still going to work on it with or without money. I think somehow someday this work will be recognized by wider audiences.

I'm glad if it actually inspires students to think about this. We all collectively experienced the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, and they saw delivery workers on every corner all the time. Now maybe the film will make them notice the workers more and think about their status and their situation. Professor Kwong’s 4 (xpe)4 (r)-7 -7 (n)1ongwo