

Warrior Class by Kenneth Lin explores the dark rooms and back alleys where political lives are made, remade, and disappeared. While you may be familiar with some of his television work (he is a staff writer on *House of Cards*) we wanted to introduce you to the playwright, and who better than Kenneth to tell you a little something about himself, his play, and his process as a writer.



Playwright
Kenneth Lin.

PHOTO BY TOM BLOOM

“My parents were immigrants, and I grew up in a family where some people didn’t speak English. My grandmother didn’t speak English. But my grandmother was drawn to theater and movies and made that part of life for her grandchildren. So as a child, I learned the power of storytelling and also of nonverbal communication. I was drawn to the performing arts because of how universal they are.”

“Actually, my parents fought tooth and nail about my wanting to be playwright. I was being indoctrinated with family goals, the importance of becoming a doctor or a lawyer. You don’t encounter many Chinese-American playwrights. I was forging my own path, but I had to do that to be able to look myself in the mirror in the mornings. In time, my mom was more OK about it, but my father still struggles with it.”

“I think being a multi-cultural, bi-lingual writer also has a lot to do with my yen for continuing to look at my craft from different perspectives. Who was it, Wittgenstein who argued that there cannot be an idea that cannot be expressed with language? Well, how does thinking in two languages fit into the equation, then? I know, personally, that there are things I cannot express as well in English as I can express in Chinese. Likewise, there are ideas that I can’t express as well in prose as I can in verse.”

“Don’t be too critical of EVERYTHING. I think there was a time where I was so scared to be doing this with my life that it made it feel just a little bit less scary to hate everything I saw and pick it apart. But, you got into this because you love theater, right? Focus on the best of what you see and learn from that. Find a way to learn in every theater you are in, because, you’ll be seeing a lot of theater and hating everything is just masochistic.”

“I think *Warrior Class* played a large part in why I was approached to write for [*House of Cards*]. But, ultimately, both *House of Cards* and *Warrior Class* are about people, about the dynamics of power, and about relationships.”

“I am addicted to people, and the notion that all of us are a result of an organization of forces that produces a life. If you examine that sentence, it uses the very language that describes any equation. Politics is a construction that organizes the forces that build society. Math is a construction that orders our place in the universe.”

COMPILED BY A. NORA LONG



Actor Michael Tow
(*Chinglish*) will co-star in
Warrior Class (October
21 - November 13).