

# BAI LING

## Living the (Crazy) Beautiful Life

### INTERNATIONAL FILM STAR BAI LING

is a thing of beauty. During her illustrious career she has turned in daring performances alongside a who's who of Hollywood's elite, notably Angelina Jolie, Richard Gere and Liam Neeson. Following the release of her latest film, *Crank 2: High Voltage*, the Chinese-born actress stopped by HUSTLER to discuss whether or not she's crazy and her impressive body...of work.

#### HUSTLER: Is your character in *Crank 2* insane?

BAI LING: She is just like me, a little bit crazy. More crazy. Not like me. I'm very conservative. I'm not crazy at all. I'm the most normal person on Earth. But (laughs) in films I'm crazy, especially in *Crank 2*. I play Rhea, and she is absolutely out of her mind. But in her reality it's normal.

BY KEITH VALCOURT

BAI LING

I always believe that I am from the moon. Rhea is from some place farther away. I think I gave her this very edgy, crazy, modern and driven persistence in her passion to pursue this man [Jason Statham as Chev Chelios]. But for a good reason: He saved her life.

The director was open to me improvising. I said whatever. I said, "You're my shiny diaper." Jason could not keep a straight face. Every time we started shooting, he would laugh. He'd ask, "Where did that come from?" I said, "I don't know. It comes from my crazy mind." There is a power in this character that will get the audience excited. It is the most outrageous and spirited performance I've ever given. I'm not myself.

#### How do you prepare to play someone who's crazy?

I think you just embrace your mischievous and childish side. You know when you're a child, and your parents say, "Don't do this!" and you do it? That's what I did in this film. I know everyone on the set was worried about me. They didn't want me to get in trouble and do something crazy. I said, "Wow, this is fun! I'm just going to go for it."

#### What was the craziest thing you did during production of *Crank 2*?

One time I was driving a car. The street was flooded. I was racing around, and the crew didn't stop me. They kept filming me. Everybody was so afraid I was going to hit them. They didn't use the footage. Also in the ending of the film I jump into the water, and I'm on fire. It's so funny. They call "Action!" and I go crazy. They called "Cut!" because one of the cameras didn't work. Well, I didn't hear "Cut!" so I'm still going crazy, and the crew were all laughing because they weren't even filming. I'm in the water screaming. They said, "She's just crazy!"

#### What about your reputation for being crazy offscreen?

I think that we all have a part of ourselves that is crazy and extreme. Most people don't practice that side. You're working in an office. If you went crazy, you would be fired. As a performer and actress, I can practice that side. I'm a very extreme person. There is an alien spirit living in me. Part of me is extremely conservative: demure and refined and covered up.

I came from Communist China, but I've also been on the cover of *Playboy* magazine. I've shown off everything I have—and everything I have is real. Now I'm here at HUSTLER, this men's sex magazine, and I'm part of all this craziness. It's all part of me, and I like that.

#### What inspired you to get into acting?

It is the freedom to unleash the extreme side of myself and not hurt anybody because it's pretend. In real life if I acted like my characters do, someone would call the police and lock me in jail. In film I can do extreme things to entertain people and give back for the life I get to live as an actress. I live a nice life. I travel first-class. A car brought me here today. You gave me coffee. I get that because I give my work to others.

#### Is sexuality an important part of your work?

Part of being a woman is I have this natural sensuality and sexuality. I find that all men, especially Western men, are drawn to me. There's something exciting there. As a performer, I feel I have to give the energy of sexuality to excite the gentlemen. Because if watching me gets them excited or puts them in good spirits, then they can forget about their troubles in life. Then I did something good to serve them. That is my purpose in life.

#### Is that why your nipples have popped out in public so often?

I know that when a magazine uses the picture where my nipple shows up, that is part of the job. It's the entertainment business. You have to sell magazines. Sometimes as an actor, part of our job is to be a clown. I read the gossip magazines. It's just fun for people to help them get through their lives. During heavy work you need some delightfulness. I'm here to bring that delightfulness. If photos of my nipples give a little smile to others, that is my duty. In exchange I get to enjoy the luxuries of being an actress.

#### What was it like working with Jason Statham?

I have worked with a lot of stars: Richard Gere, Jodie Foster, Angelina Jolie, Jude Law, Will Smith and now Jason. The one thing I have really learned is no matter how big the star, they really dedicate everything they have to their work. You may not see it. When they are on set, they know every line. They never mess up. They talk to the director and know exactly what the director wants. They are not distracted by who's the bigger "star." They are so dedicated professionally.

Jason is so forceful. The best thing about him is he is a normal human being. He's not the most gorgeous movie star, but he has a sincerity and likability that people can relate to.



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