

# I Love You So Much

Taiwan

Leon DAI



Genre: Drama  
Format: 35mm  
Estimated Running Time: 90 min.

Budget:  
US\$ 1,000,000 (HK\$ 7,800,000)

Producer:  
LIU Wei-Jan

Writing Credit:  
Leon DAI

Production Company:  
Atom Cinema

HAF Goals:  
Funds, Pre-sales

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## INTRODUCTION

*I Love You So Much* describes the cruel nature of an intimate relationship. The more intimate the relationship, the more hurtful it can be, which is why domestic violence seems so much worse than an assault committed by a stranger. In this film, domestic violence is examined through the problems faced by Mo-Mo, a child who is physically unable to feel any pain and who, as a consequence, regularly hurts himself and others. Mo-Mo's mother, XU Li, was raised by an abusive mother, and the damage done to her is echoed in her relationship with her son and her husband, Shi-Wei.

## SYNOPSIS

"Please believe me - all that I do, I do in the name of love.

When you were six you were diagnosed with the inability to feel pain, and from then on you could not live normally like other children: you weren't afraid of heights, of blades or of hurting yourself, but at the same time, you were able to hurt others."

Mo-Mo cannot feel pain and so that is how he expresses himself: either trying to hurt himself or hurting others. His parents, Shi-Wei and XU Li are constantly on edge, terrified for their son's safety and unable to teach him, because how can you teach a child who cannot be physically punished? Li's mother is a money-hungry scam artist, who shamelessly tries to con money from them at every opportunity. Shi-Wei works all the time to provide for his wife and son. Li tries her best, but she cannot reach her son. The pressure she and Shi-Wei face is unbearable, and every day it gets worse.

Terrified that Mo-Mo might hurt or even kill other people without understanding what he's doing, Li becomes paranoid and self-destructive. Meanwhile, her mother is constantly trying to borrow money from the couple. The pressure gets to be too much and finally Shi-Wei snaps and attempts to kill himself and Mo-Mo in a car accident. He fails, and his suicide attempt results in even more money woes. Unable to bear it, he walks out on his family. Without her husband's support, Li gives up. She lets Mo-Mo do as he pleases, even when he accidentally hurts himself.

Finally, in a desperate act, Li abandons Mo-Mo in a department store, picking up a stranger and going to a motel with him. Afterwards, she is guilt-ridden and breaks down in the shower, racing back to the store but to no avail: Mo-Mo is gone. She reports him missing, and then goes to confront her mother, venting years of rage on her. But her mother responds with physical and verbal violence and Li crumbles before her savagery. Broken, she returns home and notices that some things have been moved. Thinking Shi-Wei has returned she

searches for him, but can't find him. Convinced that she is losing her mind, she looks in Mo-Mo's room and finds him asleep in his crib. Gazing at her sleeping child, a child who is incapable of pain but who causes her pain every day, Li cannot resist her maternal instinct and she holds Mo-Mo in her arms tenderly, as a smile creeps across her lips.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Media stereotypes have given the idea that domestic abuse is limited to physical violence between a man and a woman and that domestic abuse only happens to the lower classes, the undereducated and socially borderline families. According to statistics, however, female and child victims of domestic violence are simply more likely to be reported and abuse is not limited to the physical, it can range from mental abuse to extreme financial control. The role of victim and perpetrator can sometimes be interchangeable, shifting between two people in a relationship.

*I Love You So Much* is not a traditional film about domestic violence. The main story is about a husband and his wife, Shi-Wei and XU Li, but it is also about the relationship between XU Li and her mother. And, at the same time, it's about Mo-Mo, their son, who is diagnosed with a disorder, which causes him to hurt himself and others

## DIRECTOR

Leon DAI is an award-winning actor and director from Taiwan. He holds a degree in directing from the National University of the Arts in Taipei and has acted in more than 30 films, working with directors such as KE Yi-Cheng, Edward YANG, LIN Cheng-Sheng, and CHUN Meng-Hung. DAI's directorial debut, the short film *Summers* (2001), was invited to compete at Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival. In 2002, he was invited by Teddy CHEN to direct his feature debut *Twenty Something Taipei* (2002), the second-highest grossing film in Taiwan that year. *No Puedo Vivir Sin Ti* (2009) is DAI's second feature, which won eight awards at the 46<sup>th</sup> Golden Horse Awards (including Best Feature Film, Best Director and Best Original Screenplay) and the Taipei Film Festival (including the Grand Prize).

## PRODUCER

Devoting herself to the film business since 1995, LIU Wei-Jan's film career encompasses distribution film production and festival and media coordination. She has introduced not only a great quantity of films, but also great quality films, to Taiwan including movies by Francois TRUFFAUT, Leo CARAX, and Krzysztof KIESLOWSKI. She has also successfully brought high quality Chinese films to Taiwan including *Wind of September* and *Spider Lily*. Mrs. LIU began her career in film production, producing *Au Revoir Taipei* and *In Case of Love* in 2009.

## Production Company

Atom Cinema was founded in Taipei in 2005 with the goal of bringing high quality European and American art house films to Taiwanese audiences. The company has distributed such acclaimed films as *Mysterious Skin*, *Love Songs*, *Paranoid Park*, *Persepolis*, *Control* and *Once*, and has also released its own DVD series featuring classic works by renowned international filmmakers like François TRUFFAUT, Lars Von TRIER and Werner HERZOG. In 2008, Atom Cinema expanded into film production with the Taiwanese feature film *In Case of Love* by LIN Yu-Kai and *Au Revoir Taipei* by Arvin CHEN.