

Filipino 'caring culture' hit hard by Canada truck-ramming that killed 11

VANCOUVER (Reuters) - The election eve truck-ramming that killed 11 people and injured dozens more in Vancouver sent waves of grief across Canada's Filipino community, integral to Canada in part through many members' roles as caregivers.

A man drove through a crowded pedestrian zone during a Filipino cultural festival on Saturday. Officials have arrested a suspect they said had a significant history of mental health issues, and said there was no evidence of terrorism in the attack that struck just before Monday's election to choose a prime minister.

The victims ranged in age from 5 to 65, officials said. Five-year-old Katie Le was killed with both her parents, Richard Le, 47, and Linh Hoang, 30, according to a Go Fund Me page that raised \$250,000 for the family. Also among the dead was Kira Salim, a teacher and counselor at a middle school and secondary school, education officials announced.

Nearly 1 million of Canada's 40 million people identify as being of Filipino ethnic origin, and more than 172,000 Filipino Canadians are in British Columbia, according to the 2021 census. Their influence extends across Canada as caregivers. Many Filipinas have carved out their place in Canada by raising other people's children. Still others tend to the elderly, or have found careers as nurses or medical technicians.

"This is what we do best," said Christina, 58, a Filipina who attended a candlelight vigil for the victims and asked not to be identified by last name. "We're just such a caring culture. We always say we're willing to give."

David Eby, the premier of British Columbia, acknowledged their role in comments on Canadian television on Sunday when he pledged to support them "just like they support us." "It's their turn to get care from us," Eby said. The provincial government has pledged that victims and their families will have access to support.

The truck-ramming came during a celebration honoring Datu Lapu-Lapu, the Filipino chieftain who defeated Spanish forces led by Ferdinand Magellan in the Battle of Mactan in 1521 and became a national hero. Filipino Canadians see the government of British Columbia's 2023 official recognition of April 27 as Lapu-Lapu Day as acknowledgement of the cultural contributions of their community, one of the largest immigrant groups in the province.

"We've been here a really long time," said Jonathan Tee, 30, a second-generation Filipino born in Canada. "We don't need to earn a place

here. We are here." Some 75,000 people from the Philippines became permanent residents of Canada through the Live-in Caregiver Program between 1992 and 2014. The program offering a path to permanent residency has been modified since 2014.

VULNERABLE TO EXPLOITATION

Women fleeing poverty in the Philippines and living in the homes of their Canadian bosses needed to maintain employment in order to gain permanent residency, leaving them vulnerable to extreme working conditions and abuse.

"It was deeply exploitative because of the closed permit tied to a particular employer," said Geraldine Pratt, a professor whose studies on the subject underpinned the stage play "Nanay," depicting the lives of live-in caregivers. "Most of us have some connection to the Filipino community. And it's not just childcare. It's care for seniors, it's hospitals, when you go for a mammogram or to get your blood tested," Pratt said.

Many immigrants from the Philippines are highly educated and overqualified for the jobs available to them, according to a 2023 Canadian census report. More than 40% of Filipinos held a bachelor's degree or higher but were underrepresented in jobs requiring such a degree, the report said.

The overqualification rate of 41.8% was nearly double the rate of the Chinese population and was nearly three times the rate of 15.5% among the total population, the report said. "One factor in overqualification and job mismatch was that over one-third (34.0%) of Filipino immigrant women immigrated as principal applicants through the caregiver program, which recruits them to work in personal care occupations," the report said.

About 36% of Filipinas who earned nursing degrees back home instead worked as nurse aides, orderlies or patient service associates in Canada, while 13% worked in sales or service jobs, the census report said.

Voight seeks to revive Hollywood's golden age with Trump-backed tax credits

LOS ANGELES(Reuters)-Jon Voight, one of three veteran actors named by U.S. President Donald Trump as "special ambassadors" to Hollywood, is preparing to outline his plans to restore the entertainment industry's Golden Age.

Voight -- who rose to acclaim for playing a street hustler in the 1969 film "Midnight Cowboy" and received a best actor Oscar in 1979 for his portrayal of a paraplegic Vietnam War veteran in "Coming Home" -- said he has witnessed the heavy toll production flight has taken on the acting community as well as on those who support filmmaking.

"Our hearts are broken," Voight said in an interview with Reuters. "We see what has happened to this industry that has drawn us out here to California."

"Our job is to create jobs," he said. "To bring jobs back."

Voight and his manager, Steven Paul, a filmmaker and producer best known for producing "Ghost Rider," expect to meet as soon as next week with Trump to recommend federal tax incentives, production credits and job training.

Film and television production in Los Angeles has fallen by nearly 40% over the last decade, according to FilmLA, a non-profit that tracks the region's production. Meanwhile, governments around the world have offered more generous tax credits and cash rebates to lure productions, and capture a greater share of the \$248 billion that Ampere Analysis predicts will be spent globally in 2025 to produce content.

That has taken a toll on employment in Hollywood, where one recent Otis College report on the creative economy found 25% fewer film and TV jobs than in 2022.

"Many of my fellow actors -- they're really hurting, and their friends are hurting," said Voight. "Every meeting we have, every interview, every interaction we have, I'm carrying those people in my heart."

Trump appointed Voight and two other Hollywood veterans, Sylvester Stallone and Mel Gibson, in January, to bring Hollywood back "bigger, better and stronger than ever before."

"These three very talented people will be my eyes and ears, and I will get done what they suggest,"

Trump wrote at the time, on his Truth Social platform.

Paul said he and Voight met with union leaders, entertainment executives, and California's film commissioner, Colleen Bell, and others in open-ended conversations, to discuss possible solutions.

Among the recommendations they plan to propose is accelerating the timetable for writing off the cost of production under Section 181 of the U.S. tax code, said Scott Karol, president of Paul's company, SP Media Group.

The group also supports legislative efforts to expand California's Film and Television Tax Credit program, by more than doubling the amount of tax incentives the state offers to \$750 million annually, up from the current level of \$330 million. The state legislature also is evaluating whether to broaden the types of projects eligible for the program.

Paul, who last year was among the bidders for Paramount Global, said he is so committed to restoring production in Hollywood that he is negotiating to buy a small studio with its own sound stages, and plans to mount his next three film productions in Los Angeles. He declined to name the studio, because the deal is not finalized.

Voight recently starred in Paul's productions of "Man with No Past" and "High Ground," and will be in the upcoming film, "The Last Gunfight."