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City of Detroit Joins Asian Americans Across the Country to Mark 40th Anniversary of Vincent Chin Murder with Events Focused on Racial Justice

Murder that Sparked Asian American Civil Rights Movement Coincides with National Focus on Anti-Asian Hate Crimes; Virtual Dialogue on Asian Americans and Democracy

May 2, 2022 – The Vincent Chin 40th Remembrance & Rededication Committee announced today series of events and conversations to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the murder of Vincent Chin, the Chinese American man who was beaten to death in Detroit in June 1982, sparking the modern Asian American civil rights movement.

On June 19, Chin and a group of friends were celebrating Chin’s upcoming wedding at a bachelor party at a club in Detroit. A confrontation took place with two white men at the club who were overheard saying, “It’s because of you mother f–s that we’re out of work,” a reference to the downturn in the economy that was scapegoating Japan. The two men hunted Chin down and brutally beat him with a baseball bat. He died four days later from his injuries.

The racially motivated murder received national attention, spotlighting a history of hate crimes directed toward Asian Americans. A year later, after the two men were given only probation and a fine, because of a plea bargain, the Asian American community coalesced to demand justice. A new organization was formed, American Citizens for Justice (ACJ) – which is spearheading the commemorative events this year – demanding the judge revisit the decision and, when that failed, to seek federal action in the case.

The federal government’s decision to pursue the case was the first federal civil rights trial involving an Asian American in American history.

Helen Zia, an activist and one of the founders for American Citizens for Justice, as well as the executor of the Vincent and Lily Chin estate, said, “Today, as we see a startling increase in the number of hate crimes directed against Asian Americans in cities and towns across the country, we are reminded that justice requires vigilance and an understanding of our history and the hard won solidarity among people of conscience. These are critical in our ability to move forward today.”

Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan joined the Committee on May 2 to announce a series of events from June 16 to June 20 to mark the anniversary of Vincent Chin's murder and to observe Asian Pacific Islander American Heritage Month and the Asian American civil rights movement. A full list of the events is available on the group's web page: <https://www.vincentchin.org/>

Highlights include:

- **Complicating Narratives: Diverse Voices of the American Midwest — 2022 Midwest Asian American Documentary Filmmakers Convening**, Thursday, June 16 - Friday, June 17
- **Vincent Chin 40th Commemorative Film Series**, Thursday, June 16 - Friday, June 17
- **National Conversation on Asian Americans, America, and Democracy**, Saturday June 18. The conversation, moderated by Amna Nawaz of PBS NewsHour, will be streamed and include racial justice leaders from around the country.
- **An Evening of Asian American Arts, Music and Joy — Spoken word, music and dance that speaks to justice and civil rights**, Saturday, June 18
- **Interfaith Remembrance Ceremony**, Sunday, June 19
- **NATIONAL PBS Broadcast of “Who Killed Vincent Chin?”** Monday, June 20

In addition to the events, the Committee will publish a 50+ page commemorative guide that will serve as a reference and teaching tool examining the Vincent Chin murder in the context of the larger pan-Asian civil rights movement. *Seize the Moment: Vincent Chin Legacy Guide* will be available on the website.

The forthcoming Vincent Chin 40th events come amidst a recent unprecedented surge in Asian American hate crimes occurring across the country. According to a [recent study](#) by the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism, hate crimes directed toward Asian Americans increased by 339 percent in 2021 compared to 2020, with cities including Los Angeles, New York City, and San Francisco surpassing the record numbers of anti-Asian hate crimes committed in 2020.

Zia and other co-founders, Roland Hwang and James Shimoura, of Americans Citizens for Justice, – the civil rights group founded in response to Chin's murder – are available for interviews leading up to the commemorative events and the anniversary of Chin's death on June 23.

The official Vincent Chin 40th Remembrance and Rededication planning organizations include representatives from the Vincent and Lily Chin Estate; American Citizens for Justice; the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM); the City of Detroit Office of Arts, Culture, and Entrepreneurship (ACE); APIAVote-MI, and Detroit Public Television (DPTV). The Kresge Foundation is the presenting sponsor for the landmark events. Other funders include: the Ford Foundation, Surdna Foundation, Henry Luce Foundation, the Asian American Foundation (TAAF) and AARP, Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, Participant Media and the Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission.

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