New Screening of California Waste Solutions Documentary Draws Strong Response From California's Immigrant Community

Asian-American, Black and Latino audiences are filling Northern California venues for The King of Trash as David Duong's documentary returns after a U.S. tour.



THE KING OF TRASH - A Story of Survival, Family and Rebuilding

OAKLAND, CA, UNITED STATES, September 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new round of Northern California screenings of The King of Trash is drawing packed houses and unusually warm word of mouth from immigrant families who say the film is their story, not a distant business profile.

The documentary, directed by Errol Webber, follows David Duong, founder of California Waste Solutions, from the loss of a family paper enterprise in Vietnam to the building of California Waste Solutions, Inc. recycling operations that now serve Oakland, San Jose and Ho Chi Minh City.

Tickets for the latest Bay Area and San Jose dates vanished after the first batch was released. Organizers added Hayward, Dublin, San Jose and Emeryville programs between Sept. 12 and Oct. 3 after residents who missed the earlier tour asked for another showing, and after first-time viewers wanted parents and children in the room. Nearly 1,000 people have reserved seats or joined waitlists for the four new events.

What is landing with audiences, especially Vietnamese American households and other refugee and first-generation families, is not the tonnage or the municipal contracts but the recognition of a pattern they already know: a generation that fled with almost nothing, children who worked after school, crowded rooms, and a trade that kept the family from falling apart.

The picture is back in California after an eight-city U.S. preview circuit that drew more than 5,000 people in San Jose, Oakland, Sacramento, Orange County, Dallas, Houston, Washington, D.C., and

Orlando.

Those nights mixed CWS employees, civic groups, business owners and large Vietnamese-American turnouts. The Sept. 26 program at AMC Eastridge in San Jose is the closing VIP preview, with Duong, members of the cast and Webber expected to meet the audience. The film has also been selected for the 2026 San Francisco International New Concept Film Festival and The Red Rock Film Festival.



David Duong speaks to attendees at The King of Trash screening at the United States Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C


The King Of Trash Event In Houston

AN IMMIGRANT AMERICAN JOURNEY
For some ticket-holders the film is an introduction to a refugee crossing they never heard described in this much detail. For many others in the Bay Area's Vietnamese community, and among immigrant families from elsewhere, it plays as memory. Parents starting over in a language they did not yet speak.
Relatives sharing two small studios; night work that looked like scavenging to outsiders and looked like survival to the people doing it; constant tiredness in the face of keeping up with studies and paying bills.

"This is one of the most important stories to come out of cinema this year," said Yvette, 57, from Oakland who attended the Hayward screening. "So many of us have endured the sleepless nights worrying about where the next paycheck is coming from and facing all sorts of discrimination. It was like David Duong said in the movie; it was faith and persistence that got us through it to the other side."

> We almost died out there in the ocean. We had only one choice: survive."
>
> *David Duong, Founder and CEO of California Waste Solutions*

Jacob, 41, from East Bay, said that the story in The King of Trash reflected his own upbringing. "Ultimately, yeah, we

made it. Not in the way of building a multi-million dollar company, but like, as upper-middle class Americans. But no one sees the blood, sweat and tears it took my parents and us as a family to rise from nothing. That's the American Dream, and it's hard won but it is doable. I thought the movie captured all that really accurately," he said.



Victor Duong, Kristina Duong, director Errol Webber and David Duong speak with guests during The King of Trash event.


The King of Trash on the Big Screen

The Duongs reached San Francisco after Saigon fell, a year in a Philippine camp, and a boat crossing Duong says almost killed them. Multiple relatives lived in two Tenderloin studios. They pulled cardboard, office paper and cans from streets and office buildings, sold what still had value, and used the cash to keep the household standing. By the end of the 1980s they had seven trucks and an Oakland contract. That work became manifest in their first recycling paper business and, in 1992, in the founding of California Waste Solutions.

On camera, Duong recalls his parents walking into downtown towers and treating discarded white paper and aluminum as treasure. The film's title tracks that instinct and the nickname carried by his late father, Jim Thu Tai Duong, also known as "Vua Rác," or The King of Trash from which the movie derives its name, whose rule was that nothing useful, and no person with potential, should be discarded.

"We came here to America with bare hands and we started collecting trash on the street," Duong tells a forum of young San Jose entrepreneurs in the film. "With $700 to start with, now we have a few billion-dollar contracts between here, the Bay Area and Vietnam. This is the country with opportunity, but you have to work hard for it."

California Waste Solutions now processes about 1,000 tons a week in Oakland and up to 1,300 tons a week in San Jose. Vietnam Waste Solutions, formed in 2005 as a wholly owned affiliate, runs a large integrated facility in Ho Chi Minh City. The movie spends time on that return: a

family that lost plants after 1975 later putting American-standard waste infrastructure into the city they once fled.

FAMILY, NOT BRANDING
Critics who have seen the film keep returning to the same point immigrant viewers make in the lobby: the picture does not dress the rise up. It records the grind.

Brandon Pho, writing in the San Jose Spotlight, described a film about family resilience among people who left Vietnam after 1975 at real personal cost, then noted that CWS drivers and executives speak of a chief executive who built a recycling concern out of almost nothing. Children in the household, he wrote, worked after school until midnight.

Tom White of The Front Row Daily said the core of the movie is the conversion of hardship into long-term community improvement, under a family rule that nothing and no one should be wasted.

Attendees at the recent Hayward date put it more bluntly. One San Francisco viewer said the film made family the center of both Duong's life and the company. An Oakland attendee called the true story hard to believe until the credits. Another East Bay viewer asked for a streaming release so relatives who could not get a seat could see it.

A sequence that draws particular comment from immigrant business owners shows Duong advancing funds and route training so other families can buy their first trucks. He ties that practice to the years when his own household lived off recovered scrap and to a promise he says he made when he was still the person asking for a fair chance.

"I've never forgotten that," said David Duong. "In fact, I've put it at the center of our whole business philosophy."

WHERE TO SEE IT NEXT
+ Dublin — Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026, Regal Hacienda Crossings, 5 to 7 p.m.
+ San Jose — Saturday, Sept. 26, 2026, AMC Eastridge, 4 to 8 p.m. Final VIP preview with Duong, cast and director Errol Webber.
+ Emeryville — Saturday, Oct. 3, 2026, AMC Bay Street Emeryville, 5 to 8 p.m.
+ Hayward's Sept. 12 showing at Cinemark Century already sold through. San Jose is being treated as the natural close for the VIP series: it is a CWS service city and one of the largest Vietnamese American communities in the country.
Screening and media details: www.thekingoftrash.us and www.calwaste.com.

ABOUT THE KING OF TRASH
The King of Trash is a feature documentary directed by Errol Webber. It tells the true story of David Duong and the Duong family, Vietnamese refugees who survived the fall of Saigon, rebuilt their lives in America, and founded California Waste Solutions and Vietnam Waste Solutions.

Official site: www.thekingoftrash.us. Media: info@thekingoftrash.us.

ABOUT CALIFORNIA WASTE SOLUTIONS
Founded in 1992 by David Duong, California Waste Solutions provides recycling collection, processing, customer service, and material recovery for residential, commercial, and municipal customers in Northern California, including Oakland and San José. Through its subsidiary Vietnam Waste Solutions, the company also operates large-scale environmental infrastructure in Ho Chi Minh City. Headquarters: 1211 Embarcadero, Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94606. www.calwaste.com.

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