

Hello again, and welcome back. I'm Jim Tedder in Washington. If you like sports, particularly basketball, you are going to like this one. Have you heard about Jeremy Lin? He is an Asian-American player, and the subject of a film about his unusual career.

A bit later, we will talk about a mental health issue that people used to avoid mentioning if they or a family member suffered from it. And we will meet some courageous people who are raising money to fight the disease.

The program coming out of your radio, computer speakers, or smartphone is called **As It Is**. It is a way to learn and improve your American English, from the Voice of America.

92 foreign players from 39 countries began this season in the professional U.S. basketball league. That is more foreign players than ever before. But none is from Asia.

At the moment, only one Asian-American plays in the U.S. National Basketball Association (NBA) and his name is Jeremy Lin. A new film called "Linsanity" shows Lin's unlikely road to becoming a star last season.

Lin has always loved the game. He led his high school basketball team to the state championship. But no college offered him an athletic scholarship. Lin attended Harvard, known as one of America's top universities. His playing broke Ivy League basketball records. Still, no NBA team signed him to play for it.

As Lin struggled to prove he could play in the professional league, a group of Asian-American filmmakers began documenting his rocky start. Teams would hire him, but then remove him from the team.

Evan Jackson Leong directed the project that watched Lin's career struggle upward, but then downward again.

"We started this four years ago. You know, as a filmmaking team we went through the same journey that he went through. You know, getting cut. As his downs were going down, we were also going down... because no one really cared about what was going on with our project."

Mr. Leong kept the cameras in action during some of Lin's darkest hours. He filmed him even after the point guard was cut twice from NBA teams. At first, the filmmakers planned to create a Web series about Lin. They never suspected what would happen.

The documentary captures the story of someone trying to break through barriers in a sport where Asian-Americans are extremely rare. Lin remembers racial insults from basketball players and others early in his career.

Still, he fought to stay in the game. When the New York Knicks finally gave him a chance to play in 2012, no one expected he would lead his team to so many victories. His performance started a worldwide campaign of fan support known as "Linsanity."

The film tells how Lin became a big star in the media. But sometimes even with his success, people used racially suggestive comments to insult him.

Co-producer Brian Yang said Lin is changing wrong ideas about people who differ from themselves. He is opening the way for more minorities to take part in sports.

"NBA teams are now giving other Asian-American athletes a second look," Yang said. "I think Jeremy's story has affected the way coaches and recruiters...think and that's important."

In the documentary, Lin says his religious faith has guided him throughout his career. And that made it especially meaningful for his cousin, Allen Lu, who also helped produce the film.

"For me, the thing that I draw a lot from the journey that we've been through is that, is like, where do you draw your hope? Where do you draw your strength? And for Jeremy and myself, and a lot of us here, you know, we're Christians. And that's where we draw our strength."

Christopher Chen, another co-producer, was moved by the audience reaction when "Linsanity" opened at the Sundance Film Festival.

"We had always thought that after Linsanity [premiered], this will hopefully impact the Asian community, the Asian-American community. But what was most impactful to me is when you have middle-aged white women and Latino women, and older black gentlemen, coming up to us, [saying] 'Thank you for telling that story.' That was very inspirational."

Now, at age 25, Jeremy Lin continues to demonstrate an example for children and young people through his charitable foundation. On the basketball court, he is now making millions of dollars playing for the NBA's Houston Rockets.

Lately, thousands of Americans have taken part in “Out of the Darkness Walks.” The walkers remember loved ones they lost to suicide. They also hope to raise money for suicide prevention efforts and research into depression. Depression increases the risk of people taking their own lives. VOA’s Steve Ember joins us with the rest of the story.

Steve Iselin served in the Navy for 20 years. He retired 13 years ago, and started looking for another job. That is also when he began feeling hopeless.

“I had a great sense of dread every day. Agony is another word that comes to mind. I didn’t want to do anything that I would normally like to do. I had no interest in seeing other people”...

Steve Iselin found a job. But he left after one week because he told himself he could not do the work. Everything he did seemed very difficult. Decisions were painful, even having to choose what he would wear that day or what to eat. Mr. Iselin was suffering from depression.

Bob Gebbia heads the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. He says being depressed is very different from being sad or having a bad day. He says that about 20 million people are found to have clinical depression in the United States every year.

Mr. Gebbia says the cause could be a combination of genetic influences, changes in brain chemistry or environmental reasons. He notes that some people are more likely than others to get depressed.

“You may not have had the kinds of experiences in life that bring it out. Let’s say you lose your job, or, you know, divorce, a loss of someone.”

Steve Iselin was lucky. His wife recognized the signs of depression. She helped him get the expert care he needed. But he says that was not true of his brother’s son. Mr. Iselin says his nephew became depressed a few years later and killed himself.

A year after his nephew's death, Mr. Iselin visited his brother in San Francisco and heard about the Out of the Darkness Walk. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention organized the event. Both men took part.

Steve Iselin said that was the first day his brother understood that perhaps he was not to blame for his son's death.

Since then, Steve Iselin has volunteered with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. He has taken part in seven community walks.

Thank you, Steve. By the way, we found out that the most recent walk raised \$65,000 for the cause.

And that is all the time we have for this edition of As It Is. But more Learning English programs are just seconds away. You can also hear world news at the beginning of each hour. I'm Jim Tedder in Washington, and this is the Voice of America.

