

《Faces of Hong Kong:meet Hong Kong ' s favorite western actor》

By CGTN's Tao Yuan

Gregory Charles Rivers is probably one of the most recognizable Western faces in Hong Kong TV dramas, though for his fans, he's better known as Ho Kwok Wing. The 50-year-old Australian singer/actor came to Hong Kong in 1987. He speaks fluent Cantonese, and has starred in more than 200 local TV series.

When did you decide to come to Hong Kong?

I was studying medicine at a university in Sydney, and from somewhere in the middle of the first year, it just so happened that all of my friends were from Hong Kong. I discovered Hong Kong pop music. One day in the dormitory I heard the music and I loved it, and I borrowed it and started learning Cantonese pop songs and the Cantonese language.



Gregory Rivers' love affair with Hong Kong began even before 1987 when he first arrived, having been a fan of Canto-pop. /South China Morning Post Photo

And after being the volunteer chauffeur for Alan Tam and Leslie Cheung when they had their concerts in Sydney, I just loved it too much and said I'm not going to study medicine anymore. I'm going to go to Hong Kong and try and

become a pop star.

How did you end up at TVB?

I wanted to be a pop star. But when I came over, absolutely all I had was 5,000 HK dollars and a room in a friend's home that I could live in for one month. I spent every day just walking the streets, just exploring.

I found a job teaching English in Causeway Bay, and it was in that job at Causeway Bay that a colleague saw a poster and told me that TVB's looking for a gweilo (Westerner) who can speak Cantonese. I had no confidence but I went over and saw the producer. It was a really bad casting but they had no other choice. And that was the beginning of 20 years of TVB.



TVB Photo

Was it a difficult decision to leave TVB?

I stopped working at TVB the beginning of 2008. I'd been there for 20 years and I knew that from a business perspective they weren't going to give me main roles. I knew I had two choices - I could stay at TVB and become one of those old supporting actors who'd been there for 50 years, or I could leave TVB and go back to 1987 when I

first arrived in Hong Kong with no job prospects and hope something turns up.

I decided to once again take a chance and leave. It turned out to be the right choice. The whole world has changed. When I was at TVB for 20 years, it was the main TV station in Hong Kong. But today, it's only the old people who are watching a TV. Everybody else is looking at their device. Now I'm working at three different TV stations. The whole ecosystem has changed. Hosting a travel show, hosting a show about amazing people in Hong Kong - that would never have happened at TVB.



Gregory Rivers (2nd row, 4th from right) join one of Hong Kong Polytechnic University's seminar to encourages PolyU SPEED students to dare to their dream in 2016. /Hong Kong Polytechnic University Photo

What's your future plan?

keep acting and singing as long as I can and hopefully get my first album out. I came here to be a pop star. I'm never going to be a pop star but I haven't released my first album yet. We started working on it six years ago and I had a lot of accidents with my singing voice.

I was using the wrong method for singing so there has been a lot of incidents. And last six years I've been working on eradicating the bad practices and trying to learn the correct practices. When I can finally release that album that I came here to do 30 years ago, then I can give myself a pat on the back.