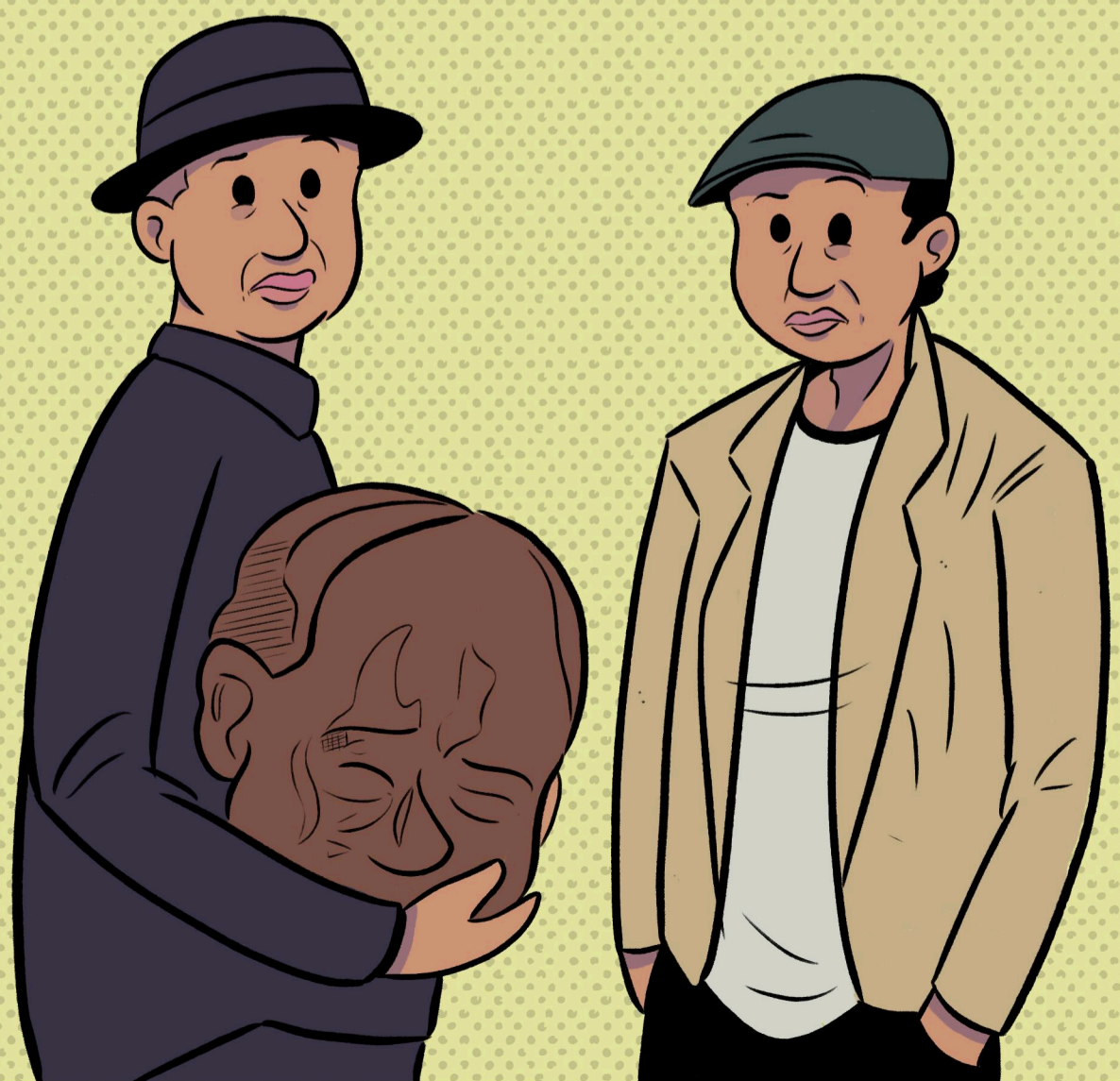


ON AUGUST 26, 2024, CHINESE ARTIST **GAO ZHEN**
WAS IN HIS STUDIO IN SANHE CITY, CHINA.



SINCE THE 1980S, GAO ZHEN AND HIS BROTHER GAO QIANG HAVE BEEN KNOWN FOR THEIR PROVOCATIVE SCULPTURES CRITICIZING MAO ZEDONG AND HIS REGIME.



ONE PIECE, MAO'S GUILT, IS A BRONZE STATUE OF THE FORMER COMMUNIST DICTATOR KNEELING IN REMORSE.



GAO HAD MOVED TO THE UNITED STATES BUT WAS BACK TO VISIT HIS FAMILY WHEN 30 POLICE OFFICERS SUDDENLY STORMED HIS STUDIO.



GAO WAS ARRESTED AND OVER A HUNDRED OF HIS ARTWORKS WERE CONFISCATED.



GAO ZHEN'S ARREST REFLECTS THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S ONGOING CRACKDOWN ON ARTISTS AND CREATIVES DEEMED SUBVERSIVE.



JUST LAST WEEK, FEI XIAOSHENG, A PROMINENT MUSICIAN AND PERFORMANCE ARTIST KNOWN FOR SUPPORTING THE HONG KONG DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT, WAS DETAINED.



IN 2021, CHINA INTRODUCED A LAW UNDER XI JINPING'S CAMPAIGN CRIMINALIZING INSULTS TO REVOLUTIONARY "HEROES AND MARTYRS," WITH PENALTIES OF UP TO THREE YEARS IN PRISON— A CRACKDOWN THAT CAME LONG AFTER MOST OF GAO ZHEN'S WORK WAS CREATED.

PUNISHING ACTIONS THAT OCCURRED BEFORE A LAW WAS ENACTED VIOLATES THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-RETROACTIVITY, A CORNERSTONE OF MODERN LEGAL SYSTEMS.

GAO ZHEN AND OTHER ARTISTS AND ACTIVISTS REMAIN DETAINED UNDER THIS LAW.

FREE GAO ZHEN