

Murder at the Movies

Wes Wetzel



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ArtAge Publications

Bonnie L. Vorenberg, President

PO Box 19955

Portland OR 97280

503-246-3000 or 800-858-4998

bonniev@seniortheatre.com

www.seniortheatre.com

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MURDER AT THE MOVIES

By Wes Wetzel

CAST

CHARLIE CHIN THE THREE: Male, middle age, made up to look Chinese

DIRECTOR: Big Mama Musselman, a hard-bitten female and boss of all the actors.

CAMERA OPERATOR: Male or female, non-speaking part.

VICTIM: Jake the Flake, non-speaking part.

SELDON SILENT SARAH SLAVEN: Always ready with a quip and prone to continuous talking if you don't shut her up.

SAM DIAMOND: Talks like James Cagney, did a TV serial "Murder is in the Cards" with co-star Sam Spade. Is carrying a deck of cards.

TONY THE PONY: Always has a racing sheet in his hand and a toothpick in his mouth.

MARY MAYFLOWER: Over from England to do this film, sweet younger redhead.

MI SIN: Pronounced "My Sin." Charlie's daughter, looks Chinese, is younger and always carries a magnifying glass.

GLORIA THE GORGEOUS: Cosmetically overdone, chews gum, a Mae West type.

COLUMBO: Of TV fame with trench coat and his famous last minute question before exiting.

A MALE SHILL: In the audience.

Place

A motion picture studio, with a live audience, in Hollywood.

Time

The present.

SCENE ONE

Setting: A motion picture studio in Hollywood. Our audience is the live studio audience. If possible, lighting on stage is set so all the action will be seen in silhouette. A chair is Center facing Left. A motion picture camera is Center Left facing the chair. A Director's Chair is Down Left. A table is Center Right.

An introductory overture may be added as a mime with a Russian sounding name comes out to conduct the world famous (your city's name) pit orchestra. After two false starts where the mime admonishes the fictitious orchestra players down in the 'pit,' we hear Chopsticks played on a kids' player piano on the third try. Create fun, ham it up!

At Rise, in silhouette: The Camera Operator is behind the camera and films until the Director says, "cut." The Victim enters, sits in the center chair, opens a newspaper and reads to himself. Sarah enters and sneaks up behind the Victim, puts her arm up and over him and stabs him in the front of his chest. The Victim groans and slumps forward. Sarah sneaks back out the way she came in. Short pause. The Director enters.

DIRECTOR: Cut! All right, that's a print. Lights, please. *(Stage lights come on.)* All right, cast, gather around. *(Sam, Sarah, Mary and Tony enter and huddle around the Director)* Gang, I want to thank you all for your diligent work. It's been a long hard road, but it's almost over. All we have left is next week when Arizonia 5-0 is available. *(Arizona can be changed to your home area if desired.)* I think we have got us a good film. *(The Victim is still slumped in the chair, the knife in his chest.)* All right, Jake, no more of your cheap hamming, you can get up now. *(As she looks at Jake, he doesn't move. Finally Sam Diamond goes over to see what's up. He bends down to inspect and straightens up in horror. Tony the Pony rushes over to look.)*

SAM: By God, he really has been stabbed. I think he's dead.

They all rush over to see.

TONY: That's real blood.

MARY: Well, how could this happen? That's a stage knife. You didn't change knives, did you?

SARAH: Did I kill him?

SAM: (*shaking Jake*) He really is dead. That's (*pointing*) not a stage knife.

DIRECTOR: We are all in deep trouble. Jake is dead and you did it, Sarah.

SARAH: But, Mama, I was supposed to, it's in the script.

DIRECTOR: But you used a real knife.

SARAH: I didn't know that. It looks like the one we always use.

TONY: Look here, Big Mama, it even has a notch right where the other one did.

DIRECTOR: You're right. Someone must have changed knives. This can only mean one thing: he was murdered!

END OF SCENE ONE

SCENE TWO

Setting: The center chair and movie camera have been removed from the stage.

At Rise: Charlie Chin the Three enters with chopsticks in his vest pocket. He is followed by Mi Sin.

CHIN: (*talking to the audience*) Good evening, playgoers. Allow me to "congratulate" you for coming to see Chin in my masterful performances of the past. But now I'm here to solve yet another "aggrieveous" murder. I thought you people in Sun Cities (*a local community*) were quiet retirement community. Ahhh, but Chin has been wrong before. This time have brought my daughter to study my notes and maybe become Chinese Miss Marple. Please to introduce Mi Sin.

Mi Sin bows Chinese style to the audience, but says nothing.

CHIN: Chin is number 1 son of revered father, who in turn was also number 1 son of grandfather, Grand Master of all criminal deduction. But I'm sorry to report gods have not favored Chin quite so well, have only 2 daughters, but I have decided to keep them, anyway.

At this point Mi Sin whips out a round magnifying glass and looks through it at the audience, carefully studying everyone while Chin talks about her.

CHIN: Mi Sin is number 7/8 daughter, she arrived 2 weeks early. Am not sure she all here. But now Chin must solve murder before he strikes again. Oh, excuse. Chin equal opportunity detective...killer could have been a lady. Who directs this masterpiece?

Big Mama enters as Mi Sin exits

CHIN: You are director? A lady director?

DIRECTOR: You bet your sweet chopsticks. Why, I've more experience than a retired gangster.

CHIN: Ah, glad to see dragon lady in charge. Will be of much help to me. Please to tell name of man who was stabbed and why good looking lady stab him.

DIRECTOR: Look, Chin, none of my people would have switched knives. We're family. Even though Jake was a son-of-a-bitch, no one would kill him. Why, he was even married to Gloria at one time.

CHIN: Ah, so. Married to Gloria, very interesting. Is she the one with sunset in her hair?

DIRECTOR: Oh, no. That's Mary Mayflower. But she had a torrid affair with Jake when they did *An Ocean so Big* together in England.

CHIN: You have said none of your people would have stabbed. But all had opportunity, right?

DIRECTOR: Well, they were all here, if that's what you mean.

CHIN: Ah, Miss Director, whoever stabbed Jake have to have practiced very

carefully, must buy knife exactly like this one (*holding up the stage knife*). I see it have a rubber blade that go into handle. Very clever. (*pause*) Miss Director --

DIRECTOR: It's Big Mama Musselman.

CHIN: Ah, yes, Big Mamma. Did you see stabbing?

DIRECTOR: No, no, it was too dark. But I know how it was done. We rehearsed a few times in the light.

CHIN: Oh, all the ladies are beautiful as a lotus blossom. It's too bad the stabbing was in darkness.

DIRECTOR: They are lovely, aren't they. But most of the scenes were in the light.

CHIN: And does same lady always do stabbing? (*using chopsticks to point, also using them casually throughout the play*)

DIRECTOR: Well, it was always her, but that's what the script called for. She's having a hard time getting over this shock. She's in her room recovering, so please don't talk to her now.

CHIN: Ah, I see your care about your people.

DIRECTOR: Care? I love these people.

CHIN: And how many actors in this Chinese opera?

DIRECTOR: Well, there were 17 altogether, but only 7 in the scene we were shooting. Let's see, there was: Tony the Pony, but he's always at the track; Gloria the Gorgeous, and she really thinks she's hot stuff. There's Mary Mayflower, who comes to us from England. Oh, Seldom Silent Sarah Slavens, who's always talking. It seems she's making up for her grandfather, a great actor from the silent film era. And of course, Jake the Flake. Oh, yes, and also Sam Diamond, a real card.

CHIN: Miss Mama, you have said someone must have switched knives. So who is responsible for props?

DIRECTOR: Ah. Well, we don't have a special person, but Gloria kind of took

care of them. She's one of our actresses.

CHINK: Ah, please to speak.

DIRECTOR: Look, Chin, anybody could have replaced that knife.

CHIN: Then you should not mind if I speak to her.

Director goes to edge of stage to summon Gloria.

DIRECTOR: Gloria, Mr. Chin wants to speak to you.

Gloria enters. The Director sits in the director's chair with her back to the audience.

CHIN: Ah, Miss Gloria, you are prop lady?

GLORIA: Yes, that's me.

CHIN: Oh, Miss Gloria, did you know Mr. Flake? I mean before the play.

GLORIA: Know him? He was my third husband.

CHIN: *(in dismay)* You were married to Mr. Flake?

GLORIA: Yes. I was pregnant and he was the lucky guy.

CHIN: You mean he possibly is not the father of your child?

GLORIA: Oh, I think he was. But that makes no difference now because I had a miscarriage. I was playing Virgin Mary. Have you seen that movie where I was the Virgin. It was called *The 2 ½ Commandments*.

CHIN: Not see movie.

GLORIA: Oh, you must go see that movie. I was so angelic...I had a halo, I did.

CHIN: And you say Flake your third husband?

GLORIA: You call yourself a detective?

CHIN: Yes, I do call myself a detective.

GLORIA: It's Jake the Flake, and yes, he was, and also my fifth husband. Married him twice. He was some sexy guy, I just couldn't resist.

CHIN: Oh, you must really love him!

GLORIA: No! I hate his guts, that lowdown slimy lowlife.

CHIN: You must hate him enough to kill him, then!

GLORIA: Yes! That scum! Wish I'd replaced that knife! But it wasn't me. Maybe it was Sarah. She was always trying to seduce him, which in his case was easy enough.

CHIN: Ah-hah. And where did you keep props?

GLORIA: I always kept them in a locked trunk and before each rehearsal I would put them on the prop table. It wasn't me that switched those knives.

Sarah enters the stage from her dressing room. Her right arm is extended rigidly in front of her and she is holding her right arm up with her left hand.

SARAH: *(sobbing)* This is the arm! How could you, arm? How could you stab poor Jake?

Gloria hugs Sarah in sympathy and exits

CHIN: Excuse, please. You must be woman who stabbed.

SARAH: That's right. Who are you?

CHIN: World famous detective here to solve murder.

SARAH: *(still holding her right arm)* Well, it wasn't me. Well, I guess it was me, but I'd done it so many times before in rehearsal. *(sobbing)* I didn't know it was a real knife.

CHIN: Now don't tell me you were married to Mr. Flake also?

SARAH: No. I was married to Tony. That was just before my born-again Christian period. Now I only date ministers and church elders...but they can't be too old.

CHIN: Then you live by Golden Rule, "Thou shall not kill?"

SARAH: Of course.

CHIN: And you say you were married to Mr. Tony.

SARAH: That's right. He was my fourth. That was just after my celibate period. Thank God that only lasted 3 months.

Mi Sin enters and waits

CHIN: Miss Seldom, when you pick up knife, did you notice different, like a different weight?

SARAH: Seemed exactly the same to me.

Chin goes to Mi Sin and whispers something secret in her ear. She bows to Chin and exits.

CHIN: Miss Mama, call your people together.

DIRECTOR: Okay. All right, everyone, come on back out. Mr. Chin wants to say a few words.

Mary, Sam, Tony, and Gloria join Sarah, the Director and Chin onstage. The actors mill around in a group.

CHIN: Please to introduce.

DIRECTOR: Okay, this is Tony the Pony (*Tony acknowledges the introduction*), and this is Gloria the Gorgeous (*Gloria is busy putting on lipstick*) whom you've met. Sam Diamond. (*he's fluffing cards*). Seldom Silent Sarah Slaven, whom you've also Met. (*Sarah throws a hip in Chin's direction*) And over on the end, Miss Mayflower. (*Mary does a mock curtsy*)

CHIN: Miss Seldom, where...

(interruption as Columbo in full costume comes barging onto the set)

COLUMBO: Hi-ya, Chin.

CHIN: Mr. Columbo.

COLUMBO: How's cases?

CHIN: Very good to see you. *(shaking hands with Columbo)* You have come to help Chin solve murder?

After Columbo enters, the Director, San Diamond, Gloria, and Tony the Pony exit one by one.

COLUMBO: No, no. I'm doin' my weekly series next door at Studio 6. I heard you had a real murder down here, so I came down to see. We don't want your network to have a better rating by using reality.

CHIN: Ah, but it's good of you to come. I may need you to speak to the ladies. You know, they like you and they like your sexy car.

COLUMBO: Oh, yeah, I know the ladies *(proudly and polishing his fingernails on his coat)*, especially Mary over there. I was her second husband. I wonder if she remembers.

Columbo walks towards Mary, who slaps Columbo's face, turning his face towards the audience. Columbo gives a look of dismay.

COLUMBO: She remembers!

Sarah and Mary exit.

CHIN: Glad to see you already know Miss Mary.

COLUMBO: Yeah, and Tony the Pony, also. He was by brother-in-law for four years.

CHIN: You should be in our cast. You would fit right in.

COLUMBO: Well, how are things going? I mean, are you onto the dirty scoundrel yet?

CHIN: No. I haven't a clue.

COLUMBO: Well, if it's any help, on my last case, the butler did it.

CHIN: Interesting. Appreciate your deductive insight. Maybe Chin overlook the obvious. But, we have no butler.

COLUMBO: No butler! You gotta have a butler. You need somebody to pin the rap on.

CHIN: Ah. Maybe speak to play writer, get a butler, *(pause for thinking)*, or maybe could make Miss Mary a maid. Would a maid work?

The Director and Sam Diamond enter talking in pantomime to each other.

COLUMBO: Yeah, yeah, if you work it right. Look, I gotta go. I only get a two-hour lunch break. I'm about to crack my case. I'm gonna trap a dirty CEO. He's selling the company's stock short and then he's gonna pull the plug and send it down the drain.

CHIN: Send down drain. You mean to sewer?

COLOMBO: No, no, no. That's just slang. It means the company's goin' south.

CHIN: Oh, understand. Relocating company to Mexico.

COLUMBO: I guess so. Yeah, close enough. Well, I'll be seeing you. Let me know who done it.

CHIN: Yes. Will go see play writer. Need a butler.

COLUMBO: *(starts to exit, then turns just before he goes off)* One more thing: I'm having Chinese for the cast tomorrow. What would you recommend, egg roll or chop suey?

CHIN: Oh, egg roll. Must be egg roll, but keep off of face.

COLUMBO: Oh, okay, I see. Well, thanks for the tip. *(exits)*

CHIN: Miss Mama.

DIRECTOR: Who is play writer for film?

DIRECTOR: Well, Semore the Scribe wrote the screenplay, but he took it from the novel *In Front of the Footlights*.

SAM: *All of a sudden Sam Diamond pulls Chin aside. In his best James Cagney impersonation he says:)* Chin, come here, come here a minute. If you need any help on this case, just let me know. I've had lots of experience. You see, my buddy Sam Spade and I, we were detectives on the TV series *Murder is in the Cards*. We ran for 3½ years. I solved over a hundred murders, I know what I'm doing. I work cheap. I've got my own gat back here. *(indicating a rear pocket)* I'm better than that Columbo guy, too. Our ratings were always higher. I really think you need to take a good look at Tony the Pony. I saw him at the prop table just before the murder.

CHIN: Mr. Sam, are you a friend of Mr. Pony?

SAM: No, not really. He's just always stealing my scenes.

CHIN: So you know him as thief, then?

SAM: No, not really. He's just a no-talent ham, that's all.

CHIN: Ham. You mean he a pot-bellied pig that has been cured?

SAM: Are you really a detective, or just a comedian?

CHIN: Chin ask the questions, you give answers. Why you telling Chin about Mr. Pony at prop table?

SAM: Just trying to be a good citizen. *(he waves off Chin and exits)*

CHIN: Miss Mama, is Seymore Scribe available?

DIRECTOR: No. I think he went on vacation right after we got this screenplay outlined. He probably went to the Virgin Islands. He's looking for another wife.

His marriage to Gloria the Gorgeous only lasted three months. Well, you know how it is.

CHIN: Uh-hmmm. Hollywood lifestyle like a bowl of rice, it takes you many kernels to fill the bowl. Fortune teller once tell Chin he live long life, but only with one wife. Maybe if I get paid, could get concubine.

DIRECTOR: You don't get paid?

CHIN: Oh, no. This amateur play, no money, just great adoration for finding killer.

DIRECTOR: Well, good. Then you know who did it.

CHIN: No, I don't. Chin can not solve puzzlement. Very dejected. Must see play writer. Must get butler.

DIRECTOR: But what playwright? Do you mean the one for the screenplay *Murder at Midnight* or this play, *Murder at the Movies*?

CHIN: Yes, this play. *Murder at Midnight* have a fake murder. *Murder at the Movies* have real murder.

DIRECTOR: Oh. Well, I'll see if I can raise him. Just a minute. (*dialing on cell phone, pausing for outgoing call to connect*) Hello, Wes? (*short pause*) Oh, okay. Well, when he gets home, tell him to come to the studio as soon as possible. We've got trouble. (*pause*) Okay, thanks.

CHIN: Thank you for your assistance. Chin will give you certificate, say you are Assistant Detective Second Class.

DIRECTOR: (*sarcastically*) Just what I always wanted.

CHIN: Chin need more brain power. Maybe try acupuncture, stimulate brain, increase thinking. Excuse, please.

(*Chin takes off a shoe and it looks like he's sticking a big long hat pin into his big toe. Actually he's sticking the pin between his toes into a hidden cushion. Mi Sin enters*)

CHIN: (*painfully*) Oh, oh, oh!

DIRECTOR: *(in disbelief)* You stick a needle in your toe to stimulate the brain? Unbelievable!

CHIN: What do you know? You not Chinese. Nerve go from toe go all the way to brain in one giant rush. In fact getting signal already. It says assemble your people. Please to tell.

DIRECTOR: All right, everyone, come on out. Come on out, everyone. *(Gloria, Mary, Sarah, Sam, and Tony enter)* The Master is about to announce our killer.

CHIN: *(animated hobbling with one shoe off and the big needle seemingly sticking out of the big toe)* I'll take short interlude. Have to look into grandfather's writings. Oh, it won't take long. Grandfather assembled his uncanny deductions into well organized files. Am sure after studying grandfather's notes, will gain new insight to great puzzlement.

Chin sits down and starts to open fortune cookies. He keeps reading one after another until he finds one he likes. At this time, Mi Sin whispers in his ear. Then she bows to Chin and exits.

CHIN: **Ah-ha**, grandfather's notes reveal much. *(reading a fortune cookie)* "When toe hurts, remove needle." *(He pulls the needle out of his toe, puts the needle in his lapel, and puts on his shoe.)* Miss Seldom.

SARAH: Yes, Mr. Chin.

CHIN: You never married to Mr. Flake, or is Chin confused?

SARAH: No. That's correct.

CHIN: Well, then, as neutral party, Chin need to know--

SARAH: Don't ask! Jake and I were lovers, but it was only during the filming of *North of Nowhere*.

CHIN: Chin forget this is Hollywood. I just want to know if you like Mr. Flake, you know, as people.

SARAH: No. He was a son-of-a-bitch. He was always putting me down, always

talking about his precious Libby Lou.

CHIN: This means Mr. Flake not well liked. This means many enemies, some might even want to kill him. (*Sam and Tony each raise a hand*) Too many suspects, Chin get confused. Miss Mama.

DIRECTOR: Here, Mr. Chin. Do you know who did it?

CHIN: No. So I need to review a few facts with you.

DIRECTOR: Okay.

CHIN: Now, Miss Seldom, she stab victim to death.

DIRECTOR: Yes. But--

CHIN: I know it's supposed to be stage knife, not real knife. But in the film, who is detective who find your killer?

DIRECTOR: Well, that's easy. That's a detective from the program *Arizona Five-O*. That's a series of TV movies.

CHIN: So, where is Mr. Five-O?

DIRECTOR: Well, he's shooting a TV series right now, but he'll be here next week to shoot scenes for this movie.

CHIN: You mean your detective not here yet to solve your puzzlement?

DIRECTOR: Well, he doesn't really have to solve anything. But he has this wonderful scene where he exposes the murderer after a long monologue and several glasses of beer. This novel was made into a movie just for *Arizona Five-O*. Well, actually, it was supposed to be shot in Hawaii, but the airlines went on strike and we couldn't get there, so we shot it here in Arizona.

CHIN: Cannot wait until next week to get help from Mister Five-O. Must find another way. Ah, maybe try more acupuncture. This time use lucky finger. Oh, wait! Have a better idea. Will ask audience. (*speaking to the audience*) Playgoers, help Chin out. Does anyone know who switch knife? Must also be able to tell clue you use to find the killer. Please, come forward, relate your revelation. I will

make you Assistant Detective Second Class, but with gold star.

All players exit except Chin and the Director.

SHILL: *(standing in the audience)* I know, I know who switched knives.

CHIN: Please, come forward. Help Chin with puzzlement.

SHILL: *(walking over to Chin)* It was Big Mama.

DIRECTOR: What! Oh, what! It wasn't me. It wasn't me. What does this guy know, anyway. He's not even in the play.

CHIN: How you know it was her who switched the knives?

SCHILL: It was Big Mama, all right. She was mad at Jake because he had all these affairs with the other women and he wouldn't give her a second look.

CHIN: But you have no clues, no evidence?

SHILL: Well, no. Not really. You know, a woman scorned.

DIRECTOR: Ah!

CHIN: You don't have evidence?

SHILL: No, not really. But you know, that's how these plays always end.

CHIN: Oh, you are playgoer?

SHILL: Oh, yes.

CHIN: Well, then you know that a murder mystery have to have clues and have to have a villain. Otherwise, audience throw tomatoes.

DIRECTOR: Oh, no. No tomatoes.

CHIN: That's not how this play come out. Thank you for your help, Mr...

SHILL: Butler, Mike Butler.

CHIN: You are butler?

SHILL: Yes. I'm originally from Chicago. (*or any local town*)

CHIN: I have a part for you, Mr. Butler, a very good part. I need you in play. As a butler, you are villain.

SHILL: You mean you want me to be in this play?

CHIN: You would be perfect, Mr. Butler.

SHILL: How much would I get paid?

CHIN: Mr. Butler, this play is an art form, bigger than mere money. You gain the wealth of stardom.

SHILL: But I don't want a part where I'm a murderer. Everyone will hate me.

CHIN: Everyone will know you. You be big star at next happy hour and we will give you back your _____ dollars. (*the price of his ticket to the play*) And I need a butler.

SHILL: I'm leaving, before you have me cleaning ashtrays. So long, Chin, but remember I'm out front waiting to see who done it. (*Shill returns to his seat in the audience.*)

CHIN: (*gesturing in frustration*) Almost had villain. Chin getting no help. Must go to play writer and have him give me a dirty rotten scoundrel.

DIRECTOR: But I told you Seymore is on vacation.

CHIN: No, no. This play here, *Murder at the Movies*.

DIRECTOR: But we don't actually have a playwright in the play.

CHIN: Must see him. Must get more clues.

DIRECTOR: Chin, this is highly unusual. Let me get this clear. You want to change the play to include more clues?

CHIN: "Exacery." Audience can not come to murder mystery and go home without a solution to puzzlement. You cannot have murder mystery without a villian.

DIRECTOR: Okay, let me think, let me think.*(pause for thinking)* Let me think.

CHIN: Ah-ha. So far audience not know. Mr. Columbo thinks it's a butler, but we have no butler. Mr. Five-O is not even here. And Chin does not know. Cannot have murder mystery without a villain.

DIRECTOR: This time I'm really going to think. Let's see. Who can we pin it on?

CHIN: Oh, no, no. That would break number one rule, unwritten rule of a murder mystery. Ah, maybe Chin try grandfather's book, "How To Be a Detective."

(Holding up a large book with big letters, entitled "How To Be a Defect" on the front, "ive" on the back. He shows the audience the front and back and opens the book.)

Ah, so. Chapter 17, Section 3-A, "A Chin must never lose face." *(Lays the book down.)* Must try new approach. Miss Mama, do you know anybody who might want to kill Mr. Flake?

(At the stage entrance several arms wave)

DIRECTOR: Well, yeah, almost everyone. He had a way of bad-mouthing his competition and backstabbing his friends. Say, maybe that's why he was stabbed in the back!

CHIN: But he was stabbed in chest.

DIRECTOR: Nothing ever goes right when you're shooting a film.

CHIN: Seems Mister Flake just not well liked.

DIRECTOR: Boy, you can say that again.

CHIN: Seems Mister Flake just not well liked.

DIRECTOR: Say, Chin, how long have you been in America? That was just a slang term.

CHIN: Well, Chin come to America on slow boat from China, study English along the way, read many murder mysteries to gain insight to your way of thinking.

Mi Sin enters

DIRECTOR: Good for you. But you know, you've got a long ways to go yet.

CHIN: Ah, but Chin has learned one thing: Must have a butler in a murder mystery. Mi Sin, have you found some clues for father?

MI SIN: Yes, Honorable Father. Sun shine on your daughter.

CHIN: Ah-hah!

MI SIN: Have found important missing link.

CHIN: Finally we getting nowhere. What have you uncovered, Mi Sin?

MI SIN: Lady at second table (*or in second row*) has a tooth missing. (*nodding head*)

CHIN: (*Grabbing his head with both hands in frustration.*) Mi Sin, you are no help. (*to the audience*) Why did I ever decide to keep her? No help from daughter, Columbo, or Five-O, and Chin does not know. Must solve puzzlement myself. (*with finger in air*) Ah-ha, Chin will try fortune teller...pay big yuan, get right answer. But I'm not sure the moon aligned with lucky stars. Must first consult horoscope.

DIRECTOR: Chin, I thought you were the world's greatest detective. And now you say you must consult your horoscope in order to solve the crime?

CHIN: Only to reaffirm what Chin already know.

DIRECTOR: Boy! I sure hope next time our playwright gets a detective that knows what he's doing. This is ridiculous.

CHIN: Miss Mama, you assemble all your people together. Chin have big announcement.

DIRECTOR: Okay, everyone, come on out, gather around. Chop-chop. Oh, sorry, Mr. Chin.

CHIN: Chop-chop?

(Gloria, Sarah, Mary, Sam, and Tony enter and huddle around the Director and Chin)

DIRECTOR: Mr. Chin, you're our star.

CHIN: *(Talking to the audience in this ending monologue.)* This puzzlement very interesting. We have acknowledged stabber in Miss Seldom, *(motioning toward Sarah who is still holding out her arm)* but only because somebody switched knife. We have murder taking place in play while the real murder happen. We have a victim, Mr. Flake, a vengeful man few liked. And we have a prop table containing murder weapon open and available to all. Indeed, very great puzzlement until Chin get vital clue. You see, I asked daughter to speak with Mr. Flake's doctor. Seems Mr. Flake was dying of cirrhosis of the "river." She also find out he owe over \$200,000 to man with whom he make book *(Tony holds up his arm and others point to him)* and he can not pay. Chin believe that Mr. Flake, being a vengeful man, switched knives, himself, as he was dying anyway. This way he could cast blame on one of his fellow actors. If this is not so, let us say it is, anyway. After all, nobody like him. And besides, if we can all agree, Honorable World Famous Detective not lose face. *(Chin bows to the audience)*

CURTAIN