

Nutzacrackin'
Immigration and Naturalization Syle.

Scene 1. Law Division, Ellis Island. Desk, cluttered with files; two phones; cigar butt. Sign on wall behind desk, "Law Division, Ellis Island."

The Chief, old, wearing odd, hornshelled glasses, absent-minded, eccentric, enters. Looks at desk, moans.

A tall mail clerk comes in with two files, followed by short one carrying files up to his head. They place them on the desk, announcing, "Morning mail". Exeunt.

Chief - Oh, lord. (Scratches his head) What was that file number? Oh, yes, 99242/764. (Looks among the files and finds it - cigar butt which he lights).

Phone rings.

Chief - Law Division ... you won't be in today?---you're in bed..... with whom.....

Oh, with a bad coldokay.

Lord, there's an awful lot of work to be done here.
(Places feet on desk and puffs cigar, nevertheless).

(Resumes air of business) Where's that stenographer I was supposed to get today?

Phone rings.

Law Division.....yes, operator.....Washington is calling?...(New secretary enters, conga style).....tell Washington to call me later.

(Rises to meet the new secretary)

Secy.- Are you the Law Division?

Chief - Yes.

Secy. - I was told to report here for work this morning.

Chief - Good. Let's get down to business. (They sit down). What did you say your name was?

Secy. - I didn't say, but it's Nada Lazonga.

Chief - Would you like to be my personal secretary. You have great possibilities. (Ogling). My former secretary didn't like

this close desk work (sidling over)....Why the smock? The girls here don't wear them.

Secy. - I beg your pardon. You see, I'm going out tonight. I didn't know how late I'd stay, so I thought I'd wear this over my gown (releasing smock a bit, with chief ogling). Do you mind?

Chief - Mind?

(Looks for a piece of mail as young inspector in uniform and woman enter. Woman handcuffed). (Inspector is meek, mild type).

Chief to Secy. - (As they approach) One of our new inspectors making his first arrest.

Chief to Insp. - Where is the warrant for the arrest of this alien?

Inspector - Alien! This is my mother-in-law. I tried the handcuffs on her and can't find the key.

Chief - (As they exit quickly). Get out.

Inquirer (meek, mild) - I would like to adjust my illegal status in the United States.

Chief - Here, fill out this form I-55, this form I-155, and this form I-255. Over there.

(Inquirer retires to a table and chair, with sign in rear, "Forms filled out Here - Ellis Island." He remains there throughout skit, quiet when there is other action on the stage, and during brief lulls, scratching his head, removing his coat, vest, tie, etc., gradually engulfing himself in paper).

(As soon as he is directed to retire, the phone rings)

Chief - (On phone) Law Division...yes....Ellis Island Hospital?.... that alien I sent over yesterday is badly jaundiced?.... Badly jaundiced, hell, he's a Chinaman.

Chief to Secy. - Where was I? Oh, yes...(dictating) Write a letter to Washington.

Secy. - To whom in Washington?

Chief - Attorney General...Reference is made to the case of Honeysuckle Epstein, and we are sending you a complete copy of our file to replace the one lost by you, as usual...

Secy. - As usual?

Chief - No, cross it out.

Secy - My, but it's warm here, do you mind if I remove my smock?

Chief - No, not at all. (She experiences difficulty, helps her).
Let's forget this for a while. Tell me, what did you do last night?

Secy. - I went to a movie about an alien smuggled into the country. Mae West took the part of a refugee who is smuggled in. The smugglers hold her in bondage. An inspector passes the house where she is detained. She looks out of the window and says, "Why don't you come up and free me sometime, inspector?"

(Another stenographer walks in)

Chief - Yes, Mrs. Smith, what is it?

Smith - Please okay this application for leave. I am going to have a baby.

Chief - Sorry, the Department says it's a national emergency. You can't do it.

(She exits as the phone rings)

Chief to Secy - Must be Washington again.

Chief on phone - Law Division...yes...yes, Major.....Major who....
(repeating after him) Major uniform six months ago and I want the money. Say, Sam, you made the pants too long. (Hangs up angrily)

(Inspector enters and walks to the desk)

Inspector - I made an investigation of an illegally resident alien. The findings of fact and conclusions of law puzzle me. He committed suicide. Is that a finding of fact or a conclusion?

Chief (angrily) - That's definitely a conclusion. For him and for you. You're fired.

(Inspector exits as phone rings)

Chief on phone - Law Division.....yes, operator...Major? (Aside to Secy. - Must be that darned tailor again)...Say, why don't you stop annoying...what? what? (tone changes completely) Yes, sir, yes Major. You want to know how many people work in the Law Division.....about half.

(Alien who doesn't understand English walks in)

Chief - What can't I do for you? (Gibberish follows - Chief orders guard to get an interpreter meanwhile conducting some asides with the steno. Interpreter enters to interrupt)

Chief to Interp- See what he wants. I suppose he wants to adjust his status.

(After exchange, interpreter smilingly takes alien by the arm to lead him out).

Chief to Interp. - Say, what does he want?

Interpreter - ~~The lavatory.~~ *The men's room*

(exeunt quickly)
(As they go, woman enters)

Chief - Yes, madam.

Madam - I was born in this country, but I was married in 1922 to an alien. ~~Did I lose it?~~

Chief - Madam, we answer legal problems only.

(She exits as meek lawyer enters with a good-looking girl).

Chief to Atty - Well, young man, what is it?

Atty (stutteringly) - I am an attorney at law. I want to surrender this alien, paroled on my responsibility and in my custody a month ago. My mother says I have to get her out of the house.

Chief - Get out.

(They go and 3 huskies enter with a small alien concealed among them. They are in formal clothes).

Chief - Yes, gentlemen.

One of them - We have an alien here for you.

Chief - Who are you?

Three (in unison) - Don't you know, we're from the Special Inspection Division.

(exeunt)
(Chinese interpreter enters)
(Bows to Chief who rises)

Chief - Good morning, interpreter Sing.

(Interpreter bows again to Chief and
to Secy. ogling her)

Interp. - I bow to the Chief
And I bow to the bower
Wherein sits such a
Beautiful lotus flower.

Secy - I may be a lotus flower
Of whom you are fond,
But don't expect me
To grow in your lily pond.

(Phone rings)

Chief - Law Division...yes, Special Inspection Division...You want
to know is there a penalty against a steamship company for
bringing in an alien afflicted with rigor mortis?...Yes, a
stiff one.

Chief - Go, ahead, Sing, what is it?

Interp - Without is a supplicant for your consideration. It is
that smuggling affray of which you so well know.

Chief - Bring him in.

(All is quiet, Chief and Secy look at the
form executor on the side, and then before
Interp reenters)

Chief to Secy - Every alien has an appeal by law. Yours is natural.
Miss Nada, I am a brusque man,
Of words few and snappy;
May I arrest your attention?
Twould make me very happy.
I'm not given to language romantic,
Nor phrases ardent and fiery.
I do make this Special Inquiry:
How about a date?
As Interpreter Sing would say, a date with you, ah,
better than all the figs grown in California.

Secy - I like your cherce;
I'm not averse
To the Astor Roof,
Or the St. Regis bar
In your red upholstered Cadillac car.

(Interp. reenters with Chinese)

Chief to Secy - Take this down well.

(Chinese enters bewildered. Is directed to seat by Interp. Seated, he finds composure, but with eyes for the Secy. Takes cigar out of bag, and hands it to Chief). (Chief lights it and says, "Mixture of Hong Kong and Shanghai").

Chief to Interp. - Swear him. (Babble and confused hand raising)

Chief - What does he say?

Interp. - He says, honorable chief, upon his most dignified honor he will not tell a lie.

Chief - That is not enough under the law under our even more dignified law. Does he swear to tell the truth?

Chinese - Yolah. - Interp. Yes.

Chief(To Guard - Get me a specialist from the Chinese Division)

(Inspector enters - conceited type)

Chief to Insp. - This is one of the boys who was smuggled in several months ago and we're trying to get at the smugglers.

Insp. - Yes.

Chief to Chinese - What is your name?

Chinese - Wan to Go.

Chief - So soon? You are informed that I am the exalted Chief of the Law Division and that the purpose of these proceedings (to Secy) You will get that formula from one of the other girls.(to Chinese) Do you wish to make a statement under these conditions? (To Secy. before there is any chance for a reply) Yes.

Insp. - I am deeply concerned, as that appears to be prejudicial on its face.

Chief - Face! As to your face I'd say, in the language of Confucius, bull frogs open their mouths at night, after the song birds have closed theirs. So, don't interrupt.

Chief to Chinese *-How old are you?

Chinese - (Counts on fingers) (Chief gets impatient) Here, tell him to use this. (Hands abacus).

Chinese - (Hurriedly computing) 24.

Chief - Do you claim any right to be and remain in the United States?

Interp - (after long harangue) Yes.

Chief - What right?

Chinese - I am a citizen of the United States.

Chief - How so?

Chinese - I was born in China of a father who was a United States citizen.

Chief - What your mother ever in the United States?

Chinese - No.

Chief - Was your father ever in China?

Chinese - No. (after distress and beginning to look to the Interpreter for help)

Chief- Ah, hah, then how were you born?

Chinese - Ah, hah, my mother was a picture bride by proxy and father sent her a loetter to have a boy.

Chief - What was your father's name?

Chinese - (Distress and gets coaching material)

Chief - Ah, hah, coaching material, let me have it. (Interp. hands it over) Explain this.

Chinese - When the memory is stressed
The printed page is best.

Chief - When did you get on the boat?

Chinese - At night.

Chief - Ugh, what date, and where?

Chinese - The 7th day of the 3rd moon of the 15th year of the reign of Chiang Kai Shek at the dock.

Chief - This is driving me nuts. Did you enter in person or by proxy? Forget that. Who helped you stow away on the vessel?

Chinese - (Interp) - My - I mean this man would like to know why so many questions. He says continued drops of water will wear a hole even in a stone.

Chief - Is that so? Well, you tell him that hair by hair I will pluck him bald. Now when and where did he board the vessel and who helped him and how in blazes did he get ashore here?

Insp. - I beg your pardon, that's argumentative and Washington will reprove us.

Chief - Confucius said, Axe wielders look only for tall trees; little shrubs, like you, are perfectly safe.

Chief to Secy - Miss Nada, direct the girl to apply for a warrant for the arrest of this alien on the ground that he entered unlawfully, at an unknown port, on an unknown vessel, on an unknown date. Mark it for the special attention of the chief of the warrant branch, Hutchins building, Ave. D & 10th St., Washington, D. C., Room 506, Northwest corner thereof. Maybe that will get prompt action.

Yung - Can he be released?

Chief - Only under bond in the sum of \$3000.

Yung - We can--I beg pardon--I think he can raise that through friends.

Chief - take him out.

(They and Insp. go out as phone rings)

Chief on phone - Law Division...yes.. Yes, Major..you are on the dais and don't like the way I act on the job ... I am transferred forthwith to the Board of Immigration Appeals in Washington...oh, lord.. (To steno.) darling, I'll see you soon.

(Blackout)

Scene II

(Same, except sign on wall
Board of Immigration Appeals,
Washington, D. C.)

(Chief enters in robes; cluttered desk; scratches his head; notices the form executor still there, looks at the sign above and turns it around, and it now reads:

Forms Filed Here
Washington, D. C.

(Chief proceeds to desk; immediately the other two members come. There is mutual bowing. They recite, standing:

1. We are a holy trinity (bow to each other)
 2. Often accused of asininity;
 - all. But any alien so deluded (finger-waving)
 - all. Is sure to be deported, excluded.
 3. We examine passports, dirty, greasy,
 1. Looking for a proper vise.
 2. We want to know all--(sweeping gesture)
 3. Your name;
 1. Have you committed crimes? (Pointing)
 2. With whom and how many times?
 3. Will you try the U. S. to overthrow?
 1. You're a strange Communist
If you don't say no.
 2. Do you suffer from superiority(pointing)
 3. Psychopathic inferiority?
 1. Do you believe in bigamy,
 2. Balanced budgets,
 3. Polygamy?
 1. Are you healthy,
 2. Suffering from colic,
 3. A public charge,
 1. A chronic alcoholic?
 2. Has your conduct been good or lewd (puritanically)
 3. Or have you been suffering from moral turpitude?
 1. Are you dyspeptic,
 2. Epileptic
 3. Are you docile,
 1. An antiquated fossil.
 2. Do you fuss,
 3. Do you fidget,
 1. Are you a moron,
 2. Or an idiot?
- All. We follow changing policy
1. To a very high degree.
 2. But we never know
 3. Whether it's x,
 1. Or y
 2. Or z.
- All. And if we do say, DEPORT,
1. Aliens know how to thwart us,
 2. They apply to the Court
 3. For a writ of habeas corpus.
- All. So, hell, let them come from any clime
As long as the paychecks come on time.

(Board sits down)

1st Member - I'M not one to complain
About the many new rules and laws;
But they give one a headachy pain
To study with their numerous flaws.
One day we're instructed to do this,
The next day it's retracted.
Yes, sir, this hodge-podge of what to do and not to do
Leaves one utterly distracted.

2d - Are you distracted by them?

1st. - No, I don't study them.

3rd - You may be somewhat astounded
But I think we're purposely confounded;
So that whether we're strict or lax,
We always get the official axe.

1st - Let's get down to cases. They tell me there's a Chinese
matter coming up.

2d. - Oh, oh, these Chinese cases. I gives me a laugh--
Even the shape of a giraffe
Is capable of some rational expla-
nation,
But a Chinese case
Occupies a peculiar place
Solvable not even by astronomical
calculation.

(A young lawyer at the threshold)

1st. - Come in, young man.

Atty - I am scheduled to appear before you today on some cases for
argument.

1st - What firm of attorneys do you represent?

Atty - McCann, Hertz & Howe.

2nd - Your name?

Atty - G. Howard Hertz.

1st - Proceed.

Atty - Gentlemen, I have 9 cases I would like to argue, if you
please.

1st - No, make it an even number, 8, you're losing half and winning
half.

Atty - (Bewildered) Yes.

2nd - And don't bother us with the cases you've won.

Atty - First, I would like to present the case of a Chinese gentleman,
Wan to Go, your file number 55666/111. Now, in that case,
gentlemen, in which you have undoubtedly read the record,
there is not a scintilla of evidence to establish alienage
on the basis of which an order of deportation may be
predicated.

1st - Yes, not a scintilla of anything.

Atty - True, he made some statements against his own interest, as who does not at times, but there is a higher justice, a greater law...

2nd - Are you arguing for his entrance to heaven?

Atty - Gentlemen, I have brought here Mr. Wan to Go, in person. He is at large under bond. To see him is to love him, to hear him is to believe him. Notice his utter candor, his truthfulness, his reliability. Gentlemen, Mr. Wan to Go.

(Dow & Yung enter, Dow shuffling behind)

(Business of lichee nuts)

3rd - Speakee Melican leetlee best?

Dow (without dialect and without interpreter) - No, sir, (catches himself)

(Board knocks heads)

1st to Dow - We have looked over the record and it is pitifully weak. (to Interp) Ask him if he understands that?

Interp - He says he rests his case in the laps of the Gods (indicating Board).

1st - But where will his case be if we stand up. (To Board)
Gentlemen, I am inclined to move unanimously for the deportation of this respondent. On the record he hasn't got a Chinaman's chance.

2 & 3 - Let's consult (All knock heads - violent disagreement).

1st - I move deportation.

2d - I move to defer action. Maybe he can get a private bill passed by Congress in his behalf.

3rd - I move suspension of deportation if he marries an American citizen.

1st - Lord, that makes three different motions.
The Major is here,
Watching us deal out justice,
With this sad showing,
He will surely bust us.

So let us three agree,
And avoid confusion;
Vote with me and
Let our motto be:
Unanimous exclusion.

(More consultation and finally as a result of agreement,
coin is tossed)

1st - After consultation
And much hesitation,
We have decided that you Chinese
Must go back and sip your tea
In far-off China 'cross the sea;
We have laundries here galore,
Frankly, we don't need any more,
So pardon, please, and your ancestors too,
All. But it's the very, very best that we can do.

1st to Yung - Tell him of our decision. He must be deported.

Yung does and Dow gathers back the lichee nuts in his bag, saying,
"Deport, deport".

(Dow resumes seat)

1st - Ask him if he has anything to say.

(Yung says a few words, turns slightly and points to
Dow's jacket re the writ - Dow's face lights up and he
pulls the writ and presents it to No. 1)

1st - (reads) United States District Court - U. S. ex rel Wan To Go vs
Anyone having the Body of Wan to Go or any interest in it.

Hold everything
There will be served on you this writ,
Which says herewith and to wit:
In the interests of international peace
You will effect Wan to Go's immediate release.
The decision of the Immigration Board
Will be, in toto, reversed,
Vitiating and ignored.
The grounds are many and sundry,
The moving one is
I need someone to do my laundry.

The signature and seal are genuine and there's plenty of red tape.

1st - Shall we honor this writ?

2 & 3 shrug.

1st - All in favor say Aye.

(Dow slaps an insect on his neck and says A1)

1st - Then the writ is honored, the proceedings closed out, ^{and} the respondent may go hence without day.

Yung - He is free?

1st - Yes.

(Yung beckons quickly to Dow who is standing - Dow comes to him - Yung embraces him - MY SON - they go out quickly).

1st to Atty - Well, Mr. that Hertz. What is your next case?

Atty - The next in the lost column is that of Miss Nada Lazonga.

1st (surprised - Who? Say, I promised....what's her trouble?

Atty - It developed after she had secured a civil service position on Ellis Island, that her citizenship, based on her father's naturalization, was in question. As a matter of fact, he had never been naturalized. He mistook his first papers for the real thing. I cannot believe it was his intention to have perpetrated a fraud. As a matter of fact, the naturalization office accepted the papers as being final papers until someone discovered the words "First papers" written on the reverse. Gentlemen, you can't send this girl back to her native Tasmania where she has neither skit nor skin..kith nor kin.

1st - Uh, huh, a phony. Gentlemen, I wish to disqualify myself, I am prejudiced against this girl's father. As Confucius would say, as the tree is bent, so is the twig inclined. But go ahead, Mr. Attorney, it hertz again. Is she at large under bond?

Atty - No, she was paroled on my responsibility and to my custody.

1st - Say!(recalling that he is the atty at Ellis Island)...Never mind.

2d - I hope you have her here.

Atty - Your wish is my command. Gentlemen, I am going to let Miss Lazonga plead her own cause. You know the facts. (Beckons her in). Here she is.

(She congas in to music) (No. 1 averts her gaze)

Atty - Tell these gentlemen the story of your vicissitudes and how innocent you are.

She - (sidling over to No. 3) - Gentlemen, I don't know how to approach you (stroking the cheek of No. 3). I was born in Infamy, Tasmania, (slight pause) at a tender age I came to this country as a citizen by birth, I thought. I worked hard and finally became a stenographer on Ellis Island. You may or may not know what happened there. Here I am at your tender mercies. Let not the quality of your mercy be strained, let it fall like rain from your gentle heaven, upon us beneath, rich and poor alike.

You are the symbols of Life, Romance,
I, but a creature of the hour,
Before you, by magic chance,
To indulge your God-like power.
If on the shore of this land,
I may not stand with you, -think,
Then Love, and with it fame,
To nothingness must sink.

(She, continuing) - Gentlemen, I appeal to your reason. (She exhibits her charms)

She - Gentlemen, I wish you could come to see my home surroundings and judge for yourselves whether I have been and am a desirable alien.

2d - (after consulting with 3rd) -- Yes, good moral character enters into our considerations. Under the authority of U.S. ex rel Sarcophagus versus Immigration & Naturalization, a body constituted as we are may consider visual as well as oral testimony.

She to 2 and 3 - Yes, come with me. (They go, excited, leaving No. 1 alone in his reverie).

1st - Gentlemen, this is illegal, and I vote for deportation. (Phone rings).

1st - Law Div...Board of Appeals...oh, yes.. you have made a decision..don't tell me, I know...by a majority vote proceedings against Lazonga are cancelled. (hangs up phone wearily) Oh, well. (Repeats action of first scene wherein he finds the cigar stub)
(Form executor becomes mad, drinks poison and expires, while #1 just looks on amused, sardonically, and continues puffing at the blackout).

END