

A DAY IN THE CHINESE DIVISION
(A Farce)

The characters and situations in this skit are entirely fictional and any similarity to persons unborn, living or dead, or events past, present or future is purely coincidental.

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(SCENE - Table. Scattered papers. Dinner gong - Sign - CHINESE DIVISION)

Z is asleep as scene opens.
Steno. walks in.

Steno - Good Morning.

Z - (Rousing) - Oh, good morning, good morning; and how have you been?

Steno - Good.

Z - That's fine. Let's get at the morning mail. (Picks up letter and reads:

Hm - damn fool - listen to this, Miss French - Chinese Department, near Statue of Liberty Gentlemen (?) - I wonder why in hell he puts a question mark after Gentlemen. I hear the women in China are very responsive--to authority. I am a white-blooded American citizen and wish to go there to marry. But what will my children be?

(Throws letter to steno)

Oh, tell him, boys or girls, we hope.

(Picks up next letter with a smile which turns to a frown)

Holy mackerel, the Central Office again. Listen to this:

Reference is made to the case of MAH DAI FON TON, who was recently excluded on the ground that she admits the commission of a crime involving moral turpitude, to wit, placing poison in the tea of HIP HIGH, War Lord of Tinsin Province, which was followed by his death.

The inspector who conducted the examination has exhibited rare talent and perspicacity which should make him go far--down.

He did not even ask if the War Lord, Hip High, sipped the tea. Perhaps he died of natural causes.

The examining officer is, to say the very least, guilty of gross carelessness, rank professional ineptitude, abysmal, fundamental ordinariness of insight, and acute inflammatory lack of gray matter.

Any repetition will cause the Central Office to search for more harsh terms.

Reopening of this case is in order. However, the Central Office file containing consular cable despatches relating to the case has been lost. It would be embarrassing to ask for copies from the State Department. Exclusion and habeas corpus proceedings might also be embarrassing. Therefore, land the alien ~~and instruct her to sin no more.~~

on the ground she is a political refugee.

(Throws letter aside in disgust)

Z - Oh, let's forget this for a while. Tell me, what did you do last night?

Steno - Oh, I saw the most exciting picture about Chinese smuggling. May West took the part of a Chinese girl who was smuggled in and she is held 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?"

Z - Oh, yeah. But, talking about immigration, Miss French, you know there is something about you that reminds me of an excluded alien.

Steno - What's that, Inspector?

Z - Your appeal. It is sustained. Miss French,

I am a brusque man,

Of words few and snappy.

If your attention I may arrest

'Twould make me very happy.

I'm not given to language romantic,

Nor phrases ardent and fiery,

But I will go frantic

Unless I make this Special Inquiry:

How about a date?

As the Chinese philosophers would say, A date with you - ah, better than all the figs grown in California.

Steno - But, Mr. Inspector....

Z - Don't call me that; call me Willie.

Steno - But, Mr. Willie - I just cahnt - honestly, I can't..

Z - Oh, I get it - someone else.

(ROSEN AND MOLLOY ENTER)

(Z rises and there is mutual bowing)

(Z recites as all three remain standing:

Z We are a holy trinity (bow to each other)

m Often accused of assininity;

- A But any alien so deluded, (finger-waving)

- A Is sure to find himself excluded.

- M We examine passports, dirty, greasy,
R Looking for a proper visee.
Z We want to know all-- (sweeping gesture)
M Your name; have you committed crimes, (pointing)
R With whom and how many times.
Z Will you try the U. S. to overthrow?
M You're a damned fool Communist
M If you say so.
R Do you suffer from superiority, (pointing)
Z Psychopathic inferiority;
M Do you believe in bigamy,
R Balanced budgets, polygamy?
Z Are you healthy, suffering from colic,
M L.P.C. or a chronic alcoholic?
R Has your conduct been good or lewd (puritanically)
Z Or have you been suffering from moral turpitude?
M Are you dyspeptic, epileptic,
R Are you docile, an antiquated fossil?
Z Do you fuss, do you fidget,
M Are you a moron or an idiot?
- A We swear 'em, we scare 'em,
- A Watch and you shall see.
M We find a cause of exclusion,
R If it's only X Y Z.
Z But, no matter how exclusionistic we feel,
M The alien always beats us on appeal.
R He goes before the Board of Review (point to dais)
Z And you know what they do.
M And if that doesn't thwart us
R They get writs of habeas corpus.
- A So, hell, let them come from any clime,
- A So long as the pay checks come on time.

(BOARD SITS DOWN).

Molloy - Back at business again.

Rosen - You call this a business? This is a profession, like music.

Molloy - Yeah, and we're always playing the wrong tunes.

We're immigrant inspectors,
Lie detectors--
The very best in the ranks.
Do we get more money?
Ho, ho, that's funny--
All we get is thanks.

For years we've stayed
In one salary grade,
While seniors less smart get a raise.
When we've reached Methuselah's age
And arrived at the retirement stage,
We'll get it--

ROSEN & Z & STENO - Get what?
MOLLOY - A pension and praise.

ROSEN - Well, at least we occupy dignified positions here below. In all probability, when we pass beyond, St. Peter will cast us in the same roles.

MOLLOY - Yeah, but will we be able to stand the heat?

ROSEN: But I also have cause to complain
About the many new rules and laws;
They give one a headachy pain
To study with their numerous flaws.
One day we are instructed to do this,
And the next day it is retracted.
Yes, sir, the hodge-podge of what
to do and not to do
Leaves one quite utterly distracted.

MOLLOY - Are you distracted and headachy from the many rules and laws?

ROSEN - No, I don't study them.

MOLLOY - Don't blame you. The instructions seem to be purposely so confounded that the official chopping block accompanies each case we handle.

ROSEN - Yes, we do just as well to decide cases by the length of shadow the applicant casts.

Z (disdainfully) - I wonder why it is that bankrupt minds are always so vociferous. Let's get down to the business of the day. We have some Chinese waiting for a hearing so long that they must have forgotten their coaching letters by now.

ROSEN - Oh, these Chinese cases. It gives me a laugh--
Even the shape of a giraffe
Is capable of some rational explanation,
But a Chinese case
Occupies a peculiar place
Solvable not even by astronomical calculation.

MOLLOY (to Z) - By the way, who is this new Chinese interpreter we have?

Z - He's a pretty bright fellow from China. Been here quite some years. Came in originally as a student. An alien. You know these Chinese interpreters are not under Civil Service and don't have to be citizens.

MOLLOY - Oh, I see.

(Z rings gong)

(YUNG enters, bows to the dais and the Board, who rise and bow profusely in return)

(YUNG bows last to the steno: And I bow to the bower
Wherein sits MY little lotus flower.

Steno * I may be a lotus flower
Of whom you are fond,
But don't expect ME to
Grow in your lily pond.

(YUNG, downcast, to Z) - Honorable Chairman, without pants an applicant for admission.

Z - Well, get him a pair and bring him in. But he picks a bad day. I have been thwarted (indicates steno). If the applicant knows his onions, he will keep from in front of an enraged bull, from behind an aroused skunk and as far as possible in all directions from a thwarted Government official.

(YUNG whispers to Chairman)

Z - Well, why didn't you say before that he belongs to the rice-growers union? Bring him in. Never let it be said that we, the inner keepers of the inner portals shall close our ears to the upraised voices of those clamoring at our gates--anyhow not between 9 and 4:30.

(YUNG exits to get the applicant)

(Z picks up from the floor a mass of files and places them on the table)

Z - Gentlemen, these are the files in this case.

MOLLOY - Let's arrange now the details of this applicant's exclusion, so that there can be no claim of unfair hearing.

ROSEN - Yes, we should thread our excluding business with soothing phrases, so that the applicant may not be unduly distressed.

(YUNG enters with DOW who ogles steno)

Steno - Now, none of that lotus flower business from you too.

(DOW looks about bewildered. Is directed to seat by YUNG. Seated, he finds composure. Gets up and places lichee nuts on table. Resumes seat)

Z to YUNG - Swear the applicant.

(Business of babble and confused hand-raising).

Z - What did he say?

Yung - I will not tell a lie.

Z - That is not enough under the law. Does he swear to tell the truth?

Dow - YOLAH (or HILO).

Z - What is your name?

Dow - WAN TO GO.

Z - So soon? At this hearing you have the right to have present a friend or relative. Do you wish to avail yourself of that right? (Before interpretation is possible - Z to Steno - No.

MOLLOY * I am afraid that is prejudicial.

Z - Bull frogs open their mouths at night, after the song birds have closed theirs. So, don't interrupt.

Z (to Dow) - How old are you?

Dow - (Business of counting on fingers - Board gets impatient)

Z - Here, tell him to use this. (abacus)

Dow - (computes hurriedly) - 24.

Z - Where were you born?

Dow - Oo Lung village, China.

Z - On what basis do you claim any right to enter or remain in the United States?

Dow (points to Yung) (Yung shoves his hand down) - My father is a native born citizen of the United States and I am a sonofa--

(Yung to Dow and then to Board) - Son of a native.

Z - Are you of the Chinese race?
(Fairly long harangue)

Dow - Yes.

Z - Do you read Chinese?

Dow - Yes.

Z - Read this. (Holds card and dictates to steno - Applicant is given test card No.3, with Chinese characters thereon, English translation of which is: This is to test your ability to read Chinese. Comply with these instructions. Place your right hand on your forehead and raise this card with your left hand.

(Business of reading and complying).

Z to Steno - Applicant reads.

MOLLOY - I would like to ask a question at this time.

Z - Whenever it is essential to my greatly overworked mind that nothing of a disagreeable nature should intrude, your face has to appear.

Z to Dow - Where is your father?

Dow - He died somewhere in the United States in a Tong war.

Z - Is your mother in China?

Dow - Yes.

Z - Was she ever in the United States?

Dow - No.

Z - What is your father's name?

Dow hems and haws, tries to get help from the Interpreter, finally turns a bit to his right and tries to get at the coaching letter in his pocket.

Z - Interpreter, what has he got there?
(YUNG takes away coaching letter and presents it to Chairman. Dow is entirely flustered).

Z - Aha, just as we thought, a coaching letter. This case is clearly a concoction, a fraud. (Turns pages of the voluminous coaching letter).

Z to Yung - Look at this. It's a coaching letter, isn't it, family history and all?

Yung (downhearted) Yes, sir.

Z to Dow - Well, young man, how do you explain this?
Dow (fumbles for an answer) When the memory is stressed,
The printed page is best.

Z - Well, do you now recall your father's name?

Dow - Yes, WON LONG TOE.

Z (Thumbs through file) - We have here the record relating to a WON LONG TOE killed recently in a tong war between the A F L and the C I O laundrymen's unions. According to your testimony you were born in China about 1913. Your mother was never here. According to this record, your alleged father was last in China in 1908. How could you have been born in China in 1913, then.

Dow (pushes aside Yung) - (Broken English) - My fadder, he write letter to mama; have boy; 'bout time.

Z - Say, where did you learn to speak English?

Dow - A missionary.

Z - Are you to present any witnesses, relatives or identifying witnesses?
(Long Harangue)

Dow - No.

Z - Haven't you any relatives in the United States?

Dow - Only a distant relative, Gong Bong, somewhere in the United States.

MOLLOY - How is he related to you?

Dow - His paternal grandfather's sister's husband and my maternal grandmother's brother's cousin were once engaged to marry.

Z - Did you own a water buffalo?

Dow - A buffalo but no water.

MOLLOY - Well, where did you get your water?

Dow (disdainfully) - From a well in front of the village.

Z - Did your family own any domestic animals?

Dow - (Yit meow, yit bow wow) Yung - 1 cat, 1 dog.

Z - Describe your house in China?

Dow - Two bedrooms, kitchen and an open court.

ROSEN - What? No bath?

Dow - No.

Steno - But, I don't understand. How about the Board of Health?

Z - Miss French, not everybody can live in a Bronx apartment.

Steno - Mr. Willie - Mr. Chairman, I mean - can I ask the applicant a question?

Z - Miss French, you are not authorized to do so. Our ~~Z~~ Central Office did not see fit to give you a charter empowering you to do business as a Board member. I guess they realized that authority fits a woman like a saddle does a cat.

Z to Dow - How many children did your parents have?

Dow - Eight sons, no daughters.

Z - Are you married?

Dow - Yes, I have a wife and eight sons, no daughters, in my native village.

Z - What is this, all sons and no daughters.

Dow - Why so many questions? Continual drops of water will wear a hole even through a stone.

Z - Yes, but hair by hair we expect to pluck you bald. Now how do you explain all these sons and no daughters.

Dow - My father and I always ate rice, made proper offerings to the gods and they smiled on our efforts.

Z - You're trying to put something over on us.

ROSEN - Mr. Chairman, that's argumentative and should not appear in a record. We may get into trouble over it.

Z - Only tall trees have to fear the woodcutter. Little shrubs like you are perfectly safe. (TO YUNG - Ask the applicant if he has any further statement to make.)

Dow - No.

Z - (to Yung) Ask him if he understand that his case is pitifully weak.

Dow - I rest my case in the laps of the gods (pointing to the Board)

Z - But where will your case rest if we stand up? (To Board) Gentlemen, I am inclined to move unanimously that we exclude this applicant. On the record he hasn't got a Chinaman's chance.

MOLLOY AND ROSEN - Let's consult (knock heads together) (violent disagreement)

ROSEN - Well, I move to defer for the appearance of the applicant's mother.

MOLLOY - I move to admit under bond.

Z - I move to exclude. But, lord, that makes three different motions and where are we?

The Commissioner 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 result of agreement, coin is tossed)

Z - After coinsultation
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,
But it's the very, very best that we can do.

Z to YUNG - Tell him he's excluded.

(Yung complies and Dow gathers up the lichee nuts) saying: Can't come in;
can't come in.

(Dow resumes seat)

Z to Yung - Inform him of his rights.

(YUNG says a few words, turns slightly and points to Dow's pocket re the writ - Dow's face lights up with understanding and pulls the writ from his pocket and presents it to Z)

Z (reading) - UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT - United States ex rel versus the Board of Special Inquiry - the District Director - the Specific Commissioner and the General Commissioner or anybody having custody of or an interest in the body of WON TO GO -

Hold Everything.
There will be served upon you this writ,
Which says herewith and to wit:
In the interests of international peace,
You will effect Won to Go's release.
The decision of the Board
Will be, in toto, Chrysler, De Soto,
Reversed, vitiated and ignored.
The reasons are many and sundry,
But the principal one is
I need someone to do my laundry.

Z - Shall we honor this writ?

MOLLOY & ROSEN shrug.

Z - All those in favor of honoring it say Aye.

(Dow slaps an insect on his neck and says Ai).

Z - Then the writ is honored; the alien may go.

Yung - He is free to go?

Z - Yes.

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

Z - Molloy - Rosen - HIS SON (all pursue) - Z - Miss French, take this wire for a warrant -

Steno (running after with book and pencil poised)

All exit.

END.