

SIN FRANCISCO

screenplay & story by
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INT. WONG'S BACK ROOM, CHINATOWN - NIGHT - DAYS LATER

The room is small and quiet and lit by a SINGLE LAMP.
Meridyne is several baijius in.

A dishevelled Wong storms in, clearly PISSED OFF - his
shitty suit is slightly torn and missing a button.

He sits down saying nothing and grabs the bottle.

MERIDYNE

What's happened now, Tong?

WONG

*(through his gritted
teeth)*

Wong! Jeremiah Wong - it's always
been Wong since you've known me...
you Irish fucking ape.

MERIDYNE

(shrugs)

Right so.

WONG

I am not a Tong - I run a Tong, the
distinction is-

MERIDYNE

What happened?

Wong vigorously tidies his hair.

WONG

The Kwong Duck.

MERIDYNE

What did the Duck decide?

WONG

They decided that the terms of our
arrangement no longer suit them and
they have expressed this opinion
through the medium of what I can
only describe as...enthusiastic
physical commendation.

MERIDYNE

The negotiation is finished then.

WONG

Yes, in a manner that I found...
professionally unsatisfying.

MERIDYNE

So what are ya gonna do?

Wong is silent, thoughtful; for a long while -

WONG

I have to kill him.

MERIDYNE

So kill him then.

WONG

I can't.

MERIDYNE

So don't then.

He shrugs and casually refills his glass.

WONG

It is not a question of want, it is a question of image, of my reputation in this community, which I have spent considerable time and money-

MERIDYNE

-but your suit doesn't fit.

WONG

My suit-

MERIDYNE

Has never fit.

WONG

My suit is a statement!

Wong pulls the lapel straight with forced dignity.

WONG (CONT'D)

The point - the point, you fucking philistine - is that I cannot be seen to have Qiang removed. The Tong world has eyes and I...I am a businessman. If I simply have a man killed, I become a man who simply has men killed and that is a different-

MERIDYNE

You do have men killed.

WONG

Quietly! At a tasteful distance!
Through appropriate intermediaries!

Meridyne knows he should let the silence work but he hears himself speak anyway.

MERIDYNE

Ya know, if we get rid of this Duck
bastard, we control most of
Chinatown.

Wong stops - blinks once. Twice.

WONG

That is... an interesting
observation... but I cannot be seen
to-

MERIDYNE

So who have you got in mind then.

Wong smiles his big ingratiating, stupid smile.

He refills both cups, still smiling at Meridyne.

MERIDYNE

(to himself)
Ah, Jesus Christ.

INT. BACK STAIRCASE, PROVISION HOUSE, CHINATOWN - LATER

Meridyne climbs silently up a narrow wet staircase.

At the top he draws his Colt as he shoulders in the door.

INT. ROOM ABOVE PROVISION HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

He finds Qiang sitting behind a table at the end of the room.

Qiang takes in the situation. Feigning calm, he leans back and raises his hands slowly.

QIANG

You are here on behalf of Jeremiah
Wong. Let us not spend time on the
part of the conversation that
serves neither of us.

(beat)

Before you do whatever you have
come here to do, I would ask you to
consider one thing.

Meridyne watches him go on and doesn't stop him.

QIANG (CONT'D)

I have four men who answer directly to me and they will burn the Sacramento Street properties to the ground before Wong's people reach the front door.

(beat)

This is not a threat - it is an instruction I have already given them, contingent on my absence.

(beat)

Wong gains nothing from my death. But what he gains from my life is a negotiated boundary and a percentage from the eastern houses that I am prepared to agree to.

Meridyne doesn't give a shit.

QIANG (CONT'D)

I am proposing that everyone in this room leaves with a workable arrangement. That this evening is not remembered by anyone for whom forgetting is convenient.

The men hold each other's gaze a beat when the door BURSTS inwards and the Sullen brothers move in as one, GUNS drawn before the door has finished its swing.

They look at Qiang. Qiang looks at them. Meridyne looks at them. They look at Meridyne. Qiang looks at Meridyne.

A beat as he Sullens and Meridyne size up each other's intentions.

All three guns are pointed at Qiang - *he's fucked.*

MERIDYNE

You're popular, Qiang. Seems everyone wants to kill you tonight.

The Sullens nod in unison.

QIANG

Gentlemen. I...I wonder if we might-

JOHN

(to Meridyne, pleasantly)

So we should all kill him together, right?

Meridyne considers this. Nods once. Reasonable enough.

QIANG

(r.e. The safe)

There is money in the safe.
Whatever figure seems-

Nobody looks at the safe.

TOM

I suggest we shoot him on the count
of three.

MERIDYNE

(nodding)

Right.

JOHN

(nodding)

Right.

A pause. Meridyne looks slightly confused -

MERIDYNE

Is that one-two-three, shoot?

TOM

No. One-two-shoot. With three bein'
the shoot rather than the number
precedin' it.

Meridyne nods but John looks slightly confused -

JOHN

Why not three-two-one, shoot?

TOM

Now why in the fuck do you always
gotta go complicatin' matters?!

JOHN

I'm not complicatin', I'm
clarifyin'. There's a difference
between-

Qiang meanwhile, is looking at them all in absolute
confusion.

MERIDYNE

(genuinely uncertain)

So would that be three-two-shoot?

TOM

(pointing at Meridyne)

Don't you start.

Qiang has considered his available options. He palms his pistol under his desk, as the three men who are, at this precise moment, not looking at him.

JOHN

The descendin' model is more intuitive is all I'm sayin'. The French do it that way...

TOM

The Fre...Where the fuck did the French come from?!

JOHN

I'm not sayin' French, I'm sayin' the principle-

TOM

The principle is one-two-shoot and that is the established-

MERIDYNE

Established by who, though?

BANG! A single GUNSHOT startles the three men.

They all look at Qiang - now spread all over the wall - then look at each other.

INT. CHINATOWN GAMBLING HOUSE, SF - NEXT DAY

As usual Meridyne is drinking like it's his profession.

The Sullens enter, conspicuously overdressed - resembling a frontier BEAU BRUMMEL.

They scan the room and motion to Meridyne's table.

MERIDYNE (CONT'D)

Wots two dandies like you doin' in a place like this?

JOHN

Someone would like-

TOM

-to meet you.

It was not a request.

MERIDYNE

Aye, figured so.

Calmly, he downs his drink, grabs his hat and rises.