

Wang Chung Syndicate

A screenplay by

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BLACK

SUPER: One night while dreaming I beheld a thing / as
real as that just passing day remained / A prosperous and
an idle sort of king / grew fat and prayed to God to ease
his pains / And then that dynasty laid at my feet / its
darkest hour looming overhead / A king a queen a corpse
for worms to eat / The princess parted from her pretty
head / But yet this nightmare seemed a dream again / and
I the darkest hour stayed awhile / and watched dear
Birnam sacking Dunsinane / And at my labor's fruits I
was beguiled / If fortune be to breed an idle man / then
let me be misfortune's busy hand.

BLACK

SUPER: "Act I"

INT. A WAREHOUSE - DAY

A long table is set up near one end of the empty
warehouse. At it sits, a man in a red suit, red shirt,
red tie, and a pair of round red sunglasses. In front of
him, a tape recorder plays thunderous operatic music.

Behind him, eight men stand in an arc.

Across from the table, a man is tied to a chair in his
boxers and an undershirt.

The MAN IN RED stops the tape, and speaks to the
PRISONER.

MAN IN RED

Tell me this, who sent you
here?

The prisoner is nervous.

PRISONER

You did. You called us and you
asked for me to come. A
messenger, no guns, to
warehouse nine.

MAN IN RED

Really now, and why would I do
that?

PRISONER

Perhaps you had a message to
be sent.

MAN IN RED

(sardonically)

Oh that's a thought. Why
couldn't I use mail?

PRISONER

Perhaps it was to dangerous to send.

MAN IN RED

Then why would I have thought to use the mail!? Do you take me for some kind of fool?

The prisoner is looking very nervous.

PRISONER

I'd think you'd have to think about it once, to decide against it.

MAN IN RED

Of course not! I have never been to Mexico, and I have never thought about it once!

PRISONER

So you didn't do it without thinking?

MAN IN RED

What are you trying to say you little putz? That I would do a thing and not think first?

PRISONER

Oh no!

MAN IN RED

Hey Julius!

JULIUS steps forward, a man in a white suit, with a deep purple shirt and tie.

JULIUS

Yes.

MAN IN RED

Go show him just how I think before I act.

JULIUS

Yes sir.

Julius walks around the table, then turns and walks toward the prisoner. It takes him quite some time to get there, as the prisoner is nearly 100 yards away.

When he arrives, he tweaks the prisoner's nose. The prisoner yelps in pain. He retraces the same 100 yards and returns to his former spot.

MAN IN RED

So you're a messenger?

PRISONER

Why yes, I am.

MAN IN RED

Ok, well do you have a message then?

PRISONER

Well, no I don't I thought you might have one.

MAN IN RED

Why should I? I am not a messenger.

PRISONER

If you don't have a message, why call me?

MAN IN RED

I did not call you! We just went through that!

PRISONER

Then I don't really know why I am here.

The man in red pauses at this.

MAN IN RED

Julius, release him.

JULIUS

Right away.

MAN IN RED

Give him pen and paper, Julius.

Julius produces a pad and pen from his pocket.

MAN IN RED

I sent them to Damascus . . .

He gestures to the pad.

MAN IN RED

Write it down. They'll have it by this time next week, I fear. We'll need her to retrieve them if the time, by their or his judgment should arise. Should he bring them to them, she would need its maker and its manuals (all 3). Deliver this to Fredrick, messenger.

PRISONER

Yes sir, and thank you for your time.

MAN IN RED

Go on.

The messenger runs out the door. The man in red pushes play on the cassette and the room is filled with music again. Soon, it is joined by a ringing cell phone. It rings 3 times before the man in red stops the tape.

MAN IN RED

Who's ringing?

A stout, unkempt MAN IN GREEN replies.

MAN IN GREEN

Me, sir.

MAN IN RED

Answer it.

MAN IN GREEN

Yes sir.

He opens the phone, looks at the caller ID, then answers it.

MAN IN GREEN

Ok, Wangelin, give me some good news.

Chatter on the other end.

MAN IN GREEN

Oh. Sir, Wangelin's found the other source.

MAN IN RED

Have them liquidated.

MAN IN GREEN

Right away. Any preference on who gets the hit?

MAN IN RED

Use the brothers. I don't want mistakes.

INT. BEDROOM OF BROTHER 1 - DAY

BROTHER 1 lays in bed beneath a picture of Odysseus and the Cyclops. He is a thorough intellectual. Precise and nimble in speech, broad in knowledge, thorough in all he applies himself too. The room is filled with old volumes and classical and renaissance art tributes.

He rises from the bed at the ringing of a rotary telephone on the nightstand. He glances at the caller ID, then answers it.

BROTHER 1

Hello, LaRed, It's early to hear from you . . . I see, and where's the briefing going to be? . . . At ten o'clock. Have you not eaten there? The steak tartar is always underdone, the crème brulee is blowtorched, it's a mess . . . You know I'm making sport, now what's the fee? . . . That's more than fair, you tell him I said hi . . . Amen to that.

He hangs up the phone.

BROTHER 1

Once more into the breach.

He takes out a pair of large lightly tinted aviator glasses and puts them on. He glances at the clock, grunts quietly, then takes them off and leaves the bed.

INT. BEDROOM OF BROTHER 2 - DAY

BROTHER 2 lies in a bed in a similar room. He shares Brother 1's sharpness of mind, and manner of speaking, but is more inclined to roguishness. Contemporary text and art comprises his furnishings.

BROTHER 1

Wake up! Wake up! The call to arms has come.

Brother 2 stirs.

BROTHER 2

Already then? Well tell them I'm not home.

Brother 1 stops at the side of the bed.

BROTHER 1

Oh come now, fetch the weapons and lets go.

BROTHER 2

I'm not a chauffeur, let them fetch themselves.

Brother 1 moves toward a shelf and begins fiddling with some of the knick knacks.

BROTHER 1

Let who?

BROTHER 2

The arms, the weapons that
just called. I'd answer them,
but I won't fetch them here.
They'd best to call a
chauffeur than call me.

Brother 1 studies a small spherical sculpture. He picks
it up off the shelf and holds it.

BROTHER 1

Your body can't be weaker than
your puns. Your arms should
have the strength you give
your tongue. Its idle flapping
isn't any use. Your arms at
least might lift you out of
bed.

BROTHER 2

The arms and the man are
tired, now let us be.

Brother 1 returns the sphere, and begins scanning a
selection of nearby books.

BROTHER 1

Virgil.

BROTHER 2

Yes.

BROTHER 1

Impressive for a loaf. But
Virgil's man was ready for a
fight. . .

BROTHER 2

And Shaw's was set for
chocolate creams and tea, and
loaves of tea cake,
 (massaging his
 pillow)
fluffy, fluffy loaves.

BROTHER 1

(Squinting at books)
. . . which might explain why
Virgil isn't here.

He turns away from the books and begins to examine a
collection of small bladed weapons.

BROTHER 2

Oh dear, did I neglect a poet,
sir? Did I, an unarmed man,
just slay your pride? Then go
and get your own arms. Let me
sleep.

BROTHER 1

You bore me with your art
critique, get up. We've got to
be at Montague's at ten.

BROTHER 2

They'll want a man to do the
job, I'm sure. A sleeping boar
is useless to the world.

Brother 1 shoots an irritated look at Brother 2, toying
one of the knives.

BROTHER 1

Well fine, I'll go alone, if
you insist. If you're hungry
I'll bring something back.

BROTHER 2

Well that depends, what's
being served today?

Brother 1 suddenly whirls around and throws a knife at
Brother 2's head. Brother 2 flips out of bed and lands on
the floor.

BROTHER 1

A boar's head. . .

Brother 2 gets up and marches angrily toward brother 1,
clutching the knife.

BROTHER 1

. . . and my armaments,
messieur.

Brother 2 gives a cold stare, menacingly shaking the
knife. Then he walks out of the room.

INT. THE KITCHEN - DAY

Brother 2 strolls through the thoroughly modernized
kitchen, past silver automated appliances.

He snatches up a mug from under the coffee maker and
continues on.

INT. THE SITTING ROOM - DAY

The room is decorated classically, full of antique
furniture, globes and the like. It is painted warmly with
much natural wood.

Brother 2 approaches a book case along one wall. He
lazily presses the spine of a copy of "The Art of War"
back into the wall. It yields and sinks far into the
bookcase. The shelves slide away revealing a hidden wall
covered in mounted firearms.

Brother 2 scans the selection, sipping his coffee.

INT. BEDROOM OF BROTHER 1 - DAY

Brother 1 begins to dress himself. His ensemble consists of a bullet proof vest, a pink silk shirt, a lime green tie, a gray suit jacket and pants, and the aforementioned glasses.

INT. THE SITTING ROOM - DAY

Brother 2 is packing a few selected weapons into metal attaché cases.

INT. THE HALLWAY - DAY

A narrow affair, undecorated, with bright blue walls. The brother's walk down it, Brother 2 now dressed similarly to Brother 1. Both of them are carrying rifles pointed at the ceiling, and briefcases.

INT. THE GARAGE - DAY

The 3-car garage is clean and empty except for the car, a toolbox, shop hoist, and set of metal cabinets in one corner, and a pile of metal brief cases, the ones Brother 2 filled, next to the passenger door.

The car itself is a gray '70s Aston Martin with maroon interior.

The two brothers stand in front of the car, looking at it. Without lifting his gaze, Brother 2 flips a coin. He glances briefly at the result, then tosses the keys to Brother 1.

They move toward the cases and begin loading them in the car.

EXT. THE DESERT - DAY

The car speeds along a straight, narrow strip of pavement. To either side is miles of flat, dry ground.

Brother 1 stares ahead over the wheel, focused. Brother 2 is passed out in the passenger seat.

A city skyline can be seen on the horizon.

EXT. THE CITY - DAY

High, shimmering glass skyscrapers line the sidewalks as the car rolls through the streets. The sidewalks are scattered with blue-haired ravers, coffee shop sophisticates in black turtle necks and business men.

The car parallel parks next to a small French restaurant named "Baudrillard's."

INT. BAUDRILLARD'S - DAY

The two brother's stroll determinedly through the restaurant. Customers look up from their tables and eye them as they walk by.

The two take a seat at a round table across from an old man wearing an outdated military officer's uniform. Tea is already on the table, and cups have been poured for both of them.

The brothers silently exchange nods with the man as the waiter brings menus.

The Brother's open their menus to find detailed descriptions and photographs of their next targets.

Brother 2 closes his menu and passes it to the waiter.

BROTHER 2

We'll be a minute, thank you
very much.

Brother 1 also hands back his menu.

INT. KENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

KENT OMNI lies fast asleep on his face on a four-post bed in a room decorated in an ostentatious Victorian style, though it is painted bright pink. The room is in a massive penthouse at the top of the Omnicorp skyscraper.

He is a twenty-something with a sharp mind and no misgivings about cutting with it. He is a bold, dominant figure of almost super-human posture, yet his rebelliousness can lend him something of a boyish quality.

He wears a rumpled yellow shirt and black boxers, and a pair of black-framed boomerang sunglasses with clear yellow lenses. These lie askew on his face.

A mechanical alarm clock goes off on the nightstand. Kent rises to a sitting position, rubbing his temples. His glasses fall into his lap.

He grunts and slaps the alarm, silencing it. He then picks up his glasses, and staggers to his feet, still rubbing his temples. He begins moving toward the bathroom door, encountering a pair of black dress pants on the floor along the way, which he picks up.

He then stumbles into . . .

INT. KENT'S BATHROOM - DAY

A modestly sized but accommodating affair. The walls appear to have once been white, but are now covered over every square inch with graffiti much like one would find in a public restroom. On closer examination, every note is of the format "For a good time call . . ." followed by a female name and a phone number.

Kent puts his glasses down on the vanity, and splashes some cold water on his face. Instantly his demeanor is improved. His eyes open up. He picks up the pants, grabs a black coat off the towel hook, and shuts the door.

INT. KENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Kent re-emerges from the bathroom looking alert, his glasses on straight, wearing the pants he found and the coat over his shirt. The shirt isn't tucked in, but it seems to have mysteriously been ironed.

He strides casually around the corner and out a pair of double doors into . . .

INT. THE HALLWAY - DAY

The hall is decorated in the same fashion as the bedroom, and painted identically.

Just outside the doors from which Kent emerges, 4 CEOs sit on a bench, and a butler, ALFRED waits standing with a newspaper.

The four CEOs swarm Kent and all begin talking at once. Kent continues in a straight line down the hallway. Alfred follows but does not speak.

KENT

One at a time, please! Alfred,
you go first.

Alfred unfurls the paper and reads the headlines.

ALFRED

Four dead in Ohio, sir, a
shooting, seems. Your stocks
in Family corp and Abraham are
down 13 percent since
Tuesday's close.

KENT

Sell the stock in Family corp
today. I'll hold the stock in
Abraham a week.

ALFRED

And breakfast sir?

KENT

The usual will do, but set a second place, Ophelia's here. She's joining me for breakfast.

ALFRED

Very good.

Alfred continues straight as the rest of the group makes a right turn.

KENT

Now you, Lucille.

The first CEO, LUCILLE, moves next to Kent as they walk.

LUCILLE

The budget just came in. Our spending on replacement goods is up alarmingly the third year in a row. The shipping manager's been fired twice with no results, we just keep losing parts.

The hallway becomes a sky bridge. Kent and the CEOs move over it and into a plain white corridor lined with what appear to be offices.

KENT

What was said by those two shipping managers, before we fired them?

LUCILLE

The last one told us once the place was cursed. Said information changed on manifests, and items flew around inside the logs. The paper work just didn't stay in sync.

KENT

Well get the numbers on my desk today. The budget and stats on shipping too.

A little GIRL stands in the hall in Kent's path. She is about 4, a highly precocious, highly dimpled little thing in a flower print dress.

She accosts Kent as he passes.

GIRL

Are you the boss-man?

Kent immediately stops, and kneels before the girl.

KENT

Yes, and who are you?

The girl grins shyly.

GIRL

My daddy says he'd like a
soda, please.

KENT

And what's your name?

GIRL

Lucretia Warren Smith.

KENT

Ok, Lucretia, let's go find
your dad, and get that soda to
him, that ok?

She nods, Kent lifts her up, and turns to the CEOs.

KENT

I have to meet with Father
pretty soon. I'll find you
after that and finish this.
The break room's on the right?

The CEOs nod. Kent turns to Lucretia.

KENT

Well then we're off!

Lucretia giggles. Kent marches forward, the CEOs
disperse.

INT. FATHER'S OFFICE - DAY

FATHER is a stout man dressed appropriately for a 17th
century English nobleman, and with the accent to match. A
permanent idealist, he is perhaps somewhat delusional,
and often seems detached. He speaks with a low, growling
tone, and has a British courtier's accent.

The decorating theme is much like Kent's room, and
dominated by the same shade of pink. It is largely empty
except for father's desk, which faces the door, and two
chairs directly in front of it.

Behind Father's desk, in an elaborate gold frame, is
massive painted portrait of Father, Kent, and two young
girls. Father stands looking at this painting, deep in
contemplation.

ROBYN, the first girl in the painting, has dark hair
combed straight down, and wears heavy makeup. She is an
ambitious, reckless, yet highly intelligent girl, and a
professional manipulator.

OPHELIA, a tall, blond girl, upright and professional, is the second girl in the portrait. She is a simple, passive girl, who is half good at pretending to be a go-get-em corporate exec.

Kent enters briskly and stands almost at attention.

KENT

You called for me?

Father turns around, looking dazed.

FATHER

What's that? Oh, yes, of course.

He turns back to the painting, and gazes silently.

KENT

. . . Well while you're doing that I'll just sit down.

Kent takes a seat. He watches his father silently until he can bear it no longer.

KENT

There's something I would like us to discuss. I know you've been an honest sort of man. And all my life I've tried to live to that. And when I start a family of my own, I want to keep that honest legacy. I know Ophelia is dear to you. She's been a daughter to you now for years. But I can't let you help her with a lie, and two good men have lost their jobs for her. My wife is not a shipping manager, and we'll just have to bear the consequence. If she should fail at what we've given her, it's her responsibility . . .

Father whirls around, suddenly animated.

FATHER

Indeed! Indeed
Responsibility's the staff,
with which a corporation lifts
its weight, and strides to
great horizons breezily, as
one near capable of flight
might stride.

He takes his seat.

FATHER

And such a company I give to
you, a floating giant, nimble
in its course, and quick to
spot a fault in any path. For
industry's a soft, unkempt
terrain, and one must see each
pebble on the ground, each
sprout, and every lowly sprig
of grass, and mushroom crop
and clover patch, and stone,
and horned toad and beetle and
ant hill and ant and woodland
rodent and beetle and . . .
beetle . . .

Father is suddenly dazed and troubled.

FATHER

Now what was I just getting on
about?

The door opens, in walk Robyn and Ophelia. Ophelia wears
standard corporate dress. Robyn seems dressed for a night
club.

FATHER

Ah, my daughter's come!

Kent turns in his chair.

KENT

Ophelia!

Both rise to greet the ladies. Kent kisses Ophelia on the
lips, Father kisses Robyn on the cheek.

OPHELIA

We're running late, a customer
was in.

ROBYN

And I'm late for my next
appointment too.

FATHER

I understand, I won't abuse
your time. A father's not to
burden children so.

He turns to Ophelia and grins.

FATHER

Even if I'm not your father
yet. For age has taken time
enough from me . . .

KENT

I have another pressing matter
too, if you don't mind, why
were we sent for, sir?

Father stops.

FATHER

Yes, quite, my point, I'll make it simply now. Each one of you has quite a mass of shares. Already you own half this company. Ophelia a little less just now, though more to come upon her wedding day. To this I'll add whole of mine quite soon, retiring from my post at Omnicorp. I've called you here to make my final act. I wish to launch a project Thursday next.

KENT

In what division?

FATHER

Pharmaceuticals. My Robyn's field of work if I recall.

ROBYN

You payed for my degree, you should recall.

Father continues, pacing back and forth behind his desk, and using vivid hand gestures.

FATHER

My father taught me much about the world, and never did he spare me a detail. I've heard of evil men and misery, of going hungry in a dying land. And though I've never seen such things myself, I found I had an empathetic heart, and eagerly I wept for those so weak that scurried in the streets so far below. I thought for quite awhile on such affairs, that some solution might be reached for them. I thought about narcotics mostly though. These drugs that make a devil out of men, and dull his every sense to vice and sin.

Robyn is smirking. Kent looks exasperated. Ophelia is attentive and thoughtful.

FATHER

And then I thought, if such a thing could be. If men were turned to devils by a drug, could one not cause the opposite effect? One pill may make an evil sort of man, and one perhaps could change the bad to good.

Kent sits upright.

KENT

Well, Father I don't think it works that way.

Father looks stunned at this remark.

FATHER

What is it you imply?

KENT

That you're an ass. We cure the world by making magic pills? The board would hang you if you pitched them this.

ROBYN

I like it.

KENT

What?

ROBYN

It has a market base. Narcotics is a massive industry. If we could start from scratch with something new, and clean the image up. .

KENT

Have you gone mad?

ROBYN

The FDA will listen to us, Kent, our company can bring these things about.

Ophelia looks quite nervous. Father moves to Robyn, grinning. He holds her face.

FATHER

Dear Robyn, you are such a clever girl. Don't mind your brother, and his shallow mind. His head though large has no room for a dream, its much to full of him to hold a thought.

KENT

I really doubt I have the biggest head. Had you two brought yours with you you could see.

Father moves back to Kent.

FATHER

I'll have no more of this! You'll hold your tongue.

KENT

I won't let you destroy my company, and junkies tend to scare our clientèle.

FATHER

This company has little need for you! Its legacy is living legend here!

KENT

And killing it will never get my vote!

Father is too flustered to answer. He moves back to his spot by the picture.

FATHER

Get out! Your future here is gone, get out! Your fortunes gone, your legacy is dead. You are no more an Omni than a man! Now get your feeble self away from here.

Kent looks at father, baffled.

KENT

You can't just do that.

FATHER

Yes, I can and will.

KENT

Well, no, you can't, I own my shares outright. I hold a legal stake in Omnicorp, and more than you if I remember right.

FATHER

Get out! I'm finished with you, go away.

KENT

With pleasure, have a pleasant day you two.

Kent exits. Ophelia gets up to follow him.

FATHER

Stay here, Ophelia, just let him go. I'll find another son for you to wed.

Ophelia looks at father, mildly disturbed.

OPHELIA

I'll take the one you've given, thank you sir.

Before she can be stopped Ophelia sprints out of the room.

EXT. BAUDRILLARD'S - DAY

The brothers are getting back into the car.

BROTHER 1

So you're a nihilist, then? How interesting.

BROTHER 2

I wouldn't want to use that term per se.

BROTHER 1

That's true, I guess it is a tad precise. You wouldn't want them pegging you too soon. The grand idea-makers can't afford to be mistaken for someone they are.

INT. THE BROTHERS' CAR - DAY

The two slam their doors and begin unloading weapons from their person and tossing them into the back seat.

BROTHER 2

I'm just a purer pragmatist that's all.

BROTHER 1

That title's surely purer than the truth. No wonder you don't want the proper name. I'd cover all my blemishes with shit, if I could conjure shit that beautiful.

BROTHER 2

A shitface makes a good philosopher.

BROTHER 1

If he can find a shitfaced lecture hall.

Brother 1 rummages for his keys, he sticks them in the ignition, but does not start the car. Instead he turns in his seat to face Brother 2.

BROTHER 1

You don't believe in nothing,
do you though?

Brother 2 repositions himself similarly.

BROTHER 2

I don't believe in continuity.

BROTHER 1

And what does that mean?

BROTHER 2

look at it like this. A child
makes an angel in the snow,
and brother comes along and
tramples it. Now how will she
react?

BROTHER 1

She'd be upset.

BROTHER 2

Exactly, she'd go running home
to mom, and bawl her eyes out
every single step. And