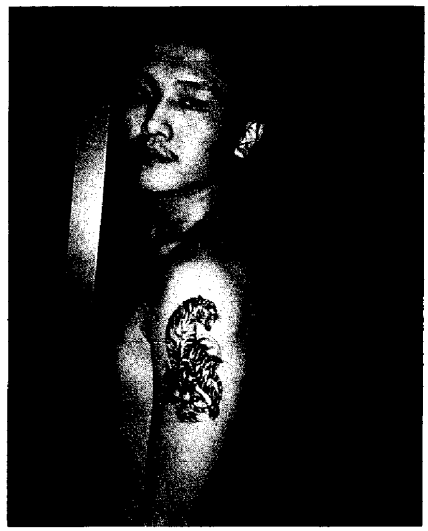
ANNALS OF CRIME

REVENGE OF THE GREEN DRAGONS

by Fredric Dannen

AROUND seven o'clock on the night of July 16, 1989, Anthony Gallivan went out drinking. He was joined by his wife, Christine, and another couple. The Gallivans, who were both in their early thirties, were born in Ireland, but at present they lived in Jackson Heights, Queens. It was wet and windy, so the two couples took a cab to the Liffey Pub, an Irish bar in Elmhurst. They laughed and talked and drank Guinnesses until after nine, and then decided they were hungry for Chinese food.

This was a commodity not hard to come by in Elmhurst. In two decades, Elmhurst, Flushing, and other sections of Queens within a two-mile radius of Shea Stadium have become a second Chinatown, cleaner and more prosperous than the one in lower Manhattan. (The No. 7 subway train to Flushing has been dubbed the Orient Express.) The Gallivans and their friends ducked into the Tien Chau, a Taiwanese restaurant just a short jog from the Liffey Pub. They had planned to order takeout, but now it was raining heavily, so they sat down at a table for four.



By the time he was twenty, Chen I. Chung had become the dai lo, or street boss, of the Green Dragons, a Chinese gang that terrorized the Asian community of Elmhurst, Queens. After I. Chung's arrest in a federal murder-and-racketeering case, police raided gang sites in Queens and seized an arsenal of thirty-one weapons.

The Tien Chau was a small restaurant, with only about a dozen tables, and at nine-thirty on a wet night it was almost empty. Seated near the cash register, Gregory Hyde and his Chinese-American wife, Carol Huang, were getting ready to leave. When they got up to pay the check, two well-dressed Chinese boys were arguing with the manager, a thirty-five-year-old Taiwanese named Mon Hsiung Ting. Well, Greg figured, we might as well sit down and let them finish their discussion. Moments later, Greg heard what sounded like firecrackers. When he turned around, one of the boys was crouching, his feet spread apart. He was firing a pistol.

"Carol, duck!" Greg yelled. Carol dived under the table, her eyes on the shooter. The boy caught her looking at him. She later estimated that they made eye contact for two or three seconds—long enough for her to fix an image in her mind of a handsome young man with spiky hair, huge eyes, and, for an Asian, very fair skin. He wore a black suit and a white shirt with black pinstripes. He appeared quite calm. Then he fired in Carol's direction, and she instinctively covered her face with her hands.

Greg Hyde was struggling to get under the table as well. His back was to the shooter. He tried to slide out of his chair, but it was stuck, and when he pushed back hard he was forced upright. Suddenly, his legs gave way under him, and he knew that he had been shot. Hyde fell to the floor, face forward, on his arm. He tried to move, but his legs were paralyzed. He could feel his body going into shock.

At her table toward the rear of the restaurant, Christine Gallivan looked over to her left and saw her dish fall. Her husband clutched his chest and said, "Christine, I think I've been hit!" She glanced up and saw a young man with a small, "James Bond-type" gun, his arms bouncing in recoil after each shot. Blue smoke rose in the background. Tony Gallivan was sliding off his chair. One of his friends grabbed him and laid him on the ground on his back. There was blood on his T-shirt in the middle of his chest, a dot the size of a pen top. It was an exit wound; the bullet had entered his back on the right side and passed through his heart. Christine was screaming. She later recalled, "I held him in my arms, and his eyes rolled and his color changed. And I figured he died then."

The restaurant manager, Mon Hsiung Ting, staggered out from behind the cash register and collapsed, dead, in the middle of the floor. His blood was splattered on the wall mirrors, and gushed out of holes in his body. He had been shot nine times, by both boys.

The second boy grabbed his companion in the black suit and pulled him out the door. Carol got up from under the table and screamed at a waitress to open the cash register for a quarter to phone 911. She returned to her husband's side, and Greg said an Act of Contrition. He believed he was dying. He would live, though, crippled for life; a bullet had entered his shoulder and damaged his spine. Carol had escaped unharmed, and she had seen so much that in time the

boy in the black suit would regret not having killed her.

ABOUT four miles south of the Tien Chau restaurant, in an apartment on Eighty-seventh Road in Woodhaven, Queens, the man who had ordered the shooting was debriefing the two assassins. His name was Chen I. Chung, and he was the *dai lo*, or big brother, of a Chinese gang called the Green Dragons. *Dai lo* is a term of respect accorded to one's elders, or to a boss, in a gang, and Chen I. Chung was both a boss and an older gang member. He was twenty.

The Green Dragons were based in Elmhurst, and their principal competition in the borough of Queens was a Flushing gang known as the White Tigers. The Dragons and the Tigers maintained an uneasy truce, and on occasion ranking members of the two gangs would sit down in a restaurant or a night club and attempt to resolve territorial disputes. Besides mutual animosity, the Green Dragons and the White Tigers had something else in common: both were patterned after established gangs in Manhattan's Chinatown. Youth gangs started to emerge in Chinatown in the sixties and seventies, and they have a distinctive culture—a bizarre mixture of traits borrowed from the Hong Kong triads (secret criminal societies) and the clichés of American and Chinese gangster movies. Gang members dress all in black and have their chests and arms tattooed with dragons, serpents, tigers, and sharp-taloned eagles. They can be as young as thirteen. Once enlisted, a gang member loses contact with family and school; the gang becomes both. Members live in safe-house apartments, often several to a room. Gangs have territories—certain streets, certain hangouts—and the appearance of a rival gangster in the wrong place can lead to bloodshed.

It would be simplistic to compare gangs such as the Green Dragons and the White Tigers, as some have tried, to the Jets and the Sharks of "West Side Story," or even to the color gangs of Los Angeles. They are not youth gangs in the usual sense but, rather, a young form of organized crime. They have a clearly defined hierarchy, and junior members will obey the instructions from the *dai lo* or someone else of high rank even if the order is to kill for reasons not explained. Asian gangs engage in a recognizable pattern of racketeering, the bedrock crime being extortion. It is difficult to find a restaurant in Chinatown that is not shaken down for protection money by one gang or another on a regular basis.

The Green Dragons and the White Tigers imported this tradition into Queens. Sometimes the restaurants would put up a fight. This was not something that Chen I. Chung could allow. If word were to get around that a restaurant had successfully refused to pay the Green Dragons, no one would take the gang seriously. According to the testimony of former gang members (a prime source of information for this account), Chen I. Chung repeatedly complained that the manager of the Tien Chau, Mon Hsiung Ting, was "hardheaded." Finally, he decided to send a pair of Dragons to kill Ting. One of the boys he selected was Alex Wong, who had been the good-looking boy in the black suit. The other killer was Joseph Wang. Both boys were sixteen.

Now Alex and Joe were reporting back to Chen I. Chung after the shooting, and the *dai lo* was satisfied, with one reservation. Alex said that the customers had ducked when the shooting started—all except one man. He had stood up, so Alex had fired at him. (That was Gregory Hyde.) Alex perhaps did not realize that he had shot and killed Anthony Gallivan, but he knew that the man he had hit was Caucasian. Chen I. Chung did not like that part of the story. Victimizing a non-Asian might bring heat from law enforcement. Gangs did not think American justice cared much about Asians, and the Asian community seemed to agree, for most extortions and many armed robberies went unreported.

Chen I. Chung was Taiwanese. He was familiarly called I. Chung (with "I" pronounced like "E"). I. Chung had immigrated to Waco, Texas, in 1981, at thirteen, along with two older sisters and an older brother, and had moved to Chicago before settling in Queens. His parents opened a Chinese restaurant in Buffalo. He was about five foot seven and skinny, with a tattoo of a tiger on his left shoulder and a gold ring in his left ear. His face was catlike. On Christmas Eve, 1987, two Asian youths opened fire on I. Chung as he sat in his car, at a red light. He managed to drive to the hospital with a bullet lodged in his skull. Since then, I. Chung experienced severe headaches at times of stress. After eight years in America, he spoke almost no English. He had been with the Green Dragons from its inception, in 1985, and had moved steadily up the ladder. As *dai lo*, he had his own apartment and a platinum American Express card. It is commonly thought that gang members kill mostly one another. The Green Dragons dispelled that myth: they preyed on the innocent.

WITH two dozen active members at most, the Green Dragons was a relatively small gang compared with Chinatown gangs such as the Ghost Shadows and the Flying Dragons. It was also more autonomous, since the Chinatown gangs must answer to a more senior criminal hierarchy. Chinatown, which was established in the eighteen-hundreds, operates on a system of tongs, or fraternal societies, which constitute, quite literally, the local government. (The Hip Sing, with headquarters on Pell Street, is the largest and most powerful tong; next in line is the On Leong, on Mott Street; and then the Tung On, on Division Street. A fourth, the Fukien American Association, on East Broadway, is a comer.) The tongs control Chinatown's commerce, and allegedly profit from drug trafficking, gambling, and prostitution. Each tong enjoys the allegiance of a youth gang. The fear that gangs inspire in merchants is enormously useful to the tongs, which govern the community through intimidation.

The tongs and the gangs are often equated with Mafia enterprises, but a far better analogy is to the Black Hand, the precursor of the American Mafia which in the early part of the century also preyed on its own ethnic group—first-generation Italian immigrants who spoke little English and did not trust American law enforcement to protect them. Most of Chinatown's population is also foreign-born, and regards police and prosecutors with the same skepticism.

The government has exerted far more effort against "traditional" organized crime in America—the Mafia—than against Asian crime, which has existed here just as long. Prosecutors have a lot of catching up to do. While RICO, the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, has been used effec-

tively against Mafia families, no successful RICO case has ever been brought against a tong. The government has been more successful in prosecuting the gangs. In 1985, Nancy Ryan, of the Manhattan District Attorney's Jade Squad, convicted twenty-five members of the Ghost Shadows of numerous acts of racketeering, including thirteen murders. The Ghost Shadows serve the On Leong tong. A few years ago, the Flying Dragons, the gang overseen by the Hip Sing tong, was infiltrated by a police officer, David Chong. Today a lieutenant in the New York Police Department and the highest-ranking Asian on the force, Chong fooled the Flying Dragons so thoroughly that he rose to the status of *dai lo* and became a street lieutenant, with a crew of twelve soldiers. Recently, Chong spoke about one of the most deplorable jobs of a *dai lo*, recruiting new gang members. This is typically done at school.

"I drove a Corvette, I had handfuls of money, the prettiest girls, the best jewelry, so you know what I would do?" Chong said. "I would have my kids go to a high school in Chinatown and look for the turkey right off the boat. You want him in ninth or tenth grade, he can't speak English, he's got a stupid haircut. And when you find this kid, you go beat the shit out of him. Tease him, beat him up, knock him around. We isolate this kid; he's our *target*. What will happen, one day I'll make sure I'm around when this kid is getting beaten up, and I'll stop it with the snap of my finger. He'll look at me—he'll see that I have a fancy car, girls, I'm wearing a beeper—and I'll turn around and say, 'Hey kid, how come these people are beating on you?' I'm gonna be this kid's hero, this kid's guru—I'm gonna be his *dai lo*. I'll take the kid for a drive, take him to a restaurant, order him the biggest lobster, the biggest steak. Eventually, I'll take him to the safe house where I keep kids and guns. Then I slowly break him in."

"Two months in France and Spain gave me the courage to smoke again."

PART of the allure of joining a gang is that it attracts a certain type of girl. Gang girls are not actual members, though they do sometimes hide guns or abet crimes in other ways. One girl involved with the Green Dragons, Tina Sham, was atypical. She was extremely shy and frightened by violence. Her grandfather was a prominent, upper-middle-class Hong Kong shipping executive, and a devout Buddhist. Her father, Robert, the ninth of ten children, was a rock musician. As a teen-ager, he heard the Beatles and discovered his destiny. By 1967, at the age of twenty, he had formed a Hong Kong rock group called Jade. Robert played drums. "We were very popular," he said recently. "We got four LP. I am quite famous." He smiled.

At twenty, Robert was already married; his wife, Rita, was half Chinese and half English. They had a daughter, Tina, in 1968; a son, Alfie, in 1969; and another son, Trini, in 1970. That year, they were divorced. Tina moved in with her cousins Beatrice and Dorothy Chan, the daughters of Robert's oldest sister.

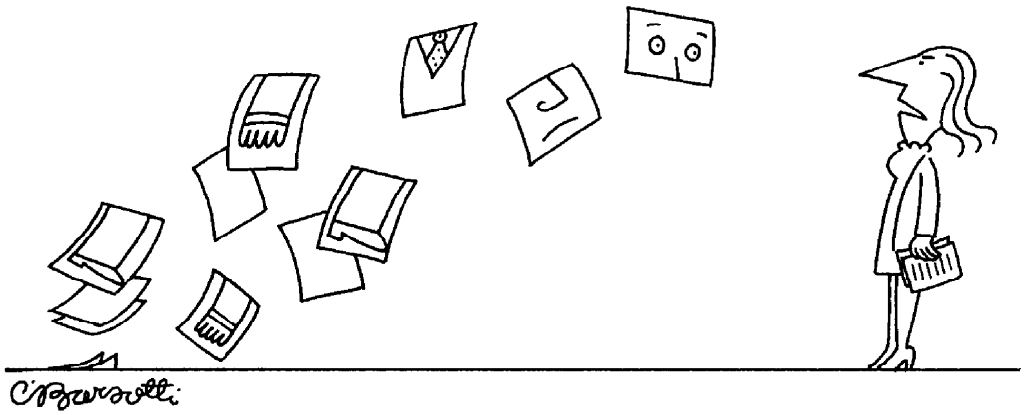
In 1983, Robert relocated to Queens, taking Tina and Trini with him. (Alfie remained with his grandmother in Hong Kong.) He had long contemplated the move: "America, you have one big song, you win a fortune. When you hit"—he snapped his fingers—"that's *it!*" Rita had arrived in America a year earlier, remarried, and settled in Brooklyn. The Chan cousins moved to Queens soon after Robert did. Tina and Trini bounced from home to home, in Brooklyn and Queens. Robert's big plans did not seem to include child rearing.

The fame Robert had won so early in Hong Kong eluded him in America. By 1985, he was beginning to feel desperate. He now says he wanted to make enough money to build his own recording studio. At a night club, Robert met a heroin trafficker named Henry Chan. Henry needed another courier to smuggle his contraband from Hong Kong to New York, and he was willing to pay that person ten thousand dollars per pound. In May and June of 1985, Robert went to Hong Kong, loaded the false bottom of a steamer trunk with

heroin, and mailed the trunk to himself with musical equipment inside. Both times, the trunk cleared customs undetected. At Christmas, Robert made a third trip for Henry, only this time he took the trunk on the plane. So far, Henry told him, that was twelve pounds of heroin—one hundred and twenty thousand dollars. Henry paid Robert in small bills, stuffed in restaurant take-out bags. On March 20, 1986, Robert arrived at John F. Kennedy International Airport with his fourth shipment—eight pounds, this time, according to Henry. He was called aside by a customs agent. When Robert did too much talking, the agent got suspicious, examined the trunk, and discovered the false bottom. Robert was arrested. He decided to cover for Henry Chan, but then, to his shock, customs weighed the heroin at more than sixteen pounds—twice what Henry had told him. Realizing he had been cheated, Robert turned state's evidence against Henry. Thanks in large measure to his testimony, which filled nearly three days of a one-week trial in early 1988, Henry Chan was convicted. He got twelve years and was fined two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Robert, as a reward for coöperating, was sentenced to the two years he had already served while awaiting Henry's trial. He returned in disgrace to his apartment in Rego Park. He had brought dishonor to his family, and his grief was compounded by an incident that had occurred only four months after he was stopped at Kennedy Airport. It concerned his son Trini, who had had the misfortune to fall in with the Green Dragons.

Trini was prime Green Dragons material. At fifteen, he was already five-eleven, and tough. Officially, he lived with his mother, Rita, in Brooklyn, but he did not get along with his stepfather. The Green Dragons provided him with a floor mattress at a safe house on 128th Street in Queens. Soon he was given an assignment: to dispose of two guns used in a shooting—a .38-calibre pistol and a .357 magnum. At 4:30 A.M. on July 22, 1986, as Trini prepared to toss the weapons into Columbus Park, in Chinatown, he was stopped by a police officer—James Dora, of the Fifth Precinct. In a panic, Trini brandished the .38, which was loaded, fired, and hit Dora in the right hand and the neck. (Dora eventually recovered from his wounds, but not without considerable suffering.) Dora returned fire, wounding Trini. The boy dropped the guns and fled. For the next three days, he hid at the Queens gang apartment. On July 25th, police officers from the Fifth Precinct, acting on a tip, burst in and arrested him. On January 5, 1987, Trini pleaded guilty to attempted murder in the second degree, a Class B felony. He ended up serving five years as a juvenile offender.



"Look, if it's just a matter of collating get one of the clerks to do it."

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For Tina Sham, seeing her father and brother go to prison as, respectively, a heroin smuggler and a would-be cop-killer was just the latest sad chapter in a difficult life. She had dropped out of school and tried to find work, but had few advantages, other than good looks. All her facial features were strong: large eyes set far apart, a shapely nose, a sensuous mouth. "She's too pretty," her cousin Beatrice Chan recalls thinking. "People will mess with her." Tina was a shy girl. "Tina never talked," Beatrice says. "She never even say one word back to you if you scold her. She just sit down and listen—sometimes she smile. And she never complain, whether she has enough money, food to eat, whether her rent could be paid."

Beatrice and her sister Dorothy had looked after Tina as a little girl in Hong Kong. At a house they shared in Woodside, and, later, in Elmhurst, they became, in effect, her foster family. Bea was married and had two small children; Dorothy was single; both worked at law offices in Chinatown.

"Tina don't really have a proper life," Beatrice remembers. "She's always with this relative, that relative. Relatives, if you don't have money to bring with you, they don't love you. You can't imagine how sad life she has. I get so mad with my Uncle Robert. Tina love her father very much, she want to stay with him, but the father don't know how to take care of her. He's a total lost person. He has a band in Hong Kong, very famous, and he come here and can't get fame. Then he goes into the wrong sides with doing the drugs, and got himself into a jail, and Tina got no place to stay, and jobs is hard to find. I have my own family, but still I try my very best. This is the only place she can stick around."

Tina seemed happy in the Chan household. "She loves my daughter Nicole, always she hugs her," Bea says. "She cooks for her. Tina even teach her how to eat French fries. And my son, Eugene, whenever his birthday, if her pocket has ten dollars, she buy the toys, she spend it all. She loves him."

Still, Tina could not seem to stay in one place. "She move around a *lot*," Bea says. "More than ten places. I help her move more than five places. I myself bring her food. And the apartment they live in is not good apartment."

One of Tina Sham's temporary addresses, an apartment on 164th Street and Parsons Boulevard, was a safe house for the Green Dragons. Tina lived there for a good part of 1986 with her boyfriend, a high-ranking Dragon named Johnny Tran, who was Vietnamese, which did not at all disqualify him for membership. Inside the gang, he was

known by the nickname Johnny Walker.

Beatrice knew that Tina was dating a gang member but did not believe it was her place to object. "I'm very open, I take life easy," she says. "I know what they hang around with, I've been here since '83. Kids, you can't force them—they won't take anything from you. If I know my brother smoke, I don't object, but don't smoke it in the house."

She drew a similar line when it came to Johnny Walker. "He sometimes drive Tina to my old house in Woodside, but I don't let him park in front, because they usually come with a whole bunch of gang kids in the car. I tell him, 'Dump her a block away.' I don't want my neighbor to see gang kids—what do you think about us? But Johnny can come over. I even ask him to stay for dinner. That kid never wants to stay. He was around nineteen, and I know he was in the gang with the Green Dragons. But he's not that bad, he's very polite. These are just kids, you know?"

THE Golden Q, a pool hall on Queens Boulevard in Elmhurst, is a popular hangout for Chinese gangs. One day in October, 1986, Sonny Wong wandered in and met several members of the Green Dragons. Sonny Wong was sixteen. He worked at a Baskin-Robbins ice-cream parlor in Elmhurst and, a month earlier, had entered Newtown High School in the tenth grade. His English was not bad—he had come over from Hong Kong at age seven—but he was an indifferent student, with a truancy record.

Sonny's best friend at Newtown was a boy he had met in junior high, Steven Ng. At school, both boys were viewed as likely gang targets. They resisted joining the White Tigers and a Chinatown-based gang, the Tung On Boys, and were roughed up as a result. But when Sonny Wong encountered the Green Dragons at the pool hall, Steven Ng was among them.

Sonny had not seen Steven for a week, and Ng explained that his father had kicked him out of the house, and that he'd had nowhere to go, so he had moved into a Green Dragons apartment at Jamaica Avenue and Seventy-sixth Street. Johnny Walker, who was at the Golden Q that day with his girlfriend, Tina Sham, asked Sonny if he was living at home. Sonny said he was, and Johnny explained that if he, too, wanted to join the gang he would have to leave his parents and move into a safe house. Sonny looked around the poolroom at the Green Dragons and sized them up: they had fancy clothes, and money, and beepers, and did not go to school. They had cars. On the spot, he decided to become a member.

That was it. There were no initiation rites. It was considered proper to get a tattoo, though, and Sonny soon had three tattoos on his chest and arms—green dragons and an eagle. He began to dress like his gang brothers, in a black jacket, a black turtleneck, tight black jeans, and black canvas slippers, leaving his ankles bare, even in the dead of winter. Another gang affectation was to have one's hair permed, and streaked with red, yellow, or green dye; some members went every day to Linda's Beauty Salon, in Elmhurst.

The gang apartment at Jamaica and Seventy-sixth was on the top floor, with one private bedroom, belonging to the *dai lo*. He went by the name of E.T. Two other bedrooms were chockablock with floor mattresses, for five other gangsters, and Sonny would make six. Sonny got an allowance of forty dollars a week, and after Christmas the amount was doubled.

Gradually, Sonny came to understand that there was an even bigger boss than E.T. His name was Paul Wong, and he had founded the gang, a year earlier. Wong was considerably older than the other gang members; he was born on December 14, 1955, in China's Fukien Province—hence his nickname, Foochow Paul. He had a mustache (a Fukienese trait). Paul Wong had been a *dai lo* in the Fuk Ching gang, on East Broadway in Chinatown, which was affiliated with the Fukien American Association tong, and, thanks to his rank, he had become a millionaire in the heroin business. Except for one weapons bust, which had cost him a seven-hundred-and-fifty-dollar fine in 1984, he had stayed out of the clutches of the law. But because of the huge sums generated by drugs, and by another illegal business, the smuggling of aliens, the Fuk Ching was full of internal strife and killing, and Foochow Paul finally found it prudent to drop out and form a gang of his own.

ON A *SIDE STREET*

If there are small shops
With blurred signs,
Don't come near them
Or look in their windows.

Keep to where the sky can be seen
In its cloudless twilight splendor
Above the dark buildings,
Dark even on darkest nights.
If someone's following you,
And he limps, and he's got a watch
He puts to his ear smiling,
Run from him and his watch.

There's a wide, well-lit avenue
Thereabouts. Thousands have come out
Just to see you, although
They make believe you're invisible
As you step into the light
Out of that dark side street,
With your face so pale
It seems powdered for a carnival.

—CHARLES SIMIC

He apparently chose the Elmhurst section of Queens because it was virgin territory; the White Tigers already had a strong foothold in Flushing. Foochow Paul had no interest in giving his gang kids entrée into the drug business, but he was beneficent, providing money for rent and cars and guns, and also high-priced criminal lawyers when they got arrested. A big man in Chinatown, he was, in effect, the Green Dragons' tong. It gave the Green Dragons "face" to say they were "Paul's kids," and the gang enhanced his status and provided him with bodyguards. Foochow Paul maintained residences in Hong Kong and on the mainland, but for the moment he was living in a private house in Forest Hills.

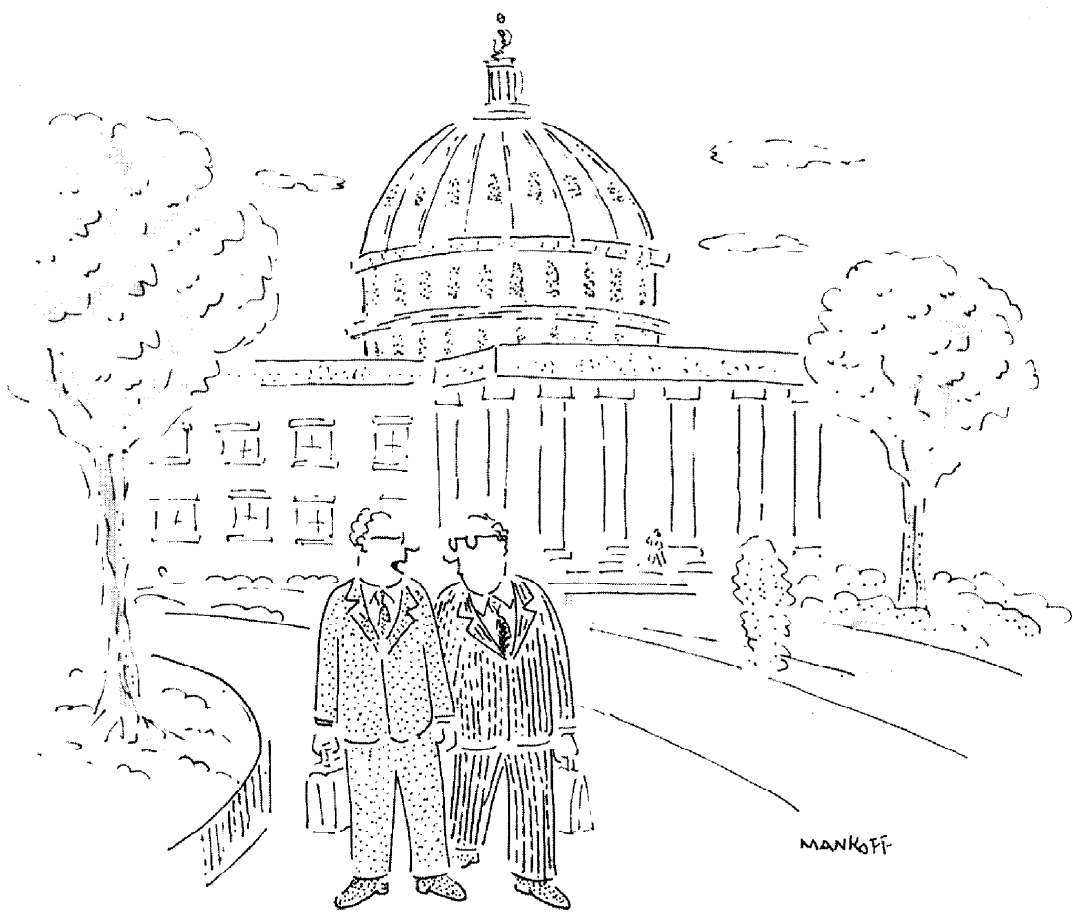
Sonny didn't get to meet the big boss right away. First, two seventeen-year-old flatmates broke him in. One of them was Chen I. Chung, and the other went by his nickname, Chicken Wing. As with all new members, I. Chung gave Sonny instructions on how to perform a "clean" kill. These were the essentials: shoot multiple times, to make sure the victim is dead; see that there are no witnesses; and, because murder weapons have to be discarded after a killing, always use the least expensive gun.

Chen I. Chung and Chicken Wing were considered brothers, as the result of a special ceremony, in which they cut their fingers and drank each other's blood. But privately Chicken had his doubts about I. Chung's leadership skills. "He looks dumbfounded sometimes," Chicken told Sonny. "It's not that he's not smart, the shit-face—he just doesn't bother to *think*, you know?" But Chen I. Chung was on an upwardly mobile track, because those more qualified to lead than he was would soon be dead or in jail.

On November 8, 1986, Chen I. Chung turned eighteen, and that evening his birthday was celebrated at the Foliage Restaurant, in Elmhurst. Everyone from the Jamaica Avenue and Parsons Boulevard apartments was present, including Tina Sham. About the only person absent was the boss, Foochow Paul himself. The Foliage was a large restaurant and bar, and the Dragons had rented the upper level in the back, which looked down on a dance floor. At some point in the evening, four Tung On Boys walked into the restaurant and sat down at a table on the lower level, directly below the party. The T.O.s proceeded to get drunk and twirl their guns on the table. At around two in the morning, E.T. got up to pay the manager for the party. He, too, was drunk, and I. Chung told Sonny Wong and Steven Ng to watch over him. They stood with E.T. by the cashier's table, but it was taking a long time for the manager to calculate the bill, so Sonny went off to get a soda. As he returned to the cashier, he saw E.T. arguing with one of the Tung Ons. Then E.T. smacked the Tung On in the face, and the T.O.s started shooting. Sonny ducked behind the bar. When he got up, E.T. and another Green Dragon were dead, and Steven Ng had been shot eight times in the chest. (Ng survived and returned to the gang, but never chose to get a tattoo, perhaps reasoning that eight bullet holes were adequate.)

On New Year's Day, 1987, Sonny Wong got an urgent phone call from a friend named Cindy Pak. She said she was being harassed by two Fuk Ching boys at a roller rink on Roosevelt Avenue in Jackson Heights. Sonny went to the rink to investigate, identified himself as a Green Dragon to the two boys, William Mei and Jinbo Zhao, and asked why they were bothering his friend. The boys told Sonny to back off—it was just a misunderstanding. Sonny left the rink and returned with six Green Dragons, in three cars. The Dragons escorted the two Fuk Ching boys out the door, and Johnny Walker threw them against a wall and began punching them in the face. Then they were forced into the Dragons' blue Pontiac, and driven off.

They were brought to the Parsons Boulevard apartment, where Tina Sham was living with Johnny Walker. She was in the bedroom, getting dressed, when the captives were hustled in. Tina looked through the narrow slats in the bedroom



"But how do you know for sure you've got power unless you abuse it?"

door, and saw the two boys on the floor, being interrogated and struck by one of the Green Dragons. Sonny was punching them as well, saying, "You wanted to hit me before. Why don't you hit me now?" Then Johnny Walker entered the bedroom and led Tina and another gang girlfriend out of the apartment. Frightened, Tina walked quickly to the front door with her head down, but looked up long enough to recognize several of the Green Dragons.

After the two girls left with Johnny, the Fuk Ching boys were strung up by their fingers against the living-room wall. For two hours, they were interrogated. Then Sonny was told to get takeout from downstairs. He returned with the food, and, with the gang's permission, untied the Fuk Ching boys and gave them some mushrooms and rice. Sonny later claimed that he left the apartment soon afterward, and never again saw William Mei and Jinbo Zhao. Three months later, their badly decomposed bodies were found floating in a marsh off the Saw Mill River Parkway in Westchester County, in the village of Ardsley. Each had been shot once in the head.

A FEW days after the roller-rink incident, on Chinese New Year, Sonny Wong at last got to meet Foochow Paul. The boss dropped by the Parsons Boulevard apartment, handed out around two hundred dollars to each of the gang members, wished them Happy New Year, and left. A week or so later, Sonny met Paul Wong again, at the Silver Pond Restaurant in Flushing, at a dinner to introduce the boss to some of the newer members. Paul asked Sonny his name and where he was from. They seemed to hit it off, which pleased Sonny tremendously.

Lately, Sonny had had reason to fear that he was losing the respect of his gang brothers. They had made fun of him for ducking behind the bar during the shootout at the Foliage Restaurant, and for giving food to the Fuk Ching boys. On February 13th, Sonny was offered an opportunity to prove his manhood: he was selected, with three others, to murder a *dai lo* in the Tung On gang in retaliation for the death of E.T. The youngest member of the shooting party, Billy Kim, was fourteen. Chen I. Chung kept a statue of the warrior god Gung Gong by the door, and he asked the four boys to pray before heading out. So they knelt down and burned three sticks of incense to Gung Gong, and then went off to kill the Tung On boss.

Johnny Walker drove the four boys to the Taiwan Center in Flushing, a meeting place for Cantonese people, where the Tung Ons had been partying earlier that evening. When the Green Dragons arrived, the party was over and the Taiwan Center was closed. So Johnny suggested that they try the 888 Restaurant in Jackson Heights, a popular T.O. hangout. Johnny parked the car in front, and the four Green Dragons went inside. There were T.O.s in the restaurant, all right, but far more than the Dragons had bargained for—maybe thirty of them, at four tables in the back, including a few that Sonny recognized as his tormentors at Newtown High School. Sonny and his gang brothers took seats up front and weighed their options. They agreed they could not back out. Sonny, armed with a .357, and Billy, carrying a .38, would hit the boss, and the two other boys would stand guard up front to cover them if the Tung Ons gave chase. The main dining room at the 888 was elevated, so Sonny and Billy were gazing down at the T.O. boss, at a distance of about forty feet, when they opened fire. Each got off six rounds, then fled, uncertain of who, if anyone, had been hit. (Five people were wounded, none seriously.) Johnny Walker sped off with the four Dragons and returned them to the safe house.

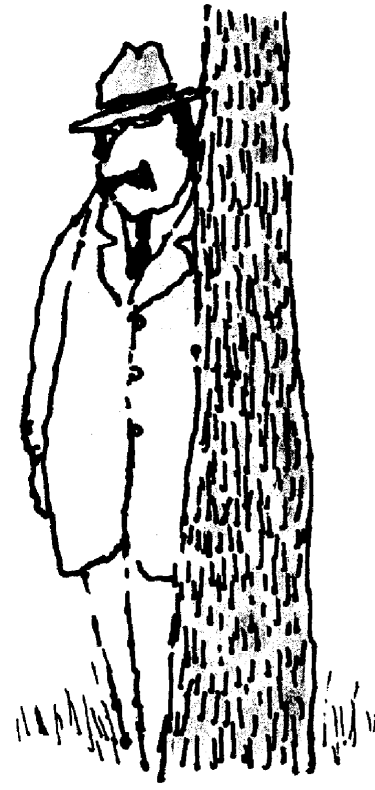
Though the mission was not a success, Chen I. Chung was satisfied that at least the Tung Ons had been put on warning. In any case, Sonny Wong's status rose dramatically after the shooting, because Foochow Paul took him under his wing. During the next three months, Sonny was Paul's personal bodyguard, at the boss's house in Forest Hills and on two trips to Hong Kong. Sonny also smuggled one hundred thousand dollars of Paul's drug profits through Hong Kong customs.

Meanwhile, Paul conceived of another role for Sonny. Because he spoke good English, Sonny would be the liaison between him and the attorney who appeared to be the Green Dragons' house counsel. That man was Arthur Mass, a criminal lawyer who defended a lot of drug dealers and mafiosi. (Mass

NAGGING QUESTIONS

by William Steig

"How should I say it?"



"Should I kill him now?"

vehemently denies that he was the gang's house counsel: "All I am is a defense lawyer who works for anybody who's busted, and because I'm good at my job the Green Dragons called me. That doesn't mean I work for the Green Dragons. I work for individuals.") In April of 1987, according to trial testimony, Paul Wong introduced Sonny to Arthur Mass at a Japanese restaurant in Manhattan. The three of them met once a week after that, at the same restaurant; sometimes Mass brought his girlfriend.

Mass's services were soon needed, for on June 27th, while Sonny and two other Green Dragons were driving on Queens Boulevard, their car was stopped by the police. They were told to get out and lie on the ground. The gang members were then handcuffed and driven to a police station in Westchester. Sonny was separated from the others, taken to an interview room, read his rights, and shown photographs of William Mei and Jinbo Zhao, the Fuk Ching boys who had been abducted from the roller rink and murdered. As Detective Thomas Dixon later told it, Sonny began to cry, and then said, "I didn't kill them both." A Green Dragon named Hock Jai had murdered Zhao, he said. Sonny never signed a statement, and his gang brothers refused to believe that he had cracked, which was fortunate. Coöperating with police was a violation of gang rules, punishable by death.

TINA SHAM was terrified. She was only nineteen, both her father and her brother were in jail, and now she was being threatened with arrest as an accessory to murder. On the day Sonny was arrested, Tina was hanging out with Johnny Walker in a safe-house apartment in Brooklyn. The police burst in and led Johnny out, then escorted her into the hallway for questioning. When she refused to speak, she was handcuffed, taken to police headquarters in Westchester, and interrogated for two or three hours by a detective. Finally, Tina described all she had seen and heard through the bedroom-door slats on New Year's Day, and whom she recognized as she was leaving the apartment. Two days later, she was held at a Westchester motel as a material witness.

In Westchester County, before a secret grand jury is convened defendants may request a so-called felony hearing, which is held in open court. A judge determines whether there is enough evidence to warrant sending the case to a grand jury. The felony hearing in the case of People of the State of New York v. Siu Man (Sonny) Wong et al. began on July 2, 1987, before a local judge at a small courthouse in the village of Ardsley, where the bodies of the Fuk Ching boys had been found. Each of the nine defendants was represented by an experienced New York criminal-defense lawyer; Hock Jai's attorney was Arthur Mass. Bruce Bendish, the Westchester assistant D.A. prosecuting the case, was impressed. "It was obvious to me that money was not an issue," he said recently.

On the first day of the hearing, which lasted two days, Bendish called to the stand his most important witness, Tina Sham. She was led in before the eyes of the defendants, including her boyfriend, Johnny Walker. As Bendish took Tina's testimony, her voice was barely audible, because her head was down. Judge Walter Schwartz remarked that he was within five feet of her and had to lean forward to hear. "I remember her," Pat Basini, the Ardsley Village court clerk, says. "Pretty little thing. She was so scared—never raised her eyes." Nevertheless, Bendish managed to elicit from Tina that the Fuk Ching boys had been beaten in the Green Dragons' apartment, and the names of those who had participated.

At the conclusion of the hearing, on July 3rd, Judge Schwartz ruled that there was indeed enough evidence to hold the defendants without bail pending a grand-jury investigation. Before that could occur, Bruce Bendish left the Westchester D.A.'s office, and his successor inherited the case. He did not inherit the star witness. Tina Sham, convinced that her life was in grave danger, disappeared. The grand jury failed to indict four of the defendants, including Chen I. Chung, who was released from the Westchester County Jail after about fifty days. Billy Kim pleaded guilty, apparently to take the heat off his gang brothers; because he was fourteen when the homicides took place, he could not be sentenced as an adult. After two years in prison awaiting trial, Sonny Wong was found not guilty; apparently, the jury, like the gang, did not believe he had confessed. The Westchester D.A.'s office plea-bargained relatively short jail terms on lesser charges for Johnny Walker, Chicken Wing, and Hock Jai.

The D.A. never had a chance to serve Tina Sham with a grand-jury subpoena. Within days after the felony hearing, she had been hustled off to San Francisco with her cousin Dorothy Chan. The two remained there for four months.

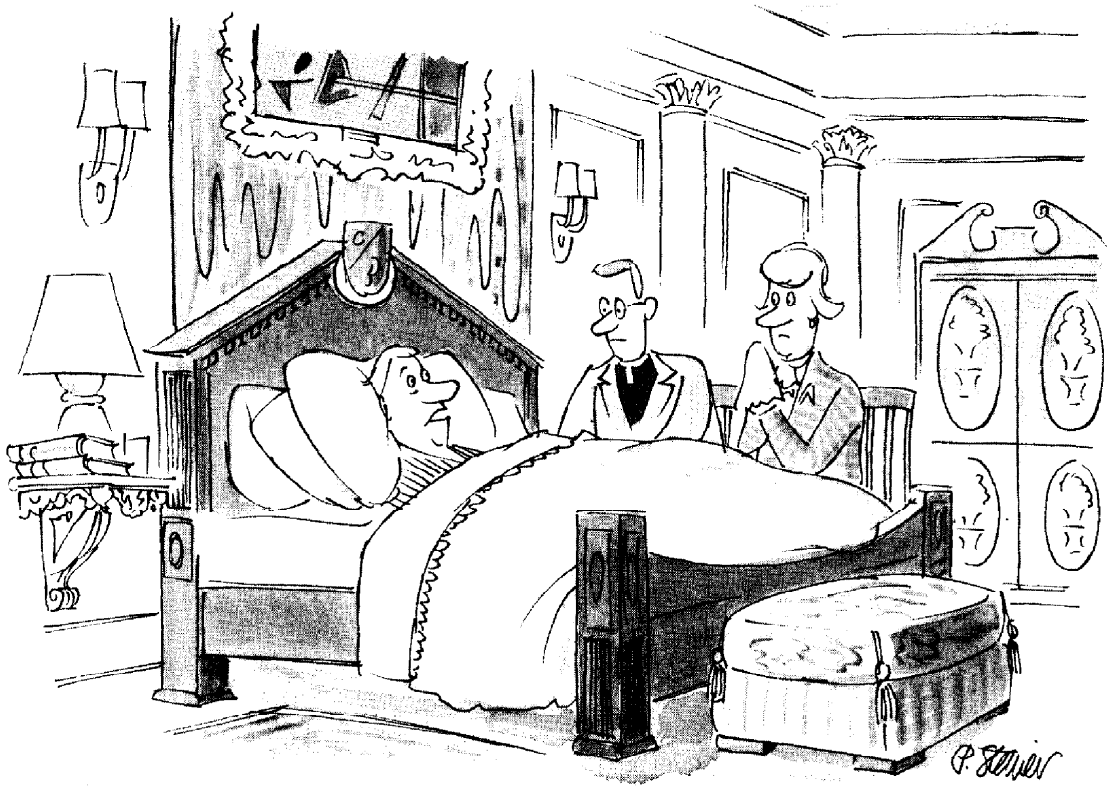
"After they come back from San Francisco, I put them in an apartment in Woodside near my house," Tina's cousin Beatrice Chan recalls. "I tell Tina to stay with Dorothy. Don't go out anywhere, come up to my house for lunch. After six months, we thought it was safe for her. We said, 'Maybe it's time to find a part-time job around here—don't go to Chinatown.' So she applied for a job at the Key Food on Queens Boulevard. The wages is not good, but she works there. She goes to movies in Queens and midtown, but not Chinatown. So after a year two detectives go to Key Food. They know where she is. They tell me, it's all right now. The case is finished."

CHEN I. CHUNG, unfortunately, held grudges. By mid-1989, with the Westchester case over, he was now the *dai lo*, answerable to no one but Foochow Paul himself. It was time to avenge an insult to the gang even more grievous than the one committed by Tina Sham.

A year and a half earlier, on January 3, 1988, the gang's shakedown tactics had met with unprecedented resistance. That afternoon, four Green Dragons—Chen I. Chung, Lung Gor, Danny Ngo, and Allen Wong—had lunch at the Broadway Noodle Shop, a restaurant in Elmhurst that had just opened. Sometime between two-thirty and three, they finished eating and got up to leave. The owner, a burly Taiwanese named Peter Chung, confronted them and demanded, "Why don't you pay?" Danny Ngo flung a lighted cigarette at him, and suddenly everyone was shouting. An employee came out of the kitchen with a gun and opened fire. Ngo was wounded slightly in the arm. Lung Gor was shot dead.

Now Chen I. Chung had just the hit

man in mind to settle the score—a Vietnamese, recently arrived from San Francisco. His name was Tony Tran, but he was more commonly known as Dai Bay, or Big Nose. On the evening of May 2, 1989, I. Chung sent Big Nose to the Broadway Noodle with orders to kill the owner. He carried two guns, a .38 and a 9-mm. semi-automatic. The job was a cinch; Big Nose didn't even have to go inside. Peter Chung was standing by the front entrance, so Big Nose just walked up and shot him three times at close range. The gunshots shattered the restaurant's glass door. Leaving a trail of bloody footprints back into the restaurant, Chung collapsed into a chair, fatally wounded. The day after the shooting, Chen I. Chung appeared at one of the gang apartments with a copy of a Chinese newspaper carrying the story, and handed it over. The gesture was well understood: it was I. Chung's way of saying that whoever did it would get recognition. He made only one comment, "*Bo ying*"—a Cantonese expression meaning "What goes around comes around."



"I want to be cremated and have my ashes sprinkled on the Republican Party."

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ONE day in June, 1989, as Foochow Paul walked out the door of a private house in Flushing, two or three young Asians hiding behind the bushes on his front lawn jumped out and opened fire. Paul was hit four times. He managed to get himself to Booth Memorial Medical Center. The Green Dragons' beepers began sounding, and word of the shooting spread rapidly throughout the gang. Several members caucused at the hospital, including Sonny Wong, just recently out of jail and now Chen I. Chung's underboss. The next day, Paul Wong came out of surgery, and I. Chung smuggled two handguns into his room, in the hollowed-out core of a Yellow Pages. On the pretext of being relatives, gang members remained in Paul's room around the clock, to make sure no one took another shot at him.

In a few days, Paul Wong recovered sufficiently from his wounds to be released from the hospital. He had an apartment at Broadway and Fifty-seventh Street, in Manhattan, and gang members took him there to recuperate. Paul said that when he was well enough to walk he would leave the country, and then he wanted the Green Dragons to avenge his shooting. Not many people knew the address of the house in Flushing, apart from Wong's partners in the drug business, and Paul's suspicions centered on one of them—Kin Tai Chan, better known as Ah Tai. Paul told the Dragons that if Ah Tai had formed an association with a fraternal society known as the Taiwanese Brothers it would be proof of his treachery. By early August, Paul was back on his feet and was in China. One afternoon, Chen I. Chung spotted Ah Tai leaving a condominium in Flushing with members of the Taiwanese Brothers. That evening, by telephone, Paul Wong ordered his death.

On the night of August 23rd, two Dragons in a gold Honda Accord spotted Ah Tai's girlfriend, and followed her to a house on the corner of Pershing Crescent and Eighty-fourth Drive, in Jamaica. Sometime after 10 P.M., Ah Tai left the house toting a shoulder bag full of laundry and strolled down the driveway. As he opened the door to his car, a white Jeep Cherokee, a member of the Green Dragons—it was later alleged to be Steven Ng—jumped out of the Honda and shot him once in the head and three times in the back with a .380 semi-automatic. Another bullet tore a gold Rolex off Ah Tai's left wrist; it landed near a sewer. Police searching Ah Tai's dead body ruled out robbery as a motive; he had on his person over eighteen hundred dollars in cash. It was alleged that while firing the fatal shots Steven Ng told him, "This is from Paul."

ALTHOUGH Paul Wong was nearly twice the average age of his gang kids, there was no evidence that he ever acted as a restraining influence. But his money did. Wong helped the gang defray its largest expenses—lawyers' fees, bail, firearms, rent—reducing the need for armed robbery. Once he left Queens for China, in August, 1989, that source

of funds for the gang dried up. Chen I. Chung continued to take direction from him over the telephone, but now the young *dai lo* was in charge. And the Green Dragons were out of control.

By the winter of 1989-90, Chen I. Chung was having difficulty meeting expenses, even though he had stepped up the pace of extortions. From an operations standpoint, the Green Dragons were in the red. Finally, I. Chung asked a cousin of his named Allen Lin, who was not in the gang, to scout out sites for armed robberies. Lin heard of a private apartment in Elmhurst where medium-stakes mah-jongg games were held. He went there one night and found two game tables, at which perhaps one or two thousand dollars changed hands. A middle-aged couple was in charge of the action, and the wife served soft drinks.

The apartment was occupied by a Taiwanese man, who will be referred to here as Charlie Lo, and his wife, his mother, and the wife's cousin. Lo was twenty-seven and worked in a restaurant from ten in the morning until ten at night. His wife, Susan, put in similar hours at a different restaurant. She was twenty-four and was born in Malaysia. On January 23, 1990, Susan Lo returned home at about eleven and found her mother-in-law and her cousin on the living-room sofa watching television. It had been a long, hard day, and Susan changed into a robe and prepared to take a hot bath.

Charlie Lo, arriving home a few minutes later, encountered a young man in a black jacket loitering in the lobby. He was a Green Dragon named Jay Cheng. As Lo climbed five steps to the door of his apartment, another youth passed him, on the way down. At his door, Charlie looked around nervously, then turned his key in one of two locks. The second lock jammed, and as he struggled with it five Green Dragons surrounded him and pulled him over to the mailboxes facing the door. Four of them had guns, and the fifth brandished what the gang called its Rambo knife.

"Open the door. Please don't fuss," Lo recalls being told. He protested that the lock was broken, and offered the key. Again, he was ordered to open the door, and this time he succeeded. The gang members rushed in together, pushing Lo to the ground. After several minutes, he was taken into a bedroom and forced to strip to his underwear. Jay Cheng found a bank card in Charlie's wallet and demanded the code number. With two guns pressed into his back, Charlie gave it to him. "Is the number real or not?" Jay demanded. "It's real," Charlie said. "If you don't believe me, you can go and try it." Jay told him that if the number didn't work, or if he reported the robbery to the police, his entire family would be killed.

Susan Lo had finished taking her bath when she heard noises that sounded like furniture being moved. She opened the bathroom door a crack, saw a black-jacketed man with a small gun, and heard someone say, in Cantonese, "Where is your money?" She tried to climb out the bathroom window, but it was too small. For half an hour, she huddled in a corner, hoping not to be discovered. Then Brian Chan, an eighteen-year-old Green Dragon, kicked the door open. From the adjoining room, Charlie Lo could hear his wife screaming.

Pressing a small black gun against her shoulder, Brian Chan led Susan into her bedroom. Her husband, her mother-in-law, and her cousin were lying face down there, in their underwear. The room had been ransacked. One of the robbers was rummaging through a desk beside a large fish tank. Jay asked Susan where she had hidden the money. "There is no money," she said. If he found even one dollar in her room, Jay told Susan, he would kill her. She was made to take off her robe and lie face down next to her husband. The robbers tore through a closet and turned the bed upside down. After perhaps half an hour, Susan Lo and her cousin were led into the cousin's bedroom and raped.

By 1:15 A.M., the apartment was quiet. Charlie found his wife, naked and sobbing, under a blanket. In a little while, Susan got up and made a tour of the apartment. The sofa had been overturned. Videotapes were scattered on the floor. All the cabinet drawers were pulled out, and clothes and shoes were tossed in heaps. A table had been kicked over, and mah-jongg tiles were strewn about. All the telephone lines were slashed. Susan got dressed and called the police from a corner pay phone.

Back at one of the gang's apartments, the proceeds of the robbery—cash, jewelry, and pearls—were poured out on a coffee table. Chen I. Chung counted the money and gave most of it to Sonny Wong to be used for lawyers' fees. The rest was divided up. Jay Cheng went to a cash machine and tried Charlie Lo's bank card. He got five hundred dollars.

IN 1989, Tina Sham turned twenty-one. She had not seen any of the Green Dragons for two years. Johnny Walker was still in jail. Tina had felt sufficiently safe from harm to commit another offense against the Dragons: she dated a boy nicknamed Mosquito Steve, who happened to be a member of the White Tigers. Meanwhile, she got a job as a cashier at a Chinatown beauty parlor. Around Christmas, she was formally introduced to a young man whose best friend's sister knew her cousin Dorothy. The young man wanted to date her, but Tina was not sure what she thought of him. He was different from the guys she was used to going out with—a hardworking ethnic Chinese from Vietnam who made his living repairing jet airplanes. His name was Tommy Mach.

Tommy's father had been a prosperous pork distributor in Saigon, but after the Communists took over he escaped with his wife and seven children, on October 2, 1977, in a small, crowded boat. The Machs almost died of thirst during

MAILBOX

To the Editor:

Philip Levine's poem "On the Meeting of García Lorca and Hart Crane" (October 19th) fascinated me because García Lorca and I were friends during our student days at the Residencia in Madrid in 1920-21. I have a photo of us standing on the rear platform of a third-class coach after a day in Toledo spent examining El Grecos and discussing world problems and wine. I remember the depressed atmosphere of 1929, when the two poets met in Brooklyn, which produced the falling visions that Levine writes about.

HENRY C. RICKARD
Westwood, Mass.

the five days it took the boat to reach the Philippines. After the family had spent ten months in a refugee camp in Manila, the United States Catholic Conference sponsored their passage to New York, first boarding them at an old hotel near Lincoln Center, and then renting a small apartment for them in Elmhurst. Tommy's father was very strict, and the entire Mach family was suffused with the Asian work ethic. The Mach children spent up to eight hours a night trying to do their homework in an unfamiliar language.

In 1981, Mr. Mach decided he could make a better living elsewhere, and moved out of the city with his wife and two youngest children, who were girls. The five oldest children, down to Tommy, now fourteen, remained at the apartment in Elmhurst. Mrs. Mach was worried that, with no parent around, her youngest son might fall in with a gang. In fact, Tommy was himself so fearful of gang kids that in junior high he avoided making friends with any Chinese at all. "Tom said, 'Mom, we've gone through a lot of difficulty to get to this country, and I'm not going to waste my life and be an idiot,' " his older brother Steven recalls. "I was very proud of him."

"Those were the days, my friend,
We thought they'd never end."

• • •

Far from wasting his life, Tommy had rapidly become proficient in English. He passed an entrance exam for Aviation High School, one of the best in New York City, and breezed through with good grades. After he graduated, he obtained F.A.A. certification to work on all aspects of aviation maintenance. He accepted a job at Butler Aviation. At the age of seventeen, not yet old enough to drive, Tommy Mach was repairing jet planes.

By 1986, it seemed that the long struggle was over for the Mach family, and that, as Steven put it, "God couldn't treat us better." The older children had graduated from college and gone into finance and other high-paying professions. Steven became a software engineer. The Machs bought their first home, in the suburbs. Steven lived there with his parents, and so, for a while, did Tommy, who happily contributed toward the mortgage.

In September of 1989, Tommy, bored with suburban life, decided that the time had come to move back to Queens. He took a job with USAir at LaGuardia Airport. At twenty-two, he was earning over fifty thousand a year. One weekend, Tommy came up to see his brother with news of a romantic interest.

Steven recalls, "He said, 'I met this girl and she looks really cute and all that, but I just don't know if she like me or not.' That girl is Tina. I said, 'Don't worry, just let it go easy, let it go natural. If she's yours, she's yours.' And then nothing work out, because he said that Tina, for some reason, is kind of hold back. I said, 'Did you talk to her?' 'Yeah, I talk to her a couple of times; she doesn't seem to show any interest.' I said, 'Hey, what's the big deal? If she doesn't respond, there's a lot of other girls out there. Maybe she's trying to play hard to get.' "

By February of 1990, Tommy had been back in Queens for six months, and city life was beginning to wear on him. His mother was begging him to return home. Finally, Tommy confided to a friend that he planned to ask Tina Sham out one last time, on Valentine's Day, and if she refused him he was going to pack up and move back in with his parents and Steven. Whether the threat was genuine will never be known, because Tina accepted.

After Valentine's Day, Tommy was a constant presence in the Chan household in Elmhurst. Some nights, he would pick up Tina in his car, a red Subaru, and take her dancing at a Manhattan club, the Limelight. Other nights, he would stay over for dinner and play mah-jongg with family members. "He's very sporty," Beatrice Chan recalls. "He never can sit still. But Tommy, he's not a bad kid, he earns his own way. I tell Tina he's quite good. I said, 'Go disco.' "

Within days of their first big date, Tommy was talking openly of marriage and children. Tina was clearly fond of him, but at the same time she seemed deeply troubled, and it now appears that she had not yet found the nerve to tell Tommy about her past. Or perhaps she was worried about Johnny Walker, who would soon be getting out of prison and might still view her as his girlfriend. "Tina, she sits here sometimes by herself watching TV, but she's not watching TV," Beatrice recalls. "She's somewhere else. Maybe she don't want us to worry, but she don't tell us anything."

On Friday, February 23, 1990, Tommy Mach had the day off. He planned to take Tina and Beatrice for dim sum, but Beatrice bowed out at the last minute, because her husband

was returning from a trip that day. Around three o'clock, Tommy arrived with Tina at the Crown Palace Restaurant, on the corner of Queens Boulevard and Van Loon. Tina was wearing jeans, cowboy boots, a sweater, a black silk blouse, and hoop earrings. Tommy was dressed in a white shirt with black polka dots, jeans, and a black leather jacket. Tina had been to the Crown Palace a few times before, and one of the waiters recognized her. Even more familiar to him were the Green Dragons who just then filed in, taking their usual table, by the back door. The gang collected two hundred and fifty dollars in extortion money every Sunday from the Crown Palace, and had dim sum at the restaurant two or three times a week.

Chen I. Chung, as befitted his rank as *dai lo*, took the corner position at the table. Big Nose sat next to him. There were some new faces in the gang. Aleck Yim was that rarity—an American-born Chinese gang member; he was seventeen, and had been recruited out of Forest Hills High School. Yim was called Moon Jian, which means Small Eyes.

Brian Chan was also at the table. One month earlier, he had found Susan Lo cowering in her bathroom and marched her out at gunpoint. Brian was born in Hong Kong in 1972 and baptized Roman Catholic. Ten years later, he had immigrated to America with his family, and was enrolled at St. Patrick's Semi-Military Academy, in Harriman, New York. He wore a full-dress uniform, maintained an A-minus average, and graduated in 1986. Brian spoke a number of Chinese dialects and fluent English. In the winter of 1986, Brian's father died. Both Brian and his older brother, Perry, dropped out of high school. By the summer of 1988, the two boys were in the care of an uncle: their mother had evidently abandoned them. Along the way, the brothers suffered another trauma: they were beaten by Chinese teen-agers, and Brian was stabbed. Close together in age, Perry and Brian moved in opposite directions. Perry obtained a high-school-equivalency diploma, worked his way up to contract administrator at a Manhattan financial company, and began studying for an M.B.A. By late 1989, Brian had joined the Green Dragons.

Roger Kwok was another relative newcomer to the gang. He was born to Chinese parents in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, the third of four children. In 1979, when Roger was six, he and his family were forced by the Khmer Rouge to walk two hundred miles to a detention camp in Thailand. From there, the Kwoks moved to New Jersey. Roger's father was a stonecutter, and his mother found a job at General Motors. Roger was a good student, but began running away from home at age fifteen and hanging out with the Green Dragons. Desperate to keep his youngest son from becoming a gangster, Mr. Kwok shipped Roger to California to live with his grandparents and attend a parochial school. This arrangement lasted one month. In August, 1989, Mr. Kwok tried another tack: he moved his entire family to Middletown, in upstate New York. Roger dropped out of Middletown High in January, 1990, and now, a month later, sat at a table with his gang brothers. After all the gang members had taken their places, the manager signalled for the waitress to serve them. They began to eat.

Sonny Wong arrived late. When he took his place at the table, Chen I. Chung gestured across the restaurant, toward the right-hand side. Is that Tina? Sonny believed it was. The boy was unfamiliar, but he had a black jacket and looked like a gang member; he must be the White Tiger that Tina supposedly went out with. I. Chung sent three Green Dragons to the table to verify the girl's identity and frisk the boy. They came back and reported that the girl was most definitely Tina Sham but the boy had neither a gun nor a tattoo. I. Chung asked Sonny what he should do. "You're the boss," Sonny reminded him. Throughout the summer of 1989, I. Chung had repeatedly insisted that Tina Sham must be killed for testifying in the Westchester case and for dating a White Tiger. "She's been around long enough to know the rules," he had said then, more than once. Now I. Chung had to make a decision quickly, because, unnerved, Tina and the boy were hastily paying their bill and preparing to leave. The back table fell silent, except for intense whispering between Chen I. Chung and Big Nose. All eyes were on the *dai lo*. As Tina and Tommy were walking out, I. Chung made a gesture with the back of his hand. The gang understood.

Someone tapped Aleck Yim on the shoulder, and he got up. He and Big Nose left through a side door, and Brian Chan and Roger Kwok went out the front. Tommy and Tina had reached the door of his red Subaru, in the parking lot across the street from the restaurant.

"Mom, Dad, this is Phil, the man I've been running a background check on."

"Thank you, sir. I see you're not hopelessly liberal."

Suddenly, they were surrounded by four Green Dragons with their guns drawn. "What do you want?" both of them asked. Aleck took Tina's bag. Big Nose swung around in the gang's car, a two-tone blue Mercury. Tommy and Tina were forced into the car, and it drove off. Big Nose was in the driver's seat, and Aleck was beside him, aiming at the captives. Tina and Tommy, in the back, were squeezed between Brian and Roger, who were also pointing guns at them.

En route, Big Nose explained to the other gang members what I. Chung had told him: this was for revenge. None of the four abductors had ever met Tina Sham, but they had heard about her. The boy was a mystery—apparently not a gang member. That was simply too bad—the killing must be clean, no witnesses. The restaurant staff, they were certain, would be too frightened ever to testify. Big Nose told Aleck that they had to find a quiet place with no one around, and asked for directions, because he was from San Francisco and was unfamiliar with the area. By now, they were on the Long Island Expressway. Tina was crying and begging; Tommy was very quiet. Meanwhile, Brian, Roger, and Aleck took their belongings. Tina, who was both Catholic and Buddhist, handed over her silver cross and a gold chain and a gold-plated Buddha inscribed "Chinese Happiness." Tommy surrendered a stainless-steel Charles Jourdan watch, a gift from his brother Steven, and a jade Buddha that Steven had brought him from Thailand after having a monk bless it to keep Tommy safe from harm.

The drive went on for more than forty-five minutes, and finally Big Nose left the L.I.E. and turned down a residential street. There were too many houses. They circled around for a while and came across a dirt road. The road ran along the bottom of a ravine and cut through dense woods—an ideal spot for an execution. Big Nose remained by the car, telling Aleck to make sure they went all the way down the path, and to bind the hands of both the boy and the girl. And he added, "Let the new kid do it."

Aleck understood. Brian Chan had an expensive automatic; Roger Kwok, the new kid, sixteen years old, was carrying a less expensive .38. The three abductors forced Tina and Tommy down into the ravine, which was slippery with dead leaves, and onto the road. They walked for about two hundred and fifty feet, and then, though Tony had told them to go farther, Aleck stopped, because he was scared. Roger got Tina to kneel, pulled back her sweater, and knotted it behind her; Aleck pushed Tommy to his knees and performed a similar maneuver with Tommy's leather jacket. Then Aleck gave the signal: ready, go. Roger killed Tommy first, with one shot to the back of the head, and then Tina. They both slumped forward from the impact and landed together on their right sides. As they lay there, probably already dead, Aleck took his gun and pumped bullets into Tommy's left armpit and abdomen and Tina's left abdomen and hip. Then the three boys ran.

Big Nose asked Aleck why he had fired his gun. Aleck said nothing, but then Big Nose reassured him: "It's O.K. You're getting good with this." Back in the car, they passed the guns forward to Big Nose. He put them in the usual hiding spot, the air-conditioning vent. The murder weapons would later be disposed of by Aleck in a lake in Flushing Meadows–Corona Park, off the Grand Central Parkway. They took the L.I.E. back to Queens, to an Asian-American garage where Chen I. Chung had gone to get his car fixed. The assassination team met I. Chung there, told him that the deed was done, and divided up the victims' money. Aleck showed I. Chung an expensive-looking cigarette lighter he had lifted from Tina, and asked for permission to keep it. I. Chung told him to go ahead. The *dai lo* was pleased. The only regrets were those expressed by Big Nose. On reflection, he said of Tina Sham, "We should have raped her first."

EVER since Tommy Mach moved back to Queens, he had called his mother every Friday night, without exception, but on the evening of February 23rd the phone never rang. Strange that he doesn't call, Mrs. Mach said. By Sunday, the entire Mach family was in a panic. Steven and an older brother arranged to take off two weeks from work and began driving aimlessly around New York, looking for Tommy's red Subaru.

As the days went by, Tina's cousins also grew increasingly afraid that something terrible had occurred. "The whole

family of us can't sleep," Beatrice recalls. "Sometimes cry, all the aggravation, Tina's friends coming in, Tommy's friends coming in. Finally, I go to fortune-teller, and they tell me she's not dead. But signs are not good. Tommy's friends want to go to psychics, not fortune-teller, because they're more American kids. The first psychic is a very good one. He says, 'Bring her clothes and bring Tommy's clothes.' When we bring them and walk up the corridor to the psychic's house, he sees us and says, 'Go away! I don't want to see you guys now!' We're shocked. That was almost the first week. I keep praising the Buddha, but nothing happened."

Robert Sham took a different approach to trying to find his daughter. From his son Trini, who was still in state prison, he got a beeper number for Sonny Wong. Trini and Sonny had been good friends in junior high. Robert beeped Sonny and got a call back. Robert said his daughter was missing, and arranged to meet Sonny at a McDonald's on Queens Boulevard. Before the meeting, Chen I. Chung briefed Sonny on how to handle Robert Sham; Sonny denied any knowledge of what might have happened to Tina, and suggested that she might have run afoul of the White Tigers. He also attempted to learn from Robert what, if anything, the police knew.

In fact, the police knew nothing at all, because the bodies had not been discovered. That all changed on March 10th, sixteen days after the murders. The dirt road on which Tina and Tommy were killed was a service road for the Long Island Lighting Company, well hidden between two country estates in Sands Point. A caretaker eventually stumbled on the bodies and called the local police, who in turn notified the Nassau County Homicide Squad. Tommy Mach was identified from a pay stub found in his jacket pocket. Before sunup, police located Tommy's sister in New York and broke the news to her.

The next morning, members of both families were asked to identify the bodies at the morgue. Because it was winter and bitterly cold, the corpses were exceptionally well preserved. First, Tina's body was wheeled into a small room behind a glass partition, a sheet covering all but her face and shoes. "We go together, but they only allow the parents to go in, Robert and Rita," Beatrice Chan recalls. "When Rita start crying very loud, we heard that. All of us start crying very loud, we know that's her."

Then Tommy's body was wheeled in. "I was the first one that identified him," Steven says, struggling in vain to suppress tears at the memory. "The doors open, and the first thing I saw was his shoes—he bought a pair with me—and I just almost faint, because it finally hit me. Until that moment, I still have that dream, that hope, that Tommy is somewhere, that he just run away with Tina. I'd come up with a reason that is really outrageous. He just ran away to the Caribbean with Tina, to a little hideout, and have a sudden marriage, just to surprise us. I keep thinking, If I see him I'm gonna beat him up. But then when I see that pair of shoes my heart just fell, and it fell like to a bottomless cliff, or whatever you call that. I saw his face. He— he looks like he's asleep, but the expression on his face is very *complex*. It's a little anger, a little sorry—like sorry that he went down, sorry what had happened. But I know one thing. He is scared! Not only that he face what he has to face with guys surrounding him with guns and all that. But the biggest fear I think he has is that probably the family will never find him, because the place is very secluded. I want to talk to him, I keep asking him to wake up or something. I knock on the glass. But he just lie there. All of a sudden, I have a feeling like an invisible hand grab hold of my heart and just squeeze it and squeeze it, and it's so painful. That's when my sisters take me out the door. Even now, I still dream of that face."

As a reward for the double homicide, Chen I. Chung soon put Roger Kwok in charge of a gang apartment on Ithaca Street. Roger had fired fatal bullets. Brian Chan still had not done so. But another opportunity arose only four days later.

The Green Dragons were bitter enemies of a Vietnamese gang called Born To Kill, headquartered at a shopping mall on Canal Street in Chinatown. A large gang, with more than a hundred members, Born To Kill took its name from a popular slogan on G.I.s' helmets in Vietnam. Many members were tattooed with the letters "B.T.K." and a coffin and three candles, signifying "no fear of death." Born To Kill was the only major Chinatown gang not affiliated with a tong. The gang took direction from a latter-day Fagin named David Thai, who ran a prosperous counterfeit-watch business and a couple of massage parlors. Born To Kill terrorized Vietnamese establishments on and around Canal Street, and also wormed its way into Queens.

On February 27, 1990, Brian Chan, Roger Kwok, and Big Nose were cruising in Brian's bullet-pocked car. Some time between 5:20 and 6 P.M., they spotted four young men walking toward Linda's Beauty Salon and believed them to be Born To Kill members. Brian made a sharp U-turn and chased them. At the corner of Britton Avenue and Ketcham Street, Brian stopped the car, jumped out, and shot one of the young men dead with a .380 semi-automatic. Police found the body face down on the sidewalk, legs crossed. The victim appeared to have fallen in mid-stride.

It turned out that the victim was not a member of Born To Kill. His name was Jin Lee Seok, and he belonged to a gang called Korean Power. This was a problem, because the Green Dragons and Korean Power had a peace agreement. Tony Kim, one of the bosses of Korean Power, got on the phone with Chen I. Chung and expressed his outrage. The two gangs quickly came to terms. No one in Korean Power would testify against Brian Chan, because of the unwritten rule that gangsters must never coöperate with the authorities. However, Korean Power had permission to settle the matter privately; that is, if the gang wished to kill Brian, that was all right with the Green Dragons.

The murder investigation of Tina Sham and Tommy Mach was turned over to a Nassau County homicide detective named Peter Blum. He had never worked on an Asian-crime case before. When he learned that Tina's father had been busted as a "mule"—federal prosecutors' slang for a low-level heroin smuggler—and had agreed to testify against his drug supplier, Blum initially thought that Tina might have been murdered in revenge. Robert Sham assured Blum that this was

ADAGES OF A GRANDMOTHER

Grandmother said to me, "Keep thyself
unspotted from the world." She spoke in quotes.
I got the feeling that she had rehearsed
all her admonitions as a child,
for when she issued them to me she grew
solemn and theatrical. I knew
she tasted in her words some sweet,
indissoluble flavor of the past; but even more,
as though at eighty-five or eighty-six
she stood still in the parlor of her recitation—
a plain, studious girl with long, brown braids
(I have the portraits of her as a child)—
and spoke her lessons for approving guests.
Such touches of girlishness accompanied
her adages. And then she gave me dimes
for so many lines of Shakespeare memorized.
For "The quality of mercy..." I was paid
a quarter, and at tea I gave her guests
a dollar's worth of Shakespeare with their toast.
"All the world's a stage," she reminded me.

Only armed with an adage might I sally forth.
"A foolish son's his mother's grief," she thought.
The world was scriptural and stratified.
It held raw veins of wisdom in its side,
like the Appalachians when we journeyed north.
She sat in the front seat of the Buick, hairnet drawn
over her white hair coiled in a dignified bun,
her straw, beflowered hat alert and prim.
From the back seat I'd study her, my grim
grandmother, with her dictatorial
chin, her gold-rimmed spectacles ablaze with all
the glory of the common highway where
field daisies spoke to her in doctrinaire
confidential accents of the master plan
confided to grandmothers by the Son of Man.

Wisdom was talismanic and opaque—
could be carried in a child's small fist
like the personal pebble I fished out of the lake.
And whenever I stepped outside she kissed
my head and armed me with a similitude.
Beyond the screen door, past the windowsill,
the bright earth rang with providence until
even the wise ants at my shoe tips moved
in dark amazements of exactitude,
and the small dusty sparrows swooped innumerably.

I write this on the sun porch of the house
where she lay, an invalid, in her last years.
And I'm abashed to realize I blamed
her stiffness and her stubborn uprightness
for much that happened to me afterward.
Now I look through the window where she looked
and see the sunlight on the windowsill
and wonder what it signifies,
for now I barely recognize
her world outside, as though sunlight effaced
not only human features but their memory.
Her adages are all scattered in my head
(*Neither a borrower, nor a lender be*),
and I cannot think for thinking of the dead
(*Go to the ant, thou sluggard;*
consider her ways, and be wise);
I cannot read the world now with her eyes
(*Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven*
is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold).
And I, who used to blame her so,
rummage in my pockets for
a nickel's worth of wisdom for my kids.

—ERIC ORMSBY

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not possible. Then Blum learned that Tina Sham had also been a government witness in the Westchester case against the Green Dragons.

Blum needed to find the last people to see Tina Sham and Tommy Mach alive. Tommy's red Subaru was missing, so Blum ran the plate number through a computer and traced the car to the Ace Towing & Recovery Company, in Queens. The Subaru had been hauled away on February 28, 1990, from a parking lot across the street from the Crown Palace. Blum visited the restaurant with the only Chinese-speaking officer he could find in Nassau County. The eleven-member restaurant staff was extraordinarily unhelpful. (Chen I. Chung had come back after the murders and explicitly cautioned the staff against talking to the police.) When they were shown photographs of Tommy and Tina, they all drew a blank. The workers, mostly Cantonese, claimed not to understand the Chinese police officer, who spoke Mandarin. "Their attitude was 'I do not speak your language. Goodbye,'" Blum recalls.

The New York Police Department provided Blum with a Hong Kong native named Joemy Tam. He spoke Cantonese, and he was extremely persuasive. Tam lectured the restaurant staff on why the Asian community needed to band together and resist intimidation by thugs. Gradually, some of them bought what Tam was selling. One day, Tam and Blum picked up a Crown Palace waitress in front of her house and drove her down Queens Boulevard. It was raining, and they sat under the El. She looked over a police-photo spread, settled on a picture of Chen I. Chung, and said, "That's the *dai lo*." Tam was able to lure others to an interview room at Nassau County police headquarters. Yip Ming Lee, a waiter, identified seven Green Dragons, and remembered which

of them had followed Tina and Tommy out of the restaurant.

Blum had identified the abductors in less than a month. Tina Sham's relatives believed they had assisted him by putting a red handkerchief in Tina's suit pocket at her cremation. According to Chinese custom, if a murder victim is given something red to wear, the color will "stick to" the killer and he will be caught. Blum was not one to scoff at Chinese superstition, because of an incident that, he says, "still gives me chills." Tina's parents and her two cousins asked Blum to lead them to the ravine in Sands Point where she had been murdered. According to Buddhist lore, when a person dies violently the soul remains at the spot where death occurred. Tina's family wished to coax her soul into an incense stick and reunite it with her body at the funeral parlor. "The family is dressed all in black," Blum recalls. "They stack up oranges"—a traditional offering to the Buddha—"and put a big incense stick in the ground where Tina was murdered, and bow three times, and pray for Tina's soul to come. All of a sudden, a large brown butterfly appears—must have been two and a half inches in diameter. We had half a foot of snow five days earlier, and it's freezing out, and there is no reason for a butterfly to be coming around. It flies to the top of the knoll and sits on a branch. The family is crying and bowing and praying to this butterfly. They believe it's Tina. I'm standing twenty feet away with two other detectives. The butterfly does a complete circle around us, then circles the family, and is gone. Robert says, 'I told Tina that you were the detectives who were trying to solve her murder. When she flew overhead, she was thanking you.'"

After speaking with the Crown Palace workers, Blum had probable cause to arrest a number of Green Dragons for murder. He did not do so, and for good reason: the federal government asked him to refrain. Not far into his investigation, he discovered that the United States Attorney's office in Brooklyn also had its eye on the Green Dragons. The office planned to use the RICO statute against the Dragons, after a decade of deploying it effectively against the Mafia. At the same time, the Brooklyn office was preparing a second RICO case—this one against Born To Kill.

The federal Green Dragons case had its origin in an investigation of a Queens drug lord named Lorenzo (Fat Cat) Nichols. Between March and August of 1988, the F.B.I. had bugged the telephone of Fat Cat's sister Viola, and two strange voices speaking Chinese piqued the interest of Michael McGuinness, a New York City police sergeant. One of the voices belonged to Foochow Paul Wong, who may have been supplying heroin to Fat Cat. In November, 1989, the Justice Department created C-6, a task force made up of a dozen New York City police detectives (including McGuinness) and an equal number of F.B.I. agents. By December, C-6 had connected Paul Wong with the Green Dragons.

Mike McGuinness steered the Green Dragons case to an assistant U.S. Attorney in Brooklyn named Catherine Palmer. Nicknamed the Dragon Lady, because of her success in prosecuting Asian heroin cases, Palmer is petite, athletic, perky, and quite fearless. She has come close to being the only federal prosecutor killed in the line of duty. On January 29, 1990, a package arrived at her office containing a briefcase, which she had been expecting as a belated Christmas gift from her parents. Palmer would have opened the case immediately except that the return address was unfamiliar. A D.E.A. agent and a police detective slowly lifted the lid, and inside they found a fully loaded sawed-off .22-calibre rifle with a string around the trigger. Last July, David Kwong, a D.E.A. informant who had previously lost his job because Palmer had exposed him as a liar, was convicted of attempted murder. After the attempt, Palmer complained loudly that United States marshals assigned to guard her were getting in her way. The Green Dragons could not have asked for a more stubborn prosecutor.

In five years of operation, the Green Dragons had become contemptuous of American law enforcement, and not without reason. Throughout its spree of murder and racketeering, the gang had faced only state cases, most of which had ended in acquittal or in relatively light sentences. The federal government was far better equipped to attack the structure of a criminal enterprise. The hallmark of an F.B.I. investigation is electronic eavesdropping—a costly and labor-intensive procedure, but very often a gangbuster. By August of 1990, C-6 had court approval to listen in on four Green Dragon phones, including a cellular model. Over the next four months, six Asian members of the task force monitored hundreds of conversations, in Cantonese, Mandarin, Fukienese, Vietnamese, and, occasionally, English. Besides gathering evidence to be used one day in court, C-6 learned of crimes still in the planning stage. The trick now was to prevent them without prematurely exposing the investigation.

On September 7, 1990, the C-6 task force drew on a combination of wiretaps and physical surveillance to thwart the robbery of a private house in Yorktown Heights. The house belonged to Chen I. Chung's granduncle—a graphic illustration that gang loyalty came before family. Two police detectives, George Annarella and Richard Arbacas, tailed the robbers to the house. (This was a chore, Annarella recalls. "The Green Dragons drove with no regard to traffic laws. They would cut across three lanes at eighty miles per hour.") Alerted by C-6, Yorktown police set up a roadblock and stopped the gang's car as it left the crime scene. Police found two handguns in the car's air vent, a sock stuffed with ammunition, and a baseball bat on the floorboard. They also found a bag of jewelry and $25,554 in cash. Three Green Dragons were taken into custody.

The next day, C-6 agents listened with amusement to a conversation between Chen I. Chung and his cousin Allen Lin, who had tipped off the *dai lo* that their granduncle was sitting on a pile of money.

"Mother! Damn!" I. Chung said. "It was going all right. It was going fine, and all of a sudden the police showed up! . . . We were just waiting to split up the money. . . . Mother! Right now, I'm really having a headache."

CHEN I. CHUNG had ordered the Yorktown robbery because of the need to replenish the Green Dragons' legal-defense fund. The gang was tens of thousands of dollars in debt to the law firm of Arthur Mass, and was too broke to hire a new attorney. A number of Green Dragons sat in jail awaiting trial for various state offenses, and none

CROSSED PATHS

Chagall Meets Toscanini

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of them placed much faith in court-appointed lawyers. For the moment, I. Chung was particularly worried about Alex Wong, who had been arrested the previous year, at age seventeen, for gun possession, and incarcerated in the juvenile wing at Riker's Island. Alex not only had a hearing coming up on the gun charge but was now a suspect in the double murder he had committed—the shooting at the Tien Chau restaurant of Mon Hsiung Ting and Anthony Gallivan.

Carol Huang, the woman with whom Alex had made eye contact during the shootout, was proving to be a first-class nuisance. First, she described him in remarkably accurate detail to a police sketch artist. Then she identified his picture in a photo spread. Then she picked him out of a lineup at the Fifth Precinct, in Chinatown. Alex did not care for this at all. He could handle three years on the gun charge if need be, but not twenty-five-to-life in a state murder case. On a wiretap he was overheard to say, "The most important thing is, after getting out, I could be still in my twenties, or even my thirties would be fine. Motherfuck!— Just don't let me be in the *forties!*"

On August 18, 1990, it became clear to what lengths the Green Dragons would go to prevent Alex Wong from suffering this fate. Alex was speaking to Sonny Wong by prison phone.

"Everything, everything, is Carol this and Carol that," Alex said.

"Yeah, man," Sonny said. "Motherfuck the bitch!"

"The bitch!"

"I'll see how long she'll last right now. . . . Just let her talk. Talk, talk, talk, talk. . . . And then the next time our lawyer will go up, and if she says something different, then she'll *drop dead*—you know what I'm saying?"

Alex knew precisely what Sonny was saying, and if C-6 had any doubts, the doubts were dispelled in a conversation on August 29th, in which Chen I. Chung told Alex, "That girl, it would be fine if she just disappears." On September 9th, Alex called I. Chung excitedly to tell him he had found "that female's address," accidentally disclosed in some legal papers. According to trial testimony, I. Chung then instructed Sonny to buy a street map, find Carol Huang, and have the gang kill her and burn her body. Fortunately, by this time Carol

"Today on 'Oprah' those who are still employed, and the people who love them."

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Huang had been warned by the police and had gone into hiding.

By November 5th, Alex Wong was feeling desperate and disillusioned. "Whether I am going to sit in jail or not, it all depends on you guys, man," he told Brian Chan.

"I know."

"You *know*. . . . Motherfuck, man! I might as well wash my ass to sit in jail."

"Fuck! Don't say that, man! Shit!"

"No, man. . . . Every time I talk to [Chen I. Chung], he says just wait a fucking while. Fuck his mother, I have waited for six months. No fucking thing has been done. . . . I'm going crazy, man! Freaking, man! . . . I don't even have a single fucking lawyer, you know? . . . It caused my father to have died already. . . . That's why I'm so incensed. . . . Lost a fucking father, man. For what, man? For nothing! . . . I have followed [I. Chung] for three years. . . . Loyalty, *fuck you.*"

At this point, Chen I. Chung might have begun to question his own loyalty to Foochow Paul, who was sitting pretty in hideouts in Fukien and Canton. But bugged conversations between the two revealed I. Chung to be as obsequious as ever. Paul's mind appeared to be on matters other than the financial worries of his gang. He considered investing two hundred thousand dollars to become a silent partner in a new *karaoke* club in Queens, but airily suggested that a member of the Green Dragons try to borrow bail money from his father. By November of 1990, Paul had been gone for four months, and there was no evidence that he had donated a cent of his enormous drug profits to his young followers.

"When are you coming back, Big Brother?" I. Chung asked.

"I am planning to come back."

"You are?"

"I won't delay any more."

He never returned.

Arthur Mass, the Green Dragons' alleged house counsel, was getting impatient.

"If I have the motherfucking money, O.K., I'll then give it to you guys, O.K.?" Sonny Wong told him. "If I don't have the motherfucking money, what do you want me to do, man?"

It was September 12, 1990, five days after the failed robbery in Yorktown Heights.

"Business is business," Mass said. "You know I know the problems. But when you make a statement that you're going to deliver and you don't, it hurts. . . . All right, get the word to your Big Brother."

The pace of restaurant extortions stepped up as the gang's finances sank deeper into the red. A grand opening was a welcome event, because it was traditional at such times for gangs to collect "lucky money"—a large inaugural extortion payment. Often the required sum was a multiple of a hundred and eight—a thousand and eighty dollars was common for a restaurant—because that was the number of Buddhist monks who defended the Shaolin monastery in the seventeenth century. The wiretaps were full of references to "the red envelope," traditional for gift-giving among Chinese and for the payment of lucky money. In September, there was much discussion of moon cakes, because September is the month of the Chinese Moon Festival, and the Green Dragons forced restaurants to buy twenty-dollar boxes of cakes for up to five hundred dollars apiece.

In October, Chen I. Chung and Sonny Wong went to Fa Chung Fa, a new night club on Queens Boulevard in Elmhurst, to talk to the manager about lucky money and weekly protection payments. She informed them that the club already had an arrangement with a Chinatown gang, the Ghost Shadows. A week later, the Green Dragons and the Ghost Shadows held a summit meeting at the club and came to terms: the Dragons would get a thousand and eighty dollars in lucky money, and each gang would collect three hundred dollars in weekly protection.

October was a month of diplomacy for Chen I. Chung. On the twenty-eighth, he sat down with the White

Tigers and forged a peace agreement. The gangs would not fight, provided everyone kept to his own turf—Elmhurst for the Dragons, Flushing for the Tigers. Privately, I. Chung remained wary of the Tigers, having read in a Chinese-language newspaper that the gang was encroaching upon Elmhurst. The next day, October 29th, I. Chung mentioned this story to Brother Lok of the Ghost Shadows.

"No, no such thing, silly!" he was assured.

"It was reported so big in the papers."

"The papers! They just say so, they don't know."

But on November 13th I. Chung's worst suspicions were confirmed. An underboss in the White Tigers, who was known as Lobster, had gone into the Fa Chung Fa and collected a red packet full of lucky money.

Over the next five days, Brian Chan, acting as I. Chung's spokesman, had several heated discussions about this breach of contract with Chris Chin, the *dai lo* of the White Tigers, and Chin's brother Ah Kin. Finally, Ah Kin admitted that Lobster had collected the red packet, but countered that the Green Dragons had broken the agreement first by allowing the Ghost Shadows to operate in Queens. "Queens is supposed to be split up between I. Chung and us," Ah Kin reminded Brian. "We said, 'Is this fucking for real?' How could Gum Pai"—a street boss in the Ghost Shadows—"extend his living from Chinatown to Queens?"

This was war. All that was needed was a formal declaration, and it came in the early-morning hours of November 19, 1990, in a telephone call between Chen I. Chung and an unidentified street boss of the White Tigers. Suddenly, leaders of two feared criminal enterprises showed themselves for what they were—boys.

"I'll kill you!" said the White Tiger. "You think the Green Dragons are so swell?"

"Fuck you!" said I. Chung.

"I'm going to kill your entire family, O.K.? I know where you guys live. . . ."

"I fuck your asshole. . . . I fuck your mother's asshole. . . ."

"Green Dragons!"

"What about Green Dragons?"

"Green Dragons are useless!"

"Then you come out!"

"Come out!"

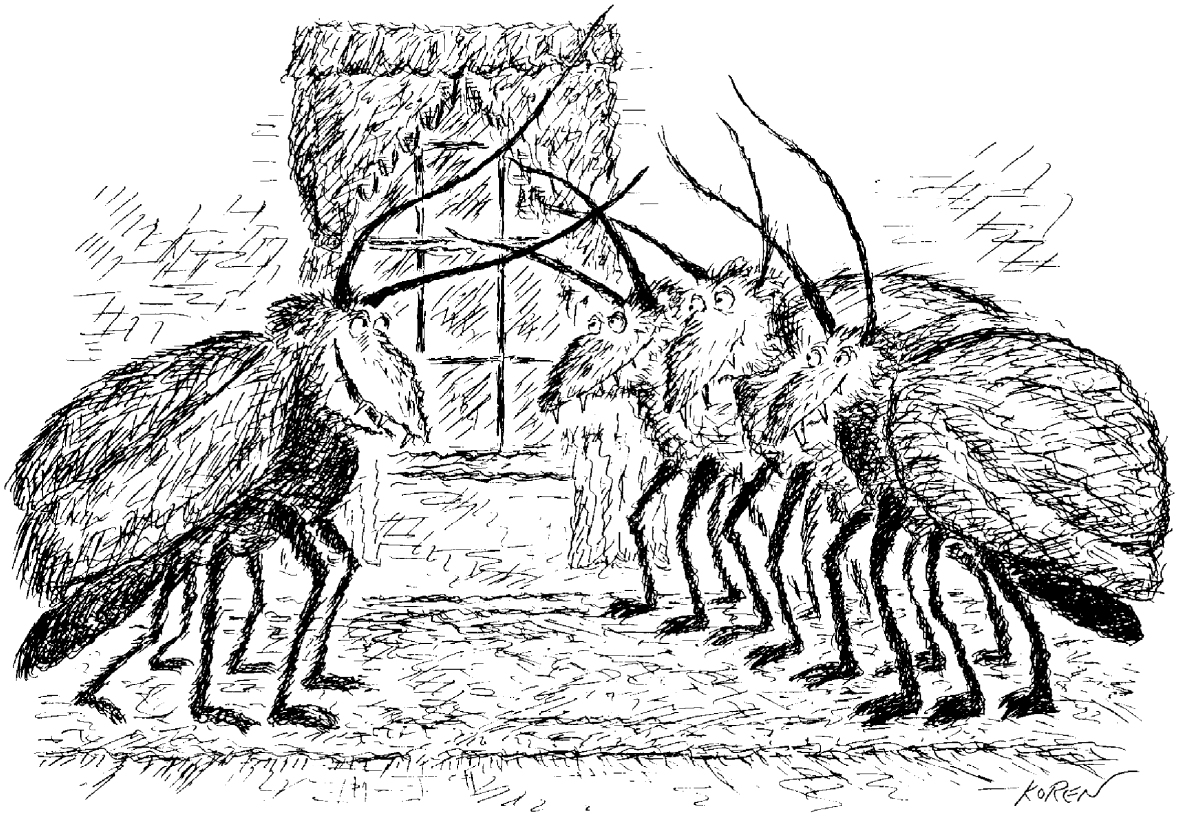
"Ha!"

It was agreed: the gangs would face off at 3 P.M. that day, at a record store on Northern Boulevard. The Green Dragons, however, never showed up, for as they set out to rumble the White Tigers Chen I. Chung and the top members of his gang were placed under arrest.

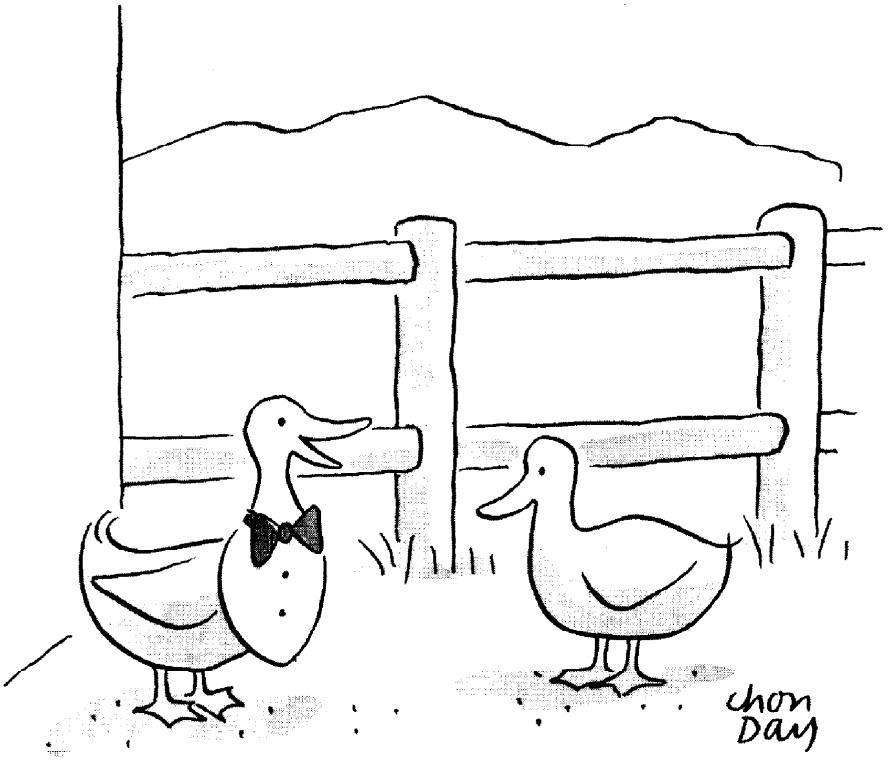
THE government had not wanted to collar the gang suspects quite so soon. More than enough evidence had been gathered to dismantle the Green Dragons, but the big boss, Paul Wong, was still at large, and there was no extradition treaty between China and the United States. Chen I. Chung's explosive parley with the White Tiger boss left the Feds little choice. If the suspects were not apprehended, they would probably kill or be killed.

On the day of the arrests, the surveillance team followed several gang members from Linda's Beauty Salon to the gang apartment run by Roger Kwok, in the basement of the house on Ithaca Street. New York City police, F.B.I. agents, and SWAT officers armed with M-16s ("dressed in their Ninja suits," one cop recalls) surrounded the house. About a dozen gang members, some of them armed, emerged and headed for two cars. All were arrested without a shot being fired. Sonny Wong attempted to flee through the back door but was stopped by a rifle-wielding officer on the roof.

The next day, police searched Chen I. Chung's apartment in Woodhaven. They found fifteen weapons, including an Uzi machine pistol hidden on top of a ceiling tile, and a bulletproof vest between I. Chung's bed and nightstand. (Police also found a calendar on which I. Chung had marked off each week's extortions.) Guns were recovered from other gang apartments and cars. All in all, the police collected an arsenal of thirty-one weapons—more than enough



"It's a perfect day to reorganize those closets!"



"It's a ducky dickey."

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to fill an evidence cart at the trial, for the awed inspection of the jury.

The police had located the firearms without much difficulty, because someone had tipped them off to where they should look. That person was a suspect who had been persuaded to "flip"—become a government informant—on the first night of his arrest. The informant was Sonny Wong.

It appeared to have been Sonny's destiny all along. His gang brothers had always suspected him of being weak. At F.B.I. headquarters, Sonny was separated from his colleagues and interrogated by William Murnane and James Hughes, of the N.Y.P.D., and by Peter Blum, of Nassau County. Sonny began to cry. Within a few hours, the officers had extracted a signed confession.

Five months later, Pete Blum bagged another prize. Not long after the murders of Tina Sham and Tommy Mach, one of the killers, Aleck Yim, had quit the gang, because, he later explained, "I wasn't making money." He had gone to Florida for a time, and then returned in April, 1991, to the streets of New York, where Blum and another detective arrested him. Blum was able to persuade Yim that the government could prove he had helped kill Sham and Mach, and that it would be best for him to confess. Yim pleaded guilty to murder and agreed to testify at the forthcoming trial of the Green Dragons.

Meanwhile, Sonny Wong, like his gang brothers, was thrown into the Metropolitan Correctional Center, but segregated on the eleventh floor. (Sonny had agreed to plead guilty to one count apiece of assault, kidnapping, and extortion.) The Green Dragons remained in detention, awaiting trial. Somehow, by the spring of '91 Chen I. Chung had learned that his former right-hand man had copped out.

On June 4, 1991, the F.B.I. monitored a phone call placed by Chen I. Chung from the M.C.C. to Foochow Paul, in China. Though Paul Wong once again promised to "be there" for the young men who had followed him with love and reverence, it was clear that he had callously written them off. I. Chung, however, continued to kowtow to his leader.

"I'm just worried about the one on the eleventh floor," I. Chung said.

"Who?" Paul asked.

"Gu Yu Chai!" (This was Sonny Wong's Cantonese nickname. It meant Playboy.)

"Gu Yu Chai," Paul repeated. "I am still looking for his family members, you understand."

The government took alarmed note of that.

"I'm telling you, you can fight this case," Paul said.

"Mmm-hmm."

"Just in case . . . ten years. When you come out, I'll be still there. . . ."

"I know, Dai Lo. . . ."

"I'll have a plan. . . ."

"Hey, Dai Lo, here we aren't thinking about anything. That is to say, since you have no problem, then all is fine. . . ."

"My head has become swollen with problems!" Paul said. "You know my situation."

"I know."

THE trial of the Green Dragons opened on February 18, 1992. It was held on the second floor of the federal courthouse in Brooklyn Heights. Cathy Palmer was joined by two co-prosecutors, Loretta Lynch and Margaret Giordano. On the sixth floor, government lawyers were prosecuting the boss and seven members of Born To Kill. The news media ignored both cases in favor of a trial on the fourth floor, that of the Mafia boss John Gotti.

If the media underestimated the Green Dragons case, so did the nine defendants: Chen I. Chung, Tony (Big Nose) Tran, Brian Chan, Roger Kwok, Alex Wong, Joseph Wang, Steven Ng, Jay Cheng, and Danny Ngo. This was a federal RICO case, and the penalties were severe. Murder in aid of racketeering carries a mandatory sentence of life without parole. In the past, mandatory life had been handed out to the likes of Fat Tony Salerno and other aging mafiosi. The Green Dragon defendants ranged in age from eighteen (Roger Kwok) to twenty-three (Chen I. Chung). Yet the defendants remained very much a gang, arrogant and invincible—laughing and smirking to a degree almost never seen in federal court. Perhaps they still believed that Foochow Paul would swoop down and rescue them—even though Legal Aid, and not Foochow Paul, had provided their lawyers.

On February 20th, Loretta Lynch called to the stand Charlie Lo, the man whose apartment had been robbed and whose wife had been raped. (Since rape

is not considered a racketeering act, the crime was not charged and was never mentioned in open court.) Within moments, Cathy Palmer was on her feet, complaining to the judge that Big Nose was giving Lo the finger. After Lo testified, Palmer fished out of a wastebasket a graphic drawing of a nude made by Chen I. Chung. It became a court exhibit. The atmosphere of the trial grew steadily more tense after that.

On February 25th, Carol Huang identified Alex Wong as the young man who had shot and killed two people at the Tien Chau restaurant. Under questioning by Loretta Lynch, Christine Gallivan described to a stunned courtroom how her husband, Anthony, had died in her arms.

On February 26th, the government displayed large, graphic photographs of the dead bodies of Tina Sham and Tommy Mach. During a break, as the defendants marched out, Big Nose stopped at the government table to glance admiringly at a picture of his handiwork. Then he locked eyes with Tommy's brother Steven, in the courtroom as a spectator. Cathy Palmer recalls, "He goes 'Hee-hee! Hee-hee! Hee-hee!' as if to say, 'Yeah, we killed them—and we enjoyed it.' "

On February 27th, the government called Yip Ming Lee, the only worker at the Crown Palace who consented to testify. Lee was shaking so hard he had to grip the witness stand. That morning, as he had walked toward the courthouse, a blue sedan pulled up and a young Chinese man opened the door. "Hey, kid," he warned Lee in Cantonese. "Be careful of what you say. Be fucking careful."

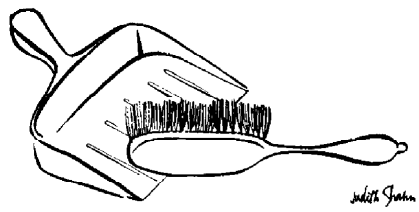
On March 4th, the government called Sonny Wong. He testified for more than eight days. In authenticating the wiretaps, Sonny severely damaged the defense. On March 12th, as the Green Dragons left the courtroom during a break, Big Nose turned to Sonny and hissed, "Watch yourself!" Under his breath, I. Chung added, "Scum!"

On April 9th, after three and a half days of deliberation, the (anonymous) jury found all the defendants guilty on virtually every count in the indictment. Last month, Judge Reena Raggi sentenced all the defendants. Chen I. Chung got nine concurrent life terms, with no possibility of parole. Six others got life sentences with no parole: Big Nose, Brian Chan, Roger Kwok, Alex Wong, Joseph Wang, and Jay Cheng. The two gang members who testified, Sonny Wong and Aleck Yim, are yet to be sentenced. The Green Dragons were effectively put out of business.

SHORTLY after the verdicts were handed down, Chen I. Chung agreed to be interviewed. Wearing a brown prison jumpsuit and white Avia sneakers, he was led into the visitors' room on Five North of the M.C.C. He had gained weight in jail. A jade Buddha hung from a gold chain around his neck. He had a hint of a mustache, some hairs on his chin, and a hole in his left earlobe where he had once sported a gold loop. The edges of a tiger tattoo were visible on his left arm. His thumbnails and left little-finger nail were dramatically long and pointed, Fu Manchu style. Unable to get Q-Tips in prison, he said, he had grown his nails to clean out his ears. He was in a bad mood.

After twenty months of prison, I. Chung's English was a bit improved but still subpar. He had learned enough to converse with John Gotti at the M.C.C., and said they had come to an agreement: "The law is dirty, man." I. Chung had nothing but contempt for Cathy Palmer, the federal prosecutor, whom he referred to, inaccurately, as "the D.A." "I don't know why she hate me a lot," he said. "I didn't do wrong." The pornographic sketch he had made in court was meant to be Palmer, he said. "I nothing to do. And they not fair, this court. What I listen for? So I draw, draw, draw, draw, draw that D.A."

He reserved his deepest scorn, however, for Sonny Wong. At the mention of Sonny's name, he nearly spat. To hear I. Chung tell it, it was Sonny who murdered Tina Sham and Tommy Mach. "We went to have tea lunch that day," he began, switching back and forth between Mandarin and English. "After we finished tea lunch, someone noticed Tina. Sonny Wong leaned over and said, 'Remember this girl? In the jail for nothing, two year. Wo wo wo wo wo.' I say, 'Forget about it.' He say, 'You kill that Tina Sham. Take a gun, shoot her in the chest.' And I say, 'Don't do bad thing, O.K.? Don't do it.' After we saw them leave, all of us went to the parking lot. Then I looked around and said to Sonny, 'What are you doing?' And he said, 'I'm taking them to a place.' "



I. Chung did admit that there were those who believed he was responsible for the murders, including Tina Sham's ex-boyfriend in the gang. "Johnny Walker, he come out of jail. And then he calls up my house, and we got a meeting, you know? Come on and go eat. Korean restaurant. And then Walker, he was sighing, 'Ayyy!' He had become numb. I said, 'You know, this is fate. She was killed; there was nothing we could do to prevent it. Destiny, man.' "

Was he prepared to spend the rest of his life in prison? "I can't do it," he said. "I feel that I might commit suicide. I might hang myself. Nobody could take it. Nobody could say, ha ha ha—happy! Who could happy? Come on. I only born in this world twenty-three year." Wasn't it clear by now that Paul Wong had abandoned him? I. Chung shrugged, and said, "Who am I to him?" Did he have any words for Sonny Wong? He did: "Where is your conscience?"

THROUGHOUT the trial, there had been no sign of any defendant's parent or close relative in the courtroom. The shame was too great to bear, particularly in the Asian culture. However, Joseph Young, the uncle and guardian of Brian Chan, sent the judge an ambitious document he had prepared. A computer consultant, Young methodically assembled and captioned a series of photographs of his nephew, tracing his development from infancy. He wanted to show that Brian was a "kind-hearted, outgoing and loving child" who could be "rectified" and "not be a scum of the society," he wrote. But the document only heightens the enigma of Brian Chan. In a snapshot from the summer of 1986, he is happily holding a monkey at Sea World, in Florida. In a government photograph taken after his arrest, only four years later, he is utterly transformed—with two large, menacing eagles tattooed on his chest, and cold, scary eyes.

On being reached by phone, Young

said he was still puzzled by how it happened that Brian had turned so bad. Young had lived in the United Kingdom for over twenty years, and spoke with a clipped British accent. He was more eager to talk about Brian's brother, Perry, who was working for a financial company and studying for his M.B.A.

"He's doing B-plus average while working full time," Young said proudly. "Last year, he took thirteen credits, which is a tremendous effort. This year, he took, I think, nine or ten. He never stopped studying all year round. He listens to me, whereas the younger one is not trying to listen. And then got into trouble—sort of the ultimate trouble that one could ever get into. In American society, being so liberal and so free, children will abuse the family rule, and leave the house, even though the regulations stipulate they should not. Because I am not a direct parent, there's a certain limit to what I can do. And, fortunately, one of them I salvaged completely." Young allowed himself a satisfied little laugh. "I'm happy already."

ROBERT SHAM moved to Virginia for a year after his daughter's murder, but now he works at a Korean night club in Flushing, playing the drums in a band from nine-thirty at night to three or four in the morning. He gets to take one-hour breaks while drunken Koreans sing *karaoke*. Robert is dating a Korean woman who works at the bar. To enter the night club, one passes through an airport-style metal detector—to prevent gang members from walking in with their guns—and climbs a flight of stairs. The club is enormous, with disco balls and klieg lights; smoke billows from the dance floor. Robert is the only Chinese in the band, which plays pop standards like "Feelings" and the love theme from "The Godfather," along with hit Korean tunes. Now forty-five, Robert wears his hair slicked back and tied behind in a pony tail. There is an earring in his left ear. He wears a white tuxedo shirt and black pants—the club uniform.

On the way up the stairs, Robert's niece Dorothy warns, "He looks depression and skinny and he lost a lot of weight, and his girlfriend told me he was drunk all the time." Robert does seem depressed. A few weeks earlier, he went down to Chinatown to install a picture of Tina at a Buddhist temple on Mott Street, and the previous day he had gone to visit the tomb containing her ashes at a cemetery in New Jersey. His son Trini, now out of jail (and, in the view of the parole board, thoroughly rehabilitated), joined him.

"She always next to me, I feel like she always there," Robert says of his daughter. "When I play sad song, especially American song, forget about it. I'm the best. I love sad song, for Tina, my daughter. Sad song remind me. I love her too much. When I see her body, I hit the wall—*pow!* My hand was hurt. Because I know the Buddha punish me, for my drug business—what happen to my daughter, my son. And I pay for it, too. I believe that Tina died because maybe she take all my bad luck away. I believe that. She took all my suffer away. But I feel like no hope. I got a good dream, recording. But what I fight for? I fight for my family, but she gone."

THE mood at the Mach residence is equally sombre. Steven continues to live there, with his parents and his wife. Near the dining-room table is a shrine to his brother—a small wooden cabinet upon which stands a framed photograph of Tommy, wearing a tuxedo. In front of the photograph is a brass box containing his ashes. Next to these are fresh flowers and fruit, and electric candles. The shelves hold an assortment of Tommy's clothing and other possessions, including a remote-control model Porsche, skin-care products, sunglasses, and the wings Tommy earned when he got his F.A.A. certification. On top of the cabinet is a plate with some food.

"That's dim sum we had this morning, so we put some there," Steven says. "A few hours later, we just throw them out. It's a way to express our respect. Every morning, before I go to work I drink a glass of orange juice, so I'll pour him a glass. I'll burn incense for him, I'll tell him I'm going to work. I know this is like useless, it sound kind of crazy, too, but it make me feel better that I don't leave him out, because we always eat dinner together when he was alive. A lot

CONVERGENCES

MAGRITTE *STANDARD TIME*

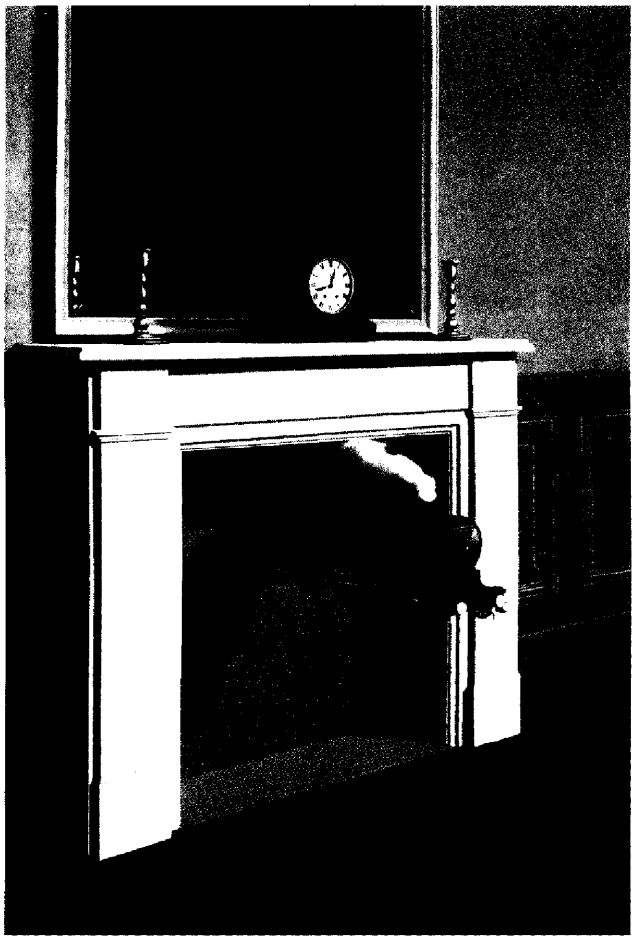
IN olden days, time was true. Noon occurred in every village at the very moment that the sun reached its zenith over the courthouse steeple. Trains—in particular, transcontinental rail travel—changed all that. In the era before time zones, passengers on coast-to-coast trips might well have had to jimmy their watches dozens of times, adjusting to the separate temporal reality of each locality through which they travelled. (Schedules were similarly scrambled; New York City's noon was Buffalo's 11:40.) For years, people puzzled over these mysteries and muddled through the confusion—what did it mean, for instance, to say that two events happened at the same time in two different locations?—until, in 1884, an international conference finally resolved the problem by decreeing a unified system of standardized time zones.

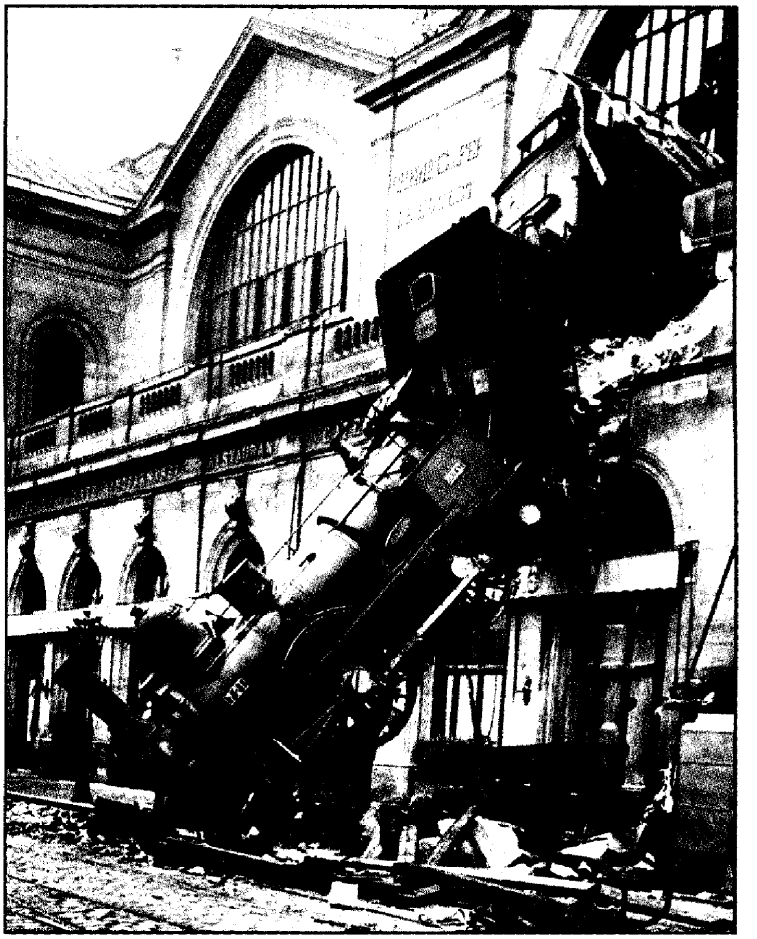
Is it any wonder that a genius, born in 1879 and growing up in a world grappling with these issues, would go on to formulate a theory of relativity which deployed trains as one of the principal motifs in its exploration of simultaneity? ("Lightning has struck the rails on our railway embankment at two places *A* and *B* far distant from each other. . . .") And is it any wonder that, a generation later, a leading Surrealist painter would have recourse to the same train motif in his 1938 painting "Time Transfixed"?

But what of *this* coincidence: René Magritte was born in 1898 in Lessines, Belgium. The train pictured in the photograph on the right overshot the Gare Montparnasse, in Paris, on October 22, 1895. Surely no relation. Except that it was Magritte himself who gave us to understand that everything is relative and everything is simultaneous.

Next week, his marvellous show at the Metropolitan will be leaving the station, bound for Houston and Chicago.

—LAWRENCE WESCHLER





of times, if I go out for dinner, or anything, if I forget to tell him, I feel really guilty."

Steven's mind keeps returning to October 2, 1977, the night his family took to the sea to escape Vietnam. "That night the sea was really choppy," Steven recalls. "Every time our tiny boat go through a wave, it slam down, and the noise it creates is horrifying. Tommy and my little sister were huddled under my mom's arm. And Tommy said, 'Mom, I'm really scared. If this boat is not going to hold and we fall into the ocean, are we all gonna die?' At that time, Tommy was ten years old; I was thirteen. My mom said to him, 'Don't worry, son. If anything happen, we all good swimmers. We'll hold on to you, and we'll all be safe.'

"We went through all that, right? And when we live in Vietnam it was a war-torn country. We survive all that, and we came to America, supposedly a safe haven for us, and this is where Tommy got killed. That's something I can never swallow. People say America is a land of opportunity, a land for the dreamers. I have that dream before, I have that feeling, too. And now I have to say America is not a land of opportunity, it is more a land of opportunists. Because those gangsters, they come here, they just terrorize people, and do anything they want. They have not only terminated a young person's life, and shattered his dreams—Tommy has a bright future and all that—but for the family, we have to suffer, and we have to suffer forever."

THE families of Tina Sham and Tommy Mach no longer speak to each other. "They mad at us. Maybe we mad at them," Dorothy Chan says. "You can see on their face they don't like us—especially Steven." The last time an attempt was made to communicate was at Tommy's cremation. "I go with Robert, he wants to go, we try to pay some respect," Beatrice remembers. "But they weren't talking to us, they weren't even look at us. The mother even using her eyes like this. Then we sit for a while, and then we go out. I know the parents is very mad and sad. I don't blame them. Maybe they think the cause is because of Tina. You know Chinese, they always want to blame. But it isn't fair."

Steven: "The thing that kind of bugs me—I don't know whether I should say it—but when we first find out that Tommy was missing, my sister call Tina's cousin. And the first thing they said was: Was Tommy a gangster? My sister said, No, no, he's not anything like that. We didn't even ask the same question for them. Because it's inconceivable for us to think Tommy would date an ex-gang girl. See, I know that Tina is also one of the victims, and I'm not trying to blame anyone, it's not her fault. But I don't think Tommy knows who Tina really is. Because if Tommy knows Tina's background, he would never go out with her. He's not going to do something crazy like that. So the biggest mystery for us is we never know whether Tommy knows why he is killed. Nobody will ever know. Only between them two." ♦