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Angry Super Professor

by

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ANGRY SUPER PROFESSOR

by

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Thesis

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-- INTRODUCTION--

Inspirations

I'm a screenwriter, I'm a professor, and I'm also Chinese. As a Chinese screenwriter and professor who teaches screenwriting in China but went to universities in the United States to study the movie making style of Hollywood my goal has always been to write a movie that would entertain both Chinese and American moviegoers.

Oddly, my childhood dream was not always to become a screenwriter, but to be a paleontologist or biologist, believing I could someday bring dinosaurs back to life. The reason why I had this dream was intrinsically tied to a blockbuster movie, Spielberg's *Jurassic Park*. Sadly I wasn't doing very well in my biology classes; so I eventually gave up on that dream. But fate is quite an interesting thing, now as a screenwriter, I'm still working on making the impossible, possible. Not biologically, but imaginatively through my pen, I mean keyboard to be more accurate. I rarely use a pen anymore.

Let's go back to the topic of how I got inspired to write this screenplay, *The Angry Professor*. As I mentioned, I want to write a movie that would be appealing for both American and Chinese audiences, but I also hope this movie can bring meaningful thoughts that might inspire or encourage the audience. For a Chinese audience, today's commercial movies often lack good thoughts, and the so-called "art" movies are lacking in the entertaining area. In other words, extremely boring. I always believed a really excellent movie should be a combination of both entertaining content and thoughtful meanings, like many successful Hollywood products, for example, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Titanic*, and *Forrest Gump*... even comedies like *21 Jump Street* or *Bruce Almighty*. These kinds of great movies really excite the Chinese audience and lift their movie-watching experience to the next level. For the American audience, they want to see the subjects about foreign cultures, but there aren't too many American productions that really depict those cultures accurately. As a Chinese person, I believe I'm capable of writing a

qualified Hollywood-style screenplay with a more accurate and refreshing perspective on Chinese culture.

My biggest advantage is that I have experience with both American and Chinese moviegoers' tastes. This is why I decided to write a story that happens in China with easily understandable content that is more in line with the human-nature of things, while following the Hollywood-style structure—the “Blake Snyder Beat Sheet” and the “Character triangle”.

One other important thing is that I need to estimate the sale-potential of this script or the feasibility to make it happen because I always believe only after the script is made into the movie, can it be called complete. I'm already in the industry; I had sold a feature already, and am being hired to write a feature comedy for two A-list Chinese actors. Since I have the connection and resources to make it happen, then why not? My first task is to decide the potential genre of this coming script. I'm very good at action-adventure or fantasy type ones, but it would be a little risky to write such blockbusters because the budget would be huge and challenging. The horror movie is always a hot pick in the United States, but it might face some censorship difficulty in China. Art movies would narrow the potential audience, which doesn't really fit my movie philosophy—I want to pass my idea through the movie I write to as many people as possible. A detective movie would need me to build a case with a lot of logic. It's possible, but I have never written a very successful detective script before... What about comedy? The budget doesn't need to be very high, and many audiences love watching comedy, plus, I don't really need to build an extremely sophisticated world or case... and besides, I always have had a passion for comedy, I know it's really hard for just one writer to write a “keep-making-people-laugh” comedy but I still decided to give it a try, because one of my goals is to write a movie for Stephen Chow.

After I decided to write a comedy, I also had to consider a very important issue though, inasmuch as the tastes of comedies of American and Chinese are a little different. I researched

many comedies that had good box-office performance in both the US and China and I found that a comedy that combines with either an action/superhero or romantic stories have a better chance to gain more box-office. I'm a big fan of both action/superhero movie and romantic comedy. The Marvel movies, Nolan's *Batman* series, the romantic ones like *You've Got Mail*, *When Harry Met Sally* are all the movies I love. Also, Stephen Chow's *Kung Fu Hustle* is another great example that has all these elements, action/superhero, romance, and comedy, and it's shockingly popular in both countries. Stephen Chow had said in an interview that Bruce Lee was his idol, and to be a Kung Fu master was his dream, also, the set, the location, and the story of *Kung Fu Hustle* were all inspired by Stephen Chow's experience growing up in Hong Kong. So I guess it would be a good idea to write something that I'm familiar with and also related to something that I really want to do but hard in real life.

I'm a professor, so I believe I'm very familiar with a young professor's life. But there are so many things I really want to do but might never have a chance to; it's really hard to make a choice... That is until one day I found several of my students plagiarized in their papers, I failed them but they were trying to find excuses and told me "everyone does it." What the heck?! I thought. I always hated the moral decay of people in our society, I hate corruption, I hate the ones who aren't honest, and I hate the ones who do uncouth things like illegally parking and asshole driving, spit and throw garbage around, jump the queue and making noises... If I had power, I would kick their asses! When I think about such things, suddenly, the idea of this movie burst out! A young righteous professor gets superpowers so that he can punish the decay of morals among people, and I decided to make him irritable as his flaw. Also, the professor just uses his power to punish the people who are causing the moral decay in order to make the world a better place, sometimes they need a righteous hero to guide them, just like Superman, therefore, I set the "need" of my character to "realize the power of guiding other people is more important than punishment".

With the character triangle to be settled, I began to work on the story. One important thing I have to consider in the first place was to make it capable of passing the Chinese censorship. My protagonist will have the superpower in this screenplay, but Chinese censorship rarely allow anything supernatural to happen in the modern world, I can't write about having any gods or having someone be granted superpower, and then I thought about doing aliens. There might not be any god in our world, but there could be aliens, who have powers like the gods, and they can easily grant human superpower, and the humans may even be created by them. I think it's totally reasonable and scientific, and would be allowed to pass censorship. I created two aliens who look like Jesus and Buddha (just for fun) who grants superpowers to our protagonist. The reason why they give him power is that they are very disappointed with the human race that they created seeing the corruption and moral decay of the human race. They want to eliminate their horrible creation, but still, want to give the human a final last chance, and they put this chance as a test in our protagonist's hands, to see if he can guide the others to be good.

The main story was clear, and as I mentioned, romantic comedy always does well in both countries, thus, I decided to put a love story in it as the B story. My professor Bob Shayne and I had talked about this as well, in a very strong non-romance story, some romantic plots always add more flavor to the script and lift the story and the theme into the next level.

Anyway, I finally got the chance to write the "fade in" and begin the real scriptwriting process, and I really enjoyed creating stupid jokes for the story, since this is an absurd comedy. After endless revision and discussion with my professor, the script *Angry Super Professor* finally came out. It is still not fully finished, I need to make a Chinese version because I'm going to pitch it for a famous Chinese comedian, please wish me luck!

--Chapter 1--

The Creative Process

Title: Angry Super Professor

LOGLINE

A righteous but jaded professor is given super powers by morality-seeking aliens, but little does he know that if he doesn't use his power to prove that humans aren't all bad, the human race will be eliminated.

CHARACTER TRIANGLE

Want: To punish corrupt people

Flaw: Irritable/Jaded

Need: Knows guiding others is more important than just punish them

TREATMENT/BEAT SHEET

Opening Image

A series of corrupted or immoral actions are shown on a big screen in dramatic ways, and two funny-looking aliens (looks like funny Buddha and Jesus) who created the human beings are watching the screen. This image indicates to us that this movie is a comedy and will have supernatural aspects.

Set-up

The two aliens feel extremely disappointed toward humanity and decide to find a smart and righteous person to give super powers to as a test. Their test is: to see if this person can guide humanity to do good things, and if this person fails, they will eliminate the human race.

TIAN, a young male professor in an art university critiques the papers by his students. The way he judges them indicates that he is an extremely righteous person (this is also the "save the cat" moment), but also shows that he has a bad temper.

Theme Stated

After the discovery of plagiarized paper, Tian punishes his student, and we know the theme of this movie is that “if we want to make this world a better place, people have to be moral”, and it also hints the sublimed version of the theme “Guidance is probably more important and useful than just punishing the morally deficient people”, which will be shown in the end.

Set-up (Continues)

The two aliens search for the right person in a bank, government building, and hospital... but they can't find anyone who matches their righteousness requirement. They begin to search in Metro Art University, where the corrupted president CAI is having a ceremony for himself. From how Tian reacts to CAI we are certain that Tian hates the corrupt people; and the two aliens take notice. They begin to follow Tian, trying to study him a bit more. They are also a bit concerned about Tian's bad temper, since Tian appears really angry when he finds an illegally parked luxury car blocking his car. This luxury car belongs to WONG, who is the nephew of Cai and the head of the security department at the university.

Catalyst

At a cross-walk, one asshole driver tries to outrun the pedestrians, Tian tries to get him to stop, but the car hits him... The aliens are afraid they will lose this ideal, righteous person, so they save him, give him super powers, and make him the “chosen-one”.

Debate

Tian wakes from the car-crash, but he doesn't know what just happened because the time of the whole world appears stopped. Suddenly, time unfreezes and, Tian doesn't know that he is the one controlling time and he believes that he's gone crazy. He even teleports (also his power, he just doesn't know how to control them at this point) to the female dressing room of a Yoga studio unexpectedly, where he encounters YEE (the leading lady of this movie), a troublesome college girl who is trying to take nude photos of other women for money. When Yee sees Tian,

she screams, making Tian look like the pervert. He then gets his ass kicked by the other women in the Yoga studio. In this moment, he accidentally stops the time again and gets away. Tian becomes even more confused. Back at his apartment, he dreams about a superhero that he admires and, he accidentally teleports to the big screen of the city square where the trailer of this superhero movie is playing. When he realizes that he just teleported again, he sees two bad guys trying to rape a girl in a backstreet.

Break into Two

At this critical moment, Tian begins to realize what has happened to him, and he accepts that he might have super powers. He tries to use his power, and he succeeds by freezing time (even though there is some delay when he wants to use his power)! He saves the girl and punishes the bad guys! He is now sure he has super powers and decides to use them to purify the corrupted society he lives in.

B STORY

At this point we will also learn a bit more about Yee, who has some financial trouble, is almost going to sell her honesty for money. The B story will be the relationship and story between Yee and Tian.

FUN AND GAMES

There will be some fun clips about Tian begins to practice his powers: freezing time, teleportation. With each attempt he improves his skill. This is when he begins to use his power to punish some different kinds of dramatically funny bad-guys. He even smashes Wong's illegally parked luxury car. At the same time, Wong sells students cheating devices for the CET 4 English test, and Yee agrees to provide the answers for money. But Tian catches Yee while she is providing the answers. Yee begs Tian to let her go this time, but Tian insists that he must report her, since "one has to be responsible for what he/she has done". Yee might get expelled. She has no choice but to ask Wong to help her. Tian sees that Wong picks her up, and he

follows them to a fancy hotel. Wong, however, brings his uncle Cai, the corrupted president of the university to help Yee. Cai says he would only help Yee if she agrees to be his affair. Yee refuses, but Cai drugs her and tries to rape her. Yee struggles and tries to escape through the window.

Midpoint

At this critical moment, Tian, who has been secretly watching the situation in the hotel suite's bathroom can't stand anymore; he freezes the time and runs to them. When he gets to the scene, his power is a little delayed and, Yee has already fallen. He jumps out the window, grabs her and prepares for impact. This is a low-point (or false defeat) of the script.

Bad Guys Close In

Before Tian and Yee are about to hit the ground, Tian teleports them to the city square, but his back is injured and Yee still can't move because of the drugs. Now that he's rescued her, he has no choice but to tell Yee about his super power. Despite her shock, Yee agrees to keep this secret, and thanks Tian for saving her from Cai. She tells him that she regrets that she sold her morality for money. Apparently, there is some chemistry happening between Tian and Yee. Tian plans to punish the corrupt president Cai.

Tian uses his power sneaks into Cai's office. He not only records Cai taking bribes and, he also finds a secret room of Cai where he holds crazy "sex parties". He sends this scandalous information to an online news company, and Cai's immoral behaviors are exposed on the internet.

All is Lost

A prosecutor and several police arrest Cai because of the evidence of his corrupted actions. It seems Tian successfully punished Cai, since the "Midpoint" of this script is a low-point, the "All is Lost" would be a relatively high-point, a false victory.

Dark Night of the Soul

Yee wants to thank Tian for saving her from Cai, and asks him out for a dinner. Meanwhile, someone in a powerful position lets Cai out of jail.

On Cai's way back to home, he and his men happen to see Tian is having dinner with Yee. They realize Tian must relate to the scandal video and other weird incidents that had impacted them. They follow Tian, and find out Tian is on a "date" with Yee.

While at dinner, Yee kisses Tian! Cai and his men get a photo and leave. Apparently Tian and Yee have feelings toward each other; they decided not to act on it because of their teacher-student relationship. However, Tian sends Yee back to campus, freezes time and kisses her (she doesn't know).

Soon, the photo about Tian and Yee kiss floods the Internet and all the students begin to condemn him for having an affair with a student. Tian is called to the president's office. To his surprise, Cai is back! Tian loses his control and tries to use his power stop everyone.

Break into Three

The aliens come back to check how Tian is doing, and unfortunately they witness this bad situation, and decide to terminate the human race. Tian keeps using his power, and the whole campus starts to shake—as if he's summoning an earthquake. Yee comes and inspires Tian: he needs to guide the others, not just punish them with power (the theme sublimed).

Finale

When Tian wakes, he meets the two aliens and learns the reason why he has super powers. He also learns that because of what he has done, the aliens have decided to terminate the human race, and create a big LIFE-BALL (looks like a mini sun) which absorbs the human souls from the whole world, and then they leave Tian. It seems it's too late to stop the aliens, however, Yee inspires Tian again, it's time for him to be a real hero and save the human race.

Tian now knows the importance of guiding others instead of punishing them; he comes up with a strategy to stop the aliens.

Tian and Yee make a video explaining everything to the world. Tian uses his powers to steal a spacesuit and tries to teleport to the aliens' place in the outer space. To his surprise, the aliens are not in the universe now; they are actually watching Tian's video which is playing on the big screen in the city square. Unfortunately, Tian's explanation video didn't move any other human beings to be moral and the termination process continues. Tian—with no options—remembers the kiss between Yee and him and how it had made his power useless toward Yee. He gets an idea and kisses the aliens when they are not paying attention. This kiss makes the aliens' power lose balance. Tian takes this advantage and uses his own body to try to block the LIFE BALL's power. But this imbalanced power is too much for a human body, it explodes, and the explosion rips Tian's body into countless pieces of light. However, each of these pieces conveys a little of Tian's righteousness and they fly back to the dead people, and they miraculously come back to life! Tian's righteous spirits enter them, too! This selfless action moves the two aliens, and they use their technology to bring Tian back to life, and send him back to Yee. They also show the image about Tian sacrificing himself to save the others on the big screen in the city square. This time the other people are truly moved.

Final Image

A series of images that are totally opposite from what we saw at the beginning, show that this is a changed, and better world.

--Chapter 2--

The Academic Essay

How to write a comedic screenplay that may be appealing for both Chinese and American Market

Abstract:

Today, the Chinese market has become more and more important for American movies, and many Hollywood productions earn major profits from China. The interesting thing is, however, the movies with much comedic content that succeed in Hollywood usually won't do that well in China. Also, Chinese comedies rarely have box-office success in North America. This paper will discuss the possibility writing a comedic screenplay that may amuse both the American and Chinese audiences.

China now has become a very important market for Hollywood movies, in the year of 2017, many American movies earned large profits from the Chinese market. Here are the top five:

Rank	Title	CNY	USD (approximate)
1	The Fate of the Furious 8	2.67 billion	400 million
2	Transformers: The Last Knight	1.66 billion	250 million
3	Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales	1.17 billion	185 million
4	Kong: Skull Island	1.16 billion	180 million
5	Coco	1.15 billion	177 million

(cbooo.cn).

The similarity these movies that succeeded in Chinese market share is that they were all Hollywood blockbusters. They all follow the Blake Snyder's beat sheet, also, their protagonists all have clear goals/wants, have obvious flaws, and they finally realize their needs at the end of the movie and grow emotionally. One interesting fact is, however, in these five moves, only one of them contains comedy as critical content, and this movie is *Coco*, which is animated.

If one takes a more careful look at the box-office list in China in the year of 2017, the only other American film besides *Coco* with much comedy that reached 1 billion CNY is *Despicable Me 3*, which is also animated. The other blockbusters with much comedic content that had the highest box-office in China are all Marvel's movies: *Spider-Man: Homecoming* and *Thor: Ragnarok* got about 750 million CNY, *The Guardians of Galaxy Vol.2*, about 690 million CNY (cbooo.cn).

The funny thing is, however, compared with the box-office data in North America in the year of 2017, the movies with much comedic content mentioned in the previous paragraphs, i.e. *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2*, *Spider-Man: Homecoming*, *Thor: Ragnarok* and *Coco* had gained way more box-office in North America than the top 5 Chinese box-winner American

movies. The only exception is *The Fate of the Furious* which ranked a little higher than *Coco* (Boxofficemojo.com). Also, the new comedy blockbuster *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* got about 390 million USD in North America (Boxofficemojo.com), but only 500 million CNY, about 80 million USD in China (cbooo.cn)

According to such records, it seems the tastes for comedies of Chinese audiences and American audiences are somewhat different. This situation also can be seen from the movies of Stephen Chow, who is a master of mo lei tau¹ comedy (Yi 127), and is also considered the “King of Comedy” in China (Srinivas 289). *The Mermaid* 2016, a fantasy comedy directed by Stephen Chow made the gross of 3.4 billion CNY, about 560 million USD, and it also broke the Chinese box-office record at its time (cbooo.cn). In the 21st century, the six movies directed/acted by Stephen Chow gained more than 1 billion USD box-office together just in China; and four of them won the yearly box-office championship in China (cbooo.cn).

Also, before the year 2,000, that is before any Stephen Chow’s movies were being released in theatres in the mainland of China, when Stephen Chow movies only focused on the Hong Kung market, Stephen Chow had already been named the Hong Kong box-office leader together with Jackie Chan and Chow Yun Fat. They are called “two Chows and one Chan”. The year 1992 was even called “the year of Stephen Chow”, because the protagonists of that year’s top five box-office movies in Hong Kong were all played by Stephen Chow! (Paihangbang). “Made by Stephen Chow” means a guaranteed box-office win in the Chinese market. Oddly, Stephen Chow’s movies rarely gain very good box-office revenue in North America. The movies that each gained more than 200 million USD in China: *The Mermaid*, *Journey to the West: Conquering the Demons*, *Journey to the West: Demon Chapter* had never even reached 10 million dollars in North America according to Rottentomatoes.com.

¹ The name of a kind of nonsense humor originally from Hong Kong, and it is now associated with popular Chinese culture.

One major reason could be these movies never had major release in the US (Boxofficemojo.com). But there is one exception, one Stephen Chow movies did gain more than 10 million USD in North America, and it was *Kung Fu Hustle*. Its box office in the US was 17 million USD. It also gained 170 million CNY, about 25 million USD in China, and was the champion of the box-office in China in the year of 2004 (Mtime.com) It also broke the movie box-office record in all of Asia (Eagan). Also, many American audiences watched *Kung Fu Hustle* on DVD. Till the year 2007, the DVD sale volume exceeded 40 million USD (zhouxingchi.info). According to such data, *Kung Fu Hustle* would be a great example to discuss what kind of comedic movie may amuse both American and Chinese audiences.

Kung Fu Hustle has a very clear protagonist – Sing, who is a boastful but actually cowardly street hooligan. He has a clear external goal: to become a member of the Ax Gang, a very powerful yet ferocious gang. But his need or internal goal is “maintain world peace”, or in other words, punish evil people and protect the good ones. His external skills include bluffing and lock picking, and his internal skill is he is a “one out of million Kung Fu genius”. In Hollywood productions, protagonists are required to have a “character arc” and some special skill (screenplay.today). The character of Sing matches Hollywood’s character standard perfectly. This could be a reason that helps the American audience to understand the protagonist more, so that they might like this movie more.

Also it follows Blake Snyder’s beat sheet almost perfectly. Here is the beat sheet of *Kung Fu Hustle*:

Opening Image (1 min): Gator Gang crushes the police station, while no one in the police station dares to resist. It states that this is a world in which good doesn’t overcome evil.

Set-up (1-15 min): A more violent and fierce gang, the AX GANG kills the leader of Gator Gang and becomes the biggest mafia in the city, and peace is hard to find in the city except in an extremely poor suburb.

Theme Stated (7-8 min): The poor but happy and peaceful suburb “Pig & Dragon’s village’s” residents’ lives hint the theme of the importance of peace.

Set-up (continues) (1-15 min): SING is a boastful hooligan who pretends that he is a member of Ax gang and tries to extort the poor people in “Pig & Dragon Village” with his outwardly strong but inwardly weak sidekick BONE. But no one is afraid of them.

Catalyst (16 min): The conflict between Sing and the residents of “Pig and Dragon Village” brings the real Ax Gang!

Debate (16-26 min): The Ax Gang gets ass kicked by three secret Kung Fu masters who live in the “Pig & Dragon Village”. The Ax Gang escapes but they imprison Sing and Bone for pretending to be Ax Gang members.

Break into Two (26 min): Sing tells the boss of the Ax Gang that he really wants to join them, the boss CHEN gives him a test: to kill a person.

B Story (starts at 29 min): Sing tells Bone his childhood story about why he chose to become a gangster... FLASHBACK: He wanted to be a righteous person, who protects world peace, and he even used his savings for college to buy a Kung Fu book instead. One day when he tries to save a little mute girl with the Kung Fu he learned from the book, his Kung Fu doesn’t work and the others who were bullying the girl also humiliate him. At this moment, the story between Sing and this mute girl begins. BACK TO: He sees her again after so many years. She is selling ice cream now.

Fun and Games (30-53): Sing decides to Kill the fat landlady Bao in order to fulfill Chen’s test, but when he comes to the “Pig & Dragon Village”, Bao is about to kick the three secret Kung Fu masters out because she thinks they may bring in outer violence. When they argue, Sing and Bone try to kill Bao but fail in absurdly funny ways, and have to run away. Also, Ax Gang hires two top assassins to kill all the people in “Pig & Dragon Village”, and they defeat the three Kung Fu masters that hide in “Pig & Dragon Village”. But to everyone’s surprise, the

landlord couple of the “Pig & Dragon Village” are the real top Kung Fu masters. They defeat the assassins and tell the Ax Gang to never come back again.

Mid-Point (53): Sing and Bone have an intense argument because they fail to kill Bao. Sing’s own friend Bone leaves, he becomes a totally loser.

Bad Guys close in (53- 67): Sing gives up on hope, and he even abandons the last good parts in his heart. He robs the grown-up mute girl’s ice-cream stand... Also, at this time, unexpectedly, the boss of Ax Gang Chen sends his men to Sing and tells him he is admitted to the Ax Gang. Boss Chen gives Sing a big assignment, to free the legendary Kung Fu Master/assassin the “Evil God” to take revenge on the “Pig & Dragon Village” people.

All is lost (68 min): Sing brings the “Evil God” to the Ax Gang, and Evil God shows his power by catching a bullet with his bare hand. It seems no righteous person will be able to stop him.

Dark Night of the Soul (68- 75): The landlord couple comes trying to end Ax Gang, but Evil God stops and almost really kick their asses. But by using strategies, the landlord couple sacrifices their move and finds a way to lock Evil God’s move, they are tie in a balance. Sing is too weak to do anything except just watch the fight.

Break into Three (75-77): Boss Chen gives Sing a hammer ask him to kill the landlord couple, however, Sing remembers the mute girl, and the righteous feeling comes back in his heart. He hits Evil God instead. Evil God appears extremely angry and breaks the lock, and almost beats Sing to death. Fortunately, the Landlord couple saves Sing and run away.

Finale (78- 92): Evil God kills Boss Chen and becomes the new leader of Ax Gang. He leads them to the “Pig and Dragon Village”, tries to eliminate them all this time. But the dying Sing’s body changed abruptly and makes him a one out of million Kung Fu genius. He finally beats Evil God, both physically and mentally, and spares his life.

Final Image (92-95): Sing and his sidekick Bone open a candy shop, also the mute girl comes to their shop, a fantasy image shows they become how they look like when they first meet, and kid Sing leads Kid girl into the candy shop.

Blake Snyder's Beat Sheet is probably one of the most important screenwriting guides in the US. Most Hollywood productions are using this beat sheet. The American audience, therefore, would probably feel comfortable to follow the story of *Kung Fu Hustle*, since its story line just flows just like Hollywood productions.

But since many other Stephen Chow's movies use the same structure and same character arc, why they didn't make much money in North American is a worthy discussion. Actually, the article "The Theoretic Meaning of the Dialogues in Stephen Chow's Movies (《会话含义理论在周星驰电影对白中的运用》)", written by three English professors in China which is published in *Science & Technology Information* in the year 2008, talked about this issue. They claim that language is a vital issue in Stephan Chow's movies, especially for his mo lei tau style comedy. There are many phrases or words that are impossible to translate accurately. The literal translation won't help the audience to understand such jokes as they are not familiar with the colloquial Chinese culture (167, 195). Different from many other Stephen Chow movies, *Kung Fu hustle* has more action jokes. The jokes are totally action-packed, which makes it easier to the audience from all over the world to easily understand (Dumas 69).

Another important reason why *Kung Fu Hustle* won the American audience's heart over other Stephen Chow movies is that it's a Kung Fu action movie (Eagan). Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is the Chinese movie box-office record holder in North America; it grossed 128 million USD (Boxofficemojo.com). Here is the list of the top 10 Chinese movies that gain most box-office in North America in the light of the data from *sina.com* a leading Chinese comprehensive website.

Title	Box-office (million, USD)	Year
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	128	2001
Hero	53.71	2004
Fearless	24.63	2006
Kung Fu Hustle	17.11	2005
Iron Monkey	14.69	2001
House of Flying Daggers	11.05	2004
Eat Drink Man Woman	7.29	1994
The Wedding Banquet	6.92	1993
The Grand Master	6.59	2013
Curse of the Golden Flower	6.56	2006

(k.sina.com)

As one can see, more than half of them are Kung Fu movies. In the light of such data, together with what had been stated from *Kung Fu Hustle*, it might be a good idea to add some Kung Fu elements into a Chinese comedic movie, if this movie has ambitious to make more profits in North American Market.

Detective Chinatown 2 might be another great example to discuss this topic, but from the opposite perspective. It is also a comedy blockbuster. It was released in China at 12th Feb 2018, and it has already had a gross of 3.4 billion CNY, about 500 million USD in China. Also, it was mostly filmed in the US, and has many American characters and English contents. Apparently this movie had ambitious for its American release. Tragically, it only got about 2 million USD

in North America (boxofficemojo.com). Also, its critic review on Rottentomatoes.com is only 50%, which is way lower than *Kung Fu Hustle*'s 90%.

If one takes a careful analysis, the story of *Detective Chinatown 2* also follows Blake Snyder's Beat Sheet. The only part that doesn't match perfectly is the theme stated part. The theme of this movie doesn't get carried out clearly.

About the "character arc", *Detective Chinatown 2* is more like a buddy-cop movie, so it has two leading characters, Qin Feng and Tang Ren. But how to clarify who is the no.1 protagonist is very hard. According to Blake Snyder, the character who grows most would be the protagonist. In this movie, Tang Ren grows more than Qin Feng; he changes from a selfish money-digger to a righteous person, while Qin Feng doesn't change much. But the funny fact is that Tang Ren's part or importance in this movie is way less than Qin Feng. Most of the puzzles and difficulties and even the final test are all solved by Qin Feng, which makes Qin Feng a clear protagonist, but the problem is that he doesn't grow that much.

Actually, there is another popular genre in Hollywood productions which the central character doesn't grow; it is called the traveling angel. According to the book *The Screenwriter's Bible* by David Trottier, the traveling angel is a perfect protagonist who doesn't need to grow up, instead this "angel" helps everyone else around him/her to grow up in the movie (47). But in *Detective Chinatown 2*, Tang Ren is the only person who obvious grows emotional, while Qin Feng is not the angel-character travel around and helping everyone else to grow up. Stated thus, this "hard-to-tell-the-protagonist" issue could be a reason that impacted this movie's performance in the US.

Also, another reason why *Detective Chinatown 2* was not successful in North America could be the language issue again, because it also has many mo lei tau jokes, too. Even though *Detective Chinatown 2* could be considered as a failure in American market, it exceeded the

performance of Detective Chinatown in, which had only about 470,000 USD gross in North America.

Now it might be a good time to take a look at the American comedy movies that had great box-office victory in Chinese Market. In the year of 2017, the movie that has comedic content as vital parts had gained most profits was *Coco*. In fact, Hollywood animations had always been doing very well in Chinese market since the *Lion King*. The interesting fact is, however, besides the animated movies, the only Hollywood movies that had much comedic contents grossed the box-office more than 200 CNY, about 30 million in Chinese market are all Marvel's super hero movies (cbooo.cn). This fact seemingly reflects that if an American comedy movie is not animated, it better have much action, perhaps some superhero contents in it to fit the taste of the Chinese audience.

Same reason as Stephen Chow's mo lei tou jokes are hard to understand for American audience. The cultural jokes from such popular movies in North America like the *Hangover* series, *Deadpool* which even has a superhero, and other comedy movies related to American high school lives like *Super Bad* or *21 Jump Street* are very hard to understand toward the Chinese audience as well. None of these movies are very-well known in China, according to an investigation the writer did in the university where he teaches screenwriting. So it might not to a good idea to use language or cultural joke as the vital comedic content if any comedy movie wants to attract both Chinese and American moviegoers.

Stated thus, if a comedic screenplay follows the Blake Snyder's beat sheet, has a protagonist with a clear "character arc", also, use more action-packed jokes instead verbal and cultural jokes, and add a bit more "Kung Fu" or "Super hero" contents in it, this movie may have more potential to be a box-office winner in both Chinese and American market.

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