

THE HANDOVER

A screenplay by

Chris Kyme
&
Richard Tunbridge

Copyright © 2008
by Chris Kyme & Richard Tunbridge

FADE IN

EXT. LOCKHART ROAD, WAN CHAI - NIGHT

The deserted "entertainment district" of Hong Kong Island. Two blocks of cheap hotels, bars and neon-lit strip clubs. Soon, the sun will be up. The few remaining places that haven't closed are either in the process of doing so, or soon will be.

A few Thai and Filipino PROSTITUTES wander the streets, hoping for one last date.

Occasionally, small groups of drunken EXPATRIATES stagger by. TWO POLICEMEN continue their rounds.

A MAN (CHRIS) appears on an almost-deserted street. He is alone and has just walked up from a basement disco. It is the end of a long night for him. He checks his bearings, turns and slowly walks... past Club Hawaii, Popeye's, Waikiki and Club San Francisco.

A MAMA-SAN tries to corral him in with offers of cheap beer and pretty girls. He looks at her, smiles, but continues on his way.

CUT TO

EXT. HENNESSEY ROAD, CAUSEWAY BAY - DAWN

The shopping district. Commercial buildings, some of which are clad in bamboo scaffolding. Restaurants. Light is just starting to hit the pavement. A street sweeper makes its way down a littered street. Trucks are making deliveries. Stacks of papers and magazines surround newspaper VENDORS, stocking their street-side stalls.

POLICE and a few ON-LOOKERS are standing out the front of an apartment building. The area is cordoned off. Someone has jumped off a building. An ambulance pulls up.

CHRIS walks through all this activity. Oblivious.

CUT TO

EXT. VICTORIA PARK – EARLY MORNING

Acres of gardens and recreational areas, in the middle of the city. Groups of OLD MEN and WOMEN are going through their Tai Chi rituals.

YOUNG ADULTS - some FOREIGNERS but mostly CHINESE - jog around the paths. And then there is CHRIS. The antithesis of health. Tired. Vacant. Dragging his feet a little as he makes his way... somewhere.

CUT TO

INT. LOBBY OF LARGE OFFICE TOWER – MORNING

A SECURITY GUARD eyes CHRIS as he enters a lift. The doors close on him.

FADE IN TITLE: TURNING CANTONESE

CUT TO

Elevator doors open. CHRIS exits and walks to the security panel beside two large, glass sliding doors. It takes him two or three attempts to enter the correct four-digit number. The doors slide open. He walks through the reception area of a large multinational advertising agency.

CUT TO

INT. CREATIVE DEPARTMENT - MORNING

CHRIS' journey continues, through a crowded, open-plan office. A labyrinth of partitions. There are little cartoon characters and action figures atop the low, cubicle walls.

CUT TO

OFFICE

CHRIS takes off his jacket. Throws it on a desk piled high with magazines, faxes and documents. A few open CD sleeves are scattered about. He takes a few steps - like they could be his last - toward a sofa, which lines the back wall. He falls onto it. And is asleep in seconds.

FADE TO BLACK

CEO
(off)

Chris? Chris!

FADE IN FROM BLACK

INT. OFFICE

CHRIS horizontal on couch, looks up at a CHINESE WOMAN (CEO), early forties. She stands above him, wearing a canary yellow Chanel twin-set.

CEO
Client's here. Where are the boards?

CHRIS
Um. Oh. Yeah.

CHRIS sits up. Pauses. Then stands and walks over to his desk.

CHRIS
Right. I've got them. Here. I'll be there in a minute.

CEO
Can I see them? I hear the review didn't too well yesterday.

CHRIS
It wasn't that bad. We made a few changes. Didn't finish until late. Don't worry. It'll be fine.

CEO doesn't say anything. CEO has her doubts and looks at CHRIS - intensely - before leaving.

CHRIS looks around his desk. At the floor. Into the corners. The boards are in here, somewhere.

CUT TO

INT. UPPER DECK OF LAMMA FERRY – MID-MORNING

CHRIS is looking out the window. Hong Kong Island recedes into the distance. He looks down at a small box of possessions. Some books. CDs. Videos (Taxi Driver, Dog Day Afternoon, The Italian Job). Magazines. A newspaper. Photos. A six inch figurine of The Lone Ranger. A framed award or two. He lifts his head and looks to the bow of the boat.

A small CHINESE BOY, 2-3 years old, stands up on the seat in front. And stares at CHRIS.

CUT TO

BOY

(in the female voice of the CEO)

What were you thinking?

CHRIS blinks, slowly. Unsure if this surreal moment is really happening.

BOY

That account was worth \$100 million. They came to us because they wanted to change their image. To be seen as a modern, international airline.

CHRIS blinks again.

BOY

“Air China. We’ll take you to heaven, and back”?

CHRIS looks away from the BOY and contemplates the view.

CUT TO

EXT. LAMMA ISLAND FERRY PIER - NOON

CHRIS is walking away from the ferry, box of possessions under one arm. He feels something tugging at his pant leg. He stops, turns, sees a young CHINESE WOMAN, smiling at him. And the BOY who was “talking” to him on the boat.

The BOY is holding up a copy of the English newspaper we had seen beside CHRIS earlier. The BOY smiles. CHRIS takes it from him.

The BOY and his MOTHER walk off.

CHRIS watches them walk down the pier. The BOY turns to look at CHRIS one last time.

CHRIS glances down at the paper in his hand and reads the headline:

BANDITS ESCAPE WITH \$100 MILLION

CHRIS looks down the pier. It is empty. He puts the paper in his box. Stands there a moment before walking off.

CUT TO

EXT. PROMENADE OF AL FRESCO CHINESE SEAFOOD RESTAURANTS

CHRIS walks through the restaurants.

Local STAFF are setting up tables. MIDDLE-AGED MEN and WOMEN are putting fish and prawns and sea snails and other fruits of the sea into large glass aquariums. As CHRIS walks by, they greet him in a familiar fashion. In Cantonese.

MAN #1

Joh sahn!

WOMAN #1

Lay ho!

CHRIS smiles. He loves this type of thing.

CHRIS

Joh sahn! Gay ho-ah!

CUT TO

EXT. SECOND FLOOR BALCONY OF SEAFRONT VILLA – AFTERNOON

CHRIS is sitting at an Ikea table. There is a beer on it. And the newspaper. He stares across the bay at the power plant. Smoke is pluming from four of the five giant chimneystacks. He hears the front door open, but remains focused on the view.

GUY enters the apartment.

GUY

(off)

Richard?

CHRIS

Chris.

GUY arrives on the balcony. His is tall, thin and good looking, in tha effeminate way. He also looks like he didn't get much sleep last night either.

GUY

Hello mate. Where's Richard? (beat) What are you doing here? I thought you had some big pitch on.

CHRIS

I don't know where he is. Thought he went out with you last night. (beat) Pitch didn't go so well.

GUY sits down at the table. Lights a cigarette.

GUY

He was. Until about two. Then I went with a few of the guys into Tsim Sha Tsui. Hilarious. (beat) What happened at the presentation?

CHRIS

Client didn't like it.

GUY

Bastards. I hate it when that happens.

CHRIS

Vivian liked it even less.

GUY

She hates everything you do.

CHRIS

I know. That's probably why she fired me.

GUY

I hate it when she does that.

CHRIS

No, really. She did.

GUY

No way.

CHRIS

Uh-huh.

GUY

You want another beer?

CHRIS picks up the can of beer on the table. Shakes it to see how much is left.

CHRIS

Yeah.

GUY walks into the kitchen.

GUY

(off)

So what're you going to do?

CHRIS doesn't answer. He's still looking at the smoke stacks.

GUY returns. Opens a beer, gives it to CHRIS. Opens one for himself. Sits down. Drinks.

GUY

Anyone hiring at the moment?

CHRIS

I'm thinking of something different.

CHRIS looks at GUY, briefly, then returns to the view. He waves his beer at the smoke stacks

CHRIS

Have you noticed how only four of those chimneys work?
That one on the end there, it never does anything.

GUY

Yeah. I know. Feng shui. They really only needed four.
Except four is one of those "unlucky" numbers.

CHRIS

So they knocked up a fifth?

GUY

It keeps the island spirits happy. And might just bring a little good fortune to the neighborhood. You know what it's like.

CHRIS

(sarcastically)

Oh, I know. I mean, who wants an unlucky power plant, generating all that bad energy? Using its power for evil, instead of good. I can see it now. *Good-bye Llama Island. Hello Three Mile Island.* I had no idea you were a closet geomancer as well.

GUY

(adopts the voice of YODA)

Much have you to learn, young Skywalker. Feng shui, powerful ally it is. Yes, hmm. (returns to normal voice) Didn't Vivian paint her Beemer canary yellow because the guy said it would be luckier? Shit. You guys moved the whole office last year because of the reflection from the building across the street and the direction of the wind.

CHRIS

Yeah, well, I think that feng shui charlatan was blowing smoke up her arse. There was nothing but bad juju in there this morning.

GUY

So what're you going to do?

CHRIS

I've been thinking about something. But I'm going to need your help.

GUY

What?

CHRIS slides the newspaper across the table to GUY, who looks at it. GUY takes a drink from his beer. And looks across at CHRIS.

GUY

What? Be a journalist? I have problems putting together a coherent shopping list. Richard's the English teacher. Get him to give you a hand.

CHRIS

I don't want to be a journalist. Look at it.

GUY

(reading)

Bandits escape with \$100 million. (beat) What? You're going to catch them and claim the reward? Or do you just want to

ask them for a loan and start your own business? I'd be careful with those triads - the interest rates can kill you.

CHRIS

No. I know. Kind of.

GUY just looks at CHRIS. Blank.

GUY

You're going to team up with them? Join their gang? I'm not sure you have the qualifications or experience. Didn't you fail Basic Weapons Training in high school?

CHRIS

You're getting warmer. I'm thinking we should do a little job of our own.

GUY stares at CHRIS.

CHRIS

We should knock off a jewelry shop. You... me... and Richard.

GUY

(in disbelief)

Piss off.

CHRIS

Think about it. It's 1997. Our expiration date is up in June. We're going to need visa's to stay here then. I've lost my job. And it's not going to be so easy to get another. They've got this whole localization policy going and are starting to take it literally. Do you think your joint is going to sponsor you? It's not like there's a shortage of barman. And, no offense, but it's not like you've got any special skills that would justify a work visa.

GUY

I can think of a few people who might disagree with you on that point.

CHRIS

Sorry, but I don't think *can suck a golf ball through a garden hose* is going to swing it for you.

GUY

It's a little easier than pulling off a jewelry shop. And the police don't shoot at you while you're doing it.

CHRIS

No, they just shoot a load in your in the face when you've finished.

GUY

It's good for the skin.

CHRIS

(continuing his original line of thought)

Richard's going to find it hard, so to speak, as well. They're not exactly beating down his door, are they? Who goes to an Australian to learn English? As a language it's going to be right up there with Latin in a year or so anyway. Everyone's boning up on their Mandarin, to continue with your analogy. He can't even pay the rent now.

GUY

Chris-

CHRIS

We don't have enough money to go back to the UK. It's shit there anyhow. No jobs. No sun. Frumpy women. No fun. I tell you, this'll be easy. (holding up paper) These guys have been pulling jobs every month. The cops know who's doing it but they never catch them. It's like they're letting them get away with it. How hard can it be?

GUY smiles. He still half-thinks CHRIS is just yanking his chain. It's just one of those conversations. They've had hundreds of them.

GUY

Oh, yeah. Not hard at all. I mean, in a city of 6 million Chinese how hard is it going to be to track down three white guys running around with 250 metric tons of gaudy gold jewelry, a couple of jade Buddhas and 250 Rolex Seamasters in their pockets.

CHRIS

The police won't be looking for three *gweilos*.

GUY

Oh. And who will they be looking for? The three wise monkeys? Hear No Chinese, Speak No Chinese and Don't Look Like No Chinese? What are we going to do, smother ourselves in tanning lotion? Get creative with the eyeliner. Sorry, I saw them try that with Connery in *You Only Live Twice* and it wasn't very convincing. In fact, as much as I adore Connery, it looked ridiculous.

CHRIS

We'd wear disguises. Masks. Balaclavas. No one would recognize us.

GUY

But they'd hear us. Unless of course, you're planning to mime your way through a robbery. Which is always very intimidating, isn't it? "Look out! He's going to walk against the wind!" (he mimes the appropriate actions) "Do as he says or the man gets trapped behind the glass." "Nobody move. Or I'll climb the ladder."

CHRIS

We can speak Cantonese.

GUY

(mocking)

Can we? Oh. I'm sorry, I forgot. We can speak Cantonese. Well, that's everything taken care of then. (argumentative) I know you've mastered the *lay ho* and *joh sahn*, the *lang lui*, *sarm Carseebah* and can warble your way through some Karaoke Canto Pop, but we're not planning on holding up a knocking shop, are we? And me, well, I think I'll be a bit of a give-away. (affects stereotypical gay accent with lisp) Thick 'em up, thweetie. (returns to normal voice) And Richard will just sound, shit, well like Richard. Like Ned fucking Kelly. (affects typical Australian accent) G'day mate. Stick 'em arp. And no farny starf, orright. Bewdy.

CHRIS

We can learn. And besides, Richard won't have to speak. He'll be waiting in the car. He can drive.

GUY

Jesus. You're serious. Drive what? Or did Vivian give you a car as part of your golden handshake? That's some severance package you have there. Can I have one?

CHRIS

You're not touching my package, I've told you before. (beat) Don't worry. We'll find a car. Easy.

GUY

Look, I know Hong Kong's got more Mercs and Beemers and Rollers per head than anywhere else in the world, but that's not because every third name out of the hat wins one. It's because half the population can afford one. And we, in case you've forgotten, are the other half - The Sandwich Class of 1997.

CHRIS

Exactly. And the only way we'll get our hands on some decent dough is if we have a go at something like this. It'll be fun.

GUY

Fun?

CHRIS

Think of it as our contribution to this years Fringe Festival.

GUY

I'd rather not. Your previous efforts weren't exactly the toast of tinseltown. And I think we've got a little more to look forward to than a bad review if this one goes over like a lead balloon. The critics will crucify us. This idea isn't really a *fringe* idea. It's waaaay out there.

CHRIS

No it's not. Come on. We'll plan it. We've got heaps of time to practice; especially now I'm not working. All we have to

do is come up with a plan and learn our lines. Rehearse until we get it right. Anyone asks us what we're doing, and we'll tell them it's all part of an act. A show. A freelance project. Whatever. By the time they work out what's really going on, we'll be on a beach in Thailand.

GUY pauses. Looks intently at CHRIS.

GUY

No. Way.

CHRIS

You know you want to.

GUY

Even if I did, Ronnie Biggs, where are we going to learn the Chinese? Or, to be more specific, robber-speak? How many schools have Advanced Armed Hold-up on their curriculum?

CUT TO

INT. FAUX ENGLISH PUB - AFTERNOON

Local BUS DRIVERS and CONSTRUCTION WORKERS noisily play "liar dice" at tables in two of the corners.

A young CHINESE WAITRESS delivers pints of beer. She then makes her way across to a table where CHRIS is sitting with a plainclothes CHINESE DETECTIVE (ERIC).

CHRIS

When you back on duty?

ERIC

About an hour.

CHRIS looks up to the WAITRESS.

CHRIS

(speaking Cantonese, badly)

Lay ho, lang lui.

The WAITRESS giggles. ERIC shakes and lowers his head in mock embarrassment.

CHRIS

Leung gor, Carseebah, m'goi.

GIRL

Two Carsbur? Okay.

The WAITRESS giggles again and returns to the bar.

ERIC

Your Chinese still as bad as three year ago. Her English is better your Cantonese.

CHRIS

Oh, come on. It's not that bad. Not as bad as-

The WAITRESS returns with two pints of beer and places them on the table. When she speaks, it is an almost perfect imitation of CHRIS' rudimentary Cantonese.

GIRL

Leung gor, Carseebah.

WAITRESS giggles. And leaves.

CHRIS

Cheeky thing. (raising glass) Cheers. Anyway, Eric, been on any busts lately? Used any of those lines I gave you? (beat) *Up against the wall, motherfucker! Don't make me pop a cap in your cracker ass!*

ERIC

Not yet.

CHRIS

Why not? Come on. Try it. *Up against the wall motherfucker.*

ERIC

Don't be stupid.

CHRIS

Go on.

ERIC

(flatly)

Up again that wall, mother-fucker.

CHRIS

Put a bit more effort into it. Start using language like this and they'll make you Chief Of Police. (beat) *Or I'll pop a cap in your ass.*

ERIC

I'll pop caps, in your ass!

CHRIS

(seriously)

Cool. Keep working on it though. Try it on the guys at the station.

ERIC

Police don't say that kind of thing. We've trained by British, remember. Not Hollywood. We're much more polite. Don't want people to get too excited. It can cause trouble.

CHRIS

So what do people say then? How do these things *go down*?

ERIC

Go down?

CHRIS

Like in those big robberies lately. What happens?

ERIC

Well, we've never been *at* robbery. Always finished by the time we get there. They get away. But I've seen video.

CHRIS

Really? What video? Heat? Goodfellas? I should lend you Dog Day Afternoon. It's brilliant. You still have my copy of Thundebolt And Lightfoot, by the way. Don't make me send the cops around for it.

ERIC

Not Blockbuster video. Security video. From the shop. And bank.

CHRIS

Really? A copy of the robbery?

ERIC

Yes.

CHRIS

Can I see it?

ERIC

Maybe. Why the interest?

CHRIS

Oh, I'm doing some research for my show at the Fringe Festival this year. You remember the one I did last year.

ERIC

The Hidden Persuader. Yes. It was stupid.

CHRIS

Thank you for your incisive critique, Mister Tarantino.

ERIC

Taranto? That in Canada, is it?

CHRIS

That's Toronto. This is Tarantino. Quentin Tarantino. The director. Reservoir Dogs. The movie. Remember?

ERIC

What happen in that?

CHRIS

You know. Everyone is a colour. And that bloke bleeds to death. And there's that guy who doesn't give tips. The cop loses his car-

ERIC

How he lose his ear? It not stuck to his head?

CHRIS

Mr. White- (decides this is going nowhere) It doesn't matter. Anyway, this year, there's a bit where a couple of *gweilos* are planning a robbery. They disguise themselves and pretend to be Chinese, so the police think it's another gang.

ERIC

Chee-sin!

CHRIS

I was hoping you could help me. With what they say during the robbery. Write it down. Like a script. And, now that you mention it, that video would be just the thing. Make it more authentic.

ERIC

Maybe.

CHRIS

I'll put your name on the poster. You'll be famous.

ERIC drinks his beer. Thinks about it. Looks at CHRIS.

CHRIS

Go on. You know you want to.

ERIC laughs. Lights cigarette.

CHRIS

(coy)

Er-riiic...

ERIC

OK. But I got-

CHRIS

Show us your gun.

CUT TO

EXT. LAMMA APARTMENT BALCONY - LATE AFTERNOON

CHRIS and GUY are sitting at the table. Waiting.

CHRIS

Where is he?

GUY

I don't know. I told him to be here at three. He said he had a lesson in the morning, an errand or something to do, and then he'd be straight home. How's the script going?

CHRIS

What? Oh. Fine. Eric put it all down. He even gave me a tape from one of the security cameras and everything. I was hoping to get a first rehearsal in here, before you go to work. Maybe we should just do it without-

There is a flurry of activity at the front door. RICHARD, a non-descript Australian character, bursts in. He drops his backpack on the living room table and hustles over to the balcony.

RICHARD

G'day. Sorry I'm late, I-

CHRIS

Where've you been?

RICHARD

Karate.

RICHARD strikes a cliché kung-fu pose. And stays in position while his two flatmates stare at him, in disbelief.

RICHARD

Hi-yah!

CHRIS

Karate?

RICHARD

Hai!

GUY

Since when?

RICHARD

Since today. First lesson.

CHRIS

Why?

RICHARD

To help me get into character.

CHRIS

For what?

RICHARD

For the robbery. If we're going to be Chinese we have to think Chinese. Move like Chinese. It'll give me insights into the culture.

GUY

You're the driver. The only thing you have to get *insight* is the fucking car.

CHRIS

Karate is Japanese. You should've learnt Kung Fu.