

"No One Ever Suspects The Chinese Guy"

by
Henry J. Mah

A story about a Chinese guy who is a serial killer, but no one suspects him, or wants to believe that it's him at all.

Henry J. Mah
henry@henryjmah.com

SMITH HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

We open with JOHNNY, late 30s, average guy, in the living room of an average family, pitching them on his life insurance company and the insurance plan. The average family is mother JANE, attractive, 32, father TOM, 35, blue collar, and two children, a boy CHAD, and a girl KARA, 5 and 4. In the background on a table we see a fishbowl with two goldfish swimming around. We then focus on the reactions of each the family members as he goes over his plan. At the end of his pitch there is a pause, the family look at each other considering.

TOM

You know, it's a good plan, but we aren't interested right now.

JOHNNY

Why not? You just said yourself it's a good plan.

TOM

Oh, we like the plan all right, and we'll probably opt in.

JOHNNY

So then what's the problem?

TOM and JANE look at each other, with a "do you want to tell him, or should I" look. The kids look up wondering the same thing: which of the two parents will give him the news.

TOM

It's not a problem really, it's a good plan, but we aren't interested right now.

JOHNNY looks at the family with a puzzled expression.

JANE

The thing is we don't want to buy from you. We will get the plan from your company, but only if it's from another salesman.

JOHNNY

What? What's wrong with purchasing the insurance from me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

Well, we don't deal with chinks.
We prefer to buy from a white
person, if it's all the same to
you.

JOHNNY

(calmly)

I see.

TOM

No offence. I mean, it's nothing
personal.

JOHNNY

Hm.

JANE

Well, thank you for stopping by.
We'll keep your card and contact
your office in the morning.

TOM

Yes. You've been very helpful, and
your presentation was wonderful.
By the way, do we still get to keep
the gifts for the kids?

JOHNNY

Of course. Not a problem. In
fact, I have something for each of
you too.

TOM and JANE look at each other with surprise and delight.

TOM

Terrific. Bring it on.

JANE

Yes. That's wonderful.

JOHNNY pulls out a meat cleaver from his briefcase.

JANE (CONT'D)

Oh. Kitchen ware. I could use
some new kitchen ware.

CUT TO:

THE FAMILY'S HOUSE - DAY

We hear JANE screaming in horror. We hear TOM screaming in pain, we also hear the kids screaming. Then the screams one by one go silent.

CUT TO:

FAMILY HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

The family lay dead in a pool of blood, various limbs have been severed off and are lying strewn about the bodies. We hear the sound of footsteps upstairs. After a few beats we hear the sound of a dog yelp. Then we hear the sound of a cat screech. Then we hear the sound of a bird squawk. Then we hear a toilet flush.

FADE OUT

FADE INTO:

FAMILY HOUSE LIVING ROOM - ANOTHER DAY

It is a few days later, where we have a police investigation in progress. INSPECTOR DOBBS, 45, wearing a trench coat and fedora hat, is talking to OFFICER JOHNSON, 35, in full police uniform.

INSPECTOR DOBBS

Terrible. Just terrible. What would possess someone to do a thing like this?

OFFICER JOHNSON

Looks like the work of a psychotic mass murderer. A Charles Manson type if ever I saw one.

INSPECTOR DOBBS

It may have been a robbery gone wrong.

OFFICER JOHNSON

Really?

INSPECTOR DOBBS

Oh yeah. Probably what happened was he just finished robbing the place, and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INSPECTOR DOBBS(cont'd)

was just about to leave, when the family came home and surprised him. So, in order to not leave any witnesses, he kills them all.

OFFICER JOHNSON

Yeah. That sounds about right. I didn't know about the robbery.

INSPECTOR DOBBS

I have a nose for investigating. You gotta have been around for a while to pick up on these things.

All the police are casually looking over the crime scene, drinking coffee. A junior officer walks in with a dozen doughnuts, and begins to hand them out. The other officers react with mild delight, as they munch and go about their business.

CUT TO:

HAL & HAL'S HARDWARE STORE - NIGHT

JOHNNY is in a business store front, where it is after hours, the store is closed, and he is pitching his insurance plan to the business owners, HAL, 40s, balding, and HALMAN, also 40s. The business owners are sitting side by side, drinking whisky from the bottle they have stashed in the office.

They both look suitably impressed with the plan. As he highlights some of the perks of the plan, their eyes light up. They look at each other, and nod.

JOHNNY

So guys, what do you think?

HAL

Wow. That is the best insurance plan we've ever seen. You're the first person who really understands the needs of our business.

HALMAN

Yeah. Usually some jerk salesman will walk in and try to pawn off some generic covers all type of thing, that costs too much but provides too little, because we have very special needs, because of the nature of our business. It is, after all, a hardware store.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHNNY

I understand. I did detailed research on your business and your business trends. I felt that this plan, with some tweaking, would provide the best coverage and keep your premiums low.

HALMAN

You're really a wonderful salesman, but ...

JOHNNY

But what?

There is a long silence, as the two HALS look long at JOHNNY.

HAL

Well, you see, we ... um ... we don't really, you know ... we ...

HALMAN

We don't buy from coloreds of any kind.

JOHNNY

But you just said it's the best plan you've ever been offered. And you asked me to do the research for you, which I've graciously done, as part of the package. I don't understand.

HAL

Geez, it's a well known fact that you Chinese are really good at math, so I didn't want some white guy who barely passed it in high school, and probably only did so by cheating off you, to do that kind of research. The information and the numbers you came up with requires intelligence and resourcefulness.

HALMAN

Yeah. I cheated off you guys all the time. How do you think I got my bachelor of economics and marketing degree?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOHNNY

(calmly)

I see.

HAL

Yeah. We can take your quote, and shop it around to other insurance companies, and get them to compete with each other to come up with the best price.

JOHNNY

What if they don't come up with anything better?

HALMAN

We still have your card. We'll call your company and set up a sales appointment.

JOHNNY

Let me guess. With a white person.

HAL

Now you're catching on.

JOHNNY

Well, I certainly understand your position.

HALMAN

I'm glad you see things our way. I hope you don't think it's anything against you. You're a very good salesman, but you are Chinese.

JOHNNY

Yes, I know. (sigh) Well, before I go I have to give you the complimentary gift that comes with every sales presentation when you choose not to purchase with us.

HAL

That's a delightful surprise.

HALMAN

That wasn't told to us before. I'm certainly relieved that you're not taking this news so hard. Go ahead. Give it to us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HAL
Yes. Let us have it.

CUT TO:

HAL & HAL'S HARDWARE STORE - NIGHT

We hear screams of horror from the two HALS. They end.

CUT TO:

HAL & HAL'S HARDWARE STORE - NIGHT, LATER

It is later that evening, where we see the dangling legs of both the owners, pools of blood below them, and a couple of loose body parts strewn about. The same INSPECTOR DOBBS and OFFICER JOHNSON are on the scene, as another police investigation is in progress.

INSPECTOR DOBBS
Look at this. Same MO as the family. What's the pattern here? First this guy goes after a family, then a business? What's the connection?

OFFICER JOHNSON
I don't know, Chief. He's a slippery one, this Charles guy, whatever his name is.

INSPECTOR DOBBS
Maybe there's more than one of them. Maybe there's a group of them working together, like the Manson family, you know?

OFFICER JOHNSON
If they only went after other families, it could be a like a bad episode of family feud gone wrong, eh?

INSPECTOR DOBBS
Now's not the time to make jokes about it, Johnson. Doughnut?

OFFICER JOHNSON
Sure, chief. Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INSPECTOR DOBBS

Well, it's definitely the same guy, or guys, or family. What have we got so far?

OFFICER JOHNSON

Well, these two were hacked apart before being hung. He, or they, hung 'em with ropes taken from the shelf over there. And our junior officer says that one of the axes is missing.

INSPECTOR DOBBS

You might be onto something there.

I'll talk to the coroner and see what kind of axe was used to kill that family. In the mean time, dust for fingerprints.

On the counter is a sales brochure from YOU BET YOUR LIFE INSURANCE Company. OFFICER JOHNSON picks it up and examines it.

OFFICER JOHNSON

Hm. They should have taken the policy.

JOHNSON shrugs, then puts it down and continues his investigation.

CUT TO:

YOU BET YOUR LIFE INSURANCE SALES OFFICE - DAY

We move into the office, where we hear a television talking about the killings of the FAMILY and the HALS. We push in on the TV screen and see a reporter talking about the murders.

REPORTER

A family was brutally murdered in their home last night. It seems they were killed by some kind of hacking device. In a related incident, the owners of Hal & Hal's hardware store were also killed in the same manner. The police are investigating possible suspects.

On the TV are shown pictures of bearded white men, and low income families.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The TV drones on in the background as we pan over to the boardroom table where a sales meeting is in progress, and the other sales people are telling stories about their sales successes. Present are DAN, 50s, greying, wears glasses, the Manager of the group and the office. Also present are JEFFY, 40s, a Herb Tarlick clone, with loud suits and ties and the typical salesman attitude, and JUNE, 30s, attractive, brunette, a little vacuous, but friendly.

JEFFY

I sold \$100,000 in insurance this month. I almost didn't make it, but last night I signed a corporate deal that will get us not only their business insurance, but over time I'll be able to get personal life insurance for many of the top executives.

JUNE

I sold \$75,000 in insurance. I signed up 20 families this month all through referrals. One family referred me not only to their extended family, but to other families on their block. That was a major win.

DAN

That's great, June. Anyone else? Johnny? How's your month been?

JOHNNY

It's been a tough month for me. But I made \$50,000 this month. I couldn't close my last two calls, but the seven Chinese families I did sell to really bought big policies. They each had 7 kids to cover, and their grandparents too.

DAN

You only seem to do well with the Chinese families. When are you going to get out of that niche and sell mainstream?

JEFFY

Yeah. When are you going to break through? We're here to support you in any way we can.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JUNE

You gotta stop being so Chinese
about it, I think.

JOHNNY

What do you mean?

JUNE

What I mean is you only seem to get
business with the Chinese. Don't
you ever talk to, you know, other
people?

JOHNNY

Other people?

JUNE

Yeah. "Other people", you know?

JOHNNY

No. I don't know. Spell it out
for me.

JEFFY

Why won't you sell to white people?

DAN looks on, concerned yet caringly.

JOHNNY

I've been trying. But they don't
want to buy from me. One family
told me they don't want to buy from
a ... dare I say it ...

JUNE

What? You can say it. What?

JEFFY

Yes. Go ahead. We're here for
you.

DAN looks on, same expression.

JOHNNY

Well, they said the 'C' word. You
know.

JUNE

The 'C' word? I thought that only
applied to women.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JOHNNY

No. Not that 'C' word, the Asian
'C' word.

They all look at him, puzzled.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

(shouting)

'Chink'! They called me a 'Chink'!

There's a pause, then they all look on with instant recognition. "Oh. Right. That 'C' word." "Yeah. I see now." etc.

JOHNNY looks frustrated, and is a bit annoyed.

DAN

Well, you'll just have to rise above that. Don't take it personally. It probably wasn't meant at you anyway. They were probably referring to some bad past experience they've had with ... with Asians. Don't let it get you down. Let it go. You're bigger than that.

JUNE

Hey. Maybe you can handle it like how gays handle it.

They all look at JUNE like she's crazy.

JUNE (cont'd)

You know. How some of them are taking back the name 'faggot'.

DAN and JEFFY nod in agreement. JOHNNY is seething. But suddenly goes calm, and begins to reach into his briefcase.

JOHNNY

I think I understand.

DAN

Maybe it's your approach. Maybe it's your pitch.

JEFFY

Yeah. Maybe it's not what you say, but how you say it. How about some coaching?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JOHNNY

Coaching?

JUNE

Yeah. This is good. Give us your pitch, and we'll pretend to be clients that you're pitching to. At the end, we'll see if we want to buy from you or not, and this way we'll get to see what you do, and how to make it better.

DAN

Great idea. How about it, Johnny?

JOHNNY considers. Then looks up and nods in agreement as he replaces his hand back in the briefcase. We see the beginning of the pitch, then we fast forward to the end of the pitch. We see the three other sales people looking on with approval. They look at each other. And nod in agreement.

DAN (cont'd)

Yep. That was a great pitch. One of the best pitches I've seen.

JUNE

Wow. I'm sold ... but ...

JEFFY

Me too. But ...

Both JOHNNY and DAN look at them. Then DAN understands.

DAN

Right. Right. I understand. They're right, Johnny. You are a Chink, and I can certainly understand why they won't buy from you. Hm. Well, I guess keep selling to Chinese families.

JUNE

(supportively)

Do you know any other Asian languages? Maybe you could sell to the Japanese as well.

JEFFY

Or maybe even Korean, or Thai, or Vietnamese, you know? There's a whole other market right there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

They all nod in agreement. JOHNNY puts his head in his hands in frustration. But looks up calm as water.

JOHNNY

But that's not the end of the pitch.

JUNE

Oh. There's more?

JOHNNY

Yes. Oh yes. When they decide not to opt in I throw in a gift for their time.

DAN

Hey. That's a pretty good idea. I should have thought of that. You don't take it out of your entertainment budget do you?

JOHNNY

No. It's something that I've purchased personally.

He pulls out the meat cleaver from his briefcase.

JEFFY

Kitchen ware. That's a great idea. Can I borrow that?

JOHNNY

Sure. You can be the first to sample the wares.

CUT TO:

YOU BET YOUR LIFE INSURANCE SALES OFFICE - DAY

We hear screams of horror from inside and hacking noises.

CUT TO:

YOU BET YOUR LIFE INSURANCE LOBBY - DAY

INSPECTOR DOBBS and OFFICER JOHNSON are in the lobby area of YOU BET YOUR LIFE INSURANCE sales office, eating and discussing the crime scene inside the boardroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFICER JOHNSON

What a mess.

INSPECTOR DOBBS

Yeah. Body parts everywhere.

OFFICER JOHNSON

An office full of insurance salespeople all dead. Life insurance no less. The ultimate irony.

INSPECTOR DOBBS

What do we have so far?

OFFICER JOHNSON

Well, they were all hacked up, the same as the family and the two hardware guys. Other than that, we don't have any other leads. This guy sure has us stumped.

INSPECTOR DOBBS

Charlie and his family have been busy the last few days.

OFFICER JOHNSON

You said it.

OFFICER JOHNSON notices a sheet of paper on the seat between himself and INSPECTOR DOBBS.

OFFICER JOHNSON (cont'd)

What's this, Chief?

INSPECTOR DOBBS

It's an employee list.

OFFICER JOHNSON

There are four names on this list.

INSPECTOR DOBBS

Yeah. So?

OFFICER JOHNSON

There were only three bodies.

INSPECTOR DOBBS

Yeah. So?

JOHNSON looks long at DOBBS, as he continues to eat. DOBBS stops to look at JOHNSON with a "what?" expression.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OFFICER JOHNSON
Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

INSPECTOR DOBBS
About the dancing monkeys from
Czechoslovakia?

JOHNSON looks away, as DOBBS continues to eat. DOBBS then pauses in his repast, and has a sudden look of recognition. He turns to JOHNSON, who is looking annoyed.

INSPECTOR DOBBS (cont'd)
I'll just get the car.

CUT TO:

JOHNNY'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

We move down the hall, following the sound of hacking. JOHNNY is chopping up some meat. There is a ring at the door. He goes to answer, meat cleaver in hand, and INSPECTOR DOBBS and OFFICER JOHNSON are at the door.

INSPECTOR DOBBS
We're here to ask you some
questions about the murder of your
co-workers. May we come in?

JOHNNY
(tentatively)
Sure.

He indicates for them to enter, by pointing with the cleaver.

OFFICER JOHNSON looks around the hallway, and sees pictures and renderings of Asian mythological characters, some doing battle with each other, and some slaying dragons and other creatures. He is impressed. JOHNNY leads them to the living room, and seats them on the couch. He takes the big chair beside the fireplace, where we see a fire burning brightly, and a brand new axe.

INSPECTOR DOBBS
As you know some of your co-workers
were murdered yesterday.

OFFICER JOHNSON
Brutally murdered. With an axe or
some type of hacking device.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHNNY

Yes. I see.

JOHNNY is cleaning his cleaver while they talk. It gleams menacingly.

INSPECTOR DOBBS

Firstly, I want to say my condolences to you. I understand you were a very close knit group, and very supportive of each others' success.

OFFICER JOHNSON

Yeah. I bought some insurance from June last year. Best thing I could have done.

JOHNNY

Right. I remember. I gave you the quote on that. I'm glad you changed your mind. That was one of our best policies.

OFFICER JOHNSON

It was. I'm glad I opted in.

JOHNNY

So, why didn't you ...?

OFFICER JOHNSON

(embarrassed)

Uh, it's a long story ...

INSPECTOR DOBBS

Well, we're not here to get into past policies or anything. We want to catch this murderer or murderers.

JOHNNY

Murderers?

OFFICER JOHNSON

Yes. We think it may be a Manson family type of thing, you know? Not just one person, but a psychotic family?

JOHNNY

(in disbelief)

A psychotic family?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOHNNY throws up his hands in disbelief, as he waves the cleaver in anger.

INSPECTOR DOBBS

Have you seen any suspicious looking white men with beards or swastikas on their foreheads around the office? Any families with crazed twisted looks in their eyes?

JOHNNY

(darkly)

Well, other than our clients ...

This moment of levity causes the officers to laugh.

OFFICER JOHNSON

Seriously. We want to catch this person, or persons.

There is a long moment, as the officers look to JOHNNY for answers. He looks back at them, confused. He looks at the officers, at his cleaver, back to the officers. Finally, JOHNNY explodes.

JOHNNY

Look! It was me! Okay? I did it. I hacked them all up. Because they wouldn't buy from me. They wouldn't take the insurance policy from me because I'm Chinese. So I showed them. I showed them all right. I'm the one. I did it. I killed them. I killed them all!

INSPECTOR DOBBS and OFFICER JOHNSON look at each other, in disbelief and skepticism.

INSPECTOR DOBBS

(shaking his head)

Look. We're serious. You couldn't have done it. This sicko psycho took out your co-workers. I find it hard to believe that an office of sales people wouldn't want to buy insurance from each other.

OFFICER JOHNSON

Even if you are a ... I mean, You're Chinese. Chinese people aren't mass murderers.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

OFFICER JOHNSON(cont'd)

You're nice, polite and eager to please type of people. There's no way you could have done it.

INSPECTOR DOBBS

(nods in agreement, to JOHNNY)

Give your head a shake. Look. We really want to catch this guy or this family. If you know anything else, or remember anything else, here's my card. Give us a call.

JOHNNY puts his head in his hands again in frustration. The officers get up to leave.

OFFICER JOHNSON

Whole thing must have gotten to him, poor guy.

INSPECTOR DOBBS

Yeah. Must still be traumatized. In shock.

OFFICER JOHNSON

We'd better leave. Give him some space.

The officers get up and leave JOHNNY, seething in his living room chair. After they exit, he suddenly goes calm.

CUT TO:

JOHNNY'S HOUSE DRIVEWAY - DAY

We see the police cruiser, with the two policemen, sitting there discussing what just happened. We push into the windshield as we go to:

POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

DOBBS and JOHNSON are in the cruiser and sit there drinking coffee and eating doughnuts.

OFFICER JOHNSON

You think he'll call?

INSPECTOR DOBBS

Eventually. These Chinese people are very intelligent.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INSPECTOR DOBBS(cont'd)

They notice things that others might not notice. He'll remember something important, I'm sure. He just needs some time to let the trauma settle. Then he'll come through for us.

OFFICER JOHNSON nods, munches doughnut thoughtfully. There is a knock on the window of the police cruiser. It's JOHNNY. JOHNSON rolls down the window.

JOHNNY

Officers, actually, there is a detail that I missed. I do remember something.

INSPECTOR DOBBS

(looks up interested, to JOHNSON)

See? I told you. These Chinese recover from trauma quicker than I thought.

INSPECTOR DOBBS (CONT'D)

(to JOHNNY)

So what is it?

JOHNNY

Come back inside. I have to show it to you.

INSPECTOR DOBBS and OFFICER JOHNSON look at each other, shrug, and return to the house. The door closes. After a few moments, we hear screams of horror, a couple of gunshots, and then silence.

CUT TO:

JOHNNY'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DUSK

We cut to inside the house, as JOHNNY is standing over his last two victims. His eyes are smoldering. We push in on a CU of JOHNNY's face, as his eyes soften. We pull back to reveal that we are:

FAMILY HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

JOHNNY has just finished his pitch. TOM and JANE and the kids ponder the offer. Finally, TOM answers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

You know, it's a good plan, but we aren't interested right now.

JOHNNY

Why not? You just said yourself it's a good plan.

TOM

Oh, we like the plan all right, and we'll probably opt in.

JOHNNY

So then what's the problem?

TOM and JANE look at each other, with a "do you want to tell him, or should I" look. The kids look up wondering the same thing: which of the two parents will give him the news.

TOM

It's not a problem really, it's a good plan, but we aren't interested right now.

JOHNNY looks at the family with a puzzled expression.

JANE

Well, we just received an inheritance. You see, my mother passed away, and left us a windfall. We would like to check other plans from other firms first and compare. After we do that, we'll call you right back.

JOHNNY

How many have you interviewed so far?

TOM

Interviewed. I like that. Two, actually. You're the third. And so far the best. The research you've done for us on this policy is magnificent.

JANE

Yes. But the others did give us some very nice gifts though ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The family looks at JOHNNY expectantly. JOHNNY smiles, and reaches into his briefcase slowly, then presents them each with gold pen sets. The family look at each other, and smile kindly.

CUT TO:

FAMILY HOUSE - DAY

The family is at the front door saying good-bye to JOHNNY.

TOM

Good-bye. We'll be in touch.
Thanks for your time.

The family look at each other, pleased with their gifts. JOHNNY waves back, then goes to his car.

We follow JOHNNY to his car, as he gets in. We see him sitting in it for a moment, considering. Then he turns over the engine, puts it in gear, and drives off.

CUT TO:

YOU BET YOUR LIFE INSURANCE SALES OFFICE - DAY

We are focussed in on the TV in the sales office. The news is on and there is a report that a family was murdered. There is footage of the interior of the house of the same family that JOHNNY visited a few days before.

REPORTER

A family was brutally murdered in their home last night. It seems they were all killed by some kind of hacking device. The family did not have any life insurance. Onto other news ...

We pull back to reveal the whole office staff around the TV. JOHNNY'S co-workers look at each other in shock and dismay. JOHNNY is calm and thoughtful. His co-workers look at him consolingly.

JOHNNY

They should have taken the policy.

The office staff then disperse and begin their day's activities as we hear the television continue in the background.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We roll credits.

END