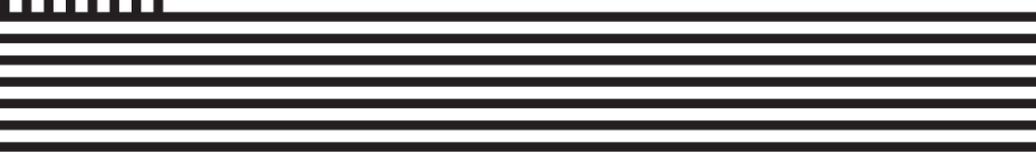
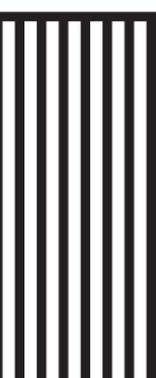


# TIGER STYLE!

BY MIKE LEW



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.



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The world premiere of TIGER STYLE! was produced by the Alliance Theatre (Susan V. Booth, Artistic Director), Atlanta, Georgia, in September 2015. It was directed by Moritz von Stuelpnagel, the scenic design was by Wilson Chin, the costume design was by Amy Clark, the sound design was by Palmer Hefferan, the projection design was by Alex Koch, and the lighting design was by Ken Yunker. The cast was as follows:

ALBERT CHEN ..... Jon Norman Schneider  
JENNIFER CHEN ..... Ruibo Qian  
RUSS THE BUS/REGGIE/  
CUSTOMS GUY ..... Bobby Labartino  
TZI CHUAN/MELVIN/DAD/  
GENERAL TSO ..... Francis Jue  
THERAPIST/MOM/COUSIN CHEN/  
MATCHMAKER ..... Emily Kuroda

TIGER STYLE! was developed during a residency at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's (Preston Whiteway, Executive Director; Wendy C. Goldberg, Artistic Director) National Playwrights Conference in 2014.

## **CHARACTERS**

ALBERT CHEN  
Asian, late 20s–early 30s

JENNIFER CHEN  
Asian, 30s

RUSS THE BUS/REGGIE/CUSTOMS GUY  
white, 30s

TZI CHUAN/MELVIN/DAD/GENERAL TSO  
Asian, 40s–60s

THERAPIST/MOM/COUSIN CHEN/MATCHMAKER  
Asian, 40s–60s

## **SETTING**

Irvine, America.  
And also the Shenzen Special Economic Zone, China.

## **TIME**

Now (circa 2016).

## **NOTE**

Cast Asian actors to play Asian characters. The Chen family is Chinese-American, so casting native English-speaking Chinese-American actors would be ideal. But if those actors aren't available, native English-speaking East Asian/API actors are also acceptable. But if those actors aren't available, stop.

No Chinese accents ever. Not ever.

# TIGER STYLE!

## ACT ONE

### Scene 1. A park.

*In the darkness we hear the opening to a song like “Wu Tang Clan Ain’t Nothing ta F’ Wit.”\* It gets more insistent until lights come up to birds chirping. Albert’s at a park bench. In comes Tzi Chuan. Tzi Chuan notices Albert. Albert notices Tzi Chuan. “Oh shit,” thinks Albert, but “oh shit” or not, the Inquisition’s begun.*

TZI CHUAN. Hey. Hey.

ALBERT. (*Takes out his phone.*) Phone. I’m on...phone call.

TZI CHUAN. You Chinese?

ALBERT. (*To God.*) No. Please? Please no...

TZI CHUAN. (*A challenge.*) No? Not Chinese?

ALBERT. Yes, but that doesn’t mean we’re like *bonded*. I don’t wanna do the *thing* where you...

TZI CHUAN. Ahhhh. I’m Chinese too! Tzi Chuan is my name.

ALBERT. I will definitely remember that.

TZI CHUAN. Where are your parents from?

ALBERT. What? From Irvine. My parents were born here in Irvine and my grandparents were born in China okay?

TZI CHUAN. Ah. You were born here.

ALBERT. Yeah I’m third generation. Or whatever.

TZI CHUAN. What do you do?

\* See Special Note on Songs/Recordings at the back of this volume.

ALBERT. Listen: I was raised to respect my elders so I hope you won't think me a bad Chinese? But I also don't think our shared heritage obligates me to endure a series of penetrating questions from you. Is that *unreasonable*, or...?

TZI CHUAN. Ah?

ALBERT. (*Mimicking.*) Ah.

TZI CHUAN. Ah?

ALBERT. Ah.

TZI CHUAN. Ah?

ALBERT. Don't "ah-ah" me, you know what I'm saying.

TZI CHUAN. (*As though he understands.*) Ah ah ah! (*As before.*) What do you do?

ALBERT. Right, who cares what *I* want... I work for MedCo Medical Software.

TZI CHUAN. *Medical*, ahhh. You're a *doctor*!

*Albert swallows.*

ALBERT. *No*, I'm a software programmer. Like computers?

TZI CHUAN. Oh, computers! Very good money.

ALBERT. S'not bad.

TZI CHUAN. How much money?

ALBERT. Dude, seriously? *Seventy-five thousand.*

TZI CHUAN. You have siblings, yes?

ALBERT. Yes I live with my older sister Jenny, who is a doctor. Yes, Jenny's a doctor and I'm just a software programmer, (*Affectless.*) ha ha ha ha.

So to reiterate: one older sister—overachieving doctor. One younger brother—smart but lazy software engineer who pulls in a respectable seventy thou. What else you want pal? My social security number? My blood type?

TZI CHUAN. You speak Chinese?

ALBERT. No.

TZI CHUAN. *Chay*. How come you're Chinese you don't...

ALBERT. ...speak Chinese. I know! *But it happened.*

TZI CHUAN. You ever go back to China?

ALBERT. No.

TZI CHUAN. But you *want* to go back.

ALBERT. Not really.

TZI CHUAN. *Chay*. Why don't you want to go back?

ALBERT. Look pal. I don't know who in ancient China came up with this arduous ritual but you need to quit. I'm on my lunch break, okay?!

TZI CHUAN. Ahhhh. Okay sorry, so sorry. Didn't mean to *bother you*, sorry...

*He exits.*

ALBERT. I'm not trying to be a jerk, I'm just trying to respect your cultural expectations without letting it bury my personhood. So... thanks for recognizing my personhood, creepy park-walker guy. Oh and my name's *Albert* by the way. Albert? Not that you guys ever ask.

*Russ the Bus enters.*

RUSS THE BUS. Ask what Albro?

ALBERT. (*Quick mutter.*) Don't call me Albro.

RUSS THE BUS. Albro what's UP?

ALBERT. What's up with you, Russ the Bus?

RUSS THE BUS. Sweet NOTHIN' man. Russ the Bus is living the DREAM. Yo, who ya talkin' to?

ALBERT. This weird old man, who was racial profiling me, which I hate.

RUSS THE BUS. Not familiar, but I feel you. Hey, quick question—

ALBERT. It's like: Just because you know my race doesn't mean you know *me*. It doesn't mean you get to project your racial assumptions on me as though...

RUSS THE BUS. Hold that rant. I actually *don't* know your race. What are you, Albro?

ALBERT. Still not "Albro."

RUSS THE BUS. Wait, lemme *guess*.

ALBERT. No, my ethnicity's not a party game.

RUSS THE BUS. I got it. Korean? No, Japanese!

ALBERT. No. Please? Please no...

RUSS THE BUS. It's hard cuz your skin tone *says* Filipino but your bone structure *screams* Malaysian. *Wait*. Are you Indonesian? No, no, no. *Peloponnesian*?

ALBERT. You're asking am I from the Greek peninsula of Peloponnesus.

RUSS THE BUS. I got it: You're ethnically Hmong but geographically from the Laotian-Cambodian border.

ALBERT. Russ the Bus: stop.

RUSS THE BUS. Nah-nah, I'll get it. You're Uyghur from Kyrgyzstan.

ALBERT. Russ.

RUSS THE BUS. You're Tibetan raised by Nepalese monks.

ALBERT. Russ.

RUSS THE BUS. You're Vietnamese raised by wolves.

ALBERT. *Russell*.

RUSS THE BUS. And don't say biracial. Do not say biracial, that's cheating.

ALBERT. I'm Chinese okay? Chinese-American.

RUSS THE BUS. Oh. Well that's boring.

ALBERT. Yes it IS boring. So we good here, or...?

RUSS THE BUS. Actually bro-han I got a work question for ya. By any chance have you cracked the UI on the patient data compiler?

ALBERT. "Cracked" it? *Yes* I've "cracked it." I've been slaving over that project all week.

RUSS THE BUS. I know, I was gonna get on that, but it's Friday, you know? Can't do SHIT on a Friday.

ALBERT. My output's pretty consistent regardless of day of the week.

RUSS THE BUS. Man that's because you're a robot. "I am Albro. I am a robot. My output is unaffected regardless of day of the week."

ALBERT. Russ the Bus, you always do this! You seriously haven't been coding? Our team's due for a status report by end of day. Plus it's our annual reviews today!

RUSS THE BUS. Dude, on a *Friday*?

ALBERT. This isn't the *weekend!* If a Friday were part of the weekend they would've called it a Saturday.

RUSS THE BUS. Wait, but if Friday is Saturday, what's Saturday?

ALBERT. Saturday would be...Sunday.

RUSS THE BUS. Then what's—

ALBERT. Sunday would be Sunday Part Two! It doesn't matter because Friday IS Friday so you should've been coding as I have.

RUSS THE BUS. "Coding as I have. I am a Robot."

ALBERT. This time you're really gonna get us in trouble with Melvin.

RUSS THE BUS. Naaaaaah Melvin *loves* Russ the Bus.

ALBERT. Melvin loves diligence. You're jeopardizing our team status report.

RUSS THE BUS. So help out yer boy, *namsayin'*? Yeahhhh, you know whamsayin'.

ALBERT. Okay, you know something? I was raised to believe in sacrificing my individual needs for the sake of the group. So *fine*. I will give you my code. *Again*.

RUSS THE BUS. That's frickin AWESOME. I'm gonna go take a nap.

ALBERT. I'm not doing this so you can nap!

RUSS THE BUS. (*Singing, like "O Sole Mio."*) "*Al-bro-a-mio.*" Lil buddy: Can Russ the Bus kiss you on the mouth? YOU? Are a lifesaver. Catch ya later Albrol!

*He kisses Albert and exits.*

ALBERT. My *NAME*. Is Albert!

*Tzi Chuan enters.*

TZI CHUAN. Albert. What's your blood type?

# TIGER STYLE!

by Mike Lew

3 men, 2 women

Albert and Jennifer Chen were at the pinnacle of academic achievement. But now they suck at adult life. Albert's just been passed up for promotion and Jennifer's just been dumped by her loser boyfriend. So they do what any reasonable egghead brother and sister would do: go on an Asian Freedom Tour! From California to Shenzen, *TIGER STYLE!* examines the successes and failures of tiger parenting from the point of view of a playwright who's actually been through it.

*"TIGER STYLE! is a witty response to Chinese-American stereotypes... a sharply observed comedy... about the vexing and infinitely complicated business of wrestling with one's heritage, both familial and ethnic."* —**The Boston Globe**

*"Lew's bursting-with-imagination comedy... works up its own restless, breathless sense of investigation, as it takes on thorny topics of prejudice and cultural expectation. ... what most sticks in the mind about TIGER STYLE! is Lew's highly original playwriting voice, distinguished by a winning wit and a playful sense of provocation. ... this singular play [is] a cultural mix-master of laughs, attitude and insight."*

—**The San Diego Union-Tribune**

**Also by Mike Lew**

microcrisis

TEENAGE DICK

ISBN 978-0-8222-3982-6



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