



MINISTRY OF CULTURE, TAIWAN



Taiwan Film Institute



Yufeng Motion Pictures
Printed by Hushan Film
Studio

Executive Producer: Qiu Mu
(邱木)

Producer: Cai Qiulan (蔡秋嵐)

Director: Lin Tuanqiu (林搏秋)

Screenplay: Lin Yiyun (林翼
雲, aka Lin Tuanqiu)

Director of Cinematography:
Lai Chengying (賴成英)

Music: Zeng Zhongying (曾仲
影)

Cast:

Wu Dongru (吳東如)

Zhang Panyang (張潘陽)

Yi Yuan (易原)

Lai Denan (賴德南)

Zhang Qingqing (張清清)

Chen Yunqing (陳雲卿)

1965

Black and White

In Taiwanese language with
English subtitles

109 minutes



Six Suspects

六個嫌疑犯

Synopsis

Tenn Kong-Hui (Mandarin: Zheng Guanghui, played by Wu Dongru) is a private eye. Kong-Hui's ex-lover, Tai-Giok (Mandarin: Daiyu, played by Zhang Qingqing), is a personal assistant to a steel company's chairman. By spying on Tai-Giok, Kong-Hui discovers many dirty secrets of the people who work at the steel company and decides to blackmail each one of them. When Kong-Hui is found dead in his apartment one day, the police detective (played by Yi Yuan) has identified five suspects. However, as the detective digs further into their stories, he finds that all of them have alibis. Just when the investigation seems to hit a dead end, a sixth suspect suddenly emerges...

Commentary

In the opening sequence of *Six Suspects* (*Liuge xianyi fan*, 1965) the audience is led to follow a car driving through Taipei at night. Sometimes we see the car and the driver in full view, but sometimes the camera is positioned from behind the steering wheel and thus the audience is made to share the same viewpoint with the driver. Blinding lights from cars, roadside lamps and shops afar dance around the darkness of city streets and the sky. Changing shapes and shades of lighting in this scene are accompanied by a smooth, funky jazz soundtrack. From the very beginning, everything tells us that *Six Suspects* is a different kind of *taiyupian*: instead of focusing on sadness, rural life, and family, it is playful and turns Taipei of the 1960s into an exciting, bourgeois metropolis.

Director Lin Tuanqiu (also known as Lin Tuan-Chiu, 1920–1998) was born to a wealthy coal-mining family in Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period. He went to university in Tokyo, where he later worked at

Toho studios. Thus, Lin became one of the first Taiwanese filmmakers with hands-on studio experience.

Upon his return to Taiwan in the early 1940s, Lin Tuanqiu served as an active member in the Taiwan New Drama Movement, embracing his ideals of social reform through artistic creation. However, his career in theater came to a halt after the February 28th Incident of 1947, when a street dispute turned into a near revolution. In the aftermath, the ruling Nationalist government (i.e. Kuomintang or KMT) tried to silence dissidents and local voices. Lin Tuanqiu left the arts and worked in the family business instead until the rise of the Taiwanese-language cinema in the mid-1950s.

With financial support from fellow culturati, Lin Tuanqiu established Yufeng Motion Pictures and Hushan Film Studio in 1958. *Six Suspects* was produced and released by these two film companies. As a writer-director, Lin adapted a Japanese film into this gripping detective mystery of love affairs, greed and murder. Unfortunately, Lin was not satisfied with the finished product, and so *Six Suspects* never received a theatrical release. Only when we are able to enjoy the film today after the restoration work conducted by the Taiwan Film Institute do we realize what a well-executed film *Six Suspects* is—from the characters, performances, costumes and make-up to the production design, including the elaborate interior sets, expressionistic lighting, and the choice of music. The film's portrayal of complicated social networks and personal relationships in a modern society, its riveting plot twists, as well as the quirky and modern vibe all resonate in the twenty-first century.

Despite Lin Tuanqiu's ambition of making Yufeng Motion Pictures a sustainable industry leader, the company closed down after only eight years in the mid-1960s due to financial difficulties. Nevertheless, all its films are considered hidden gems in the history of *taiyupian*, just as Lin's own works are recognised for their compelling stories, diverse camera movements and carefully designed *mise-en-scène*.

In addition, Lin Tuanqiu's films have been known for their detailed psychological portraits, especially the portrayals of female characters. Our 2020 tour of "Taiwan's Lost Commercial Cinema: Recovered and Restored" features three of Lin's films—*The Husband's Secret* (*Zhangfu de mimi*, 1960), *May 13th, Night of Sorrow* (*Wuyue shisan shangxinye*, 1965), and *Six Suspects*. We can observe how the female characters in these films have been localised in the Taiwanese society. As stated in the *Taiwan Cinema Toolkit*: "They can be naïve, envious, self-exploited, affectionate, fragile, opinionated, or tenacious. Their compassion and mutual support for each other imbue the films with a humanistic warmth and demonstrate the diversity of female characters in *taiyupian*."