

Kim's Convenience
by Ins Choi
Spring 2023

Who?

Director: Sam Ahn, sam.ahn@yale.edu
Producer: Diza Hendrawan, diza.hendrawan@yale.edu
Stage Manager: Caitlin Hong, caitlin.hong@yale.edu

When?

Date of First Rehearsal: 1/16
Current Tech Week Dates: 2/26-3/1
Performance Dates: 3/2-3/4
Overall Dates (First Rehearsal to Last Performance): 1/16-3/4

Time Commitment

Weekly Estimated Time Commitments (in Hours): 5-6 hours

Content Warnings

Mentions of domestic violence, racism

ABOUT THE SHOW

Mr. Kim, a Korean Canadian immigrant, is the respectable owner of a small convenience store, *Kim's Convenience*. But with a daughter who wants nothing to do with the store and an estranged son, what will be his legacy?

The show takes place at a convenience store in Toronto's Regent Park, a low- to middle-income neighborhood, made up mainly of recent immigrants.

After its premiere at the Toronto Fringe Festival in 2011, the play became a renowned TV series that you can watch on Netflix. Here's the series trailer:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_BT3jdkUPg

Here's a scene from the TV series that is taken almost word for word from the play:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eu0Fxce4d78>

But compared to the show, the play has some more gravitas. There are some really somber moments in the play, which, combined with the comedic moments that came earlier, make for a really moving ending.

WHY SHOULD YOU AUDITION?

One, it's a really fun show. Laugh-out-loud kinda play. Which means the rehearsal process will be fun, too.

Two, it is probably the first play that centers a distinctly Korean story to be put on at Yale. Which is important because Korean stories matter and should be told at Yale.

The rehearsal process will involve discussions of our own personal experiences. We'll draw inspiration from our lives. The aim is not to simply put up a theater show at Yale but to reflect on and grapple with our own Korean American identities.

PRODUCTION TIMELINE

Theater can be pretty intense at Yale. The idea is for *Kim's* to *not* be intense. We're all busy. *Kim's* will hopefully be something fun for everyone, not a burden. That being said, the show will require people to be committed and dedicated!

We'll have some fixed weekly rehearsal times that work with everyone's schedules (probably on Saturday) when we can all play together and some additional rehearsal times for specific scenes. As we get closer to the show, though, rehearsal times will ramp up. The week of Feb. 26th will be particularly time-consuming, since we'll be in the theater for the first time, putting all the elements together and running the show.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

APPA - 59 years old, speaks English with a Korean accent, must speak fluent Korean, physically hilarious

Staged violence: puts MIKE in a submission hold, twists both JANET and ALEX's wrists, gets pressure on hand by ALEX and JANET

UMMA - 56 years old, speaks English with a Korean accent, must speak fluent Korean, sings a church hymn

Staged intimacy: gets pecked by JUNG on the cheek

JANET - 30 years old, APPA and UMMA's daughter, an aspiring photographer, badass

Staged intimacy: kiss with ALEX, wrist twist by APPA, puts pressure on APPA's hand

JUNG - 32 years old, APPA and UMMA's son, has to sing in Korean with UMMA (doesn't need to be fluent, just has to sing in Korean), was a star in high school, now a car mechanic, increasingly feels like his life is worthless, estranged from APPA

Staged intimacy: pecks UMMA on the cheek

RICH* - a young Black man who visits the store

MR. LEE* - successful real estate agent, friend of APPA

MIKE* - Black man with a thick Jamaican accent who steals Vaseline from the store

ALEX* - 32 years old, police officer, childhood best friend of JUNG

Staged violence/intimacy: MIKE put in submission hold by APPA, ALEX kisses JANET, APPA twists ALEX's wrist, ALEX puts pressure on APPA's hand

**RICH, MR. LEE, MIKE, ALEX are all played by one actor.*

We will have an intimacy coordinator and a fight choreographer to stage all staged violence/intimacy.

AUDITION INSTRUCTIONS

You don't need prior theater experience to audition for this show! In fact, we're seeking people who haven't done any theater at Yale. There's something, we think, to the raw authenticity someone who hasn't done theater before has that would work great for this show in particular.

We are NOT trying to replicate the TV show! Do not try to imitate the actors on the TV show! We are looking for *your* interpretations of these characters, not carbon copies of the TV actors.

We will be doing auditions entirely virtually. The goal is to have a cast ready to work by the time we come back from break. So, auditions are going to happen through self tapes: videos you can record anywhere. These are **chill** and **low-stakes**. The most important thing is to **have fun! No need to memorize the words. Read off your computer, print it out - whatever floats your boat!**

An example of how to set up a self-tape: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O8mHtIbSj6E>

What you need to do

Follow the instructions of the roles for which you want to be considered!

FOR ALL ROLES: exhibit great comedic timing, physicality, and willingness to work with others

FOR APPA, UMMA, JANET, and JUNG: Record a minute-long video about your relationship to Korean American identity. You can talk about anything! Some ideas/themes in the play if you're struggling: parents, immigration, church

FOR APPA (Don't forget the accent!): Janet, you is thirty years old now and still single. You have to understand, now is desperation time for you. Sudden death, overtime, penalty kick shootout. Expiration date is over. Take over store is only choice you having. Me and Umma is struggle whole life make life for you. We do what we have to do, hope you can be doctor, lawyer, big success, but what can you do? Take picture. We don't have to come to Canada for you take picture. Even you can take picture in North Korea. What is my story? Hm? What is story of me, Mr. Kim? My whole life is this store. Everybody know this store, they know me. This store is my story. And if I just sell store, then my story is over. Who is Mr. Kim? Nobody know that. You take over store, my story keep going.

FOR UMMA (Don't forget the accent!):

1. Sing a verse of a hymn. Amazing Grace is an example. Any hymn you know!
2. This side: *To JUNG. Don't forget the accent!*

You Appa was teacher in Korea. He was very good teacher. Student all love him. He have lots of friend. We have very good life in Korea Then we coming to Canada. But he can't be teacher here. His English is very... no good. We get store. And he work every day. No weekend, no time off, no vacation, always have to be open, no retirement. Why? Why he doing like that? For you. For you and Janet. He is choosing like that for you.

FOR JANET: For my whole life, I've worked at least four hours a day covering for you guys, and I've never asked you for anything in return. I 've never complained about it and never bitched about not getting paid. I've been here for you for my whole life, Appa. When Jung left, I was here. When Umma was sick, I was here. What would be nice is a simple thank-you. A little appreciation, that's all I need. To hear you say "thank you." Just once. (*APPA remains silent.*) Okay, fine. (*She goes behind the counter, takes out the printing calculator, and punches in the numbers.*) Four hours a day, six days a Week, fifty-two weeks a year, for the past twenty years, eight dollars an hour - subtract room and board ... You owe me a grand total of \$102,720! Give me my money, Appa!

FOR JUNG:

1. Sing a verse of a hymn. Amazing Grace is an example. Any hymn you know!
2. This side: *Talking to UMMA.*

You remember Mike from church, he was on the soccer team? He found me on Facebook today and soon the whole crew found me, the old church soccer team. They're all successful. They start asking about me. What I do, where I been. I start making stuff up, trying desperately hard to sound impressive, but just sounding desperate. I was their captain. I was their captain, Umma. I was smarter than all of them, faster, stronger. I didn't dream I'd end up renting cars to people. Nine to five. Checking for dents and scratches. Living in a shithole in Parkdale. Apartment's a constant mess. Fight all the time, his mom and me. She thinks I'm a loser – I don't even know why I'm with her anymore. And all he ever does is cry and cry and cry and cry. Just wanna leave, y'know? Just go. Start over. Somewhere else. It'd be so easy, too. Bay and Dundas, hop on a bus and leave. I rent cars to people, then take the street car home. What is that? That's a joke.

FOR RICH / MR. LEE / MIKE / ALEX: charismatic, likable, physical comedy a must; three sides

1. MR. LEE: *in this scene, MR. LEE has just offered to buy APPA's convenience store.*

What's your exit plan, Mr. Kim? What's your exit plan from this life? You plan on working at the store 'til you die? That's not a good exit plan. You've had a rough life, especially with your son. Don't think for a minute that I don't remember the kind of trouble Jung put you through. Now if Jung were here, he'd take over the store. But he's not here and he's not coming back.

2. MIKE: see [here](#) for a intro YouTube video on Jamaican Patois:

Hey, man, wa gwan? D'ya have a tub o' Vaseline fa me? A tub o' Vaseline?

3. ALEX:

Uh, okay. Um. Janet, I've always thought of you as a younger sister, following us around like a chubby little puppy dog. Wait, but when I saw you today, like, now - you're so beautiful. You're smart, talented, you make me laugh - I don't understand why you're still single. The only way I can figure it is God must love me so much that he's kept you single for all these years to bless me with you.

How to submit your audition

1. Email our stage manager Caitlin Hong at caitlin.hong@yale.edu with your video files and name your files: Role_Name, e.g., Appa_Sam Ahn.
2. Fill out this audition form: <https://forms.gle/yMpApg2fP2QZD6Rr8>
3. We are accepting auditions between Monday, Jan 9 and Friday, Jan 13!

OTHER THINGS

Sign up for the Asian American Collective of Theatermakers (AACT) mailing list:
<https://forms.gle/dLaj8afuEiRkmxNv5>

