

2019 Alive <WHO KILLED JESUS?>

Script by Hyoshin Noh Lee and Esther Chung
"The High Priest and Jewish Leaders" Song (Act 4) by Janet Lee

When: April 19th Friday 7:30pm

Location: (Nora Sterry)

○ **Characters**

Detective Tom - Ephraim

Assistant/Jesus - Aaron

Children - Esther coordinate

Roman Soldier - Steve

Roman Soldier Dancers - Jennifer coordinate

Pilate - Franklin

High Priest, Jewish Leaders 1, 2, 3 - Taeho, Yehwan, Uichin

<Voice>

Building Owner: Pastor Soon

Tom's Mom: Esther

Michael

Jeni: Jeni

Other roles:

Sound: Eric

Lights:

○ **Stage Set-up**

Stage with a large screen on the back. Tom's Office is set up in a Sherlock Holmes style. On the right side of the stage are a detective sofa and an assistant chair. There is a typewriter on a table. The assistant uses the typewriter. Other characters besides the detective and the assistant appear and exit from the left side of the stage.

OPENING

Children appear on the stage.

Children: (walking together to the front of the stage)

Hannah: I am so excited that we get to sing a song for Alive, a program for Good Friday.

Noelle: I heard that many people have been practicing for this year's play.

Edgar: Well, we don't have a lot of time, so let's get to it! Are you all ready?

Children: (all in the position) Yes, we are ready!

(They sing and do the motion to 2 Corinthians 5:21)

Tom: What are you kids doing here? This is the front of my office! Get out, now!

Casey: I'm terribly sorry for the trouble, sir. We were just practicing for our Good Friday program.

Ariel: We're really sorry. It was hard to find a place to practice but this place seemed just a perfect place for us.

Josiah: Well, we would love to have you come see us perform! It's, in fact, today, in a few hours!. Here is a flyer about it!

Tom (receives the flyer begrudgingly) You kids are scaring away all my potential clients! No wonder why I haven't had anybody come in today.

Ariel: Sir, we will pray that you will have a client today.

Gia: (nodding) It's the least we can do.

Timothy: Also pray, sir, and it will happen!

Hannah: Pray! (folding her hands together)

Tom That's so nice of you, but hey, if you're done, please clear the entrance. (gesturing for

them to leave, as though he's shooing them away)

The children pick up whatever was on the stage and exit.

Tom Interesting! Most of the kids I know are glued to their phones, but these kiddos seem to be lively and respectful. Hmph.

Tom enters his office.

Act 1. A Strange Request

Tom enters his office.

As Tom enters the office, his assistant is looking at Tom's self-portrait hanging on the wall, copying Tom's pose.

Assi (Notices Tom) Detective Tom! You're here!

Tom You're here early again.

Assi I get so excited so I come here early, waiting for you!

Tom Do not expect that any of this will work towards you getting paid. Remember, you are only an intern.

Assi I know that! I am just glad to be with you, Detective Tom!

Tom (feeling flattered and points towards Assi) Music!

Assi turns on the music.

Tom (talking to himself in a vain, narcissistic manner) I am the one and only detective Tom: A mysterious lone wolf that prowls this great city in the name of truth and justice. The work I do preserves the foundations of world peace. (Tom walks over to the phone) I wonder what kind of cases are waiting for me today.

Tom presses the voice message button.

Michael (Beep-) Tom, It's me, Michael. I've been trying to reach you for the past month. Why aren't you picking up my calls? Is it because I got a job at the FBI? I thought our friendship was

more than that. I guess I was wrong. I'm leaving for D.C. next week. But I guess it doesn't really matter to you anyways.
Tom (looking uncomfortable) Next! (presses the "next" button)
Building owner (Beep-) 707! Your rent for this month hasn't come through, and it was due yesterday! If it's not here by tomorrow, you will leave me no choice but to call the cops. Eviction, do you understand? The money better be here by tomorrow!

Tom: (looking even more disturbed than the first call) Next! (presses the "next" button.)

Jeni: (Beep-) Tom, this is Jeni. I'm really sorry, but please stop calling me. I don't feel comfortable getting your calls so often. I might have to get a restraining order...

Tom (starts to feel depressed) Next! (Shakes as he presses the "next" button.)

Mom (Beep-) Tom! This is your mom. I know we talked about this before, but we don't support your detective work. I know it means a lot to you, but Dad and I had a talk and decided we can't keep paying for your rent. I'm sorry, but we feel it's time for you to grow up and be responsible. Look at your brother...he has a stable career.. A good wife -

Tom (interrupts machine) Today is the worst day of my life! This is too much. My life sucks.I wish I was never born.

Tom plops down on the chair. He holds his head in his hands and deadpans despairingly.

Tom That's it: I'm a total failure. I hate this life. What do I do? Please... if somebody could just... Help me.

While Tom is still dejected about his struggles, an envelope drops on the floor somewhere. Tom does not notice the card but the Assistant sees the envelope and picks it up.

Assi: Tom, we just got an envelope addressed to you!

Tom: (Not even looking at it) Throw it away! It's probably one of those stupid self-help meeting ad.

Assi: (looking at the envelope carefully) No, I don't think so. Looks like a case.

Tom: (irritated, going over to Assi and snatches it from Assi's hands) Give it to me! What is it?

(tearing the top, he looks at it and reads it loudly) Case objective: Find who killed Jesus. Attached are relevant clues from the gospel Mark, chapters 14-16. It will have all the

necessary materials for solving the case. Compensation will be generous. Inside you will find my initial payment. (looks puzzled for a moment, only to toss the paper aside) What is this? Some kind of sick joke? Today really is the worst day of my life!

Assi: Maybe this client is being serious. (pulls out an envelope of money)

Tom: (looking over at Assi who is holding the money) Is that real? You know what? Maybe I should take the case. Whatever crazy person made this request, it's all the same to me. (ponders) Was it Michael? (shakes his head) I have no choice but to take this case. I need to pay my rent.

Assi: Wow, this will be a very interesting case, indeed!

Tom: I just hope that I won't make a complete fool out of myself. I'll be digging into an incident that happened more than 2,000 years ago! Anyway, where do you think I should start?

Assi: Well, the case file said that the clues were in Mark chapters 14-16. Maybe you could start from the Bible!

Tom: Excellent idea! (sarcastic?) Your years of hands-on "training" have not gone to waste. Fetch me a Bible from the cabinet! My mom gave me one before I started my stint at the LA Police Academy. It must be stuffed somewhere in there!

Assi: (coughing, he is brushing off dust from the book.) Here, I found it.

Tom: Thanks. Now, let's start reading.

(Tom sits down on his nice-looking sofa while Assi sits on a child's chair.)

Tom: (after reading it together for a short time) I think it'll be crucial for me to interview and write down my findings from some of these characters,

Assi: Sure, that sounds fantastic!

Tom (vain monologue): Detective Tom receives an urgent request to solve a 2000 year old case. He pursues his first clue as he scours an ancient document in search of answers to the One Question... Who... Killed... Jesus...

Tom takes out his computer and as he starts typing, the stage becomes dark.

Act 2. The Roman Soldiers

The stage light focuses on Tom and Assi. Everything else stays dark.

Tom Okay, first things first.

On the back screen, the word "victim" appears. Assi types out Tom's words on the computer.

Tom WHO was the victim? Well, that's obvious. The victim was Jesus. He was 33 years old, hailing from this place called Galilee. WHEN? The incident happened in the year 33 A.D, the time when the Roman Empire ruled over Israel. WHERE? Jerusalem. WHAT? Jesus, the victim, was crucified, nailed to hang on a cross... But why...

Assi (gives an additional explanation, such as important background information) Crucifixion was the worst death penalty reserved for the worst criminals.

Tom Wait, I found a suspect right here. "And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get." We found our first suspect. The Roman soldiers killed Jesus!

The stage light on Tom turns off, and the backside of the stage lights up. The Roman soldiers march onto the stage in one line. (Refer to musical Billy Elliot - https://youtu.be/1ND2uJtfQ_c.)

(More serious marching sequence- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EanfDEB2Fco>)

Roman soldier: (walks in like a trained soldier and stands in the middle) So, I heard you wanted to talk to me about Jesus, the man who died on the cross. Well, I have to say: I have never seen a cross hanger like him. Most of the criminals who were sentenced to die on the cross were pretty messed up. You know what I mean? We would never crucify a petty thief or a first time offender. You would have to be a big mean danger to society to find yourself in the works. But even then, those big thugs would wimp out at the sight of a cross. They would cry for mercy, struggle to get off, curse us, and repeat. But Jesus? He was different!

Tom: Tell me about his physical state prior to crucifixion.

Roman soldier: There wasn't much to talk about. It was bad. We whipped him with a flagrum. His back was ripped from the bone and metal lashes. The thorn crown my friends made for him just sped up the bleeding process. He was in a mess before we got to Golgotha.

Tom: Why did you say he was different?

Roman soldier: I'm telling you, it was really strange: His body was writhing in pain, but no profanity came out of him. Instead, he looked really sad when he cried out to God to forgive us because according to him, we didn't know what we were doing. I heard him also cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" His cries were directed to God.

Tom: So you killed Jesus? (not accusingly and just putting a question to him)

Roman soldier: (he takes it personally) Who? Me? No! I wasn't the one who killed Jesus! Are you kidding me? If you want to know who literally nailed him on the cross: Yes, that was me and my fellow soldiers. But we can't be held responsible for his death. He was already condemned to die on the cross, and we were just following orders. It wasn't our fault Jesus was killed. There is a big difference between following the orders to hang him and being responsible for his death.

Tom: So you don't take any responsibility in killing Jesus?

Roman soldier: Why would I? It was my job. We're soldiers. We do as we are commanded. Is that a crime? If I had to take responsibility for all the people I was ordered to crucify, I would go crazy. Do not put this on me. I already feel bad about what I did to Jesus, but I will not take responsibility for his death. No, no, no! That's not fair! (kneels down, clenching his chest out of his own sense of guilt).

Tom's voice: Thank you. Your testimony was very helpful.

(wait until the Roman soldier leave)

Tom: I feel for him. When I was young, there was a new kid in town. My older brother, for whatever reason hated him. One day, my brother dared me to throw a pebble at the new kid from a

distance. If I hit him, my brother would give me \$5.00. I accepted the dare, but I ended up hitting and breaking the boy's glasses. My parents were furious and I was suspended from school for a week. I remember being so frustrated because it was my brother's whole idea, but he didn't get in trouble. I was a kid, I didn't know any better. I only did what my older brother told me to do. Like me, the Roman soldier He only did what he was ordered to... . So who ordered the command for Jesus to be crucified? (He opens the Bible and reads the passage for another clue.)

Ah HAH, I see another clue here. "Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified." Pilate, he was the Roman governor at that time. He must have killed Jesus!

The light goes out, and a video clip plays on the screen.

Act 3. Pilate

[Video clip]

An interview of a tired, busy high-ranking public official Pilate, taken in a paparazzi style.

#1. Pilate, looking extremely tired, drinks a take-out coffee

#2. He is reading a Newspaper about Roman Empire stock market graphs.

#3. His phone rings, and on the screen the caller name is "Emperor Caesar." He picks up the phone in servility.

#4. Pilate is walking down the street. As soon as he sees a camera following him, he starts running away.

#5. Pilate comes to a dead end. He covers his face and says "don't show my face!"

#6. Pilate gives in and reluctantly agrees to interview.

Pilate: (somewhat offended) So you want to know why I ordered Jesus to be crucified. (pause) Contrary to what you might think, did you know I really wanted to spare his life? I honestly didn't think he did something to deserve a death sentence. That is why I spoke to the Jewish leaders three times to release Jesus. (regretfully) Everytime I think about what happened to

Jesus, I shudder because I know I sentenced an innocent man to death.

[Caption: If you knew you were condemning an innocent man, why did you do it?]

Pilate: Oh, you should have seen those Jewish leaders when they came with Jesus. They were spewing out nothing but spite toward him, and they weren't going to back down unless I executed Jesus. Think about it. First, they accused that Jesus claimed himself to be the King of the Jews and was stirring up the people all over Judea. Then, they asked me to release an infamous convict named Barabbas. I mean, does it make sense to you that they would rather let go of an outlaw like that than Jesus? They were full of jealousy because people were following him as never heard of before. But I tell you what got me. When they said if I let go of a guy who claimed himself to be the King of the Jews, I would be no friend of Caesar. That was a serious charge that could destroy all I have worked for - my family, my career, my ambition! So what choice did I have? So you see, I wasn't the killer. I had to protect myself and also protect the region from unnecessary ruckus. (pause to let his statement to sink in. Then, looking at his watch) If you don't mind, I have another appointment. Please excuse me. (bowing formally as a governor, he walks off camera)

The screen becomes dark, and the spotlight turns on Tom

Tom Wow, that was a very powerful defense statement! Who could dispute that? When you are faced with the choice between saving one innocent guy over protecting yourself and saving the whole country from a possible revolt, who would have courage to stand behind the innocent guy? I had a similar situation. When I was a student, there was a guy no one liked. Even the professors disliked him and everyone knew that if any of us hung out with him, it would be suicidal for one's reputation. I didn't find anything wrong with him, but I put a distance between him and I because I needed the professor's recommendation letter. I figured there was no need to create unnecessary commotion. The best option was to go with the flow and not to stand with a guy who was mistreated for no apparent reason. (calming down) It was in my best interest to be indifferent and not care, just like the Roman soldiers and Pilate. Now that we know they were not real suspects, we have to find the real killer!

"The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as worthy of death." Maybe, the people who killed Jesus were the High Priest and the leaders of the Jews.

Act 4. The High Priest and the Jewish Leaders

<https://youtu.be/vv5wo7F1-mg>

Stage light changes. The high priest and Jewish leaders 1 and 2 appear on the stage.

The song from La Traviata plays.

Actors will lip sync on the stage

High Priest (0:23):

I am the respected high priest of Jews,
pro-~~tect~~-ing our holy Jewish way of life
How dare you – accuse me of murdering Jesus
When I saved my people from danger

Jewish Leader 1 (0:41):

Our high priest is our hope and pride
He leads us on the path of righteousness
Together, we must keep our people safe
We must not stray from his words

High Priest (0:59):

If you wish to know what wrong Jesus has done)
One night is not enough to explain)

Jewish Leader 2 (1:17):

He tried to pretend he's our Messiah
riding into Jerusalem on a donkey
He showed no respect or-- fear of us leaders
only stirred up the poor and the sick

Jewish Leader 1 (1:36):

He turned our temple into a mess
where we profit from the sacrifice
He shamed and portrayed us as bad people
How could Samaritans be good?

Jewish Leader 2 (1:54):
That lying, incompetent fake Messiah
Let me tell you what he said

~Instrumental~

(Jewish Leader 2 takes out a piece of paper)

Jewish Leader 2 (2:05):
"I am the bread of life: he who comes to me will
never go hungry."
"I am the resurrection and the life. He who
believes in Me, though he may die,
he shall live And whoever lives and believes in me
shall never die."

Jewish Leader 2 (2:22):
"I am the way, the truth, and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through me."
Now, don't you think he was a lunatic?
But.. raising Lazarus to life was quite amazing

(the high priest and others look at him surprised &
angry)

High Priest (2:38):
Ignoring our long respected religion
and blaspheming the authority of our God

Jewish Leader 1 (2:49):
he was a disgraceful lunatic
believing he's our Messiah

Everyone (2:56):

ah ah what a heretic!
ah ah what a heretic!

High Priest: So you see we did what we had to do; Jesus deserved death. He blasphemed God and was a danger to our people. Even the people knew Jesus was a fake. Do you know how easy it was to convince the crowd that Jesus deserved to die? These people followed Jesus one moment and they asked for his blood the next moment.

Jewish Leader 1: Yes, even Jesus' closest followers deserted him. If Jesus was really God, don't you think his disciples would have stood up for him? Peter denied knowing Jesus three times that night we had him arrested!

The high priest and Jewish leaders exit the stage, laughing and talking.

Tom I think I understand what is going on. Perhaps this poor young man from 2000 years ago was killed by everyone.

Assi While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.

Tom (Turns his head towards Assi) What are you saying?

Assi What if there is no one who actually killed Jesus, but Jesus made the decision himself to die?

Tom Oh, stop it! I've heard all about this years ago in church. If this was really true, that man named Jesus made a big mistake.

Assi What mistake?

Tom (smiling rather bitterly) I am not worthy enough for someone to die for me. Let's be honest here.

Assi Okay.

Tom You've known me for a while -- you know what a failure I am! Look at me! I am a shame to my family, all of my friends have left me, and I haven't even accomplished anything.

Assi Tom, when I look at you, I see my child for whom I have died.

Tom What are you talking about? ... Who are you?

Assi Hi, Tom. You finally see who I am.

Act 5. The Invitation of Jesus

(Tom asks a few questions to confirm Jesus's identity)

Tom: No way...

Assi: Yes, I am Jesus.

Tom: What.. Jesus..? But. You worked for me! For free!

Assi: My grace toward you is priceless.

Tom: Wait...Was all this part of your plan?

Assi: I wanted you to focus on what is truly important.

Tom: So that's why you made this strange request? Do you want to see me suffer and feel guilty for your death?

Assi: Remember that church you joined during college? You joined it because of Jenny, but you missed the most important part. That I was resurrected from the dead.

Tom: I know that. I've heard that a thousand times.

Assi: But you do not believe in my resurrection. Isn't that why you decided to take this case? If you had believed in my resurrection, you would not have had to find a killer in the first place.

Tom: I believe in your resurrection to some extent. I guess it could have happened. But as a detective, I know...There are so many unsolved cases in the world. This could have just been one of those cases.

Assi: So you don't care about this case?

Tom: Yeah, I don't care! I don't care about this case! I don't care about your death! what does it have to do with me? Look at my life! You're wasting your time

Assi Tom, I do not make mistakes.

Tom (slightly offended) Do you know how miserable I feel everyday? Do you even understand how much I want to just end it all?

Assi Do you think I do not understand your pain?

Tom crouches down at the corner of the office. Assi walks to Tom and sits next to him.

Tom I don't understand. If You are God. Why did you die? Why didn't you do anything when people crucified you?

Assi If I hadn't died on the cross, I would not have been able to come to you.

Tom Why would you do that?

Assi Because I want to be with you.

Tom (laughing sarcastically) You want to be with me? You know better than anyone else, nobody wants to be with me. I've been alone my whole life.

Assi Are you talking about your 11th birthday when nobody showed up?

Tom What?

Assi Or are you talking about the time when your father beat you, comparing you to your brother?

Tom ...

Assi Or are you talking about that lonely moment when you were alone on the Golden Gate bridge?

Tom ...

Assi I've been with you in every moment. From the beginning to the end. I overcame death to come to you.

Tom I am tired of this life...

Assi (sings "Fountains" by Jon Thurlow - <https://youtu.be/dkDA8Em-zAg>)

Cast all your cares on Me
'Cause I care for you
I care for you
All your fountains are in Me, and I have everything you
need
Just keep coming back to Me
Those who call upon My name, they will not be put to shame
Just keep coming back to Me
Come to Me if you're weary and I'll give you rest
I'll give you rest
My yoke is so easy and My burden is less
My burden is less

Tom, I have been with you even before you were born. I rejoiced and danced the day you were born, and have been trying to show myself as your Savior who has been extending my love for you. However, you were too distracted to find me, so I decided to come and look for an opportunity to reveal myself. Today seemed to be the window of opportunity for you to explore about me because you were let down in every area of your life. I grieved when you were struggling, but I also knew that unless you find me, you will live your life, jumping from here to there, one stop to next, always looking and wanting, but never understanding and fulfilled. I am not guaranteeing that your life will get easier because you will believe in me, but I promise that you will find strength and wisdom to handle life's

difficulties, reason to live and hope even at the end of this life. I want you to believe in me.

Tom (overwhelmed) Who am I that you have not given up on me but looked after me all these years? I am dumbfounded by your unceasing love... (with conviction) I, I believe in you. You gave your life for me. If you will take my life, I give it you.

Tom turns to Jesus and kneels at his feet bowing his head in prayer. (light out and Assi walks off stage. Light on)
Tom opens his eyes and looks around for a bit, then he takes out his phone and makes a call.

Tom Hi mom, I got your message. Yeah, I don't think I can come this weekend but I will visit next weekend... but I just want to let you know that I now know Jesus is real and He loved me with His life. Yeah... I'll tell you more when I come. Tell dad that I said hello. Don't worry. I'm okay. And thank you. I should go. Bye mom.

After the call, Tom looks at the Bible on his detective chair, holds it tightly, and begins to read.

Stage light gradually fade out.

Worship team leads into song "Fountains"