

# No, A *Different* PRC

[[The Day After Ragnarok](#)]

After the Serpentfall, everybody in Hollywood expected the struggling Producers Releasing Corporation (PRC) to go under -- actually, that's not true. Nobody thought about PRC at all. There were millions of things considered more important than the fate of a Poverty Row film studio whose business model depended on small-town movie theaters. If anyone *had* thought about it, they would have concluded that, given how many of those theaters were now under water, burned down, tumbled ruins, or cannibal-cultist lairs (that happened a lot, oddly), PRC would end with neither a bang nor a whimper.

Yet it did not. Partially that was because in 1945 it was a lot easier to arrange for circuses than bread, and the government subsidized every film studio willing to provide a distraction from the end of the world. PRC jumped on that with both feet, working around the clock to film propaganda flicks and madcap farces. They gained enough goodwill with the Warren administration (and Screen Actors Guild) to survive the 1946 'consolidation' of movie studios; SAG President Ron Reagan kept as many smaller studios off the chopping block as he could manage, and PRC was one of the lucky ones.

However, that's not quite enough to explain the studio's continuing survival. Today, PRC makes monster-Westerns and two-fisted pulp adventures. Its best-known property is the *Chinese Corsairs* series, starring dashing privateer Captain Chang (Keye Luke) fighting Japanese generals, unsavory Chinese Communists (invariably backed by sinister Soviet commissars), and the occasional monster in a rubber suit. Sometimes he's aided by the enigmatic smuggler Songbird (played by Anna May Wong: her first appearance was as a villain, but she proved popular with audiences). The series is *very* popular in the unoccupied parts of China, not least because the actors are all Chinese-American. It's not particularly popular anywhere else, but PRC stays in the black, so clearly they're doing something right.

Well, sort of. The reason PRC makes money is because it is the front for an artifact-laundering operation run by Lung Choi San, the so-called "Dragon Queen of the Pirates." The Dragon Queen acquires a *lot* of choice loot, but it's not always easy to turn that into money, bullets, and ships. So the ships delivering *Chinese Corsair* films to Hong Kong return with lightweight, high-value stolen relics that can be easily turned into "artifacts salvaged from the Poisoned Lands." Once they've been thus ritually purified, they can get turned into American dollars (or Australian pounds), which are used to buy -- anything, really. This is

how things are done in the modern world, and the Dragon Queen considers herself the very model of a modern pirate corsair.

Does the US and British governments know? Yes, or at least the OSS and the SIS do. They simply don't *care*. The Dragon Queen is the Japanese Empire's special headache, not theirs, and she's careful to not make enemies of the Americans, or British. So, so long as PRC keeps churning out pro-American distractions (and facilitating sales to Allied arms manufacturers), what's the problem? Excuse me: what's the *pressing* problem? There really *are* millions of more important things to worry about.

One last note: *Chinese Corsairs* is *not* based on the exploits of Lung Choi San, because she's not a fool. She's an avid fan, though, and watches every one that comes out. She's also subtly encouraging the use of more Asian-Americans by Hollywood. Sometimes, that involves influence via PRC. Sometimes, it involves a bribe. Tong assassins are strictly reserved for only the absolutely worst obstreperous producers. Which is for the best; Americans can get so *upset* about that sort of thing, honestly.

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