

THE WRONG BUS

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FADE IN:

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

KATHERINE, 40s, a dowdy spinster, carries a large hand bag over a shoulder. She guards it as she approaches the Crowd at the curb.

In the Crowd are CONSTANCE, 60s, perky proud, in bargain basement attire; HAROLD, 50s, rough-hewn, in off-the-rack business suit; and an assortment of Bus Riders.

Katherine moves to sit on the bench. Constance takes the seat before her. An exchange of uneasy glances.

Katherine's bag rests on eye level with Constance. Constance eyes it. Katherine tightens her grip. Their eyes meet again. Katherine stares down at her. Frowns. Huffs. Constance winces.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Faces in the Crowd: uneasy glance, squint, furrowed brow, shaken head, a tense gasp.

BACK TO SCENE

Katherine shrugs. She resists a pang of guilt.

The Crowd of Bus Riders grows. It pushes Harold closer to Katherine. He rubs against her. She makes a fuss. Moans. Harold appears oblivious. His nose in a newspaper.

A BUS MOTOR. Heads look up. She follows them.

Bus comes into view. It slows to stop in front of the Crowd. Another push with Katherine caught in the shove. She clutches her bag. Switches arms.

INT. BUS

DEIDRE, overweight, uniformed, 50s, hair streak-colored, drives in deliberate motion: signal switch on, steer to curb, brake, signal switch off.

EXT. BUS STOP

Bus destination sign reads: ROUTE 2 VENICE.

Deidre pulls the bus to a halt in front of the Bus Riders.

Doors open. Riders file in. Pay tolls. Show cards.

Katherine behind Harold, who blocks her view until she reaches the door steps. She mounts the steps.

INT. BUS

Harold finds a seat with another Rider. He glances at Katherine. Resumes his newspaper.

Katherine hesitates in mid-aisle. She looks at available seats. She feels a nudge from behind from another Rider. Uncomfortable, she eases into a seat next to a young Latina with heavy makeup. She fusses with her bag.

The last Rider finds a seat in front.

Deidre releases the brake. Closes the door. Checks her mirror. Begins to pull out.

POUNDING on the door.

She opens the door to reveal TAGGER, 20s, black, gangster fashioned, reverse ball cap, tattoos. Behind him are Three clone Gangsters. She lets them on.

TAGGER and his pals pay their tolls. They wind their way to the back. On his way, he notices Katherine.

She averts her gaze.

Deidre again shuts the door. She reaches for the sign switch.

EXT. BUS

Deidre changes the destination sign from "ROUTE 2 VENICE" to "NOT IN SERVICE".

She sits. Releases the brake. The bus accelerates from the curb onto the street.

INT. BUS

Deidre steers through street traffic.

Katherine grips her bag. She follows the bus route from her perch. Her gaze averts her eyes from her seat companion.

EXT. BUS

With Deidre at the helm, the bus accelerates, slows, changes lanes, stops at a light. She switches a signal light on to turn right.

INT. BUS

The bus turns. Katherine looks puzzled. As the coach travels, her eyes follow unfamiliar landscape. She tenses, gulps, squints, furrows her brow as the bus meanders streets.

Deidre guides the bus down a frontage road to the freeway.

A look of frightened recognition covers Katherine's face. She stands. Sidesteps to the aisle as the bus lurches and sways. She clutches at hand rails to stay balanced.

Deidre focuses on her driving.

Other Riders pay no heed to the bus route.

Harold folds his newspaper to another page. He glances at Katherine.

She clutches from hand rail to hand rail as she steps toward the front of the bus.

Constance reveals a slight cynical smirk at Katherine's steps.

Katherine reaches Deidre at the front of the bus.

KATHERINE

Excuse me, please. If I may have a word.

DEIDRE

Yeah. What is it?

KATHERINE

I demand to know where this bus is going.

DEIDRE

You demand to know. Huh. Well, for your information, lady, this is an express to West Hills.

KATHERINE

West Hills? But the sign said Route 2 Venice -

DEIDRE

Maybe that's what you thought you saw. But I've been driving this bus fourteen years. And I ain't never gone to Venice.

A stunned Katherine sways on her feet with bus motion.

KATHERINE

The sign said Route 2 Venice!

Deidre shakes her head in disgust.

DEIDRE

Lady, I got a bus to drive. For the last time. This coach goes to West Hills.

Resentment covers Katherine's face.

KATHERINE

Is that any way to treat a passenger? I asked a perfectly innocent question.

DEIDRE

I can't help it if you board the wrong bus.

KATHERINE

Can't you call someone? A supervisor? And let them know that I'm on the wrong bus?

DEIDRE

You some V-I-P? Our policy is to take you to the nearest stop. Let you off so you can return.

KATHERINE

You can't use your radio? To let them know about my difficulty?

DEIDRE

I gotta drive, lady.

Katherine hits the wall of helplessness.

EXT. BUS

Deidre takes the bus onto a freeway onramp.

It joins other traffic speeding along the road.

The "NOT IN SERVICE SIGN" leads the way.

INT. BUS

Katherine regains her composure.

KATHERINE

Then I demand that you put me off  
at the next stop.

Deidre concentrates on steering through traffic.

DEIDRE

You demand again. That won't be  
until we get to the Valley. And  
stay back of the white line!

Katherine turns to stagger back to her seat.

She gets a fright when

FLASH CUT

At the rear of the bus, in shadows, Eerie Biped with insect  
antennas morphs into a Regular Passenger as the light hits  
its face.

BACK TO SCENE

Katherine points, speechless.

Constance confides to her seat Companion.

CONSTANCE

She's in for a even bigger  
surprise.

Other Riders watch Katherine return to her seat.

Harold glances from his newspaper. He appears unimpressed.  
Folds his newspaper. A brief stare at Katherine.

She freezes at his stare.

More looks of contempt from Bus Riders.

Katherine turns to Harold.

KATHERINE

That is the most insulting bus  
driver I have ever met in my life.

Harold takes her in. Indifferent.

KATHERINE

I don't know how anybody else feels. But I'm going to report her to the management just as soon as I get off this bus!

Constance turns to Katherine from her seat in front of her.

KATHERINE

I'll take it to the transportation board if I have to. Of all the inconsiderate inconvenience!

Her huffiness agitates her.

CONSTANCE

You got friends in high places with the company or something?

KATHERINE

I am a passenger who deserves due consideration.

CONSTANCE

Due consideration. I suppose nobody else does.

KATHERINE

That's the whole point. If it happened to you, wouldn't you want to be treated fairly?

CONSTANCE

For your information, I've been riding this bus line hundreds of times. And I've never had a problem.

Tagger hears the exchange above the ROAD NOISE from his seat near the rear.

Katherine feels uncomfortable with the attention she gets.

KATHERINE

All the same. The sign said Route 2 Venice. And we're not going to Venice. We're going to West Hills! It's wrong, that's all, just wrong!

Tagger cuts in.

TAGGER

Getting upset ain't helping, lady.

She stiffens.

KATHERINE  
Wouldn't you be upset? I'm entitled  
to feel what I feel!

TAGGER  
Nobody forced you to get on this  
bus, lady.

Katherine feels the walls closing in on her.

KATHERINE  
It said Route 2 -

Harold intervenes.

HAROLD  
Where were you going?

KATHERINE  
I had a job interview in Santa  
Monica.

HAROLD  
People have car trouble all the  
time. Maybe you can reschedule.

KATHERINE  
I doubt it. Jobs are so scarce  
these days.

HAROLD  
Bad luck. That's what it is.

KATHERINE  
No. It's that bus driver. She  
switched the route on me.

HAROLD  
How can that be? Then the rest of  
us would be on the wrong bus.

KATHERINE  
The sign said Route 2 Venice.

HAROLD  
You can't blame the bus driver for  
what you did.

KATHERINE  
You know what. I'm going to call  
customer service right now. I'm  
sick of this.



She pulls out her large bag. Opens it. Fumbles for her cell phone. As she reaches for the phone and removes it, the bag tumbles to the floor.

Large wads of cash spill from the bag.

Katherine fails to notice. She continues to dial.

Harold observes the wads of cash.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Shock and astonishment from other Bus Riders at the spilled cash.

BACK TO SCENE

KATHERINE

Hello? Is this customer service?

Harold reaches for a wad of bills. He picks one up. He holds it up to Katherine.

KATHERINE

Yes. I want to make a complaint. I -

The bills in front of her, she stops.

KATHERINE

Nevermind. I'll call back.

HAROLD

Missing something?

She looks at the spilled cash. Panicky, she scrambles to stuff it back into the bag.

She feels pressure from the stares of other Riders.

KATHERINE

Alright. Don't get any ideas.

She resumes her seat. Reaches for the cash Harold holds. He keeps it from her.

HAROLD

You said you were unemployed.

She grimaces at him.

KATHERINE

Give me that money.

HAROLD

Where did you get it?

KATHERINE

That's none of your business. Maybe I cashed in my I-R-A. What do you care? It's not yours. Give it to me!

HAROLD

In hundred dollar bills. There must be ten thousand here alone.

KATHERINE

You have no right!

HAROLD

So there's nothing extraordinary about carrying this much money. You do it all the time.

Katherine tugs at the wad of bills Harold holds with all her strength. He does not let go.

KATHERINE

Give me my money! It's mine!

She feels the eyes of Riders gouging into her.

KATHERINE

You're all against me! Aren't you?

She gasps. She wrenches some more at the bills Harold holds.

KATHERINE

Just like that bank I worked in!  
They were against me, too!

A shock covers her face. She relaxes her grip on the cash. She caves.

KATHERINE

Alright. Alright. I took the money.

She sobs.

KATHERINE

You don't know what it's like.  
Being a single woman. Past her  
prime. Around all those girls.  
Young, fertile females. Having  
babies. Getting married. Showers.  
Weddings. Happiness.

(MORE)

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

And that manager. He said, "You're too old to be here."

She regains composure.

KATHERINE

I thought - I thought, "With this money, I'll get even. I'll show him. I can start a new life." Online dating. Clubs. Finally -

She sobs again.

KATHERINE

Have the kind of life I deserve. Was it really so bad? When I'm treated so callously? Snubbed? Pushed away? Scrimping and saving for every crumb?

She swallows. Wipes her face.

KATHERINE

Now I can be somebody.

Harold and the Riders glare at her.

KATHERINE

What are you going to do about it? Turn me in?

Harold hands her the wad of cash. For a moment, a look of forgiveness and understanding between them.

Then he turns his head from her view. Other Riders turn to hide their faces from her.

KATHERINE

What are you doing? Why?

She stuffs the bills into her bag. When she looks up

SERIES OF SHOTS

HAROLD THE ALIEN, strange, insect-looking head, stares back at her.

BUS RIDERS THE ALIENS, similar strange, insect-looking heads, glare at her.

DEIDRE THE ALIEN drives the bus.

Katherine freezes in shock.

BACK TO SCENE

Harold stands to unzip his suit. He wears an alien Captain's uniform. His voice sounds INSECT SQUEAKY.

HAROLD THE ALIEN

We have been looking for a specimen  
like you to observe and study.

He motions to Deidre the Alien.

Katherine aghast.

HAROLD THE ALIEN

Home Deidre.

FADE TO WHITE

THE END