

DEADHEADERS

Written by

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Based on the Novel

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. DEAD-END DINER - METROCITY - NIGHT

The restaurant sits at the end of a dark street across the river from the shining lights of Metrocity's downtown core.

A black SUV pulls into the lot with a small aluminum fishing boat in tow, joining the only other vehicle in the lot, a multi-colored big rig logging truck.

INT. DINER - NIGHT (ONE MINUTE LATER)

Four MEN enter. BUMPER (early 30s, frumpy) then RANDY (late 30s, handsome) then MYLES (mid 20s, fit) and Max (early 60s, burly) all wear blue shirts and black winter jackets or vests sporting a red MCT logo on the breast. Randy is the only one without a jacket. He shivers, freezing.

The tired-looking WAITRESS pours another cup of coffee for the TRUCK DRIVER at the counter table. She acknowledges her customers with a nod as Max let's the door close behind him.

MAX

(to the others)

Take a booth further up, would ya.

They sit at the booth with Bumper and Myles across from Randy and Max. Myles is squeezed up against the glass window by Bumper. They look at each other in silence for a long beat.

MAX (CONT'D)

How 'ya holding up, Myles?

MYLES

(hesitates)

I, I don't know. I mean --

The Waitress approaches, dropping four MENUS on the table. A COFFEE POT in the other hand.

WAITRESS

Good evening, gentlemen. Now, don't you boys look like you've spent the night on the far side of trouble!

She glances out at the boat through the window.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)
You guys just coming back from some
dusk fishing?

RANDY
Something like that.

BUMPER
(to Waitress)
Have you ever seen a dusk fish,
ma'am? They're meaner than trouser
trout!

The waitress checks her watch.

WAITRESS
So...will you all be taking coffee?

Without a word, Randy pushes his cup in her direction.

BUMPER
Oh, yes please, darling. Love me
some of that high octane jitter
juice.

The Waitress rolls her eyes.

WAITRESS
(to Myles)
Young man? Coffee?

Myles hesitates.

MYLES
Uh, no thanks. I'm jittery enough.

Max, bothered by Myles's admission, offers Myles's CUP to the
Waitress as she fills the others.

MAX
Pour him a cup, anyway, miss.

She's impacted by the intensity in Max's eyes. She pours.

BUMPER
(to Waitress)
You greeted us with a good evening
but my watch reads 2:57 in the
morning. Are you serving breakfast
or dinner?

WAITRESS
This diner is open twenty-four
hours and there's only one menu.

Bumper looks confused.

RANDY

Does that answer your question,
Bumper?

WAITRESS

I'll give you boys a few minutes.

She departs, disappearing into the kitchen.

BUMPER

She's being rather abrupt, isn't
she!

Randy takes his coffee cup in his shivering hand.

RANDY

I'm still shivering. I don't know
if it's from the cold or because
I'm still freaked the fuck out.

Bumper's got the menu to his face.

BUMPER

Yeah, that was some pretty gruesome
shit back there, no matter how you
slice it. I've never seen bone
protrude like that. It was
disgusting! (beat) Anyway, I'm
starving.

MYLES

I don't want to think about it.

MAX

All things considered, it went
smooth enough I think. You...we'll
all get over it. Although Myles
here might have a little more
trouble than the rest of us.

BUMPER

You're way too sensitive, Myles.

MYLES

(faintly)
I'll be fine.

MAX

I'm glad to hear that, Myles.
We all appreciate your support in
the matter.

Randy adds a CREAMER to his COFFEE.

MYLES

But fuck, Max... Why did you have
to go and, and...and --

MAX

And what, Myles?

Myles hesitates.

MAX (CONT'D)

Come on. Say it.

Myles shrinks in the corner.

MAX (CONT'D)

Thought so.

Max takes a sip from his coffee.

MAX (CONT'D)

It's done. And now, just like
that, the world is a better place.

BUMPER

(raising his cup)

Agreed. Here's to that.

Nobody else raises their cups.

Bumper takes a sip. Embarrassed, he looks down at the PLACE
MAT with an oddly unsettling animated image of a boy eating a
hamburger. He ponders the imagery for a beat, noting the
BACON in the boy's hand.

BUMPER (CONT'D)

That's a swell cup of Joe. You
know, I think I'm going to order
the steak and eggs on toast and
have the pancake superstack on the
side.

RANDY

My appetite's shot.

MAX

(under breath)

Order something anyway.

BUMPER

I'll finish what you don't eat,
buddy.

MAX

We covered the tracks, dotted the T's, crossed the I's. Now, all we have to do is stick together and...

Meanwhile, outside the window, HEADLIGHTS shine as a SQUAD CAR pulls into a space close to their booth. Myles is suddenly agitated.

MYLES

(exploding)

Dot the... JESUS CHRIST!

The men are instantly uncomfortable with Myles's outburst. The Waitress and the trucker look over. Myles catches himself and speaks quieter.

MYLES (CONT'D)

(strained whispering)

What we were doing out there was not...taxes!

The Squad Car lights up its cherries and CHIRPS the SIREN. All four men at the booth jump.

MYLES (CONT'D)

(with rising panic)

Oh, shit. Oh for fucks sake are you kidding me? Already? How is that possible?

MAX

(stern and focused)

Look at me, Myles. They are not here for us. Not for us. (beat) Now gentlemen, is there anything we've forgotten?

RANDY

(to Max)

Now why would you say THAT??

MAX

The two sentiments were not related.

The door swings open and two COPS enter. A young black man, ROGER, looks at ease where his female partner, CLAIRE, has a more vigilant demeanor. Roger glances at the truck driver, who is hunched over his runny eggs, and then down towards the four men.

Max's booth is instantly silent.

Myles starts to lose control. He is hyper-ventilating and his eyes dart anywhere but towards the police. Max stares Myles down.

MAX (CONT'D)
 (steadily)
 NOT for us.

The Waitress returns from the back, sees the Cops, nods to Claire, who nods back. The Waitress turns away.

Rogers strolls toward the booth, eying the boat. Claire hangs back at the cash. Roger looks over the four men.

ROGER
 You guys been dusk fishing?

BUMPER
 No sir!

The Waitress holds up a paper cup.

WAITRESS
 Hey, Roger! I haven't seen you in here in a hot minute. Got your double-double for ya!

Roger turns from the booth and smiles at the Waitress. He pauses for a moment, turns back and sizes the men up, before slowly walking over to her.

ROGER
 Hi, Kaitlyn. Thanks. I had a couple weeks vacation and uh...

WAITRESS
 Oh nice. Did you get away?

COP #1
 Yeah, the wife and I spent it in the Dominican Republic.

WAITRESS
 (hiding jealousy)
 Good for you.

Truck Driver motions to the Waitress, so she pulls his check from her pouch and slides it his way.

Meanwhile at the booth, some of the tension has lifted.

BUMPER

Ok, Randy's gotta go schmooze supervisor what's-her-face in the control room this afternoon so we can get that data dumped.

MYLES

(nervously)

Shouldn't we be NOT talking about this right now?

MAX

So they can't see where my bus has been. Of course. That's good thinking, Bumper.

RANDY

Said no one ever.

BUMPER

Stay behind that yellow line, Randy...

Back at the counter.

ROGER

Ya, you know, it was a great time.

WAITRESS

No doubt. (to Claire) How do you take yours, miss?

CLAIRE

I like my coffee like I like my co-worker.

WAITRESS

One smooth-talking, handsome cup of coffee coming up.

Claire backs up a bit toward the door as the Waitress begins her pour into another paper cup.

At the booth table...

MAX

What else?

RANDY

There's no guarantee she'll do it.

BUMPER

What? Are you losing your powers of seduction, old man?

(MORE)

BUMPER (CONT'D)

She had no problem the last time we went through something like --

RANDY

She's not going to risk her career every time I show up asking for a --

BUMPER

Just covering the trail, Randy...

Roger sets his coffee on the counter. Waitress holds the second cup aloft but Claire is a few feet away looking outside, so she sets it down.

Truck Driver leaves a few small bills on the table and stands up from the counter seat.

TRUCK DRIVER

(mutters)

Keep the change.

He ends up toe to toe with Claire, who turns her gaze from the window.

CLAIRE

Say... that's a nice rig.

There is a long moment of silence. Truck Driver's eyes dart back and forth, looking...

Truck Driver explodes, taking a fast step to his right, is matched by Claire. He stops, re-calculates, then suddenly turns and bolts. He runs right into Roger, who grabs him and spins him into the pie counter, bending him over it.

The four men watch, shocked into silence.

ROGER

(to Truck Driver)

Let's take it easy now...

Various items are knocked off the counter in the struggle, but Roger holds him down while Claire gets the cuffs on, pulls him off the counter and shoves him toward the door.

ROGER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Kaitlin, we're going to come back for those coffees.

The waitress is a bit shaken but gets her composure.

WAITRESS

(flirty)

I'll keep them warm for you, Roger!

Roger smirks and Claire rolls her eyes. The Cops exit with Truck Driver. Through the window, the men at the booth watch him being tossed into the back of the cruiser.

EXT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

The men at the booth table all look through the glass with their mouths agape.

INT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

They remain stoic until the car is started and gone.

Suddenly, Bumper breaks into a SNICKER. Randy finds this contagious and starts to LAUGH. Soon, Max fights the GIGGLES. Their LAUGHTER grows LOUDER. Bumper SOUNDS like a HYENA, POUNDS the table in delight.

RANDY

Damn. That scared the living shit out of me.

Even Myles has a smirk on him, CHUCKLING lightly. The Waitress turns to look at them as the LAUGHTER fades to a beat of silence.

BUMPER

That was intense. I was sure we were fucked.

MAX

(wiping tears of laughter)

Yeah. I totally thought they were here for us.

Max pushes the untouched cup of coffee over to Myles.

MAX (CONT'D)

Hanging in there, son?

MYLES

(sheepishly)

I wanna get home.

MAX

Darn right, Myles. Don't we all. But first...bacon.

BUMPER

And pancakes!

MAX
...and pancakes.

Max gives Myles a lingering fatherly look.

MAX (CONT'D)
We look after each other, Myles.

BUMPER
Let's order.

Bumper raises an arm, SNAPPING his finger for service.

BUMPER (CONT'D)
Oh, Miss!

Waitress heads over with a pad. Myles looks beyond stressed as he sits huddled in the corner of the booth...

END TEASER

FADE OUT:

OPENING CREDITS:

The light Bossa Nova SOUNDTRACK is incongruous with the sometimes ominous, often frantic and mostly dark imagery as shots involving mass transit with buses, trains and street cars all bleed into each other. Traffic everywhere.

Some friendly faces of transit employees and passengers. Many indifferent, if not unfriendly faces of pedestrians and passengers. Mechanics fixing buses, which are up on hoists. Transit law arresting someone. Supervisors in cars. Supervisors in the control room in front of a giant screen of buses across the city. City administrators speaking at town halls, employees cleaning the bus, welding parts together, buses lined up through the downtown corridor.

Vintage photos and film loops of people catching the bus, light rail and street car. Passengers riding the bus over the decades. A growing, changing city with more streets and expanding infrastructure, more modern buses, more modern trains, more traffic, more people. Shots of bus crashes and train derailments, fatal and non-fatal...

FADE TO BLACK

BEGIN ACT ONE

ON BLACK SCREEN: "SUMMER 2004"

FADE IN:

EXT. PARKING LOT - ENDEAVOR RENT-A-CAR - DAY

The sign reads: "Endeavor Rent-a-Car" and below, "The Road's The Limit." In a cheap conservative suit, Myles holds a clip board with a rental contract attached. He stands sweating in the summer heat while an ELDERLY COUPLE (THE BROWNS) inspects the body and paint of a Ford Sedan.

MR. BROWN

I told you no, no, no, no, young man. You said it yourself that my policy transfers onto this car while mine is being repaired. My insurance agent told me the same damn thing.

MRS. BROWN

Maybe we should consider what the boy is saying...

Mr. Brown is bent down over the hood for closer look.

Behind Myles, EDDIE who's in his late twenties, exits the store front with an attractive, provocatively dressed WOMAN.

MR. BROWN

Young man, I've been driving over sixty years. Only once was I ever in a car crash and that was way, way back in '72. That is, until yesterday when that dope-smoking, pimple-squeezing, dick-jerking --

MRS. BROWN

Darling --

MR. BROWN

The little prick is talking on his phone. Can you believe the nerve?

MYLES

Kids today.

Myles catches Eddy giving him a look, tapping his watch. Meanwhile, he's walking the Woman around a Ford Mustang.

WOMAN

Oh, this must be my lucky day to get a free upgrade. What a beautiful car.

EDDIE

We aim to please. Can I show you where the buttons are?

WOMAN

That would be wonderful.

They both LAUGH and climb into the Mustang. Meanwhile...

MRS. BROWN

(pointing at her door)

Is this a scratch?

Myles looks.

MYLES

I wouldn't call that a scratch. It's not through the paint...

MR. BROWN

Mark it down on your paper there.

Myles bites his tongue.

MYLES

Scuff on passenger's door.

He draws a line across the door on the rental contract's diagram of a car.

MR. BROWN

And there's a stone chip up here on the front bumper.

MYLES

So, that's a no to the collision damage waiver?

MR. BROWN

Young man, for the last time...

INT. WASH BAY - ENDEAVOR RENT-A-CAR (TEN MINUTES LATER) - DAY

Myles scrubs down a Toyota with a soapy brush when Eddie enters via the office door.

EDDIE

It's getting fucking hot out.

MYLES

You think?

EDDIE

And speaking of hot. Did you see that chick I put into the 'stang? Wow. Smoking hot! She was an easy sell into the Dub because she was worried about the extra horse power. Eddie's selling the Dub!

MYLES

You're on a streak, Eddie.

EDDIE

Collision Damage is pure profit.

MYLES

Do we have another Mustang coming in soon?

EDDIE

Uh. Don't think so. I'll check with the other offices.

MYLES

Because there's still a noon reservation for that Mustang.

EDDIE

Fucking long weekends!

Eddie glides right up beside Myles.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Listen to this. I'm taking this huge greasy whopper of a shit this morning and don't ask me how but my pen falls into the fucking toilet bowl and just disappears, there's so much shit.

Myles's eyes lock on the PEN with its Endeavor crest as Eddie holds it up close to him.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

And so I'm up to my elbow digging it out.

MYLES

Why? Why would you do that?

EDDIE
Myles. Come on, man. It's a
thirty-dollar pen.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

Several CUSTOMERS are lined up at the front of the tiny office as Melanie taps information onto a KEYBOARD.

In the wash bay, Myles wipes down the inside windows of a car as the Car Jockey scrubs the body's exterior.

In the parking lot, EDDIE hands the rental agreement to his CLIENT, who signs it.

Outside, Melanie walks a CHEVROLET RENTER around a small Chevrolet.

CHEVROLET RENTER
Can I still add damage waiver?

MELANIE
Absolutely!

Myles is in the office with what appears to be three SKETCHY CHARACTERS with short tempers.

MYLES
Sorry, guys. My hands are tied. I
can't rent you the vehicle without
getting an authorization on your
credit card.

SKETCHY CHARACTER #1
Oh give me a fucking break!

In the wash bay, Myles is accidentally sprayed by the hose.

In FAST MOTION, all types of cars enter and exit the lot, which gradually depletes of vehicles as the day passes.

END MONTAGE

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - ENDEAVOR RENT-A-CAR - EVENING

An older worn out Honda Civic hatchback pulls into the near-empty lot, parking beside a big shiny Chrysler. Myles gets out and goes to the office door where a CLOSED sign hangs. He pulls at the locked door before finding his key.

INT. OFFICE - ENDEAVOR RENT-A-CAR - EVENING

Myles enters the office and hangs his suit jacket over the front customer service desk. He HEARS two VOICES from the Manager's Office at the back of the room. One is Eddie. The other is CAROLINE, early thirties.

EDDIE (O.S.)
And speak of the devil...

CAROLINE (O.S.)
Okay, so we'll set this aside for now...

MYLES
(shouting to the back room)
Hi, Caroline. What brings you all the way out this way on a Friday evening?

EDDIE (O.S.)
Hey, Myles. Could you come back here a minute?

Myles goes to the back, leans into the Manager's Office.

MYLES
Where's Melanie?

EDDIE
I just sent her out of here for the weekend.

Caroline is at the computer behind Eddy's desk while Eddy sits in one of two chairs facing her.

MYLES
That's the busiest day this branch has ever seen.

CAROLINE
I must say you've got a lot of cars on the road today.

EDDIE
Not a car left in the city.

CAROLINE
I must admit we had a great day city-wide. Now Myles, please take a seat.

Myles sits beside Eddie, who's looking down at the floor.

MYLES

Thanks. My soaking feet are killing me. By the way, is there any way we could get an extra car jockey here on Fridays?

CAROLINE

I'll make note of that. How have you been doing, Myles?

MYLES

Pretty good...I mean super fantastic.

CAROLINE

That's the Endeavor way.

Myles notes the piece of paper on the desk beside Eddie's thirty dollar pen.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

You know, we have been considering you for a branch manager position for some time, Myles.

Myles sits up in his seat.

MYLES

I appreciate that, Caroline...

CAROLINE

But our expectations of you were much higher.

MYLES

What, what's that now?

Eddie is still focused on the carpet between his shoes, with air WHISTLING through his nostrils.

CAROLINE

You've taken a little too long to step up to the plate, Myles. And, lately, we feel as though you're not going that extra mile.

Myles looks to Eddie, who refuses to lift his gaze.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

So, regrettably, Endeavor is letting you go, Myles.

MYLES

You're firing me?

CAROLINE
 Endeavor is letting you go.

MYLES
 You're kidding, right?

Caroline doesn't respond.

MYLES (CONT'D)
 But I do a great job. The numbers
 have only gone up since you
 transferred me to this branch.

CAROLINE
 True. But you haven't been selling
 enough collision damage waiver.
 You know that's our profit, Myles.

Myles watches as Caroline picks up Eddie's pen, grasps it,
 turns it over in her hand. Eddie lets out a SIGH.

MYLES
 And you're firing me over that?
 I...I don't get it...

CAROLINE
 Also, you should be pretty much
 running this office so Eddie can
 focus more on promotion and sales.
 Endeavor feels that you're not cut
 out to manage a branch at this
 time. Do you have anything to say?

FOCUS ON CAROLINE:

Slowly rotate from Caroline's face as Myles begins...

MYLES
 I've personally rented more cars
 out of this branch each and every
 month than Melanie or Eddie.
 You've got me doing sales calls to
 dealerships, body shops, insurance
 agents. I deliver cars out to the
 middle of, of nowhere with the tow-
 dolly because Melanie can't or
 won't. Have I ever had a customer
 complaint about me specifically?
 No. Or at least not one I'm aware
 of. And then I'm scrubbing down
 cars in my suit because we have
 only one car jockey.

FOCUS ON MYLES:

...to see Myles isn't actually speaking to Caroline. They only look at each other as she awaits a response.

MYLES (V.O.)
(as if to Caroline)
I just dropped someone off with my own car because there's nothing left on our lot. How the hell can I run the office when I'm running all over the place...

Myles pauses.

MYLES (V.O.)
Who am I kidding? I'm too ashamed and embarrassed to tell her what should have been said.

Caroline unconsciously puts the pen to her lips. Eddie reacts by studying the wrinkles on his polished shoes.

MYLES (V.O.)
Go on, Caroline. Have a taste of Eddie's thirty dollar pen.

CAROLINE
If you'd like to get it off your chest, please go ahead and --

MYLES
I've, I've got nothing to say, Caroline.

CAROLINE
Okay then. It's getting late and I've got a long drive to the cottage, so if you'll sign this release form you'll be paid two weeks severance.

MYLES
And if I don't sign?

CAROLINE
Then Endeavor can't process your severance.

MYLES
Can this wait until Monday? I'd like to maybe take this to a lawyer.

CAROLINE

Trust me, Myles. You don't want to do that.

She pushes the release form across the desk, offers the pen.

MYLES

I've got my own pen, thanks.

Eddie makes a barely audible GRUNT.

EXT. PARKING LOT - ENDEAVOR RENT-A-CAR - EVENING

The sun is lower as Myles steps outside and goes to his car. He throws his suit jacket in the front seat beside him, watching as Eddie and Caroline come to the front windows to shut the HORIZONTAL BLINDS.

Myles turns the ignition. CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

MYLES

Shit.

He tries again.

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

Myles sits in the sweltering car a beat before getting out. He goes to the front door of Endeavor, hesitates, then marches across the parking lot to the street.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - EVENING

Myles jogs in his SQUEAKING and worn dress shoes when he spots an approaching CITY BUS. He picks up the pace to race to the stop and waves for the bus, but it ROARS past. Myles slows to a defeated walk, catching his breath.

EXT. SUBURBAN BOULEVARD - NIGHT

It's almost dark when Myles crosses a strip of lawn to the parking lot of a four-story apartment complex.

INT. MYLES'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Myles enters and flips off his SQUEAKING shoes, exposing soggy wet dress socks. He SEES the framed UNIVERSITY DEGREE on a wall near the entrance. It reads: *Bachelor's Degree in Geography.*

He flings a shoe at it, smashing the frame's glass and knocking it to the carpet. Myles falls back against the apartment door, slides down to his ass and WEEPS.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

A series of shots of Myles looking for, applying to and interviewing (unsuccessfully) for work at Hertz Car Rental, at a geo-engineering firm, at Home Depot, for an outside sales position with a chemical manufacturer...

END MONTAGE

INT. DINING SPACE - SIS AND BRODY'S TOWNHOME - EVENING

SIS (early 30s) and BRODY (early 40s) sit at each end of the table. LITTLE GUY, an adorable toddler, sits in a high chair beside his mother with a tiny TOY BUS ramming into the mashed potatoes and peas in front of him. Myles sits between his sister and her husband.

SIS

You're not eating, Myles.

MYLES

Sorry, I haven't had much of an appetite lately. It's delicious though.

SIS

Are you sick? You look pale.

MYLES

I'm fine, Sis.

SIS

Maybe you're anemic. Eat your steak, Myles. That will help.

BRODY

He's working on it, baby.

LITTLE GUY

(gurgling to himself)

Baby...baby. Who's the baby?

SIS

I don't know, Myles...

MYLES

It's been a tough summer. I think
I'm just stressed out.

SIS

You must be suffering from
depression or --

MYLES

I'm just a little down, Sis.

BRODY

Don't worry about it, Myles. You'll
be back on your feet before long.

MYLES

I'm fine. Things are just getting
pretty tight.

BRODY

Maybe we can spot you a month's
rent or help out with...

MYLES

I hope it doesn't come to that.

SIS

I can see it, Myles. You're
definitely not your old self. And
you must still be upset over Amy.

Brody stops chewing his steak as he looks across at Sis.

MYLES

I don't know if that's what's --

BRODY

(with a full mouth)

Plenty of fish in the pond, Myles.
You'll catch the right one before
long.

SIS

Brody, your mouth is full.

Little Guy ploughs his toy bus through his food.

LITTLE GUY

Vroom! Vroom! Daddy's bus.

BRODY

That's right, Little Guy.

SIS

I thought you and Amy made a cute couple and were pretty serious.

BRODY

Anyway, like I was telling you earlier, I pulled some strings and I've got your resume near the top of the pile. You'll probably be getting a call within days.

MYLES

Thanks, Brody, but I might have a couple options opening up...

BRODY

Hey, with you're education, you'll be able to climb the ladder and get into management within a few years.

MYLES

A few years...

BRODY

You were working eleven hour shifts for peanuts, Myles. If you put in those hours at the Transit Commission, you'll at least be making some coin. Plus benefits and a pension.

MYLES

I appreciate your help, Brody. But, driving a bus...

BRODY

Don't knock it, Myles. It's good work. Besides, there's a city full of women out there for you to meet. I mean, it's pussy everywhere.

Sis drops her CUTLERY on her plate with a CLANG. She gives Brody the evil eye. Little Guy freezes, watching the look exchanged between his parents.

SIS

Is that so, Brody?

BRODY

For a young single guy like Myles, it's a great job, I'm saying. Besides, you met me on the bus.

SIS

Don't remind me. (to Myles) Maybe you need to be on some sort of medication, Myles. Or maybe see a psychologist. At least for a while.

MYLES

You think I'm that screwed up, Sis?

SIS

I just think you've taken a few punches lately. You know, between losing Mom, losing your job and Amy leaving.

MYLES

I'll be fine.

SIS

I'll talk to our doctor and see if she can take you as a patient. Maybe she can get you on an anti-depressant or something.

MYLES

You don't have to --

SIS

Please, Myles. You need to look after yourself. Brody took something for anxiety for a while.

BRODY

(to Sis)

That started, coincidentally, just after I met you.

SIS

Hey! What are you saying, Brody?

BRODY

(to Myles)

Now I just self medicate.

Brody takes a deep sip from his glass of Merlot.

BRODY (CONT'D)

Tell you what, Myles. How about we head up to the hills and ride the shit out of the trails up there next weekend? It'll do us both some good.

MYLES

I don't know, Brody.

BRODY

You don't know! Man, you really are depressed. Mountain biking has got to be your favorite thing.

MYLES

I just haven't had it in me.

BRODY

You'll feel way better after a ride.

MYLES

Okay. Fine. We'll do that.

LITTLE GUY

Pussy.

The three adults turn their attention to Little Guy.

LITTLE GUY (CONT'D)

Pussy cat.

Little Guy GIGGLES.

EXT. FORESTED TRAIL - THE HILLS - DAY

Sprayed with mud and drenched in sweat, Myles rides his MOUNTAIN BIKE along the dirt trail. He pushes his body, his bike and his luck to the limit, swerving and veering among the rocks and trees at high speed. The shocks bottom out as his bike bounces over potholes on the curving narrow path.

Gaining speed on a downhill slope, Myles peddles full out as the forest opens up along a cliff overlooking a distant river and the cityscape beyond it.

Back beneath a dark canopy of trees, Myles nearly loses control when he hits an exposed root.

On a steep downhill, Myles accelerates around a bend, approaching a creek with a narrow footbridge. He spots the YOUNG WOMAN walking her leashed AUSTRALIAN SHEPPARD across it, toward him. He veers right, dropping down into the stony creek. The seat punches his groin as Myles splashes through and across.

YOUNG WOMAN

Oh God. Sorry! Are you okay?

MYLES

I'm okay!

Myles keeps pedaling. The dog BARKS after him.

YOUNG WOMAN

(barely audible)

Sheila, no!

Myles pushes harder, GASPING for breath as his bike speeds toward a crossing.

CUT TO:

In SLOW MOTION, his bike flies out of the bush to jump the gravel road. The grill of a speeding MACK TRUCK is suddenly almost right up on top of him. The truck's BULLDOG HOOD ORNAMENT glimmers in his eye as an AIR HORN blows.

CUT TO:

The bike wheels land hard onto uneven stone across the road as Myles continues back into the forested trail. Behind him, he can HEAR ROARING EXHAUST, RUMBLING TIRES and SQUEAKING SUSPENSION as the truck rolls away.

Myles jumps the bike over a ledge and veers down and left to where the trail levels off.

He clenches both brake handles, locking the wheels into a skidding stop as a giant BLACK BEAR steps out just yards in front of him. Myles balances with his feet locked into his peddles as the bear stands on her hind legs and SNORTS.

Myles and the bear face each other for a long moment before two BEAR CUBS come running out of the bush, crossing the path and disappearing beneath the ferns on the other side. Mother bear keeps her eyes locked on Myles before leaping off to follow her offspring.

PANTING, Myles unclips his shoes from the peddles and sets his feet in the mud. He reaches for his water bottle and chugs from it. He catches his breath, HEARING an approaching BIKE rolling closer from somewhere behind him.

BRODY (O.S.)

Myles! Myles, wait up!

FADE OUT

END ACT ONE

BEGIN ACT TWO

ON BLACK SCREEN: "FALL"

FADE IN:

EXT. METROCITY TRANSIT COMMISSION - MORNING

Along a sidewalk, Myles locks his MOUNTAIN BIKE to the galvanized chain link fence which surrounds the huge property. He's wearing dress pants and a tie, carrying a small BACKPACK.

INT. TRAINING ROOM - METROCITY TRANSIT - DAY

Myles sits at one of four round tables, which each seats three OPERATORS-IN-TRAINING while two INSTRUCTORS, CLIFF and LORRAINE are at the front of the room.

CLIFF

Hello everyone. My name's Cliff...

OPERATORS-IN-TRAINING

(most, in unison)

Hello, Cliff.

Cliff LAUGHS.

CLIFF

What a friendly bunch. Uh, so my name is Cliff and I'll be one of your instructors over the next six weeks. There are a number of us from the Training Department who will be working to get you licensed to operate a full-sized bus. This is Lorraine, who's in charge of said department.

LORRAINE

Hello, everybody. And welcome to your first day of training.

The dozen Operators-in-Training (three of them WOMEN) respond.

CLIFF

So over the next six weeks, which will be roughly fifty percent in class and fifty percent on the road, we will get you trained to operate a city bus so you can become proud employees of Metrocity Transit. Now, we've got lots of red tape and paperwork to get through this morning. Sorry about that. We need lots of signatures from you to feed Metrocity's bureaucracy...

Myles scans the room. EMMA, a heavy-set WOMAN (late 20s) stares at Myles with obvious longing. He looks away.

EXT. TARMAC - METROCITY TRANSIT - DAY

Four CITY BUSES are parked on a quiet patch of pavement.

INT. GMC SILVERSIDE BUS - DAY

Myles is at the wheel of the old GMC bus. OPERATORS-IN-TRAINING Emma and DAVINDER (30s) take seats while INSTRUCTOR MIKE (40s) stands beside him.

INSTRUCTOR MIKE

Assuming this old dinosaur starts up for us, we'll get you all to circle the property today, just to get a feel for it.

EMMA

Is that a thing? They don't start?

INSTRUCTOR MIKE

From time to time, Emma. So, first up is Mister Myles.

DAVINDER

(to Emma)

This is going to be fun.

EMMA

You're looking pretty hot behind that wheel, Myles.

INSTRUCTOR MIKE

Could you start us up, Myles?

Myles looks around the dashboard and side panel.

MYLES

Uh, where's the ignition?

INSTRUCTOR MIKE

There is no key, Mister Myles. See that dial on your left?

Myles finds it.

INSTRUCTOR MIKE (CONT'D)

Turn it to the Night Run position so the lights are on.

Myles turns the dial.

INSTRUCTOR MIKE (CONT'D)

The black button just in front of the dial...that's your ignition. Press that, would you please, Mister Myles.

Myles presses the Start Button and the engine ROARS to life.

INSTRUCTOR MIKE (CONT'D)

Foot on the brake. Now, release the maxi-brake. That's the yellow knob on your left. Pull that up.

Myles pulls the maxi-brake.

INSTRUCTOR MIKE (CONT'D)

Very good. Now, put the bus in gear. Ah, Mister Myles, are you wearing your seatbelt?

MYLES

I am.

INSTRUCTOR MIKE

Very good. Safety first. Always. Not doing so is an instant failure on the driver's exam, so you know.

Myles searches for a shifter.

INSTRUCTOR MIKE (CONT'D)

Hit the D button to the right of your wheel.

MYLES

Oh, okay.

He taps the shifter into gear.

INSTRUCTOR MIKE

Now, check your mirrors, assuming you've adjusted them properly, and signal your intent to pull away from the curb, Mister Myles.

Myles looks for the turn signal's switch.

INSTRUCTOR MIKE (CONT'D)

There are two pegs on the floor. One on each side of your left foot. Step on the right one to indicate a right turn.

Myles steps on the peg.

INSTRUCTOR MIKE (CONT'D)

Now, Mister Myles...what do you say we take this puppy for a walk?

CUT TO:

EXT. METROCITY TRANSIT COMMISSION - DAY

Late afternoon, Myles carries his backpack across the tarmac, past a lonely BIKE RACK beside the administrative building. He goes through the gate onto the sidewalk along the boulevard, continuing to where he left his bike. He stops. Several links in the fence are cut. The bike is gone.

Fighting tears, Myles looks at the cut in the fence for a long beat. He's pulled from his stupefaction by a ROARING in-service CITY BUS as it travels past the bus stop across the boulevard. Myles bolts across pavement to the median as the bus passes. An oncoming vehicle BLARES its HORN as he tries to get across the next two lanes. The bus ROARS away.

INT. MYLES'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Myles enters the sparsely decorated flat. He throws an ELECTRICITY BILL and a POSTCARD with a KANGAROO on the front onto the kitchen counter. He returns to the postcard, flips it over to read. He looks conflicted with emotion.

AMY (V.O.)

Dear Myles. I'm sorry we weren't meant to fulfill this adventure together. I'm traveling to Perth in Western Australia with some Swedes I met in Adelaide.

(MORE)

AMY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Highlights include scuba diving the G.B.R., sailing the Whitsundays and a four wheel drive tour of the Outback. I won't forget you. Take care, Myles. Hugs. Amy.

Tears swell in his eyes as Myles stares at the postcard. Then he rips it to shreds.

INT. MYLES'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

With a cordless phone to his ear, Myles paces between a worn couch and a small television.

MYLES

(on phone)

...disk brakes. Yeah. (pause)
Gold, uh, actually more of an amber color. (pause) What's that?
(pause) No. I don't have the serial number. (pause) Twenty-seven gears. (pause) Clip pedals and a, uh, reflective sticker, uh with a small Canadian and American flag on the frame.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - TRAINING DEPARTMENT - DAY

Myles clutches the pay phone's receiver to his ear.

MYLES

(on phone)

This happened yesterday. (pause)
I don't know when. Some time between eight and four-thirty. I made the police report last night. I have the number for you. (pause)
What's my deductible? (pause)
What? (pause) What rider? I'm the rider. (pause) Oh, the a rider on my policy. (pause) I don't have one? (pause) So, so if I make a claim, you'll pay out only five-hundred. But that's the same as my deductible. So, then why the hell would I bother making a claim in the first place?

Myles slams the phone receiver against its hook as a pair of Operators In Training walk past, each with a PAPER CUP of coffee. The obese thirty-something, GORD, is startled.

GORD
Whoa! Easy, big fella.

MYLES
Just dealing with my insurance company.

GORD
Insurance companies are all out to fuck us, Myles.

MYLES
You know it, Gord.

GORD
Hope you had time to grab a coffee.

MYLES
No. Not yet. I could use one.

GORD
Because it looks like they want us back in the class now.

MYLES
Shit.

CUT TO:

BEGIN MONTAGE

Various shots of 12 Operators-in-Training learning to drive the bus.

JANICE (Asian 20s) stands in front of the class.

LORRAINE
Very good, Janice. Could you recite route fourteen?

JANICE
From East End Mall, exit to Leafloor. From Leafloor go left on Murphy, right on Bankers. Continue Bankers to James. Left James to Smith. Right Smith to McCullough...

Gord - stuffed into his seat - drives with a satisfied smile.

Lorraine leads the Operators-in-Training as they enter the Supervisor's Control Room, admiring the room's technology and modern layout.

LORRAINE

And this is our Supervisor's Control Room. At peak periods, six Supervisors operate the radios and...

The class watches a CUSTOMER SERVICE VIDEO, projected onto a screen.

Instructor Mike is onboard with Gord and Myles while Emma drives at night.

A shot of buses running along Metrocity's Transitway System.

Night becomes day...

END MONTAGE

CUT TO:

INT. TRAINING ROOM - METROCITY TRANSIT - DAY

Lorraine is at the front of the classroom where twelve Operators-in-Training sit in groups of three around tables.

LORRAINE

First, congratulations on getting through the last six weeks. I'm sure you'll all be passing the exam and drivers test tomorrow.

The Operators-in-Training respond with HOOTS and CHEERS.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

Then next week, you'll be behind the wheel come Halloween night.

GORD

(laughing)

Throwing us straight to the dogs.

EMMA

So, what kind of work will we be doing?

LORRAINE

The booking department has added you according to seniority to the roster as Evening Spares. So, each day you'll be offered work according to seniority.

DAVINDER

And we're all at the bottom of that seniority list.

JANICE, Asian (late 20s) raises her hand to speak.

JANICE

Hey, but I'm the very last in seniority.

MYLES

And I'm grateful for that, Janice. At least I've got one behind me.

Some LAUGH.

LORRAINE

Most of you will have more choice once the winter booking begins. But until then, you'll be evening spares. You'll each get a call daily at noon and the Dispatcher will read off the available work. You're paid a half-hour for the call.

DAVINDER

(whispering to Myles)

Still sucks to be second-last in seniority, I bet.

Myles doesn't respond.

FADE OUT:

INT. DRIVER'S ROOM - EAST GARAGE - EVENING

Myles rushes into the building, going to the wall of pigeon holes, seeking his DOCKET and RUN PLATE. He pulls out the docket, checks the number to confirm. From his office behind the wall, the DISPATCHER (50s) peeks through the pigeon hole.

DISPATCHER

Cutting it pretty close.

MYLES
Yeah, sorry. Missed my bus.

DISPATCHER
(with sarcasm)
Missed your bus!

The Dispatcher shrugs, returning to his seat while Myles goes to a black phone in the room's far corner. It RINGS as soon as he picks up the receiver. A FEMALE BUS PLACER answers.

FEMALE BUS PLACER
(over phone)
Yep.

MYLES
Uh, hi. It's operator thirty-five-o-six.

FEMALE BUS PLACER
Run number?

MYLES
Huh?

FEMALE BUS PLACER
I need your run number.

MYLES
Oh. It's, uh, seven-dash-twenty.

FEMALE BUS PLACER
Seven-dash-twenty. Oh, lucky you.

MYLES
What, what do you mean?

FEMALE BUS PLACER
Nobody likes that run.

MYLES
Oh great.

FEMALE BUS PLACER
Take bus fifteen-o-two on lane fourteen.

MYLES
Uh, thanks.

FEMALE BUS PLACER
Good night and good luck.

Myles hangs up then pulls open a door to the...

INT. BUS GARAGE - EAST GARAGE - EVENING

...where a setting sun shines through the several open overhead doors at the far end of the expansive, almost empty building.

Myles crosses the numbered lanes to a door at the far side. Through the door, another section of garage with another ten lanes.

Articulated Bus 1502 sits halfway back on lane fourteen. Another bus IDLES in front of it as an impeccably dressed Bus Operator, PILOT PETE (50s) in full formal uniform completes a detailed circle check.

PILOT PETE

I see we've got ourselves a new road pilot.

MYLES

I'm sorry. What's that?

PILOT PETE

A road pilot.

Myles looks confused.

PILOT PETE (CONT'D)

It's just my nickname for us Bus Operators. So, what run are you on this evening?

Myles flashes Pilot Pete a glimpse of the run plate. Pilot Pete WINCES.

PILOT PETE (CONT'D)

Lucky seven. That's a rough one.

MYLES

So I'm told.

PILOT PETE

Get familiar with finding that red line button, you know, in case of emergency.

MYLES

Emergency?

PILOT PETE

You'll be fine. But sometimes it can be hard to reach when shit hits the fan. (beat) Must be a late run.

MYLES

I'm not due back in 'til 2:57.

PILOT PETE

Long shift. At least it pays well.

MYLES

I don't get full wage until my six-month review.

PILOT PETE

No, but that'll come soon enough.

Pilot Pete offers a hand.

PILOT PETE (CONT'D)

Pete.

Myles shakes his hand.

MYLES

Uh, Myles.

PILOT PETE

Welcome aboard, Myles.

MYLES

First night on my own.

PILOT PETE

And on Halloween. That'll be fun. Good news is you got a brand new bus. Fresh out of the box, that one. It's even still got that new bus smell.

EXT. BANKER'S STREET - NIGHT

Bus 1502 rolls along the busy main North-South corridor.

INT. BUS 1502 (MOVING) - NIGHT

The sixty-foot articulated bus carries a crowd of PASSENGERS. Among them, a number of college-aged STUDENTS are dressed in Halloween costumes. A young MOTHER has a SCREAMING CHILD dressed as a PUPPY with her.

GANG MEMBERS in RED HOODIES dominate the back seats. An obviously drunk SLUTTY NURSE stands halfway back with her friends SLUTTY WITCH, SLUTTY ANGEL and SLUTTY CAT.

SLUTTY NURSE

I hope Evan's going to show.

SLUTTY WITCH

Of course he will, you slut.

SLUTTY ANGEL

(to SLUTTY NURSE)

He's hot for you, slut. He so totally wants to fuck you.

SLUTTY CAT

Totally, yeah.

SLUTTY WITCH

Awe. That's so sweet, sluts. I heard Evan and his buddies were going as a six pack of Coors cans and that they won't be wearing anything underneath.

SLUTTY CAT

Evan's got a great six pack.

SLUTTY ANGEL

They're going as a five pack. Tommy has to work tonight.

SLUTTY CAT

That sucks for Tommy.

Unimpressed with the Slutty conversation, an ELDERLY WOMAN with an overloaded grocery cart shares the front bench with an UNCONSCIOUS MAN. Myles is focused on his driving when the stop request bell RINGS.

EXT. BUS STOP - BANKER'S STREET - NIGHT

The bus stops at the curb where a homely young woman dressed as a BUMBLE BEE waits. Two Passengers duck out the center doors as the front door opens. The BUMBLE BEE plants one foot inside the bus.

BUMBLE BEE

(with an affectation)

Hello and a good evening to you, dear Sir.

MYLES

Uh, hi there.

BUMBLE BEE

Could you tell me if this bus is running on its normal schedule?

MYLES

Uh.

Myles looks at the docket, checks his watch.

MYLES (CONT'D)

I might be a few minutes behind...

BUMBLE BEE

Because I've been waiting here for more than twenty-five minutes.

MYLES

Really?

BUMBLE BEE

Yes really. Is there a bus missing in front of you, or are you just running extremely late on your schedule?

MYLES

Sorry, it's busy tonight and --

BUMBLE BEE

Do you go to the university?

MYLES

Um...uh, yeah...I do. It's the end of the line. Just a few minutes from here.

BUMBLE BEE

Are you completely certain about that?

MYLES

I am. You know, it's only a couple blocks from here --

BUMBLE BEE

Do you have the customer service number? I'd like to make a formal complaint.

MYLES

Not on me, no. But I can find out.

BUMBLE BEE
Should you not have that number
readily available?

MYLES
Uh, are you getting on the bus?

BUMBLE BEE
Perhaps, if there's space enough.

MYLES
I'm sure there's space.

BUMBLE BEE
Could you ask everyone to step back
for me? I suffer from an anxiety
disorder and am not particularly
good in crowds.

Myles checks the aisle in his mirror.

MYLES
(to the bus load)
Could everyone step back, please?

Nobody reacts.

MYLES (CONT'D)
(louder)
Step back, please.

The Bumble Bee remains standing with one foot in the bus.

MYLES (CONT'D)
Are you coming?

BUMBLE BEE
I suppose so.

She steps in, walking past without producing a pass or fare.

MYLES
Do you have your bus pass, Miss...

Bumble Bee takes a seat halfway back beside the standing
Sluts, ignoring Myles. He merges into traffic. A car taps
its HORN as the bus pulls out.

Unconscious Man is suddenly standing beside Myles.

UNCONSCIOUS MAN
Say, Chief. Where the fuck are we?

MYLES
Bankers Street and Fourth.

UNCONSCIOUS MAN
Fourth?

MYLES
Heading south.

UNCONSCIOUS MAN
Fuck. Fuck! You missed my stop.

MYLES
What? How did --

UNCONSCIOUS MAN
Stop. Stop! Stop the fucking bus!

MYLES
Okay, just let me get to the curb.

UNCONSCIOUS MAN
Let me the fuck off. You missed my
fucking stop, man.

MYLES
I'm sorry, you're blocking my view.
Could you stay behind the yellow --

UNCONSCIOUS MAN
Just hurry up and let me the fuck
out.

Myles stops the bus three feet from the curb, opening the front door. From behind, another HORN BLARES in the dark. The Unconscious Man trips on the pavement and falls to the sidewalk. He YELLS in pain.

MYLES
Are you alright?

The Unconscious Man gets to his feet. He's livid.

UNCONSCIOUS MAN
Go fuck yourself!

He starts back toward the bus. Myles closes the door before the Unconscious Man kicks at it, YELLING and CURSING.

Myles pulls back into traffic. In the mirror, he SEES Bumble Bee SNICKERING.

EXT. EAST GARAGE - MCT (HOURS LATER) - NIGHT

Bus 1502 stops outside an overhead door, which begins to climb. The bus rolls halfway in, then stops.

INT. BUS GARAGE - EAST GARAGE - NIGHT

A bent CIGARETTE dangles from the grey lips of the elderly BUS PLACER. He sits in the shack just inside the bus entrance. The clock behind him reads 3:12.

BUS PLACER

Yer late.

MYLES

Yeah.

BUS PLACER

Fill out your time sheet and get it signed by the dispatcher before heading home, if you want to get paid for that.

MYLES

Okay.

BUS PLACER

Put her on lane twenty-six.

MYLES

Twenty-six. Thanks. Good night.

Myles moves the bus forward into the garage.

INT. ARTICULATED BUS 1502 - NIGHT

Parked on lane 26, Myles shuts the engine, climbs from his seat and looks over the interior of the new bus. It's a mess with garbage strewn on the floor, drinks spilled across several seats, felt marker tags cover the seat backs and interior walls toward the rear. The windshield is smeared with egg.

MYLES

(to himself)

So much for that new bus smell.

END ACT TWO

BEGIN ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. ARTICULATED BUS (MOVING) - PRESENT DAY

Westbound through the core, Myles takes his quickly filling bus along its lane through downtown.

Along with many others, BRIDGE, an attractive, petite woman in her early thirties boards, presenting her BUS PASS with a warm smile. Her large green eyes lock briefly with Myles before more boarding passengers compel her to continue further back down the aisle.

Myles closes the door, lets the bus start to roll from the stop when an ASIAN WOMAN runs to the front door.

ASIAN WOMAN

Stop! Oh stop! Wait! Wait!

Myles reacts by hitting the brakes. From halfway down the aisle he HEARS SCRAPING, SLIDING and a CLICK CLICK CLICK of HIGH HEELS on the sand-grit floor. He spots Bridge in his mirror, struggling for balance with several others in the abruptly-stopped bus.

BRIDGE

(embarrassed laugh)

Oh my!

Myles opens the door.

ASIAN WOMAN

Thank you. Thank you so much.

MYLES

You're welcome.

ASIAN WOMAN

Thank you. Thank you.

She shows him her bus pass, holding it too close to his face.

MYLES

No, uh, problem.

ASIAN WOMAN

May I stand here? I'm only going one stop.

Myles bites his tongue. He closes the door, ready to go when the light at the intersection turns red.

Others on the sidewalk approach and Myles opens all three sets of doors. He watches in his mirror as Bridge steps further back to accommodate more passengers. By the time the light turns green, the bus is packed tight.

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROCITY - DAY

Myles pulls his crowded bus from the curb, only to have it replaced by another and then another for as far as can be seen down the boulevard.

CUT TO:

BEGIN FLASHBACK

Myles and AMY walk their bikes along a park path, each licking from ice cream cones.

AMY

Why don't we just go for it?

MYLES

It's not that easy, Amy.

AMY

Sure it is. I called the embassy about getting work visas.

MYLES

Work visas? How long are you planning to travel?

AMY

I don't know. Months and months, if not a couple years. Wherever the adventure takes us.

MYLES

We don't have that kind of money.

AMY

That's why we'll have work visas.

MYLES

So I should just quit my job?

AMY

Yes, you should.

MYLES

(half joking)

But what would Endeavor Rent-a-car do without me?

AMY

You're breaking your back for that company. I mean, you're putting in sixty hours a week and for what?

MYLES

But when I get branch manager, the money's going to come rolling in.

AMY

Please, Myles. You know that it's not going to be your career forever. We both talked about backpacking ever since we met. Let's go do that while we're still young and don't have anything keeping us stuck here.

MYLES

Australia?

AMY

For starters, Myles. But we could see Fiji and New Zealand on the way, and come up through Indonesia and Thailand and then who knows!

MYLES

But I could work my way up to City Manager. Then, maybe in a couple years, I could open some branches in Australia...

AMY

You're driving me crazy, Myles. We could be out of here by the New Year and you could be sitting on a tropical beach somewhere.

MYLES

But I think I should stick around with Mom sick and --

AMY

Dammit, Myles. I'm sorry about what your mother's going through. It's horrible. But this is our best chance in life to travel.

MYLES

Okay. Well, let's keep scraping our nickels and dimes together and see where we're at by winter.

AMY

Promise?

MYLES

I promise.

They kiss and continue down the path.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROCITY - DAY

Dozens of buses line up bumper to bumper in their lane, creeping along from stop to stop through afternoon peak traffic. Myles is behind the wheel of an articulated bus, heading east through the city core. The bus ahead of his gets through the intersection.

INT. ARTICULATED BUS (MOVING) - DAY

Myles presses down on the feeder as the light turns amber. The bus ahead of him is stopped just past the intersection. Myles goes to the brake, stopping inches behind a KNOCKING diesel engine.

An OBESE PASSENGER reacts.

OBESE PASSENGER

Oh! I see you've blocked the intersection, bus driver.

Myles ignores the comment.

EXT. ARTICULATED BUS - DOWNTOWN METROCITY - DAY

The bus is in the middle of the busy intersection during rush hour, blocking all north-south traffic. HORNS BLARE, commuters YELL. One slams his steering wheel and dashboard, raising his middle finger. The light turns green. The bus ahead remains stopped, tight to the one ahead of it, which deploys its ramp for a WHEELCHAIR-BOUND PASSENGER who's having trouble negotiating his way into the bus.

INT. ARTICULATED BUS - DAY

Another HORN.

 OBESE PASSENGER
 (to the car driver)
 Oh, give me a break! Relax,
 asshole.

The light turns amber once again.

 MYLES
 (to himself)
 Come on, come on...

The light turns red. Both north and south bound traffic creep deeper into the intersection. More HORNS and YELLING and angry faces aimed at Myles.

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROCITY - DAY

Two buses ahead, the wheelchair ramp is stowed and the bus rolls away, allowing bus traffic to move ahead.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DOWNTOWN - DAY

In punk wear, a young BIKE COURIER races through the garbage-strewn alleyway on a MOUNTAIN BIKE.

INT. ARTICULATED BUS (MOVING) - DAY

The bus ahead stops to load a swarm of passengers from the sidewalk as Myles approaches.

The Bike Courier rolls out of the alleyway, through the crowd and into the bus lane as Myles brings his bus in tight to the one in front. He slams the HORN and presses harder on the brakes as the bike flies out into regular traffic.

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROCITY - DAY

The Bike Courier, mid-twenties, looks a lot like Myles except for the piercings, tattoos and Rastafarian hair. With an enraged grin (exposing a chipped tooth) he turns his bike around, narrowly missing a taxi cab. The Bike Courier grabs the rearview mirror as he balances outside Myles's open window.

INT. ARTICULATED BUS - DAY

Dozens board through all three sets of doors. A FRECKLED WOMAN drops coins into the farebox but Myles is distracted by the Bike Courier at his window.

FRECKLED WOMAN
 Could I have a transfer, please?

MYLES
 Uh...sorry. Yeah.

He taps the printer button, producing a transfer for Freckled Woman. The Bike Courier stares at Myles.

BIKE COURIER
 What the fuck is your problem, man?

MYLES
 My problem?

BIKE COURIER
 Giving me the horn like that.

MYLES
 I was just reacting because you came out of nowhere and I almost hit you.

BIKE COURIER
 Hit me? It wasn't even fucking close, asshole.

A PASSENGER in a PURPLE DRESS boards with others.

MYLES
 I'd say it was more than pretty close. These things don't stop on a dime, you know.

PURPLE DRESS
 Hi. Sorry. Could you tell me if this bus goes to Neville Crescent?

MYLES
 Uh, excuse me?

PURPLE DRESS
 Do you go to Neville Crescent?

MYLES
 Where's that?

PURPLE DRESS

You do go out to the eastern suburbs, don't you? Chapel Creek?

MYLES

Yes, but I don't think I drive along Neville...

PURPLE DRESS

Do you go down Flower street?

MYLES

Uh, yes.

PURPLE DRESS

Then you go past Neville Crescent.

Purple Dress squeezes back as others push their way into the crowded bus. Bike Courier slams his palm against the driver's side glass.

MYLES

How about you take a hike.

BIKE COURIER

How about you come out here and say it to my face.

MYLES

Look, one day you're going to be under the wheels of somebody's bus, and I won't be crying for you when it happens. I promise.

BIKE COURIER

Take a pill, asshole. And tell your fucking idiot co-workers the same.

The Bike Courier spits out a thick wad of snot and saliva onto the glass. He bends the mirror out of position before biking away, swerving among the cars. Another PASSENGER, a middle-aged SWEATY MAN stops beside Myles.

SWEATY MAN

Excuse me. I forgot my bus pass this morning. Do you think I could get a ride home just this time?

Distracted, Myles ignores SWEATY MAN as the Bike Courier disappears around the corner.

SWEATY MAN (CONT'D)
(tapping Myles's shoulder)
Hello?

INT. MYLES'S APARTMENT - DAY

The clock on the Blu-Ray reads 12:07. Myles lies on the couch in front of the television watching a commercial for anti-diarrhea medication. Metrocity Local News returns with an earnest news ANCHOR on the screen.

ANCHOR
Three people are in critical condition after the vehicle they were traveling in collided with a Metrocity Transit bus just after six-thirty last night. Witnesses say the car made a left turn in front of the bus from Franklin at Barrett Street when it was T-boned. There were no serious injuries reported on the bus.

The phone RINGS. Myles puts the cordless receiver to his ear and fumbles for a pencil and sheet of paper.

On television, a CITY BUS pulled over on a dark street with a SMASHED CAR in front of it. FLASHING blue and red lights of EMERGENCY VEHICLES bathe the scene.

MYLES
Hello.

DISPATCHER
(over phone with a thick Indian Accent)
Operator thirty-five-o-six?

MYLES
Speaking.

DISPATCHER
(over phone)
Alright, Myles. You have two choices tonight. First, there's a shift on eighty-five-dash-seventeen starting here at the east garage at fifteen-twenty-two, finishing at twenty-three-fifty-six back at the garage.

(MORE)

DISPATCHER (CONT'D)

The second piece, if you like, is a relief run where you meet the bus at Bankers and Amsterdam at sixteen-thirty-four, and return to the south garage at one-thirteen A.M. That piece would be the two-dash-fourteen.

Myles seems perplexed, as if not fully understanding.

MYLES

Um, you said something about the eighty-five?

DISPATCHER

Yes, eighty-five-dash-seventeen.

MYLES

I'll take the eighty-five.

DISPATCHER

I thought you might. Okay, you're booked. Have a good shift, my friend.

MYLES

Thanks.

Myles hangs up and focuses back on the television.

ANCHOR

Temperatures have plummeted in the Metrocity Region over the last few days and now the city is bracing for the first snow storm of the season with heavy snow predicted to begin sometime tomorrow afternoon.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BUS LAY-UP - WEST END MALL - NIGHT

Myles stops bus 1361 along the snowbank and leaves it IDLING in the snowstorm.

INT. ARTICULATED BUS 1361 - NIGHT

Myles pulls on his winter jacket when he sees a DRUNK passed out in a back seat.

MYLES

Last stop!

He approaches the Drunk.

MYLES (CONT'D)
Hey, last stop. Hello. Time to
get off the bus.

He gives a light kick at the Drunk's boot. No response.

MYLES (CONT'D)
Hey! Wake up! Last stop.

Myles taps the Drunk's shoulder. Again, no response.

MYLES (CONT'D)
Fuck it. I guess you're not
causing any trouble.

EXT. BUS LAY-UP - WEST END MALL - NIGHT

Myles steps out from bus 1361 into deep snow and pulls the
doors closed behind him.

INT. FOOD PLAZA - WEST END MALL - NIGHT

A clock reads 8:53. The quiet mall is closing. Myles
approaches the Starbuck's kiosk where Max stands waiting for
the effeminate BARISTA to fill his THERMOS.

MAX
You can put that on my tab, son.

BARISTA
I'm sorry but I have to charge you
for a grandee.

MAX
For this coon piss? I didn't even
waste one of your paper cups
because I'm being all environmental-
like.

BARISTA
But...

MAX
And be sure to charge me for a
small.

BARISTA
But...

MAX
That's what the girl charges.

BARISTA
But...

MAX
But, but, but! What are you, some kind of butt boy? It's the end of your shift. Don't make this a problem for either of us, son.

Max nods to Myles, who's arrived.

MAX (CONT'D)
And you better pour another one for my hard working friend here. Make it large and charge him for a small as well.

The Barista looks deflated, pours a coffee into a large cup.

MAX (CONT'D)
(to Myles)
What do you take?

MYLES
Huh?

MAX
In your coffee. It's on me.

MYLES
Oh, you don't have to do that.

MAX
But I insist.

MYLES
Uh, just double cream. Thanks.

MAX
(to the Barista)
You heard the man. Double cream.

Max offers his hand to Myles.

MAX (CONT'D)
And you must be Myles.

Myles looks perplexed.

INT. WEST END MALL (MINUTES LATER) - NIGHT

As mall employees close up for the night, Myles and Max walk with their coffees.

MAX

I've known Brody almost ever since he was hired.

MYLES

That's been a while.

MAX

Must be, oh, thirteen years now. Good guy. We get together for a pint every now and then. He was telling me his brother-in-law was working here now. Figured it might be you.

MYLES

Huh. That would be me.

MAX

I've been here just over twenty-eight years.

MYLES

Shit, that's a lot of --

MAX

More than sixteen-hundred Operators and I'm number seven in seniority.

MYLES

You must get good work.

MAX

I put in a lot of overtime. In fact, I'm the highest paid bus driver by far. I made more than most of upper management, including the mayor last year.

MYLES

That's a lot of time to spend sitting in a bus. Uh, sorry, I didn't get your name.

MAX

I figured maybe you already knew my name.

MYLES

Uh, no.

MAX

I'm sure Brody's mentioned me.

MYLES

Maybe, but I don't --

MAX

Max. The name's Max.

Myles stops in his tracks.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. BASEMENT BAR - SIS AND BRODY'S TOWNHOME - NIGHT

Brody and Myles are across the bar from each other. Brody splashes Crown Royal into each of their glasses and some across the bar top. Brody raises his glass.

BRODY

(slurring)

Here's to getting back on the bikes. Hell of a ride today, Myles.

They CLINK glasses.

BRODY (CONT'D)

Anyway, I'm just saying, Myles. If and when you start working there, just make sure you avoid him. He's nothing but trouble.

MYLES

Who's that again?

BRODY

Max. You're best to keep away.

MYLES

What does that mean?

BRODY

There's a few apples in every bushel, Myles. I mean a few bad apples in every...uh...just trust me on that, Myles.

END FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

INT. WEST END MALL - NIGHT

Myles and Max continue their walk to the doors.

MYLES

He might have mentioned you, but I
don't rememb --

MAX

Yeah, we go way back, Brody and me.

EXT. PARKING LOT - WEST END MALL (MOMENTS LATER) - NIGHT

Both men walk the near-empty snow-covered lot.

MAX

You're liking the job, Myles?

MYLES

Oh, it's alright. I'm still
getting used to it, though.

MAX

Yeah. Me too. It's just the god
damned people, you know. They
never fail to disappoint.

MYLES

I'm starting to feel that way.

MAX

You're going to meet all kinds,
Myles. All fucking kinds. Enough
so, you're going to start to see a
pattern or two among certain types
of folks. And you'll be able to
read them like a damn book. So
many of them are all the same. And
with our society in a free-fall,
it's only getting worse every day.

MYLES

I'll try to not let it get to me.

MAX

That a boy. Having any trouble?

MYLES

I mean, every shift seems like potential trouble.

MAX

You know, working for the city, the difference between driving bus and being a garbage man?

MYLES

What's that?

MAX

The garbage man's trash don't talk back.

MYLES

Hmm.

MAX

Bums everywhere these days. Damn despicable, if you ask me.

MYLES

I've got one passed out on my bus right now.

MAX

Is that so? I can help you out with that, Myles.

INT. ARTICULATED BUS 1361 - NIGHT

Myles removes his winter coat, hangs it behind his seat as Max carries his thermos toward the sleeping Drunk.

MAX

Yeah. The cold brings 'em in. Brings 'em in like flies to shit.

At the back of the bus, Max looms over the sleeping Drunk.

MAX (CONT'D)

Wake up.

No response.

MAX (CONT'D)

Wake up, you fucking drunk!

Drunk stirs with a GRUNT and cracks open an eye.

MAX (CONT'D)
End of the line, asshole. Time for
you to get out.

DRUNK
Go to hell.

MAX
I think we're already there. Don't
you?

Max slaps Drunk across the face. Drunk SCREAMS in agony.

DRUNK
What the fuck? What are you --
Max slams him with his thermos. Drunk WHIMPERS and MOANS.

MAX
I told you to get the fuck out.
Blood dribbles from Drunk's lips.

DRUNK
I have a bus pass.

MAX
Sure you do.
Max grabs Drunk by the collar.

MAX (CONT'D)
Pop the doors for me, Myles.

Myles, in shock, turns the lever releasing the interlock. Max yanks the SCREAMING Drunk out of the seat, shoving him up the aisle. Max leans into the door handle, opening the rear set of doors with a POP and HISS. He throws Drunk into the snow bank before the doors close between them.

MYLES
You didn't have to do that.

MAX
You'll be glad I did, Myles. Now,
have yourself a splendid evening
and drive safe.

Max steps out into the dark and snowy night as Myles climbs behind the wheel. He checks the curb mirror but the Drunk in the snowbank doesn't move when Myles pulls away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - MYLES'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In the dark, Myles lies awake in bed with a look of worry.

FADE OUT

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROCITY - DAY

Afternoon rush hour. Myles's bus pulls into the busy stop.

INT. ARTICULATED BUS - DAY

Myles opens the doors for PASSENGERS wanting to escape the city for home. Bridge is among them, smiling as she enters.

MYLES

Hi. Uh...

She stops and turns.

MYLES (CONT'D)

Hi. I just wanted to apologize for...

BRIDGE

Huh? Are you talking to me?

MYLES

Yes.

BRIDGE

Apologize? For what?

MYLES

You got on this bus a few weeks ago...

BRIDGE

I'm on this bus every day.

MYLES

Uh, I was driving this route and you got on.

BRIDGE

Oh, yeah.

Bridge approaches as others squeeze past.

MYLES

I'm sorry, I had to hit the brakes.

BRIDGE
(laughing)
I went sliding in my heels. And
you remember that?

MYLES
Yeah. Sorry about that.

BRIDGE
Oh, it's okay. At least I didn't
end up on my ass.

MYLES
I'm glad for that too.

Seeing his opportunity to pull away from the stop, Myles
closes the door and continues through the downtown core.

BRIDGE
So, you don't drive this route
often.

MYLES
No. I'm a spare so I pick at each
day's scraps.

BRIDGE
I see. Do you enjoy it?

MYLES
Driving?

BRIDGE
Driving a bus.

MYLES
It's too early to tell but I'll let
you know when I make up my mind.

BRIDGE
It's got to be way more interesting
than my work.

MYLES
Oh yeah? What do you do?

BRIDGE
I work as a legal assistant.

MYLES
So you work for lawyers. Criminal?

BRIDGE
More corporate, actually.

MYLES
That's what I meant.

They both LAUGH.

BRIDGE
Good one.

MYLES
I'm Myles, by the way.

BRIDGE
Brigitte. But everyone calls me
Bridge.

EXT. WEST END SUBURBAN STREET (HALF-HOUR LATER) - EVENING

The bus pulls up to a stop at Carlisle and Forest. The doors open and Bridge steps off, almost reluctantly.

BRIDGE
It was so nice to meet you, Myles.

MYLES
Yeah. You too.

BRIDGE
Hopefully, I'll get to ride with
you again soon. You're a smooth
driver, by the way.

Myles dismisses the compliment.

MYLES
I'll keep my eyes open, Bridge.

BRIDGE
Great. Thanks. Bye now.

Myles watches Bridge cross a lot. She turns and waves with a smile before continuing.

FADE OUT:

ON BLACK SCREEN: "WINTER"

FADE IN:

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROCITY - NIGHT

Snow falls between dark high-rises. Headlights approach.

Reading as "OUT OF SERVICE," the predominantly red sixty-foot ARTICULATED CITY BUS #1386 rolls along the slippery street.

Tires slip as the bus slows to a stop at a clearing along the snowbank-covered curb. The front doors pop open and amber Hazards begin to flash while....

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

...ECHOES through the desolate city corridor. The front end lowers with the HISS of escaping air pressure to be even with the sidewalk. A ramp lifts from the floor, flipping down onto the snow-covered concrete.

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

INT. ARTICULATED BUS #1386 - NIGHT

SNIFFLING with a COUGH, Myles is in the driver's seat with a finger on the ramp's toggle switch. His only PASSENGER, a LEGLESS MAN in an ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIR, adjusts the controls to manipulate his direction. He rolls up to the painted yellow line on the floor near the front.

LEGLESS MAN

Thank you so much, bus driver.

MYLES

Oh, you're welcome, sir.

LEGLESS MAN

Who are you callin' sir? I'm still waiting to be knighted by the Queen. (beat) Those are some slippery streets. Bet you'll be glad to be done your shift.

MYLES

Yeah, I'm heading back to the barn right now.

Myles COUGHS.

LEGLESS MAN

Anyway, I appreciate you taking me closer to my stop. And look after that nasty cold of yours.

MYLES

Thanks.

LEGLESS MAN

Drive safe.

MYLES

You too. Don't be pulling donuts out there.

LEGLESS MAN

(laughing)

Oh come on! That's the most fun I can have in this contraption. Well, that's not exactly true...

The Legless Man rolls forward, turns right, slamming his chair against the fare box. He reverses, tries again to negotiate the tight space.

LEGLESS MAN (CONT'D)

Oops. Missed the turn.

MYLES

That's okay. Take your time.

In the wheelchair, Legless Man cuts too tight, scuffing the right interior wheel well cover. He backs up before rolling forward again, bumping his chair into the fare box.

LEGLESS MAN

Shouldn't have had that last hot totty.

Myles stays patient as his passenger lines up with the ramp.

LEGLESS MAN (CONT'D)

Wait a minute. I got this.

MYLES

There you go.

The wheelchair rolls down the ramp onto the sidewalk.

Myles hits the toggle, lifting the ramp and raising the bus as he watches Legless Man turn his wheelchair in tight circles, spinning the tires in the snow. Myles switches off the hazards.

LEGLESS MAN

What do you say? Race to the corner?

MYLES

You got it.

Myles closes the door as the Legless Man fingers the wheelchair's accelerator and speeds along the slick sidewalk.

INT. ARTICULATED BUS 1386 (MOVING) - NIGHT

Myles pulls away from the curb, catching up to his last passenger. The Legless Man hits the crosswalk as the bus enters the intersection. Myles taps the HORN. The wheelchair nearly spins out while turning right, disappearing behind the wall of a high rise.

Falling snow nearly obscures a clock tower which reads "2:24 AM, JANUARY 14" above the New Flyer articulated bus rolling along the otherwise deserted snow-covered main artery.

Worn and squealing windshield wipers WHIMPER and MOAN across the glass with distorting wet streaks for Myles to peer through. Appearing sick and exhausted behind the wheel, his YAWN is interrupted by a SNEEZE. He wipes his nose on his sleeve, driving along Sloan, approaching Main.

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROCITY - NIGHT

On Main, an unseen YOUNG MAN on a MOUNTAIN BIKE races through the wet snow down the middle of the street. He approaches the green light at Sloan.

INT. ARTICULATED BUS 1386 (MOVING) - NIGHT

Myles COUGHS. Through the compromised windshield he SEES the red light at the next intersection turn green. He COUGHS again as the bus enters the intersection.

THWAP!

A shadowy figure is suddenly at the right bumper. There's a spark at the point of impact just below the front right glass.

Myles SCREAMS, slamming his foot to the brake pedal. The anti-lock BUZZES underfoot. He HEARS high-pitched SCRAPING, muffled DRAGGING and sickening SOUNDS of THUMPING, CRUNCHING and POPPING from beneath the chassis. The middle set of wheels bounce over something. CLANGING and SCRAPING noises continue toward the back.

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROCITY - NIGHT

The bus comes to a stop, tight against the sidewalk.

INT. ARTICULATED BUS 1386 - NIGHT

Myles is frozen in shock, watching as the wipers WHIMPER and MOAN across the glass. He stares at the streaking wiper blade dragging back and forth, back and forth before...

MYLES

No, no, no, no, no!

...he hits the maxi-brake, unleashing an angry WOOSH! He unclips his seatbelt and hits the lever to open the doors.

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROCITY - NIGHT

Myles runs the slippery sidewalk alongside the bus.

MYLES

No, no, no, no, no!

The SOUND of the IDLING DIESEL GRUMBLES louder with every step. Myles reaches the rear of the parked bus and looks at the slushy pavement behind it. Beneath a streetlight, some of the remaining snow is a pale red. Myles looks under the bus, falls to his ass in the slush and vomits.

A broken and bent bicycle frame and flat tire stick out from beneath the bus.

MYLES (CONT'D)

Oh shit. Shit. Shit. Shit!

Then Myles SEES a torso and protruding arm wrapped in the wheel well. With a look of horror, he fights to get to his feet. He brushes the melting snow from his pants as he steps back from the carnage.

MYLES (CONT'D)

Shit! Shit! What do I do? What do I do? Holy shit! What do I do?

Myles paces up and down the empty sidewalk when a forty foot bus makes a right onto Sloan from Main.

Headlights shine on Myles's panicked face as the bus comes to a stop several yards behind Articulated Bus #1386.

With watering eyes, Myles stares into the light.

Myles paces back and forth on the sidewalk.

MYLES (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Shit! Shit! What the fuck, Myles!

Behind him, a forty-foot bus turns right from Main onto Sloan. The headlights shine on Myles's panicked face as the bus comes to a stop several yards behind Articulated Bus #1386.

Myles remains frozen in the headlights as the other Bus Operator secures his bus, opens his door and steps out into the cold.

Silhouetted by the headlights, the figure of the other Bus Operator approaches.

Myles eyes flood with tears.

It's Max.

MAX
You look like you're having some
trouble there, Myles.

The two bus operators stare at each other...

FADE TO BLACK

ROLL CREDITS

END