

Morning Commute

by  
Frankie Frain

Frankie Frain  
6 Dias Ave.  
Westport, MA 02790  
508-642-2982

October 4, 2008

FADE IN:

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Dawn. Several PASSENGERS sit on a wooden bench in a glass enclosed waiting area. A PREGNANT WOMAN in a moo-moo texts on her phone. Stooped and frail, an ELDERLY COUPLE hold hands. A BUSINESS MAN reads the stock reports.

THOMAS WELLS, mid-twenties, obese and disheveled, approaches the bench. He is massive, six feet tall and immeasurably heavy. He wears khaki shorts that wrap around his leg fat, and a "DO OR DO NOT, THERE IS NO TRY" T-shirt.

Thomas keeps a two-handed grip around a DOUBLE GULP with the 7/11 brand imprinted on the cup. He blinks sweat out of his eyes and pauses in front of the waiting bench.

The Elderly Couple discreetly glance upward. The Business Man hides his wide eyes behind his newspaper. The Pregnant Woman scowls in disgust. After a big SLURP from the two-liter soft drink, Thomas turns and slowly backs his butt into the bench, forcing everyone to make room. Thomas stares ahead, oblivious to the inconvenience.

His eyes grow heavy and he begins to drift off. The bench CREEKS. He wakes with a startle. He sips again and smiles. His eyes wander.

He looks outside the waiting box and sees JACK SOLOMAN, a short, homeless, Native American. He wears a black bandana, multiple coats, and a dusty pair of jeans. His skin is dark and rough; his eyes are bloodshot. A GARBAGE BAG is slung over Jack's shoulder.

Thomas, still sipping his straw, stares blankly at Jack.

Jack holds a small sack up to his nose, SNORTS quickly, and places it back in the garbage bag.

Thomas reacts, surprised. Soda slowly dribbles out of the sides of his mouth and onto the Pregnant Woman's stomach. She glares hard at Thomas. He pulls a tissue out of his breast pocket and pats down her stomach. She pushes him away.

The BUS pulls up to the waiting area. Jack takes off a jacket and places it in his garbage bag. He beats everyone to the bus. A line quickly forms. Thomas is last.

INT. BUS - DAY

Thomas makes his way toward the back of the bus. He passes the Elderly Couple in the front seat. The woman rests her head on the man's shoulder. Thomas passes the Pregnant Woman who sits by the window in the middle and then the Business Man closer to the back.

Thomas pulls out some earphones and an iPod from his side pocket and sits in the second to the last seat across from the restroom.

Thomas puts on the earphones. They cup his head tightly. He plugs them into an iPod and calls up some music. The MUSIC is faint and MUFFLED. It sounds vaguely like music from a kid's show like "Sesame Street."

He sips loudly through the straw at the remainder of his drink. He takes a deep breath and sets the empty cup on the seat beside him.

Thomas relaxes in his seat and stares out the window, as if he just completed a work-out. He releases a deep sigh, which transforms into an enormous BELCH.

The BELCH sound reaches the front of the bus and wakes the sleeping elderly woman in the front.

Thomas squirms. He attempts to cross his enormous legs and fails. He puts a hand on his crotch, like a child who has to go to the bathroom, cringes, and looks over to the bus restroom.

He clutches his arm rest and the seat in front of him. He heaves and sighs and attempts to stand.

Before fully standing Thomas notices a garbage bag hung on the door. He plops back down and waits.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Thomas, still sipping the drink through his straw, stares blankly at the hobo.

The hobo holds a small sack up to his nose, SNORTS quickly and places it back into the black garbage bag.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUS - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Thomas studies the garbage bag. He leans as far as he can across the aisle. He can barely reach the door so his KNOCKS are hardly audible.

He leans even further and breaks the arm of the seat, causing a series of distressing THUDS and BUMPS as he falls into the aisle. His headphones fly off.

The Business Man turns in his seat and lifts his glasses to glance back at Thomas on the floor. He sighs and then returns to reading his paper.

Thomas squirms and tries to return to his feet, but before he does, the Pregnant Woman makes her way to the back of the bus, straight for Thomas. She is panicked and pale.

Thomas blocks the bathroom. The Pregnant Woman reaches over him and POUNDS on the door. She looks down at Thomas.

Thomas, still struggling on the ground, shrugs as if to say - "I can't help you, lady."

The Pregnant Woman looks around anxiously and then focuses on that garbage bag hanging from the door near Thomas' head. She grabs it off the door knob and tries to untie the knot at the opening. She can't - so she rips a hole in the side and then -

She VOMITS into the bag.

Thomas opens his mouth to protest, and she interrupts by VOMITING again.

Thomas surrenders.

The Pregnant Woman drops the garbage bag onto the floor next to Thomas and returns to the front of the bus.

Thomas, unnerved and dismayed, struggles harder to grab something - anything - to help him stand back up.

Thomas sits again in the aisle seat, his brow and bangs wet with sweat. He tries to cross his legs and rocks, and glares at the empty Double Gulp cup in the seat beside him, as if to say - "this is your fault."

He looks back to the bathroom with the black garbage bag full of vomit-coated items lying on the floor.

He looks at his watch. His eyes go wide. He turns his legs into the aisle and tries to open the door, struggling with the handle. Locked. Thomas' state turns quickly away from confused and into genuine fear.

EXT. BUS - DAY (FANTASY SEQUENCE)

The bus is parked along side of a busy downtown street. An ambulance is parked behind it. A COP directs traffic around the bus and ambulance.

INT. BUS - DAY (FANTASY SEQUENCE)

A SECOND COP throws the garbage bag onto a seat and then kicks open the bathroom door with a BANG. Smoke billows out. The cop steps aside.

A PARAMEDIC rushes forward and pulls Jack, the homeless man, out of the restroom and sets him down in the aisle. A needle sticks out of Jack's arm. Jack lies dead, eyes wide open.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUS - DAY (BACK TO REALITY)

From the back of the bus - we see Thomas at the front talking and gesturing to the BUS DRIVER, who continues to drive.

The Driver finally pulls over and parks. He gets up and follows Thomas back toward the restroom.

Thomas shoves the garbage bag aside with his foot and tries to open the door again. The driver shoots Thomas a look as if to say - "You fucking idiot." He points to a SIGN to the side of the door.

CLOSE ON SIGN: It reads, "PUSH IN, THEN TWIST."

The Driver edges around Thomas and first BANGS LOUDLY and then pushes and twists the handle. He opens the door slowly, looking inside.

Thomas watches a few steps back, increasingly anxious.

The Driver reacts with a scoff and swings open the door completely for Thomas to see - the restroom is empty.

Thomas, immediately relieved, shrugs and pushes past the driver. He enters the bathroom and slams the door behind him.

INT. BUS - LATER

With the bus back on the road, Thomas re-emerges, smiling widely. On his way back to his seat, he trips on the wet and ripped garbage bag. The force of the fall breaks his seat, which collapses onto the passenger in final seat.

Thomas, with some effort, tries to get up and eventually stands in the aisle. He picks up the broken seat. Under it lies -

Jack. Sleeping next to his garbage bag. He squints in pain, rubs his face, and looks up at Thomas as if to say, "What the hell are you trying to do?"

Jack flips over like a kid who refuses to get up, and covers his head with the garbage bag.

Stunned, Thomas looks down at the vomit covered bag and back over to Jack's bag, and finally realizes - two bags!

With a sigh, Thomas PLOPS back into his seat - this time, the bottom of the seat gives out and the entire unit collapses.

FADE OUT.

THE END