

"510"

By Quentin Bangston

FADE IN:

INT. THE BUS - MORNING

HISS! Air-brakes force the empty behemoth to stop.

A single person boards, looking sleepy. This is FEMALE, the doctorly-type, young, pretty, but most of all, sleepy.

She looks at the empty bus. Forces herself to a cold, puke-orange plastic bench seat. Female plops down into it, ready to pass out.

The bus begins to drive.

A POP type of HINDI music begins to play through the speakers.

Female glares at the speakers.

Resumes sleep.

HISS! SQUEAK! Passengers board. Female continues sleeping.

MIKE (O.S.)  
New music, Kasuma? Don't tell me!  
It's...Niraj Chag. Yup. I knew it.  
Here's the fare.

MIKE, a small, grungy man, carrying a large satchel that would make Indiana Jones envious, walks to the back of the bus.

He stops by the sleeping Female.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
GOOD MORNING!

Female jerks awake.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
Mind if I sit here?

Female shrugs. Resumes sleep.

Mike, smiling, plops into his seat. A HEAVYSET MAN walks by.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
Hey, Joe sit by me!

JOE looks at Mike. Squeezes in between Mike and a panel signifying the end of the bench. Mike scoots closer to Female.

Female wakes up, glares at Mike (oblivious to it) and moves to add inches between them. Resumes sleep.

Mike reaches down to his satchel. He takes out a BULB OF GARLIC.

Female sniffs. Sniff. Sniff. SNEEZE! It's explosive. She looks at Mike as he...

...TAKES A HUGE BITE OF GARLIC!

Female looks horrified.

Mike reaches back to his satchel. Takes a gallon of water from it. Hands his garlic to Joe, who holds it in his open palm.

Mike pops the top off. Drinks nearly half. Water dribbles down his chin.

Lid goes back on. Finishes his garlic.

Mike returns the water to his satchel. Faces Female.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Haven't seen you around before. You new to the area?

Female continues to sleep. Mike leans close to her ear.

MIKE (CONT'D)

GOOOOOOD MORNING!

Female jumps, barely missing a head collision with Mike.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I was saying that I've never seen you before. What's your name?

FEMALE

H--

MIKE

I'm Mike. Not much of a talker are you? That's okay. People normally say I do enough talking for three people. You do okay 'memberin' names? My dad always taught me the best way to remember a name was to get real close to the person's face--

He leans in to Female, almost touching noses.

MIKE (CONT'D)

--Like this. You meet their eye--

He tilts his head a little, focusing on Female's right eye.

MIKE (CONT'D)

--Like this. You keep that gaze.  
Then, in a monotone, you repeat their  
name twenty times. No more, no less.  
Mike. Mike. Mike. Mike. Mike.  
Mike. Mike. Mike. Mike. Mike.

With each Mike, Female pulls back, repulsed by the stinky  
breath.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Mike. Mike. Mike. Mike. Mike.  
Mike. Mike. Mike. Mike. Mike.

He pulls back.

MIKE (CONT'D)

See? Now you know I'm Mike. And  
you'll never forget it.

Female wipes spit from her face.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I'd ask you where you work, but I  
can tell from your doctor garb that  
you work at...Mayo Clinic. Me too.  
Yup, ride this number 510 bus every  
morning and night. Never miss it,  
either, on account that I bring my  
breakfast along.

Quickly reaches into his satchel. Mike pulls another garlic  
out.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Garlic! 61 natural acids known to  
kill all bodily ailments.

Mike kicks off his shoes.

MIKE (CONT'D)

One morning I looked on my foot.

He lifts his bare foot up, putting it on Female's lap. His  
toenails are in bad need of a pedicure.

MIKE (CONT'D)

MOLD. A patch the size of a quarter.  
Doctors said it was just athlete's  
foot, but I'm no athlete. I knew  
what it was.

Mike drops his foot to the floor.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
Cancer. So I'll tell you what I did. I went to the supermarket and bought twenty bulbs of garlic. I ate one that night, with a full gallon of water, of course for the burning. The next morning the mold was gone. Ever since, haven't had a single sickness. Would you like to try?

He hands the garlic to Female. She pushes it away.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
I insist!

He pushes it back. The bus hits a pothole and the garlic falls from his hand. Hits the floor.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
Darn! Oh well. There's always tomorrow.

Female returns to her sleep. Mike reaches into his satchel. Out comes a walkman, probably first generation. It's thicker than a stack of cards.

Mike sets it on his lap. Reaches back to the satchel. Takes out head phones. He tugs on the cord. A foot-long length comes out.

He keeps tugging, and tugging, and tugging. Soon, he has a pile of cord stretching fifteen foot on his lap. He plugs it into his walkman.

MUSIC begins blaring and...

MIKE BEGINS FLAILING A TRAPSET SOLO!

He's all arms, smashing on invisible cymbals and banging on invisible drums. His foot kicks at a bass drum.

Female glares at him.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
(screams)  
DON'T LIKE ROCK?! HOW ABOUT  
CLASSICAL?

Mike clicks a button on his walkman. Music changes to something softer.

AND MIKE BEGINS PLAYING A RAPID CELLO SOLO!

He leans forwards and begins sawing back and forth against invisible strings.

His elbow continuously hits Female's knee.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
NO?! HOW ABOUT JAZZ?

Song switch. Upbeat jazz.

AND MIKE BEGINS PLAYING A PEPPY TRUMPET SOLO!

It's complete with a mute, of course.

Mike's fingers dance on invisible valves, his other hand busy working a mute.

Female glares.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
YOU SURE ARE HARD TO PLEASE! I BET  
I HAVE SOMETHING YOU LIKE!!

Mike changes the song again. A light, whimsical song.

AND MIKE BEGINS PLAYING A QUICK PAN FLUTE SOLO!

His lips curl like he's whistling. His hands move an invisible pan flute back and forth across his lips. He hits a high note! It holds.

And holds.

And holds.

Then...

...the bus HISSES!

Female grabs her stuff and rockets from the bus before Mike knows what's happening.

Mike looks to Joe.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
I hope she's not working in the DNA  
testing lab. I didn't find her very  
likeable.

FADE OUT: