

THE BUS STOP

Written by

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CAST LIST

Paddy Neary

St. Peter

Bus driver

Other roles: Automated voice announcing the next bus

1. INT. THE BOTTOM FLOOR OF A DOUBLE DECKER BUS AT NIGHT.

Sound of a bus door hissing, opening. The engine idles and the exhaust rattles. The DRIVER opens the door to his booth and walks down the carriage, footstep by footstep, until we can hear his breathing, like he's standing right next to us.

DRIVER

Mon now, last stop. I've places to be.

PADDY comes awake startled, with a sharp intake of breath.

PADDY

Where am I?

DRIVER

Never mind where you are, just get the fuck off my bus. I've been waitin.

The sound of rain fades in over the top of all the other background noise.

PADDY

It's pishin out—

DRIVER

Never mind that, go and take shelter at that bus stop if you have to.

PADDY

. . .

DRIVER

I don't have all night!

Sound of PADDY groaning up out of his seat.

PADDY

And you're just gonna leave me here, yeah?

DRIVER

That's about the size of it, aye.

PADDY sighs.

PADDY

Can you at least tell me the time? When the next bus will be along?

Sound of the DRIVER getting back into his booth and closing the door.

DRIVER

I'm sure yer man over there can tell ye.

Sound of the doors closing and the bus pulling off. The sound of rain intensifies.

PADDY

W-Wai-

Sound of the bus shifting gears in the distance and continuing to drive.

PADDY

Fuckin prick...

Breaking the fourth wall, PADDY addresses someone observing. Us, perhaps, or God.

PADDY

My whole life's been like this. Asked to leave, barred from returning, denied entry. In fact, just this evenin I was-- I was... It's the maddest thing. Suddenly I can't remember where I was. I was havin words with yer man along the Quays when he wouldn't give my bottle back, and then-- And then...

2. EXT. A LONELY, POORLY-LIT BUS STOP ON A DESERTED COUNTRY ROAD.

Sound of footsteps as PADDY moves toward the bus stop. PADDY mumbles to himself as he reads the timetable stuck to the back of the shelter's wall.

PADDY

Ifréann... Purgadóir... Flaithis...

PADDY's train of thought is interrupted by an AUTOMATED VOICE coming from a speaker inside the bus stop. It is loud and speaks with a generic, softly spoken Irish accent.

AUTOMATED VOICE

Thank you for travelling with EternaBus. The next service will be the... six sixty six to... Ifréann. Calling at... Ifréann.

PADDY addresses the man who's been sitting at the stop since he got there.

PADDY

Sorry mister, this might sound like a stupid question... Am I still in Dublin? I've been out on the piss and I think I fell asleep on the bus. Can you believe tha? Haha!

PETER

. . .

PADDY

I dunno these estates. Is Ifréann a new development or wha? I can't quite seem to... remember how I got here.

PETER

. . .

PADDY sighs.

PADDY

Could you at least just give me the time? Last thing I remember is gettin into a scuffle with a bunch of young fellas, and then...

PETER

It's time you faced your judgement, Paddy Neary.

PADDY

Wha? Who— How the fuck do you know my name?

PETER

I've known you all your life, Paddy. Do you not recognise me?

Brief silence as PADDY considers the man.

PADDY

Ya look a bit like yer man from 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' but to be honest I haven't a clue.

PETER

You ever hear that Stones song 'Sympathy for the Devil'?

PADDY

Yeah?

PETER

Well I'm not him.

PADDY

Right.

PETER

But I am someone. Someone important.

PADDY

. . .

PETER

Think of your Bible.

PADDY

J-Jesus?

PETER

No, not Jesus ya fuckin clown. Go again.

PADDY

Lazarus?

PETER

F- fuckin Lazarus!? Do I look like I've been buried
alive!?

PADDY

No, but-

PETER

I'm Peter.

PADDY

. . .

PETER

As in 'Saint Peter'? "You are the rock on which I'll build my church"? Crucified upside down?

PADDY

. . .

PETER

Do you seriously not know who St. Peter is?

PADDY

Oh, I know who he is alright. I'm just havin trouble believing that you're the man at the pearly gates.

PETER

Do ya see any pearly gates?

PADDY

No?

PETER

So where do you think you are?

Sound of the AUTOMATED VOICE announcement plays again in the background as PADDY's next line fades in.

PADDY

Cabra?

PETER

Fuck me, son. Even you don't believe that!

PADDY scoffs.

PADDY

So these are the so-called pearly gates, yeah?

PETER

Correct.

PADDY

Made a few cutbacks have yiz? The aul man tightening his belt?

Sound of a pen scratching on paper.

PADDY

What are you writing?

PETER

The things you say.

PADDY

Why?

PETER

They're used to weigh you up in judgement.

PADDY

Judgement, yeah?

PETER

That's right.

PADDY

And so what would the score be if I told you I think you're full of shite.

PETER

Not great, to be honest.

PADDY

Or that I haven't spoken to the big man since I made my confirmation. He's been very quiet for most of my life.

PETER

Oh-ho, well, we already know that. Fell in with them goth kids at school and bet your eternal salvation on Richard Dawkins. Biggest sin there is how bad the writing is.

Sound of the automated voice in the background.

PETER

Look PADDY, any second the bus to hell will be along and you have one last chance to redeem yourself. Do you have nothing at all to say in your defence?

PADDY

The bus to hell, yeah?

PETER

Yeah.

PADDY

Is it-

PETER

Oh no.

PADDY

Is it taking me to Sheriff St?

PADDY bursts out laughing. PETER mumbles to himself.

PETER

Well I tried, Father.

PADDY calms down laughing.

PADDY

What are ya sayin?

PETER

I said I tried you buck eejit. Do you have no desire at all to save yourself?

PADDY

Not really, no.

The sound of an engine fades in from a distance. The vehicle gets closer until we hear the familiar sound of a bus stopping, the suspension hissing and decompressing, and the doors opening. An AUTOMATED VOICE says 'Six sixty six to... Ifréann'.]

PETER

Your chariot awaits, young Patrick.

PADDY

But—

DRIVER interrupting, calling from his booth toward the pavement.

DRIVER

Hurry up, Neary, I don't have all night!