

BAD MOTHERS

DOUG and STANLEY sit on a bus stop bench.

DOUG
I'm really proud of you, Stan.

STANLEY
Thanks. I appreciate it.

DOUG
I mean, seriously. I didn't think you had it in you.

STANLEY
It was the last straw, Doug. I didn't think I had it in me either, honestly, but things change.

DOUG
Right, right. (pause) You're taking the bull by the horns.

STANLEY
People change, you know? Things break down.

DOUG
Yeah. (pause) God, she'll flip when she sees it.

STANLEY
As she should.

DOUG
Plus, you'll be in there for no time. After it's done, I mean. One, two years, tops.

STANLEY
Yeah.

DOUG
That's nothing. I'll come visit every week.

STANLEY
Thanks.

DOUG
That's what friends are for.

LINDA, pregnant, enters. She sits.

LINDA
Where does this bus go?

STANLEY
Up and around the corner, I think.

Doug stares at Linda's stomach.

DOUG

You having a baby?

LINDA

(beat)

No, I stole a watermelon.

DOUG

Where are you going, the hospital?

LINDA

No, work.

DOUG

Work? Don't you get any maternity leave?

LINDA

Not when your deadbeat fuck of a husband decides to leave six months into the pregnancy.

DOUG

Ouch, that's harsh. Where'd he go?

LINDA

Left for Los Angeles with a waitress named Cheyenne. With the car.

DOUG

That's horrible. (pause) Well, you take care of that baby.

LINDA

Excuse me?

DOUG

I said, you take care of that baby.

LINDA

I ... plan to, mister.

DOUG

Good. That's good. (beat) Because you know how it is, right? Single mother, works with child in utero ... it's almost like the template for fucking up a kid. Right?

LINDA

How do you mean?

DOUG

Well ... see my friend here, Stan? Stan was completely fucked up because of his mother -- his single mother. Right Stan?

STANLEY

I'd rather not talk about it...

DOUG

He's modest but it's true. Nothing fucks up a kid more than a fucked up single mother. Look, you're gonna love and coddle that baby for what, six months? And then you won't be able to stand it anymore, with the whining and the constant shitting and crying ... and then the shit'll hit the fan.

STANLEY

Doug, she gets it. Lay off her.

DOUG

One day he'll be out playing in the yard and out of nowhere he'll accidentally whack his sister in the face with a ping-pong paddle, and you'll whup his ass so hard he has to go to the doctor for a bruised tailbone. Little stuff like that.

STANLEY

Doug, come on!

LINDA

What are you talking about?

DOUG

Or maybe in high school you'll lock him in the basement for the weekend just because he smoked a joint in gym class.

LINDA

That's horrible! I wouldn't ever do that!

STANLEY

See?

DOUG

I'm sorry, guys; I get a little heated up about shit like this. I'm just trying to help you out. You gotta think about stuff like that before your kid is born, or else you won't be able to think about it as he grows up, and you'll just fuck him up like Stan's mom fucked him up.

STANLEY

You're beating a dead horse, Doug.

DOUG

Stan, seriously, this is important. Listen, uh...

LINDA

Linda.

DOUG

Listen, Linda; I'm not trying to psychoanalyze you or anything.

I just think this stuff is important for future generations to drill into their heads. Is this your first child?

LINDA

Yes.

DOUG

Well, all I'm saying is that not a lot of people -- maybe yourself included -- have had the proper education for what it takes to be a mother.

LINDA

Well, don't worry; I assure you that my child will be well brought up.

DOUG

Excellent! That's excellent. I can hear the confidence in your voice.

LINDA

Thank you.

DOUG

I can tell that you don't want to fuck your kid up like Stan over here! (grabs Stan's face) I mean, look at this kid. Look at the sadness and desperation in his eyes. You don't want this kid.

LINDA

No, I don't want that kid.

DOUG

Look at these bags under his eyes...

LINDA

I don't want that kid!

DOUG

The thin, emaciated face...

LINDA

I said I don't want him!

DOUG

He's a bag of bones, for Christ's sake! A waif of a man!

STANLEY

(pushes Doug's hand away)
Okay, let go of my face, Doug!

DOUG

Proving a point, buddy. Proving a point.

LINDA

I get what you're saying. I need to plan on raising this child. It's just ... weird, that I'd receive this kind of advice from two guys on a bus bench, you know? But thanks, anyway-- (she suddenly clutches her stomach and moans)

DOUG

What's the matter?

LINDA

I think the baby's coming.

DOUG

You think the what now?

LINDA

It's coming.

STANLEY

Oh, shit.

DOUG

Okay, everyone, let's all be calm. No need to worry, I'll get an ambulance.

LINDA

No, no ambulance.

STANLEY

(to Doug)

Is there a pay phone around--?

LINDA

No ambulance!

DOUG

No ambulance? Why not?

LINDA

I can't afford it, okay? Listen, it'll be all right. You two can help me. No big deal. (she lies down)

STANLEY

Oh no, we're not here to help you out, lady.

LINDA

What?

STANLEY

If this were any other time of day, I'd be glad to -- enthralled, really...

LINDA

But what you said earlier--

STANLEY

That was Doug, not me. Doug's crazy like that. I can't help you right now, I'm sorry. I've got more important things to think about.

LINDA

More important? More important than the gift of life?!

STANLEY

Yes.

LINDA

How can you abandon me like that?

STANLEY

I'm not abandoning you! I'm right here! I just ... can't help!

LINDA

Why?! What is more important than childbirth?

STANLEY

I ... I've got an appointment to make! (beat) It's very important, okay?!

LINDA

An appointment? Can't you cancel it or move it or something?

STANLEY

No, I can't. It's very important.

LINDA

Well how could you be so helpful to me earlier and then throw me away now?!

STANLEY

Listen, I apologize, I really do, but I never expected ... this kind of thing to happen, okay? If it was any other time of day, any other hour, I could help, but right now...

LINDA

You're not leaving me here, are you?

STANLEY

No! We're not leaving, yet. Hey, let me discuss this with my friend, okay? We'll get this all figured out. (pulls Doug aside) She isn't going away, is she?

DOUG

I don't think so.

STANLEY

Okay, well ... how can we get rid of her? I don't want her around when the bus comes.

DOUG

I can't call a cab, I don't have any money.

STANLEY

Me neither. And she doesn't want an ambulance. What do we do?

DOUG

I guess we could ... push her away or something.

STANLEY

Push her away? On what? A skateboard?

DOUG

Do you have a skateboard?

STANLEY

(beat)

No, I don't have a skateboard, Doug! Did I come here with a skateboard?

DOUG

Well, no...

STANLEY

I can't magically create objects, man. You're no help. (he turns to Linda) Listen, I've got something really important I must do here, okay? I'm sorry.

LINDA

Can you at least get to a pay phone?

STANLEY

No, I can't leave. That's the thing. I can't move from this spot.

LINDA

Doug?

DOUG

He's my friend. I can't leave him.

LINDA

But ... but what am I going to do? I can't lay here and have my kid! Why are you being so mysterious?

STANLEY

It's personal, okay? I'm sorry.

LINDA

This is personal too! And if you're going to just stand there while I give birth then I at least deserve a reason for it--!

STANLEY

All right! You want a reason? Okay. We're criminals. All right? We're criminals! You don't want to be near us. Didn't you hear Doug? I'm fucked up in the head. A real crazy son of a bitch, you understand? You have no idea what I could do with your baby.

LINDA

That's not a reason! Even criminals would have the heart to help a woman giving birth! You'd have to be a psychopath to not help--

STANLEY

You're just like my mother, you know?! That sneer, that disgusted look on your face. Like I'm the scum of the earth. You want to know why I can't leave? I can't leave because I'm gonna hijack the next bus that stops here and plow it into some supermarket or something, and the cops are gonna drag me off in handcuffs and the news reporters will be there like flies and they'll all have their little microphones in my face, and you know what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna look right into their cameras and I'm gonna say, "Thanks Mom. Look what you did to me." I'm gonna shout it to the world, lady. I'm gonna tear her in two with a fucking sentence.

Pause.

LINDA

You're going to hijack the bus?

STANLEY

You're goddamn right I am.

LINDA

That's great! Why didn't you tell me that earlier? You can take me to the hospital on the bus!

STANLEY

What? No! Are you kidding?! Absolutely not! This ... this is dangerous stuff, lady! You don't want that risk!

LINDA

That risk is nothing compared to the possibility of dying in mid childbirth. Look, I'm sorry that your mom locked you in the basement or whatever, but do you realize how fucked up my baby will be if it's born here? You're already making me take a risk with my child! So maybe if you could just stop worrying about your plan for getting attention --

STANLEY

This isn't about attention!

LINDA

What is it about then? A cry for help?

STANLEY

No! This is about showing my Mom that I was a good person until she ... (Stanley stops himself; beat) Wait a minute. Doug!

DOUG

Yeah?

STANLEY

Wave the bus down.

DOUG

Wave it down? But the plan was--

STANLEY

This is more important than the plan! Get the bus! (Doug runs off; to Linda) We'll get you to the hospital, okay? It'll be all right.

LINDA

Well, well, looks like you're a good person after all.

STANLEY

Don't tell Doug, he'd be crushed.

THE END