

"Flight 50"

by  
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A couple are having communication issues, and the situation gets  
escalated while on a flight to China

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INT. AIRPLANE PASSENGER AREA - NIGHT

Open on two people, BILL and CONNIE, Chinese, mid to late 30s, sitting in icy silence. CONNIE is in the window seat, reading a magazine, not noticing BILL at all, who is just staring forward, obviously uncomfortable. We pull back and reveal CHARLIE, 30s, sitting on BILL'S right, also feeling the tension between the couple, who shifts uncomfortably as well. We pull back further to see a full flight. We push in on the very last row on the left, where we see two uniformed policemen sandwiching a hard looking Asian man, LI CHANG, 30s or 40s, in a standard prison issue jumpsuit. We then refocus on our trio of CHARLIE, BILL and CONNIE, where the icy silence is thick in the air.

INSERT - POV OVER CONNIE'S SHOULDER

We are looking down at the magazine that Connie is reading, and we push in on an ad for a Caribbean cruise. When we pull back, we are:

INT. BILL & CONNIE'S LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

We see Connie is sitting on the couch, looking at various travel magazines. She is excitedly poring over the various resort locations. We hear a door close, and then Bill enters the room confidently, bristling with delight. He glides down beside Connie on the couch.

BILL

Guess where I booked us, honey.

CONNIE

Where? Jamaica? The Bahamas?  
Fiji?

BILL

Okay. Get this. We're going to  
see the Great Wall of China.

There is a long pause, as Connie's expression and demeanor change radically.

CONNIE

We're what?

BILL

(tentatively)  
The Great Wall of China. I thought  
you would ...

CONNIE

Well, you thought wrong.

Connie rises in frustration and goes to the kitchen to pour herself a drink. Bill rises and follows her, and ends up on the opposite side of the counter in the middle of the kitchen.

BILL

(puzzled)

What's the matter? What's the deal here?

CONNIE

I want a vacation. I don't want to go to China.

BILL

What's the matter with going to China?

CONNIE

Well, why do you want to go to China?

BILL

I've always wanted to see the Great Wall.

CONNIE

Exactly. It's what you want to do. You want to go on a pilgrimage to search out your identity. I want a holiday. I don't want to hang out with a bunch of Chinese people. I want to go somewhere tropical.

BILL

Well, it's booked and paid for. We're going. It's too late.

Exasperated, Connie turns her back on Bill, and we see an expression of frustration on her face.

CONNIE

Great. Just great.

We push in on the magazine in her hand, as we catch another ad for another exotic location. We pull back again, and return to:

INT. AIRPLANE PASSENGER AREA - NIGHT

We again reveal the three sitting in their row, Charlie, Bill and Connie. Charlie looks over to Bill, and smiles politely. Bill returns with a weak smile of his own, then returns to staring straight ahead.

CHARLIE

Are you going to China on business,  
or pleasure?

BILL

Pardon?

CHARLIE

(extends his hand)  
Charlie Biggs. Are you going to  
China for business or pleasure?

BILL

(shaking Charlie's hand)  
Pleasure, I guess. Bill Wong.  
This is my wife Connie. We're  
going to see the Great Wall.

Connie looks up, nods and smiles politely. She looks sidelong at Bill, then returns to her magazine. Bill nods politely to Charlie, who understands. There is a long silence. Finally:

CHARLIE

I've seen the Great Wall.

BILL

What did you think?

CHARLIE

It was pretty ... uh, great.

CONNIE

(coldly)  
Hence the name.

Bill is stung by the remark. But continues politely.

BILL

What in particular did you find  
fascinating about it?

CHARLIE

Well, it was something of an experience to walk along the only man made object that can be viewed from outer space.

BILL

I've always wanted to see the Great Wall.

CHARLIE

Really? Why?

Connie looks up at Bill, then to Charlie, then back at Bill with a "are you going to tell him?" look. Bill, sensing her icy glare, shifts uncomfortably.

BILL

Well, it's ... a long story.

Charlie looks curiously at Bill, but then notices Connie's icy stare. Bill forces another weak smile, as Connie returns to her magazine, and again the trio plunges into an icy silence.

CHARLIE

Excuse me. I need to go to the washroom.

After Charlie rises and exits, the seat belt signs go on, and the plane dips slightly. And then we hear overhead:

PILOT (V.O.)

This is your captain speaking. Thank you for flying Freebird Airlines Flight 50 to China. We are presently cruising at an altitude of 30,000 feet. We are experiencing some mild turbulence, so we ask that you remain seated with your belts fastened. As soon as we are through the rough patches, I will turn off the seat belt signs. Thank you.

Bill and Connie begin to fasten their seat belts, and while grabbing and extending them their hands touch incidentally.

They look at each other momentarily, and then break off and snap their belts into place. Charlie returns and plops himself down beside Bill and snaps his seat belt on.

CHARLIE

Who's the criminal back there?

BILL

Li Chang. Wanted for murder.  
They're extraditing him to China.  
I only wish it wasn't on our plane.

Charlie nods in agreement. The plane dips again briefly from the turbulence. Charlie pulls out his palm pilot and begins to enter data. Bill is sitting thoughtfully, Connie on his left is buried in her magazine still giving off a cold air. The seat belt signs ding off. Bill looks up, looks over at Connie, then at Charlie, then unbuckles his belt and rises to the aisle to exit.

BILL

Excuse me. My turn.

He slides past Charlie and begins to move down the aisle. We follow Bill to the back of the plane. And from:

BILL'S POV

We focus in on Li Chang, as he looks up and holds Bill's look for a long moment. Then from:

CHANG'S POV

Bill is caught in Chang's gaze, but averts his eyes, almost embarrassed, or frightened, to be caught. We watch Bill move toward the washroom and enter. As we hear the door snap shut, we push in on the door's sign, that moves from "VACANT" to "OCCUPIED".

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE WASHROOM - NIGHT

Bill is looking in the mirror. He runs some water, splashes his face. We do an ECU on his reflection. When we pull back we reveal we are:

INT. BILL & CONNIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bill and Connie are standing on opposite sides of the counter in the centre of the kitchen.

CONNIE

I wanted to go somewhere hot and  
tropical. But no.  
(MORE)

CONNIE(cont'd)

You have to choose now to search  
out your Chinese roots.

BILL

It's been one of my life goals to  
see the Great Wall. You know I've  
always wanted to see the Great  
Wall. It's part of our heritage.  
It's part of our history.

CONNIE

No, it's not. It's part of Chinese  
history. You're not even Chinese  
anymore. You can barely speak the  
language.

BILL

But I'm still Chinese. Look at me.  
The hair. The skin. The eyes.  
Okay, so I'm not a perfect Chinese,  
but I'm still Chinese.

CONNIE

Only on the outside. Inside you're  
a white man. You're a banana.

BILL

Why don't you care about your  
heritage?

CONNIE

Why should I? I'm third  
generation. I'm not Chinese  
anymore either.

BILL

Yes you are. And you will always  
be. We will always be.

They look hard at each other. Connie breaks first, exiting  
the room to the bedroom, closing the door firmly. Bill  
stands stricken. We push in on an ECU of Bill's face again,  
and when we pull back we return to:

INT. AIRPLANE WASHROOM - NIGHT

The seat belt indicator dings on again, waking Bill from his  
moment. There is a knock on the door.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE PASSENGER AREA - NIGHT

A flight attendant is knocking on the door of the washroom.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
Sir, I'll have to ask you to return  
to your seat, please.

BILL  
(from inside washroom)  
Thanks. I'll just be a minute.

The flight attendant begins to push a refreshment cart down the aisle.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE WASHROOM - NIGHT

BILL is still pondering in the mirror.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE PASSENGER AREA - NIGHT

The flight attendant has stopped at the last aisle, in front of the officers.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
Coffee, Tea, Soft Drinks?

OFFICER #1  
Coffee, please.

The flight attendant pours out a steaming cup of coffee. As she is reaching down to hand it to the officer, the plane suddenly dips, causing her to lose her balance, and spill the coffee into his lap. He jumps up, surprised. As he does so, Li Chang deftly unholsters and removes the officer's gun. He pushes the officer into the aisle and points it at the officer sitting by the window, barking orders at him in Chinese.

LI CHANG  
(in Chinese)  
*Hands up! Hands up now! Hands up  
now!*

Chang has a panicked trapped dog look in his eyes. The whole plane and all the passengers look around in shock and terror. Just then, Bill emerges from the washroom.

BILL  
What the ...?

CHANG  
(in Chinese)  
*Tell the pilot to turn the plane  
around. Tell him to turn it around  
now!*

Bill looks at Chang frightened and puzzled. Chang begins to panic even more.

CHANG  
(in Chinese)  
*Tell the pilot I'll kill anyone who  
tries to stop me!*

BILL  
(slowly)  
I don't understand. I'm sorry. I  
can't understand you. I don't  
speak Chinese.

CHANG  
(in Chinese)  
*Don't make me shoot you! Don't  
make me kill you!*

While Chang is facing off with Bill at the back of the plane, the officer sitting by the window slowly creeps toward Chang, and picking his moment, lunges at him. They struggle momentarily, vying for control of the gun. It accidentally goes off, the shot hitting Bill square in the chest, as the impact throws him back into the flight attendant area, as he goes crashing into rolling carts of food.

Before Chang can get off another shot, he is cold-cocked by the other officer whose gun he'd stolen. Chang crashes to the ground. Everyone is screaming in horror.

FADE OUT

WE OPEN ON:

INT. AIRPLANE FLIGHT ATTENDANT AREA - NIGHT

From BILL'S POV

As though he has just opened his eyes. We see the heads of the flight attendant, Charlie, Connie, one of the officers and various others. Connie is about to break down, as we see tears welling up in her eyes.

CHARLIE

Just lie still. We've notified the captain. We'll land in Hawaii and take you to the hospital.

CUT TO:

POV FROM THE PLANE AISLE

Bill is surrounded by several people, Connie behind him, holding him in her arms.

BILL

I wanted to see the Great Wall. I wanted to ... see ... the Great Wall ...

Connie begins to sob quietly and holds Bill tighter, as we pull back from the image of Bill dying, surrounded by various others.

FADE TO BLACK