



# LIKE BUSES



DIRECTED BY **MARIAM MAJID**  
PRODUCED BY **ANNIE LEES-JONES**  
SCREENPLAY BY **HELEN TOMPSON**



# WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

Can unlikely pair, **Micky (30s)** and **Jules (70s)**, break the cycle of their unfulfilling liaisons by looking beyond their preconceptions to see what's right in front of them?

In **LIKE BUSES**, we meet two women at the beginning of a journey. Despite not knowing one another, they have a great deal in common. Most of all, how they are judged.

The story's main themes highlight age-related stereotypes and **empathy and support among women**, showcasing their strength and complexity. It also holds a mirror up to our own preconceptions, **challenging the audience perceptions** around age and lifestyle.





# TREATMENT

EXT. OUT OF TOWN BUS STOP - DAY - EARLY MORNING

MICKY (30s) arrives at the bus stop in last night's clothes and quickly gets frustrated by the broken display and tattered timetable. JULES (70s) trundles up with her shopping trolley, and Micky asks for help. Jules initially ignores her and they exchange terse words, revealing seemingly contrasting lifestyles. Micky admits she often goes out late, while Jules implies she's more responsible. As they talk, it becomes clear both women are hiding loneliness behind their bravado.

When Micky struggles with the bus schedule, Jules reveals the next bus is in three minutes. Micky sits beside Jules, fiddling with her tiny purse and phone. Micky says she goes out to meet people to avoid boredom and solitude and Jules surprises Micky by admitting she also enjoys staying out late and meeting interesting people.

Jules advises Micky to be more prepared for nights out, revealing her own habits of carrying essentials in her trolley. As the bus arrives, Micky hesitates and decides to miss it. She asks Jules if she'd like to get a cup of tea. Jules smiles, agrees, and stands up, revealing she's also wearing last night's clothes—a little black dress and stockings. Micky is surprised but amused, realising Jules is not so different from herself.

They walk away from the bus stop together, chatting and laughing, hinting at a budding friendship. As they head toward a nearby café, their conversation fading into the background, another bus pulls up.

# KEY

## CHARACTERS

### MICKY (30s)

Micky navigates life with a blend of sarcasm and vulnerability. Despite her independent exterior, she fears loneliness. Her impulsive nature and candidness reveal a yearning for understanding and companionship, making her both relatable and complex.

### JULES (70s)

Jules is wise, independent, and unafraid to speak her mind. Beneath her composed demeanor lies a vibrant and adventurous spirit. Her interactions reveal empathy and a deep understanding of life's nuances.



**MICKY**



**JULES**



# WRITER'S STATEMENT



**LIKE BUSES** came from a desire to change the way female relationships are shown on screen. The typical catty, competitive, and cruel dynamics often depicted just don't match my own experiences.

Life is hard to navigate, and even harder when you're surrounded by conflicting standards and social judgments. It's a misconception that women don't support each other, so in this story, it isn't about age, appearance, or behavior; what matters is the joy of connection and a zest for life.

I love playing with perception and believe a good story can change us. I wanted to challenge viewers to experience their unconscious biases and feel provoked by them: where do they come from, and whether they reflect their own experiences.

# PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

As a British comedy actress and producer, I was drawn to **LIKE BUSES** by the intriguing simplicity of its two characters meeting in a single moment in time, at one location, not driven by actions but by conversation, the truth of their underlying insecurities revealing itself in the subtext.

The joy of acting and producing is realising a vision that can be achieved quite simply between two people engaging in conversation, the actors themselves taking centre stage and shining a light on how what we say and often mean are two very different things, and with Mariam Majid coming onboard as director, brings with it a creative vision rich in challenging gender and cultural stereotypes.

This production will showcase how a dialogue driven narrative, in the hands of two extraordinary actresses, can be visually captured on screen in a cinematic piece of human connection.





# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As a mother of two boys and a girl, I often hear, 'boys are simple and girls are drama' - I could not disagree more. I find negative gender typecasting can have a huge impact on how women are perceived and how they view themselves, which in turn - propels the real drama.

I love **LIKE BUSES** because it takes you on a ride, from subverting preconceptions and breaking stereotypes to expressing larger human truths around internalised prejudices and the power of human connection. But most of all it compels some soul searching and those are the kinds of stories I want to tell.





# DIRECTOR'S VISION



We enter the world of **LIKE BUSES** in the serenity of an early morning sun. A quiet bus stop at the edge of town is apt for the symbolic representation of an interlude. It captures the spirit of the story and reminds me of Rumi's quote - *"Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing there is a field. I'll meet you there."*

I feel, the nuance of Helen's storytelling, as an unapologetic depiction of womanhood, borrows from the offbeat comedic tone of Phoebe Waller-bridge's FLEABAG. Its satire and irony are befitting tools for this societal commentary. We observe the women through our own judgemental lens - what they wear, how they look, we wonder what their story is and what place they occupy in our world; only to be reminded that we could be so wrong, that they are, like us, just people navigating life in a complicated world.



# CASTING

Casting is integral to build upon the archetypal representations of Jules and Micky so we can impose our own stereotypical perceptions upon them. Who is to say that older women from ethnic minority communities don't have fun. As Micky asks Jules *"Out early before the old man wakes up?"* We too make the same assumption about her based on popular narrative that paints older BAME women with the same brush.

Every now and then there will be a film like 80 FOR BRADY or a series like GRACE and FRANKIE, treated as a sub-genre of buddy comedies for seniors. I hope to present the same spark and verve for life for Jules I find in photographer SIRLI RAITMA's portraits of her mother, - imagine Meera Syal as the grandmother from THE KUMARS with Jane Fonda pizzaz.





# TONE & MOOD



The stylistic sensibility of Ben Sharrock's LIMBO - natural light, painterly compositions and stillness - offers **LIKE BUSES** a similar visual language for the slow burn progression towards an impactful twist ending. I love Ben Cooke's introspective long takes, close ups that capture telling detail edited in a montage punctuated by well paced dialogue by editor Lucia Zuchetti.

The vertical span of an Academy ratio captures the vastness of the open sky yet confines us at the bus stop in a microcosm that unites Micky and Jules.













# MEET THE TEAM



**Mariam Majid** is an award-winning writer and director. She earned Distinction in both her Bachelors of Fine Art and Masters of Filmmaking, receiving the Filmmaking Prize for her Postgraduate degree. In 2016, she founded Wagging Tongues Productions to engage the British Asian diaspora with the arts. Her short film, A Night with Noorjehan, won awards at the BAFTA-qualifying Leeds International Film Festival. Majid has worked on factual films for the British Council, Kingston University, and Stanley Picker Gallery. She is Head of Fiction Programming for the BIFA-qualifying London Breeze Film Festival, a member of w.in.c (women independent collective), and is producing her feature film script with a BAFTA-nominated producer.

**Annie Lees-Jones** set up Well Made Films, an independent production company specialising in scripted comedy in 2023. After returning to education from an extensive career on stage and screen, she earned Distinction in two degrees and was awarded the 'Best Pitch for a Television Series,' currently in development. She brings creative vision combined with business processes to deliver high-quality character driven content working with both emerging and established talent. Her previous films have won First Place for Best Comedy at the Oscar-Qualifying Flickers', Rhode Island and are both BAFTA/BIFA nominated, as well as shortlisted for the 1.4 Film Awards of Brilliant Filmmaking.

**Helen Tompson**, based in the South West, is a scriptwriter passionate about storytelling, primarily for screen. She holds a Masters in script and screenwriting and completed a script editing course with John Yorke. Helen hosts podcasts on screenwriting with The Script Department, adjudicates plays for an awarding body, shortlists films for Mor Media, and provides script workshops for the BFI. She teaches constructive feedback methods to MA students at Falmouth University, and works primarily in Creative Consultancy. Her favourite genres are high concept, drama, period, and comedy, especially period dramas. She was shortlisted for The Network 2024.



# PRODUCTION DETAILS

This production will be shot in Bournemouth with special thanks to Bournemouth & Poole Council and David at **MORE BUSES**.

## Key Crew in place...

AD - Vishal Krishnamurthy

DOP - Suneesh Suresh Kaithakuzhiyil

AC - Absher Abdul Khader

Sound Recordist & Designer - Shreyas Bhat

Editor & Colourist - Thomas Bobby Production

Production Assistant - Sanjivani Salvi

Production Stills - Carlos Tu

Behind-the-Scenes/Making of - Vishwajith Vs

Casting with **Colour Pictures Agency** and in talks with Meera Syal, Seema Hashim, and Beo Rannar Zafar.





# PRODUCTION BUDGET

We have secured an exclusive deal with free access to all lighting & filming equipment shooting on the **Netflix approved Sony FX3 4K Full-Frame Cinema Line Camera.**

**This means more budget for lenses to achieve exceptional cinematography.**

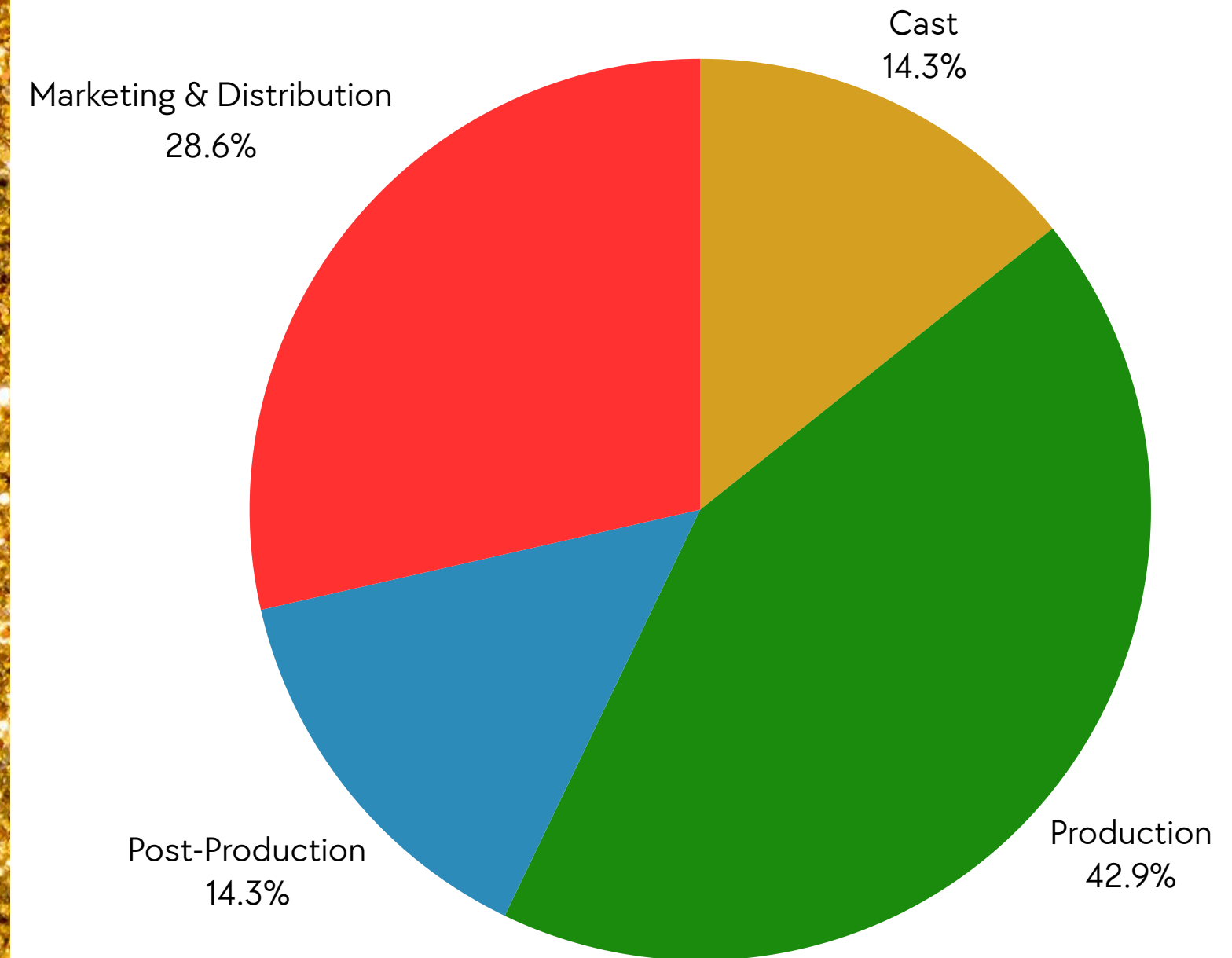
Cast £1k

Production £3k

Post-Production £1k

Marketing & Distribution 30% Budget secured after production

This exciting film is made possible by our connections in Bournemouth using local crew and affiliated post production team, able to deliver a high-quality film within the CenterFrame award.





# MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY

## TARGET MARKET

**LIKE BUSES** is a positive outlook on the friendships of women, that explores a moment in time by subverting preconceptions and breaking stereotypes.

Despite being female driven the film will appeal to both **Men & Women - Young Adult to your Nan!** Appealing to audiences who are comedy-lovers, appreciate character driven narratives, and themes of friendship with a cultural impact.

This story hits the comedy genre and current zeitgeist with relevant stories that capture audience attention combining drama, humour, diverse cultures, and authenticity.

## DISTRIBUTION

As well as the marketing at *Well Made Films* and *Wagging Tongues*, we will be looking to take this to top tier festivals with a focus on **female driven, cultural impact, comedy categories** and reaching international audiences.

With all short films there is the aim for awards, as the credibility allows industry and PR access to further promote our style, skills, and further sell our concepts to a wider band of distributors, aligning with both the writer and director's aim of playing with perceptions; **challenging gender/cultural stereotypes and writing good stories that can change us.**

Paid media for social, critics, film, and Q&A sessions, as well as short form platforms will be used to promote this film in the UK & Worldwide.



**THANK YOU**



**MARIAM MAJID  
ANNIE LEES-JONES  
HELEN TOMPSON**

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