

Strange Extras in Gillespie's



In Scene 91, Dr. Bill enters Gillespie's Coffee Shop and speaks with the waitress about Nick Nightingale. Strange thing is, there are two extras sitting in a booth behind Dr. Bill who seem to be responding, in both gestures and facial expressions, to Dr. Bill's conversation at the counter. Put in the DVD and watch closely . . . Here are but three examples of what I mean.

Bill: Excuse me, would you know when they get in next door at the Sonata Cafe?

The woman in red touches her wrist as if gesturing to a wristwatch.



Waitress: I think there's usually someone in the office round two or three."

The woman holds up four fingers as if to say, "four o'clock."



Bill: Do you know where he's staying?

Waitress: Well . . . I, I don't know whether he would want me to give out his address."

Just as the Waitress resists Bill (giving him the cold shoulder), the woman in red shivers and pulls her collar up to her face.



What is going on here? Why is this happening? Perhaps the extras simply used the dialogue as guides for their background behavior? But maybe there are other explanations? In my *Notes on Eyes Wide Shut*, I point out that the wallpaper in the corridor leading to the Harfords' apartment (5A) is the exact same wallpaper that decorates the dead Lou Nathanson's bedroom. Perhaps what is happening here is another example of this "overlapping" technique, in which seemingly separate elements intermingle in a strange way, adding to the "dream story" atmosphere of the film. (I recall how in Scorsese's *The King of Comedy*, in the restaurant scene where Rupert hands Rita his autograph, an extra sitting in the background becomes obtrusive by making playful gestures in response to Rupert's behavior, creating a mood of weirdness and paranoia.)