

MOEBIUS

Screenplay by
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Based on the short story "A Subway Named Moebius" by A.J. Deutsch

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FADE IN:

THE RUMBLE OF THUNDER ... THE SCREEN A SWIRL OF STRANGE IMAGES AS IF WE'RE IN THE VORTEX OF AN EXPLODING QUASAR IN DEEP SPACE AS BIZARRE SPLASHES OF SHAPES AND COLORS OVERLAP AND FOLD INTO EACH OTHER UNTIL - OUR SENSES RECOIL FROM AN EAR-SPLITTING SHRIEK OF METAL RIPPING METAL and then ...

A nearsighted 9-year old BOY stops squinting, puts on his thick glasses, and things come into focus as ---

INT. NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY TRAIN

RICHIE TUPELO, private school blazer, moves towards the lights reflecting off the dirty front window of the express curving through an underground tunnel. As he presses his face to the shaking, rattling front window ---

RICHIE'S POV -

- silvery tracks and dark tunnel walls hurl themselves at the train - green lights all the way as the train rumbles across a spiderweb of tracks and enters an even darker tunnel - a cheap thrill ride for any kid through a parallel dimension beneath the city streets.

REVERSE ANGLE - RICHIE AT THE WINDOW

behind him the GRAFFITI-SPLASHED SUBWAY CAR is packed with men in power suits, women with Farah Fawcett hair and leg warmers, and kids wearing Air Jordan - it's the 1980's. Richie presses closer to the dirt-smearred window. WE SEE: he hides a penknife - a private school punk - and is carving his initials into the shaking front door. Forming the "R" - the train SHUDDERS - the train SCREECHING as he presses down to form the "T".

INSIDE THE MOTORMAN'S COMPARTMENT NEXT TO TUPELO

---is THE MOTORMAN: 32, bushy moustache, big hair puffing out of his Transit Authority cap - watching his station-marks as he enters 42nd Street station and expertly slows the train, mating the front of the lead car with the end of the platform. The train stops. At that instant ---

THE MOTORMAN SLAMS OPEN THE COMPARTMENT DOOR -

--- and LAUNCHES out at Richie ---

MOTORMAN

You little shit!

Richie runs for the now-opened passenger doors --- but so many people are now flooding in that there's no way out - the motorman gets a finger on Richie's collar - but Richie twists

and breaks away - runs through the crowd to the back door -
the angry motorman in pursuit ---

MOTORMAN (CONT'D)

Grab that private school son-of-a-
bitch!

Richie yanks open the door that leads to the next car.

BETWEEN THE CARS

Richie missteps, falls between the metal plates - TERROR! -
if the train's moving his leg is cut off now - he pulls open
the door to the next car, the motorman reaching for him ---

IN THE NEXT CAR

Richie swats away the hand, dashes off the train.

INT. 42ND STREET STATION

Richie rushes upstairs. Motorman does not follow. The conduct-
or signals from the middle car: we have a train to move!

INT. THE FRONT CAR

The motorman swings back behind the controls. He eases the
throttle, train moves into the tunnel. The motorman glances at
the fresh "RT" scar on his front door. As if to a girlfriend:

MOTORMAN

Sorry.

THE CAMERA PANS FROM the "RT" graffiti to the motorman's
name tag: SOLJAK.

DISSOLVE TO:

20 YEARS LATER ...

CLOSE SHOT - AN EXPLOSION OF SPARKS

--- as a WELDER connects two lengths of steel. The white-hot
streams of light REFLECT OFF ---

--- that same old SOLJAK motorman's name tag, pitted and
browned with age - pinned to the white shirt of ---

MICHAEL SOLJAK,

his hair now short. No more moustache. He's put on weight,

but Soljak is the blue collar guy who made good - having worked his way up from motorman to the chief operations officer of the Brooklyn Division. We are in

A SUBWAY TUNNEL UNDER CONSTRUCTION

--- jackhammers pounding, workers shouting, rainbows of welding sparks - as Soljak gives a tour of this underworld to BOB, a NY Post reporter ---

SOLJAK

The O-Line Shuttle. 18 years in the making. A shuttle line tying together all the threads of all 842 miles of the New York City subway system. I was here when this tunnel was still bedrock.

BOB THE REPORTER

When will the final rails actually be connected together?

SOLJAK

You mean like "in the old days" in Utah?

(mimics hammering a spike)

The celebration's at City Hall tomorrow, Mayor's gonna be there, gonna be some party. But the actual connection: later today.

TERRELL WU, Soljak's assistant, interrupts. Always interrupts:

TERRELL

Chief ----

SOLJAK

--- as long as I have no distractions.

A CIVIL ENGINEER shows Soljak a blueprint. As he studies it---

TERRELL

You wanted me to notify you --- the other thing.

Soljak okays the blueprint. To Bob the reporter:

SOLJAK

Two o'clock this afternoon it's finished. Six o'clock tomorrow night - the party.

Soljak heads for a work train. Terrell scrambles after him:

TERRELL

You told me to tell you --- you didn't
say you were going! No Chief, no ---

INT. SUBWAY MAINTENANCE SHOP, BROOKLYN - DAY

Even louder NOISE. A train barn where subway cars are repaired, refitted, cleaned. Soljak watches a line of older cars being assembled into a train - cars from the 1970's and '80's. Is this some sort of Historic Celebration train? Bumpers slam together. Couplers connect. A SHOP BOSS counts off the cars:

SHOP BOSS

Six --- seven --- eight ---

The shop boss looks to Soljak. No smile. Shop boss understands.

SHOP BOSS (CONT'D)

I hate this part of the job.

The shop boss smacks the side of Car #8686 - the last car.

SHOP BOSS (CONT'D)

(to mechanic)

Cut it here. Leave this one behind.

MECHANIC

But ---

SHOP BOSS

Just do it.

The mechanic uncouples the last car. Shop Boss to Soljak:

SHOP BOSS (CONT'D)

Want me to stash it somewhere?
Hell, I'll even hitch it up and
send it out for a last ride.

Soljak likes that idea. The shop boss turns a key, the doors to the last car open. Soljak climbs up into car #8686.

INT. CAR #8686 - DAY

Soljak peers into his old control compartment, touches the cracked leather seat, the old-style control throttles.

SOLJAK

Always so damn hot in here. Hard
to imagine I used to live in
this box five days a week.

SHOP BOSS

Guess you don't miss being a motorman.

A low rumble, the rest of the train that was attached to #8686 is moving away. Soljak drops the front window, watches the rest of his train disappear into a tunnel. Something forboding about this - its tail-end streaked with tears of rust.

SOLJAK

(as the old train disappears)
Running trains, working in this cage,
do I miss it? --- Everyday.

Then he notices a faded, almost-invisible scar in the front door's steel: those initials --- "RT."

CLOSE SHOT - SCHOOL BLACKBOARD - DAY

A hand writes the letter R - leaves a space - writes: T.
Fills in the rest: R-ichard T-upelo. PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

MEDIUM SHOT - RICHARD TUPELO (R.T.) - DAY

RICHARD TUPELO is now a handsome 29-year old teacher in blue blazer and polo shirt - with the same mischievous swagger, and those same style glasses as when he was 9. He faces his class with confidence and ease.

TUPELO

My name is Richard Tupelo, and today
you're going to forget everything
you ever thought you knew ---

INT. THE CLASSROOM - DAY

REVEAL: no he's not teaching at Harvard, or at some small liberal arts haven - he's in the worst high school in the Bronx: slackers, wannabe gangsters, a smattering of tough Albanian immigrants ... and those are the good kids. This is not honorable volunteer work. Richard Tupelo does not want to be here. While Soljak might be the working class guy who made good, Tupelo is the rich kid whose life derailed.

TUPELO (CONT'D)

Since I'm just subbing today, and none
of you will ever see me again, let's
all maybe try to have some fun.

(This gets some attention -
some, very little, but some)

Tell me one thing you've been taught
this year that you don't believe.

(no one responds)

(MORE)

TUPELO (CONT'D)

Okay, I'll tell you something I don't believe: I don't believe anything in this room is real.

INT. TRAIN TUNNEL - DAY

That train of old rusted subway cars passes from darkness into daylight.

EXT. BROOKLYN TRAIN YARD - DAY

The old train moves through acres of shiny new subway trains being readied for their runs.

EXT. BARGE PIER - DAY

The old train continues onto a barge waiting at the pier, joining dozens of other old subway cars already packed onto the barge - and chained together. Perhaps these venerable cars are heading for use in some other town.

EXT. EAST RIVER - DAY

Tugs pulls the barge into New York Harbor: subway cars floating past Manhattan, past The Statue of Liberty.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

BAM! Tupelo crashes into a wall, bounces off, and then slams again against a wall - is he being beaten up by the students? REVEAL: he's throwing himself against the wall, again and again. This gets a few kids' attention. He gives himself a rest:

TUPELO (CONT'D)

Okay, so, if you learn one thing in science learn this: everything in the world is made up of atoms, tiny specks of matter that you can't see but which make up everything.

ALBANIAN KID

I don't understand.

TUPELO

This wall is not really hard, it's made up of trillions of floating atoms - and it's not "hard" until I press against it - the atoms in my body repelled by the atoms in the wall and if I pressed against this wall forever, imagine that, for the history of time ---

(keeps pushing)

(MORE)

TUPELO (CONT'D)

If I lived forever and kept pressing against this wall there is a possibility - of a moment - when the atoms in the wall might suddenly randomly arrange themselves so I'd go through the wall. Could happen right now. Or in a million years. Might never happen. But it could happen.

SHARONA

Like - you could walk through a wall?

TUPELO

Yeah. But something really, really different would have to be happening at just that moment in the universe to set up those circumstances.

JAMAL

If you went through the wall would you be on the other side of the wall, or inside the wall?

TUPELO

Good question. Why aren't you in some brainiac school instead of this dung-heap? - and I'm not joking. Don't like to study?

JAMAL

Life is tough.

TUPELO

Well, kid, the second thing you need to learn is: as tough as you think your life is, for someone else it's even worse.

JAMAL

(ignores that)

If you went through the wall, what would it look like?

TUPELO

All I know is this: when we leave this room, pull down the blinds, close the door, this classroom will not look like this classroom. This classroom, when no one's in here, is a swirling cloud of atoms that form this desk, this chair, this poster of Martin Luther King, with colors our eyes can't process and shapes you can't

(MORE)

TUPELO (CONT'D)

begin to imagine and that's what this room really looks like until someone opens the door and looks in - and in that instant the human eye and the human brain will turn this swirling cloud of electrons-molecules-atoms into what we think of as "real."

The kids are fascinated. Here is a guy who is not scared, bored, or patronizing to them. Tupelo is a brilliant teacher.

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAY

Beyond New York Harbor the barge stops. Tug workers unhook the chains that secure the old subway cars. The track platform tilts and one by one, each car pulling the next car, THE SUBWAY CARS PLUNGE OVERBOARD - cries of metal, groans of steel as the old cars are unceremoniously dumped into the sea (NOTE: this is actually how they get rid of old subway cars)

UNDERSEA - ATLANTIC OCEAN

The drowning subway cars gasp and spit air as they sink to become part of an ---

UNDERWATER REEF OF SUBWAY CARS

A sad watery graveyard of forgotten history, silt and muck rising as each drowning car settles among the other rusting, barnacle-covered hulks. One subway car comes to rest with its front end to us. An iridescent glow - its front door, motorman's window, headlights and identification plaque look like the face of a skull. Bubbles rise from its "mouth" and "nostrils." It looks --- very unhappy.

EXT. CITY PLAYGROUND - DEKALB AVENUE, BROOKLYN - DAY

Someone else looks very unhappy: RENEE TUPELO, 29 - a nurse, very pretty in a Vermont-Montreal sort of way - Tupelo's wife. She watches mothers push their children on the swings in a playground. A mother sees Renee. Waves hello. Renee backs off, heads across the street to Brooklyn Hospital.

INT. SUBWAY INTERCHANGE, BROOKLYN - DAY

Soljak walks through a multi-level station. He loves this grand mechanism: trains on three levels moving in and out of tunnels and platforms - like a giant clockwork at the heart of the city. Soljak pauses to watch - it's as if he owns this place - and THROUGH HIS EYES ---

WE SEE WHAT SOLJAK KNOWS:

ELECTRICITY SURGING ALONG THE MULTIPLE TRACKS' THIRD RAILS
 THE "SHOES" UNDERNEATH THE TRAINS PICKING UP THE CURRENT AND
 POWERING THE TRAINS AS ---

SIGNAL LIGHTS COORDINATE WITH SWITCHES---

TRACK SWITCHES SHIFTING TRAINS ACROSS TRACK CROSSOVERS

RODENT-CHEWED, CLOTH-COVERED WIRING FROM THE 1930'S

CONNECTING ELECTRIC TRACK SENSORS BUILT IN 1904 THAT TRIP

ANCIENT RELAY SWITCHES THAT ILLUMINATE TINY RED LIGHTS ON

METAL TRACK MAPS FROM 1950 IN GRIMY DISPATCH ROOMS -

---INDICATING THAT A TRAIN IS PASSING THROUGH THE SYSTEM AS
 STEEL WHEELS FOLLOW THE TRACK, AND WHEN THE TRACK CURVES ---

WHEEL FLANGES TOUCH THE STEEL RAILS (SPARKS FLY) ---

--- causing that ear-splitting SCREECH known to every one of
 the 2 billion subway riders in the world.

ANGLE ON - SOLJAK (BACK TO REALITY)

Still amazed that this grand, decayed, complex machine works.

INT. CLASSROOM, THE BRONX - DAY

Tupelo owns this classroom now - the kids gathered around him
 as he demonstrates principles of perception with 3 cups and a
 ball - the classic street hustle, expert slight-of-hand ---

TUPELO

Which one's the ball under. You saw
 it under Cup #1 - left-right, right
 to center, three cups - one has the
 ball - which one has the ball?

They're all convinced that ---

THE KIDS

Left one! This one! Number One!

Tupelo lifts cup #1: no ball. Groans, laughs. He shows the
 ball under Cup 3, again moves the cups around the table.

TUPELO

We're all seeing the same thing
right? Which one hides the ball?

The kids all yell, call out, pointing to different cups.

JAMAL

You got the ball in your hand.

Tupelo's look: oh yeah? He lifts the first cup. No ball. Puts the cup back down. Lifts the second cup. No ball. Lifts the third cup. No ball. He opens his hands: no ball. Huh? Where's the ball? Points to the first cup.

TUPELO

It's there. Trust me.

Jamal lifts that cup again: now there's a ball there.

TUPELO (CONT'D)

Guess we didn't all see the same thing. That's the basis of relativity: our relationship to and perception of what is happening defines our sense of what is real.

Tupelo sees past the group around him, notices a scrawny kid face down on a desk. The kid is wearing a backpack covered with scribbled note cards. Tupelo looks to the class:

TUPELO (CONT'D)

Okay ---. What's going on there?

ALBANIAN KID

You wanna trip into never-neverland
- that's your tour guide. Lives in
some other world already.

Kids laugh. Tupelo moves to the slumped, apparently sleeping figure, leans in close to read a card pinned to the backpack:

TUPELO

"Credit reports are good for 7 years
True or False."

(to the class)

I'll take some help from anybody.

JAMAL

We call her TinkerBell.

TUPELO

Her ---?

SHARONA

Teena something. That's her real name.

JAMAL

Writes down crazy things she reads
on walls, then clips 'em to herself.

Tupelo reads other cards clipped to Tinkerbell:

TUPELO

"If You See Something Say Something"
"Who Will Be Miss Subway?" "WONDER
BREAD" "Cry Then Bell"

(to Jamal)

If I came in here with a forklift,
picked up the desk and her on it,
and dumped her in the middle of a
museum I'd get a "Genius Grant."
Where's she --- what's her ---?

SHARONA

If we knew that then she wouldn't
be called "Tinkerbell."

TUPELO

But she's definitely alive, right?

Jamal shrugs: maybe. Tupelo moves to touch TinkerBell.
Hesitates. Looks to Jamal. Jamal nods: it's okay to touch.

TUPELO (CONT'D)

Kid --- ?

Tupelo gently touches Tinkerbell's sleeve ---

AN ANIMAL-LIKE SCREECH AS TINKERBELL INSTANTLY LEAPS TO HER
FEET - SCARING THE HELL OUT OF TUPELO - AND US!

Jamal roars with laughter, knew this would happen. Tinkerbell
- blazing eyes, face like a feral cat - hisses at Tupelo:

TINKERBELL

Don't touch me!!

AND THEN: THE CLASS BUZZER RINGS!

Tupelo jumps (so do we). Tupelo grabs his books, wants out of
here even faster than the students do. Jamal cuts him off.

JAMAL

You really believe any of what you
told us - that nothing is real?

TUPELO
 (on his way out)
 Thanks for your little joke.

JAMAL
 C'mon, it was funny. Look: she's okay.

Tinkerbell does not look "okay" - glares at Tupelo.

JAMAL (CONT'D)
 Was that true what you said?

TUPELO
 Next time your regular teacher
 cops a long weekend and they send
 me back here I'll let you know.

JAMAL
 (genuinely scary)
 We can make sure he never shows up.

TUPELO
 Who can resist the spirit of young
 minds eager for education?

Their eyes lock. Now only Tupelo and Jamal are left in the classroom - and Tinkerbell, who moves behind Jamal, her protector. Jamal touches Tupelo's sleeve.

JAMAL
 Answer me. I want to know.

TUPELO
 Do I really believe everything we see
 is some form of illusion that we call
 reality, an illusion we may more
 accurately understand sometime in the
 future? Do I actually believe that --- ?

The Big Question. As Tupelo leans close to answer ---

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

A FLASH of POWER-ENERGY-SPEED as the #3 train rockets downtown.

INT. EXPRESS TRAIN - DAY

Tupelo, rocking with the rhythm, takes this subway world for granted - believes it will get him home. Steel screeches, harsh sounds - he ignores them. He looks up at the subway ads:

"Credit reports are good for 7 years -
 True or False?"

Hmm - TinkerBell's quote. And below that ad, the ominous post-9/11 police department sign now in every car:

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING SAY SOMETHING.

The train speeds through COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY station. Tupelo's lips tighten - bad memories. THE ROARING SUBWAY SOUND BECOMES ---

EXT. BROOKLYN HOSPITAL - DAY

THE WAIL OF AN AMBULANCE - always some emergency in New York - but no one on the street reacts. Exiting the hospital: Renee and two other nurses: her supervisor JUDY, and CARLA. Renee eyes the playground, Judy pulls her along with them.

NURSE JUDY

We're going for a drink. And Renee, this time you're coming.

RENEE

Fine.

NURSE JUDY

I don't believe it: she said yes.

RENEE

But it better be a place filled with loud nasty drunks.

NURSE JUDY

Sorry - I never drink at home.

They head for a local tavern. Renee slows, sees: Tupelo coming up from a subway entrance. Looking for her.

RENEE

Sorry girls, rain check, okay?

NURSE JUDY

You're ditching us for a guy?

CARLA

Does a husband count as a guy?

RENEE

Next time. I promise.

The friends continue across the street, polite nods to Tupelo - awkward moment, they know something. Renee smiles at him, instinct - what a smile, then the smile disappears. Cool:

RENEE (CONT'D)

This is a surprise.

TUPELO

Nice surprise?

She puts her finger to his lips: Shh. Something very deep going on here. He locks her finger with his finger, moves it from his lips. Gives her a quick kiss. We notice their wedding rings - the identical simple bands.

TUPELO (CONT'D)

I had a very strange day. Want to get some dinner?

RENEE

Let's just go home. That okay?

EXT. BROOKLYN ESPLANADE - EAST RIVER - DAY

Soljak, alone, on the promenade overlooking the harbor, watches tugboats and barges returning from the sea. The barges - once carrying old subway cars - are empty.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - DAY

Renee and Tupelo wait for a train. Quiet. A steady DRIPPING from somewhere. He takes her hand. She gazes at the track. A look as dark as when she was watching those kids in the park.

BANG! BANG! BOOM! - THEY BOTH STARTLE as a DRUMMER seeking donations starts pounding out a LOUD BEAT on plastic water jugs.

Tupelo puts his arm around the edgy Renee. She rests her head on his shoulder. She fights back tears ---

RENEE

Richard ---

He fears what might be coming. She begins to speak, then - surprise - she pulls him into a desperate kiss.

WHOOSH-GROWL - an EXPRESS ROARS through the station as ---

INT. TUNNEL CONSTRUCTION ZONE - DAY

Soljak crunches blueprints, ready to explode:

SOLJAK

What do you mean it's not done?
I left for two hours - it should
have taken ten minutes!

TERRELL

I begged you: Don't leave. You leave,
nothing goes right. If you'd stayed---

SOLJAK
What is the problem?

CIVIL ENGINEER
Wrong joint was delivered.

SOLJAK
Then get the right joint.

TERRELL
It's in Jersey City.

SOLJAK
Goddammit! Finish this now!

CONTRACTOR
(takes a step back)
Can't get delivery 'til tonight and if
I gotta keep a crew on, gonna cost---

SOLJAK
I don't care! The Mayor's flying back
from China for this - and tomorrow is
the best day of my life. If it's not,
it's gonna be the worst day of yours.
Got that? I've given 30 years to this
system. This is my wife, my family, my
life, and anyone who gets in my way ---

CONTRACTOR
Okay! It'll get done.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - NIGHT

Renee pulls on jeans. Washes her face. Looks away from the
mirror. Sad - wishes she wasn't. Tupelo - they've just made
love - watches her from the bed. Love. Oldies on the radio.

RENEE
Never told me about your day.

TUPELO
Got to find something else to do.

RENEE
What about the thing in Vegas?

On the living room table: schematic drawings and a model of a
car on a platform surrounded by shards of mirrors.

TUPELO
He just needs the trick. Doesn't
need me to build it.

RENEE

Still, you should go out there.

TUPELO

He'll invite us both out for
the opening.

RENEE

But you need a vacation ---
(softly, sweetly)
From me.

Tupelo, out of bed, wraps himself in the sheet, follows her
into the living room.

TUPELO

Don't say that, please.

RENEE

How'd your cousin ever get into magic?

We realize what he's building is a miniature Vegas stage illusion.

TUPELO

It's not that different from physics.

On the radio the Go-Go's sing "*Our Lips Are Sealed*." Tupelo and
Renee glance at each other - some old joke between them - she
can't stay sad. As the Go-Go's sing their garbled chorus '*Our
Lips Are Sealed...*' Renee playfully sings misheard lyrics:

RENEE

"*Alex the Seal* ---"

TUPELO

See? - my version is better. Any-
way, that's what it sounds like.

The song keeps playing - brightens the room, and them ---

RENEE

Be honest - you didn't think those
were the words. The song is "*Our
Lips are Sealed*" so it's obvious---

TUPELO

Obvious maybe to a girl.

RENEE

What would "*Alex the Seal*" mean?

TUPELO

Something very heavy, and very deep.

RENEE
 (jumps and sings)
"Alex the Seal, Alex the Seal"---

Her voice drifts. Tupelo SEES IN THE MIRRORS: Renee looking across the apartment at a locked door. The sadness returns.

TUPELO
 (goes to her)
 We can't keep it closed forever.

RENEE
 It's like it all never happened.

TUPELO
 Let me - I can pack her things.

RENEE
 Not yet.

TUPELO
 She had a beautiful life. She did.
 That should be the memory.

Renee doesn't respond. Goes to the locked door. Touches it.

TUPELO (CONT'D)
 Let me take care of everything.
 While you're at work.

RENEE
 I don't want that. Not until you---.

TUPELO
 What? See things your way?

RENEE
 She had a terrible life. Just
 agree with me, okay? I need that.

TUPELO
 We're allowed to handle things dif-
 ferently.

RENEE
 I know. We handle things differently -
 (touches his shoulder)
 --- and that's what going to kill us.

She goes back into their bedroom. Closes that door. Not a slam, just a very chilling CLICK. Tupelo now left alone. He looks at that first door. CAMERA MOVES TOWARDS the dark

keyhole, taking us closer, closer - TENSION BUILDS and just when we could see through the hole and into the other side ---

SCREAM-SCREECH-WHOOSH-GROWL ----

INT. SUBWAY STATION - BROOKLYN - DAY

--- a subway train BLASTS out of a dark tunnel and ROARS into the station. Tupelo and Renee dash down the steps to catch it.

INT. OLD SUBWAY CAR - MOVING - DAY

Tupelo and Renee, standing in the noisy, surprisingly old subway car - seems neither slept last night. It's early, only a dozen other PASSENGERS are in their car including:

A young EXEC reading Advertising Age ... a CHINESE KITCHEN WORKER ... an ART STUDENT ... a red-haired MODEL with no makeup reading Vogue ... a FAT GUY with court papers ... three scattered HOMELESS GUYS ... and yet another SUBWAY DRUMMER pounding away on a plastic container.

Renee's tense. Tupelo tries to calm her:

TUPELO

Alex the Seal.

She forces a weak smile, remembers something, checks her bag.

RENEE

Forgot my keys.

TUPELO

I'm just filing hours today, and sending that design to my cousin. I'll be home when you get home.

Something grabs Tupelo's pant cuff. A rat? - Tupelo pulls away - looks down: it's a little KID IN A STROLLER. Tupelo goofs with the kid. The kid laughs.

RENEE

You would have been a great father.

TUPELO

I was a great father.

RENEE

Six weeks.

TUPELO

For six weeks I was a great father. And maybe I'll get another chance.

RENEE
Just like that?

TUPELO
We can try.

What he said burns her. He touches her, wants her happy.
Instead:

RENEE
We need to be away from each other.

TUPELO
Renee ---

RENEE
When the train stops I need to be alone.

TUPELO
Renee ---

RENEE
Get off the train or I will ---

SCREAM OF STEEL WHEELS AGAINST STEEL TRACK as the train
enters the next station.

CONDUCTOR'S VOICE
Bergen Street. Next stop Atlantic Avenue.

IN THE STATION

Train doors open. Mother with kid exits. Tupelo gets off. They
were in the rear car. From the platform Tupelo looks back at
Renee. She can't believe what just happened - now feels awful,
reaches her hand to him, truly loves him, WANTS HIM BACK, but---

CONDUCTOR'S VOICE
Stand clear of the closing doors.

TRAIN DOORS SLAM SHUT.

Tupelo smacks the door with his hand - wants in. Too late.
Train CHUNKS, starts to move.

ON THE TRAIN -

Renee rushes to the rear window as the train pulls away.

ON THE PLATFORM -

Tupelo raises a hand to her when ---

SLAM! --- A RAPID-FIRE COLLAGE OF HORRIFYING IMAGES:

TUPELO IS HIT HARD FROM BEHIND ---

--- stumbles forward AND FALLS INTO THE TRACK PIT

TUPELO CRASHES DOWN ONTO THE TRACKS ---

--- into the muck between steel rails - rats scurry as -

SOMEONE RUNS AWAY -

chasing the train ---

TWO COPS LEAP THE TURNSTILES IN PURSUIT,

chasing a YOUNG PUNK in a black jacket and backpack who

LEAPS ONTO THE BACK OF THE RUSHING-AWAY TRAIN -

latching onto the rear chains to hold on as---

RENEE - IN THE REAR WINDOW

reacts to seeing Tupelo knocked into the pit, then sees

A WILD CREATURE SUDDENLY LATCHED ONTO THE TRAIN -

--- a psychotic young face fills the window: TinkerBell.

THE SUBWAY TRAIN -

curves into the dark of the tunnel. The SCREECH of scraping steel.

IN THE TRACK PIT -

Tupelo - feeling in the muck for his glasses, finds them -

THE THIRD RAIL BUZZES WITH ELECTRICITY -

- the main rails beginning to vibrate - Tupelo blinks to get his bearings - am I alive? am I dead? - his glasses filthy, he seems in some timeless other dimension of the city, when---

HE IS THRUST FORWARD!

HIS LEGS AND FEET PULLED THROUGH THE MUCK as he's GRABBED by the cops and a FARE CLERK who pull him up out of the pit.

A MONTAGE OF DISORIENTING FACES:

COP 1 (OFFICER GARRETT)

You okay?

TUPELO

My wife's on the train. Is she ---?

COP 2

Get a look at who did it?

TUPELO

What happened?

OFFICER GARRETT

You got pushed onto the tracks.

THE NEXT TRAIN ROARS INTO THE STATION - at this hour trains pull into stations every minute. Had Tupelo stayed in the pit he's dead now. The cop's on his intercom:

OFFICER GARRETT (CONT'D)

Stop the #3 coming into Atlantic Avenue - we got a Code 2-40 riding the back!

ON THE TRAIN - MOVING - IN THE TUNNEL

A FLASH OF IMAGES as Renee and Tinkerbelle's eyes meet through the back door's scratched glass. Renee saw her bump Tupelo onto the tracks - wants to kill her - tries to get at her - but the door is locked ---

--- and TinkerBell's face is now so vulnerable it breaks your heart --- and now Renee sees her as a scared child hanging onto the back of a speeding train - now wants to help --- BUT:

A LOOK OF ANIMAL HORROR

comes over TinkerBell's face as ---

TINKERBELL'S POV: INSIDE THE SPEEDING SUBWAY CAR -

--- a TORNADO-LIKE STORM OF BARELY-IMAGINED COLORS AND SHAPES POURS IN FROM THE FORWARD CARS AND IS ---

RUSHING TOWARDS US ---

--- towards the unaware Renee - is this real or some psychotic Tinkerbelle vision? - the storm of FRIGHTENING SHAPES and COLORS about to overtake Renee when ---

INT. ATLANTIC AVENUE STATION - DAY

Commuters wait impatiently for the #3 train. Hear the SCREECH and ROAR as flanges hit rails in the curving tunnel --- the RUMBLE of the train brings some waiting commuters closer to the edge of the platform while others back away and then ---

WHOOSH -- A POWERFUL STORM OF WIND

--- blasts through the station - pulling newspapers out of hands, tossing hats, sending magazines from the news-kiosk flying --- and just as quickly disappears down the tunnel. Lots of "what the fuck ---?-'s --- but before there's a consensus of "what the fuck?" did just happen---

THE NEXT TRAIN PULLS INTO THE STATION

It's rush hour - and people are late - so everyone on the platform just gets on this next train - and this train leaves - and the platform is now empty ---

AS COPS RUSH DOWN ONTO THE PLATFORM ---

--- to find: no train, no waiting passengers, no TinkerBell, only a Pakistani news-seller picking up the newspapers and Lotto tickets blown from his kiosk by the mysterious gust of wind.

INT. TUNNEL CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A SEARING BLAST OF LIGHT. The Contractor turns to Soljak:

CONTRACTOR

It's done.

Soljak looks over to workers making the final welds on the shuttle track. The station clock: 6:23. A gruff whisper:

SOLJAK

Done. First time in 112 years: the entire tangle of the New York City Subway System is tied together ---

Soljak does not seem triumphant. More an "is that all there is?" expression as he turns to Bob the Reporter who holds out a digital recorder to capture Soljak's every word:

SOLJAK (CONT'D)

--- all 25 different lines, all 468 stations, and now it's all hooked together in one big knot - and we did it. Bravo. But if I ask for one more fire extinguisher or to change some wiring from 1930 I still need twenty pages of paperwork. The people deserve better, the workers deserve better, and this old system deserves better.

A hand grabs Bob's recording device, a hand that belongs to

MICHELLE MURPHY, a hot-looking 30ish corporate-type---

MICHELLE MURPHY

What the Chief of Operations, Brooklyn Division - who is scheduled to retire this week, I believe - means to say is that when he started things were very different - very simple - and now we're in the 21st Century.

(takes the reporter's hand)

Michelle Murphy - mayor's office.

She takes the digital recorder away from Bob. Bob reacts.

MICHELLE MURPHY (CONT'D)

Didn't you still want that interview with the Mayor on Thursday?

BOB THE REPORTER

I never - I have an interview with the mayor?

(likes that)

Let me show you how to erase that.

As Bob the Reporter erases Soljak's quote from the digital recorder, Terrell pulls Sojak aside:

TERRELL

Uh Chief: we got a problem at Bergen Street Station.

INT. BERGEN STREET STATION - DAY

The northbound platform and local track has been closed. Tupelo, emergency blanket over his shoulders, fumbles with his cell phone as OFFICER GARRETT questions him.

OFFICER GARRETT

You said you're a teacher - the creep who pushed you was a kid. Any reason for a kid to push you?

Tupelo, somewhat in shock, ignores that, his mind elsewhere:

TUPELO

I had a little fight with my wife, got off the train, then I tried to get back on and next thing I'm --- I need to call her - tell her I'm okay - she must have gotten off at the next stop - can you call her?

OFFICER GARRETT

No, but if she got off at Atlantic she'll be back here in a minute. But the kid who pushed you ---
 (reading his notes)
 --- 'bout this high, maybe 15 - grabbed a can of yellow spray paint out of a hardware store on Bergen street, we were chasing her, jumped the turnstile ---

TUPELO

So you were chasing him? He wasn't trying to kill me. He bumped me? It was an accident?

OFFICER GARRETT

Not "him" - "her."

TUPELO

Her?

OFFICER GARRETT

And her jacket and backpack: covered with all kinds of crazy weird notes. Can you help me out here?

TUPELO

Tinkerbell?

Officer Garrett smiles politely. EMS GUYS arrive with med kit, pull on gloves.

EMS DUDE

This the guy? Sir, look into this light. Can you tell me your name?

TUPELO

Richard Tupelo.

A southbound train BLASTS in from the opposite direction. Stops across the tracks at the opposite platform. Tupelo stands. Sees people get off. Train leaves. No Renee.

OFFICER GARRETT

Maybe she didn't see what happened.

TUPELO

Can someone take me to the Hospital Center? She works there.

EMS DUDE

(to the cop)

All right with you, we done here?

OFFICER GARRETT

Yeah, what the hell, the guy's
half wacko, can't tell us any-
thing, besides ---

(points to surveillance cam)

We got it all on tape.

The southbound ROARS out of the station - becoming a SMEAR of light and color disappearing into the tunnel darkness.

INT. PEDIATRICS WARD, BROOKLYN HOSPITAL CENTER - DAY

Where Renee works. Busy, under-staffed, and supervisor Nurse Judy has lost her patience with Tupelo.

TUPELO

I called home, she's not there.
Called her mother, not there.

NURSE JUDY

For the third time, Richard, she's
not here - and whatever you two
need to work out, I understand,
but I am none too happy that she
hasn't shown up for work. Okay?

TUPELO

(spots the friend)

Carla - did you see her? You take
the same train, right?

CARLA

I came in early today.

NURSE JUDY

Richard, she is not here! We're
not hiding her. And you look like
shit - go get yourself clean!

EMS DUDE

Mr. Tupelo, you need to come with us.

On the marker board that lists nurses working this shift
Renee's name is being erased. AS HER NAME DISAPPEARS ---
QUICK INTERCUTS:

INT. MANHATTAN AD AGENCY - DAY

A MESSENGER leaves documents on the desk of an empty cubicle,

the exec who should be here hasn't shown for work. No biggie.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

The owner is screaming in Chinese, pointing to a sink filled with pots. We only understand: "no dishwasher."

INT. ART SCHOOL CLASS - DAY

Students at work at their easels. One easel is empty.

TEACHER

Where's Claire? New boyfriend?

INT. BROOKLYN TRAFFIC COURT - DAY

Packed, hellish. The JUDGE moves through cases quickly.

JUDGE

Mister Mizrahi not with us this morning? Judgement against him.
Next case ---

INT. FASHION SHOOT - DAY

TWO MODELS - one Blonde, one Black - and one crazed PHOTOGRAPHER.

PHOTOGRAPHER

She always late! I don't need her.
Get me a redhead. Any redhead

EXT. 34TH STREET POST OFFICE - DAY

One homeless guys barks at another who holds a DONATION sign.

HOMELESS GUY

Where's Slim? This is his spot.

THROUGHOUT A CITY OF TEN MILLION ---

Several dozen random people at random locations are missing, absent, or late. But no reason for panic. Yet.

INT. BERGEN STREET STATION - DAY

Cops, transit officials and investigators, reporters, a guy on a ladder takes down a surveillance camera. Soljak looks to heaven (a drippy ceiling), his voice loud enough for everyone to hear:

SOLJAK

May we re-open this station? I've
been re-routing trains for two
hours which which has backed up
(MORE)

SOLJAK (CONT'D)
 my system for five hours. Read the signs, people: STAY BACK FROM THE TRACKS! So some jerk can't read, fell in, and then he climbed out - so nothing happened!

DETECTIVE MARASCHINO
 Attempted Murder. He was pushed.

SOLJAK
 If he was pushed find who pushed him. You got all your new TV cameras so go watch TV. Let me get this system back on schedule. Somebody. Please.

No one wants to make a decision. Until she appears:

MICHELLE MURPHY
 Let's get this station re-opened.

OFFICER GARRETT
 (explains to the detective)
 Mayor's Director of Operations, and campaign director --- a lotta juice.

SOLJAK
 Thank you, Michelle.

She nods like a queen, taps her watch:

MICHELLE MURPHY
 The mayor's plane lands in four hours and we have a very important evening so let's not have any more screw ups. Is that clear Mr. Soljak?

SOLJAK
I didn't fall on the tracks.

MICHELLE MURPHY
 You're starting to look like you did. Get some sleep. Go home.

SOLJAK
 This is my home.

MICHELLE MURPHY
 Not for long, but if you want that big cushy consultant job when you retire make sure nothing else gets in the way today.

She marches away. Terrell whispers to Soljak:

TERRELL

You need to pay attention to what I've been trying to tell you, Chief - and please don't yell at me.

SOLJAK

Then don't tell me things that are insane. What do you mean a #3 is missing? Terrell, be very precise: define the word "missing."

INT. BROOKLYN SUBWAY TUNNELS - DAY

A gloomy spiderweb of tracks and tunnels, one of those spots where several threads of the system connect. TWO SUBWAY MAINTENANCE WORKERS - hard hats and orange stiped vests - are repairing a light signal. Left and right of them SUBWAY TRAINS, SPARKS FLYING, ROAR PAST THEM in several directions. These guys barely notice - it's where they work.

MAINTENANCE GUY

Four-hour work order here and it turns out we just have to change a bulb.

JIMMY THE HELPER

So we take the rest of the day off?

MAINTENANCE GUY

No. We don't take the rest of the day off. And next time you come to work stinking of beer I'm writing you up. Get me a #28 bulb.

Jimmy the Helper heads down the track to a work kit. He stops. Senses something. The switches that run parallel to the track are starting to click. He turns to his boss.

JIMMY THE HELPER

Uh, this track is shut down now, right?

MAINTENANCE GUY

Get me the bulb!

JIMMY THE HELPER

Boss - the switches are flicking.

MAINTENANCE GUY

What's wrong with you? The track's shut down, its been down for 2 hours.

JIMMY THE HELPER

Check this out, boss. It's humming.

The maintenance guy, now even more annoyed, steps down from his ladder onto the track bed. Sees - hears - the action of the pre-1940's switches clicking along the track. Snaps his walkie-talkie off his belt. SUDDENLY - BEHIND HIM ---

THE SIGNAL BOX HE WAS WORKING ON --- EXPLODES!

Showering him with sparks. He winces, looks at the box, looks at Jimmy the Helper.

MAINTENANCE GUY

That's not possible. The power is off.

ALL AROUND THEM TRAINS ---

--- KEEP SCREECHING IN AND OUT OF TUNNELS ON THE CRISS-CROSSING AND PARALLEL WEB OF TRACKS --- as the maintenance guy barks into his walkie-talkie:

MAINTENANCE GUY (CONT'D)

Jackson! Track 18 DeKalb Avenue is shut down, right?

(a garble of static)

Fucking equipment! Jackson!

Maintenance Guy and his helper can FEEL the power surging through the stretch of track they stand on ---

SWITCHES FLICKING FASTER ---

--- SIGNAL LIGHTS SNAPPING ON-AND-OFF LIKE STROBES:

RED-YELLOW-GREEN ---

--- RED-YELLOW-GREEN ---

FROM THE DARK TUNNEL OF TRACK 18 ---

THEY (AND WE) FEEL THE POWER OF AN ONCOMING TRAIN ---

--- they look to each other - there's no train there - but the RUMBLING THROB OF POWER GROWS CLOSER, LOUDER - THE SCREECH! - and THEY FEEL AN ON-RUSHING SURGE OF AIR PRESSURE ---

MAINTENANCE GUY (CONT'D)

What the --- get off the track ---

GET OFF THE TRACK!!!

JIMMY THE HELPER DIVES TO THE RIGHT as---

THE MAINTENANCE GUY LEAPS TO THE LEFT ---

--- onto the empty Track 19 ----

WHERE HE IS INSTANTLY SMASHED/CRUSHED BY AN EXPRESS TRAIN ---

--- POWERING AROUND THE CURVE OF TRACK 19

ANGLE ON: JIMMY THE HELPER

Wide-eyed horror as he sees THE SCREECHING EXPRESS TEARING HIS BOSS TO SHREDS ---

--- and then Jimmy FEELS a POWERFUL CURRENT OF TORNADO-WIND FLYING PAST HIM ---

--- disappearing into the darkness - and then all those strobing signal lights on Track 18 instantly go dark.

The clicking of signals stops. The tunnel falls silent --- except for Jimmy the Helper's SCREAM!

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN FLOOR - THE SUBWAY REEF - DAY

A deep, angry undersea sound. The drowned old subway cars shift and settle among the debris of a hundred years of discarded cars, tugboats, machines and technology.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - HOSPITAL CENTER, BROOKLYN - DAY

By now the subway world should seem the norm with it's dark tunnels and tiled passageways lit by yellow and florescent light - and the world above the subway - the surface world - should seem almost too bright, too crisp, almost surreal.

Tupelo EXITS THE HOSPITAL. Sees the playground. Heads for it, catches the eye of a mother pushing her kid on a swing.

MOTHER

Hey it's you. How's Renee?

TUPELO

It's tough, you know. Has she been around? I know she comes here.

MOTHER

I seen her. I don't think she should come here though.

TUPELO

When'd you see her? Today?

MOTHER

Yesterday.

TUPELO

What about today? This morning?

No luck. Then: SIRENS grab his attention. EMS and police cars converge on one of the several Downtown Brooklyn subway entrances. Tupelo senses trouble, moves quickly across gridlocked traffic to ---

INT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Where the worker was hit by the train. Now crawling with investigators. Tupelo charges downstairs, is stopped by a cop.

COP
Station's closed.

TUPELO
What's going on?

COP
Please go back upstairs.

Now Soljak and Terrell charge downstairs, passing them. Tupelo hears:

SOLJAK
First a guy on the tracks, a train missing, now this? Why today? This is my day.

TUPELO
(follows them)
I'm the guy who fell on the tracks. This morning. At Bergen Street.

Soljak would like to strangle Tupelo.

SOLJAK
You look fine, get yourself a drink.

TUPELO
Which train is missing? The #3, this morning? My wife was on that train and she's missing too. She's missing and now the train's missing? What the hell's going on?

SOLJAK
I just got here, pal. There's been an accident - nothing to do with the #3 train. If you would give my associate a number where you can be reached I will have someone call you.

TUPELO
What's that mean: "missing train"?

SOLJAK

It's not actually --- it's a clerical error. We've been re-directing trains all morning. Thanks to you.

TUPELO

But where is it?

Sojak, losing patience, points to the iconic NYC Subway map:

SOLJAK

Sir, we got a closed system - we don't connect to Amtrak or the Long Island Railroad - so our train is not in the Hamptons for the weekend, it's not on its way to Cleveland - it's in the city somewhere so the farther it gets from the point it left from the sooner it's gonna come back. It's in the system, okay? - and whatever passengers were on it this morning are long gone and off on their merry ways.

TUPELO

You mean the passengers might have been dumped somewhere?

Soljak sees: the mangled body being removed from the tracks. Cops surround the horror-stricken Jimmy the Helper. Then---

THE SOUND OF AN ONCOMING TRAIN - THE SCREECH! ---

Everyone shivers. Jimmy presses back against the wall. TERROR. Soljak heads towards the action, barking ---

SOLJAK

I thought this track was shut down!

The rumble gets louder. LOUDER. LOUDER ----

SOLJAK (CONT'D)

Everybody off the tracks! What the---!?

Workers and EMS guys scramble onto the platform. As ---

WHOOSH ----

A POWER RUSHES THROUGH THE CENTER TRACKS, kicking up wind that sends trash flying. But the (O.S.) NOISE is clearly from the unseen level below, but as THE NOISE passes ---

IN THE CENTER TRACKS

--- a strange metallic shimmering in the air - that just as quickly disappears. All eyes turn to Soljak. Quick answer:

SOLJAK

Pressure from the IRT, or maybe
the F Train - right beneath us -
kicks up the steel dust - happens.

(to Terrell)

Go downstairs and find out what
train just passed, how fast it
was going, and why.

As Terrell heads for the staircase down to the lower level ---

TUPELO

(to Soljak)

That train that's missing, that my
wife is on. Any contact with the
conductor, the motorman?

SOLJAK

(to anyone)

I thought this guy was gone.

TUPELO

You never took my phone number. Remem-
ber? You were going to call me.

SOLJAK

Somebody take his phone number and
get him out of here ---

(looks around)

Where's Terrell?

STAIRCASE TO LOWER LEVEL

Terrell, charging downstairs, runs into an angry TRANSIT
WORKER rushing upstairs ---

TRANSIT WORKER

What the hell's going on up there?
We just got a shower of plaster and
asbestos raining down on our heads!

TERRELL

We got nothing upstairs! What just
blasted through down here?

TRANSIT WORKER

Down here? Nothing! Just a blast
of wind and that train upstairs
that must have been doing like 80!

TERRELL

But there was no train up there!
It was down here!

They exchange looks.

UPSTAIRS ---

Tupelo gives his number to Soljak. Takes a card from Soljak.

SOLJAK

When you hear from her, and you will,
call me. Now you have to leave.

OFFICER GARRETT

(sees Tupelo)
You're back again?

SOLJAK

Please make him leave.

Officer Garrett escorts Tupelo to the stairs. Tupelo sees a
clock: 9:30 a.m. To the cop:

TUPELO

Officer, help me. My wife's been
missing for like three hours and---

OFFICER GARRETT

We can't do anything for 24 hours.
A child - you could report it now,
but she's an adult - gotta wait.
Trust me: she'll show up.

Tupelo takes a last glance around the station, looks across
the four sets of tracks, and freezes --- SEES:

ON THE OPPOSITE PLATFORM ACROSS THE TRACKS ---

--- in the shadows, watching, listening: TINKERBELL (she no
longer has her note-covered backpack). She sees Tupelo see
her, squirrels away into darkness. Tupelo yells:

TUPELO

Stop! That's her!

Soljak, everyone hears - turns - this is good news ---

SOLJAK

Your wife? You see your wife?

TUPELO

No. Not my wife ---

(points, but no one's there)

Tinkerbell!

SOLJAK

"Tinkerbell"!?!? Get that maniac
out of here! And keep him out!

The cop hustles Tupelo up towards the street, but now he doesn't have to prod him, Tupelo pushes away and races two steps at a time up to ---

EXT. BROOKLYN INTERSECTION - DAY

Busy, noisy, chaotic, ambulances, police cars, TV news vans --- normal New York. Yellow CAUTION tape now closes off two subway entrances. Tupelo looks left, right - subway entrances for eight different routes at every corner of five converging streets. But no Tinkerbell. Officer Garrett catches up:

OFFICER GARRETT

The kid who pushed you - you saw her?!

As the cop calls for backup ---

TUPELO SEES TINKERBELL ---

--- just a glimpse, rushing down into a different station across the avenue. Tupelo wants to follow, but the cop has his arm.

OFFICER GARRETT (CONT'D)

I need a detailed description.

TUPELO

Let me go, I'll catch her. She was
on that train! Let me talk to her.
I'll find out ---

OFFICER GARRETT

That's our job, not yours.

Tupelo does not want to lose Tinkerbell, breaks away from the cop and charges across the street ---

OFFICER GARRETT (CONT'D)

Hey! Stop! Get back here!

--- Tupelo dodging cars until ---

TUPELO COLLIDES WITH A TAXI ---

--- goes down hard, rolls, gets back up - hands bruised,
cheek cut - races down into a subway entrance that leads to

INT. HOYT STREET STATION ---

platforms and tunnels that are completely separate from
where the accident took place. Tupelo swipes his Metrocard
at the turnstile - doesn't register - swipes it again ---

HERE COMES A TRAIN INTO THE STATION ---

--- and there's Tinkerbell, pacing, skittish - train stops,
doors open, she gets on, but ---

TUPELO'S ENTRY CARD DOESN'T WORK ---

--- he yells into the noise ---

TUPELO
Hold that train!

--- and here comes the cop! Tupelo leaps the turnstile,
rushes for the train --- a TEENAGER holds the door open ---

Tupelo gets in. TRAIN DOORS CLOSE --- TRAIN STARTS TO MOVE ---

--- the cop chases but it's too late ---

INSIDE THE MOVING TRAIN

Tupelo sees the cop pointing to the train as it pulls away.
The teenager sizes up Tupelo:

TEENAGER
Nice.

Tupelo moves forward through the train to find Tinkerbell.

Gets to the door to the next car. Pulls the handle. Locked.

Sees through the windows into the next car. Crowded. Tupelo
spots Tinkerbell. He readies to make his move as

THE TRAIN PULLS INTO THE NEXT STATION

Tupelo goes to the exit door, nervous energy. Train stops.
Doors open. He bursts out onto ---

THE STATION PLATFORM

Tupelo sees Tinkerbell dash downstairs to a connecting line.

TUPELO PUSHES THROUGH THE CROWD

to catch her, and the way he looks - cut, bruised - people get out of his way.

HE REACHES THE LOWER PLATFORM

as a train pulls into the station. People pour out onto the platform. Tinkerbell gets on at the front.

DOORS CLOSING -

---but Tupelo forces his way in - two cars behind her.

ON THE TRAIN - MOVING

That sign: IF YOU SEE SOMETHING SAY SOMETHING. Blacks, Whites, Indians, Mexicans, Jews, Chinese - all watching Tupelo.

CONDUCTOR'S VOICE

Next stop Manhattan, Whitehall Street.

Tupelo goes to the subway map beside the door, the car rocking side-to-side as he traces the yellow-colored route with his bloody finger - it connects to the red-colored line to The Bronx at 42nd Street. He knows where she's heading.

Tupelo pushes forward through the other riders to the front of the swaying car, pulls open the door, steps forward ---

TUPELO - BETWEEN THE CARS - MOVING

--- holding his balance as the train rockets through the long curving Montague Street East River Subway Tunnel.

Tupelo looks down at the connecting step-plates - sawing at each other.

He reaches across the step-plates, pulls the door latch to the next car. CLICK. It's locked.

THE DOOR BEHIND HIM SLAMS SHUT -

--- now he's between cars. He muscled the forward door - but it won't open. He starts to retreat back when ---

A SCREECH OF METAL ---

--- as the train curves and brakes apply, SPARKS FLYING as the train SQUEALS - STEEL WHEELS JAMMING, THE TRAIN JERKING---

THE MOMENTUM CARRYING TUPELO FORWARD ---

--- between the cars, slamming Tupelo into the forward door, his leg slipping between the step-plates - he pulls his leg up - the plates SLAM together as ---

THE TRAIN GRINDS TO A STOP -

Tupelo falls to the side into the chain guards, DROPS HIS GLASSES, catches them, puts them on ---

HIS LENSES FOGGED FROM THE HUMIDITY ---

--- EVERYTHING A STRANGE BLUR as he reaches back to the door that opens, can't find the handle, gets it, pulls - OPENS, he stumbles into the car, wipes his glasses, FINDS:

IN THE STALLED SUBWAY TRAIN ---

People are picking themselves off the ground, cursing, finding their spilled belongings when ---

THE GENERATOR SHUTS DOWN ---

--- air conditioning stops. GROANS from the riders. Then:

FLICK-FLICK-FLICK ----

--- one-by-one THE LIGHTS GO OUT IN THE TRAIN plunging all the cars into DARKNESS. CRIES, MORE CURSES. Tupelo's eyes adjust to the GLOW of reflected signal lights from outside the train: SMEARS of red, yellow, green on the filthy windows ---

--- they're stalled in a tunnel, this is as bad as it gets. Usually. But now it gets worse ---

THERE IS A STEADY DRIPPING SOUND NOW ---

--- on the roof of the train from the tunnel ceiling, then ---

A SURGE OF POWER SHAKES THE TRAIN -

--- a HORRIBLE WRENCHING SOUND and ---

THE DOORS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE SUBWAY TRAIN ---

ALL SUDDENLY OPEN! ---

---people who were leaning on the doors tumble towards darkness, others catch them, pull them back, people crushing closer into the center of the car which is now like an open aluminum can stalled in the dark tunnel ---

PANIC IN THE TRAIN -

- a fevered announcement from the conductor is so garbled with static that it only creates more panic. And then, from somewhere at the back of the train:

"you hear that?" - "shh" - "shut up!" -

--- the frightened riders fall into a nervous silence - in the dark, wide-open train the riders strain to hear A DEEP BASS NOTE - then they hear THE DISTANT SOUND OF:

AN (O.S.) ONCOMING TRAIN --- coming from somewhere deep in the tunnel, coming closer, ON THE SAME TRACK. Wild Panic.

TUPELO LOOKS OUT THE BACK DOOR ---

--- a distant swirling glow, something is coming --- THE ONCOMING SUBWAY SOUND GETTING LOUDER, AIR PRESSURE BUILDING---

TUPELO

Down! Everyone down on the floor!

--- SOUND COMING CLOSER - THE SCREECH! --- but instead of the smash/impact of a train wreck ---

THE TRAIN IS HIT BY A SEARING TORNADO OF HOT WIND ---

--- that BLASTS right through the stalled train as if an invisible train is slicing through this dimension ---

A SWIRLING WINDSTORM OF POWER, A VORTEX OF PURE ENERGY ---

--- aglow with hot steel dust - TEARING clothing, CRACKING glass, SLAMMING people to the floor, walls, and into each other as it SWEEPS through each car of the train. And then ---

SILENCE ---

the sparkling steel dust becoming blackened soot. THE DOORS ALL SLAM SHUT AGAIN --- the lights crackle back on. People crying, bleeding, then ---

JOLT! -

THE TRAIN STARTS MOVING, LIMPS FORWARD

and crawls into the Whitehall Street station.

INT. WHITEHALL STREET STATION, MANHATTAN - DAY

Doors of the battered train open, people flee for the exits, collapse on the platform, the totally-freaked conductor barks:

CONDUCTOR

This train is now out of service!

ANGLE ON - TUPELO

in the crowd, looking for Tinkerbell. She's gone. But he sees:

IN THE TUNNEL FAR PAST THE PLATFORMS -

--- a haze of steel dust creates a shimmering negative-image of the old subway car that passed through this space. Makes his skin crawl. The image settles into soot and evaporates.

FROM DEEP IN THE TUNNEL ---

--- that DEEP BASS NOTE echoes - moving on.

IN A DARK SAFETY NICHE IN THE WALL OF THE TUNNEL

Tinkerbell also hears the sound. FEAR. She scribbles on a scrap of paper the number she saw on the phantom train: 8686.

INT. SUBWAY - DIVISION OFFICE, BROOKLYN - DAY

A grimy glassed-in underground office that looks out at a network of subway tracks. Soljak is interrogating Jimmy, the drunk guy who was working with the killed electrician.

SOLJAK

So, you felt "a wind ---"

JIMMY

And the signal lights started flashing, and the relays ---

SOLJAK

But the current was turned off.

JIMMY

On our track, yeah, and then ---

Jimmy starts sobbing. Soljak is disgusted:

SOLJAK

You got a good man killed.

Soljak grabs a phone from Terrell.

EXT. VAN CORTLAND TOWER, THE BRONX - DAY

Twenty miles away - last stop for the #3 trains. Here the subway is elevated. A tower - an old cottage made of wood and steel - looks over the station and streets below. Tower controller MORRISEY (Jamaican, same age as Soljak) is on the phone:

MORRISEY

Mister Soljak. Hear you're calling it quits. So where to now? Florida? Gonna visit the Bronx to say goodbye? Or are you too busy with the mayor?

INT. SUBWAY DIVISION OFFICE, BROOKLYN - DAY

Soljak steps onto the platform to take the call.

SOLJAK

Hold the jokes. You reported a #3 never got there?

MORRISEY

The one that left New Lots yard at 5:52, supposed to get in at 7:12 ---
(checks his thick
paperwork)
That one never showed.

SOLJAK

What do you mean it never showed?

MORRISEY

It never came in. But everything's screwed up here with that schmuck you had on the tracks in Brooklyn.
(gets paperwork from an
assistant; to Soljak:)
Here: I got the #3 that left at 5:40 came in at 7. The 6 a.m. came in at 7:15. Everything else came and went and they should all be back in Brooklyn by now or on their way back here again, but I got nothing on the 5:52 - sure it left the yard this morning?

SOLJAK

I called the yard. It left the yard. And the bad news is the operator and conductor are Malik and Rodriguez, the King and Queen of Fuck-ups. Of course they're not answering their phones ---
 (to Terrell)
 Find Malick and Rodriguez. Now.

Soljak turns to find: Michelle. She gives Soljak the "come here" finger. Soljak gets off the phone.

MICHELLE MURPHY

We're canceling that thing tonight.

SOLJAK

My thing? No! The shuttle's connected. The Mayor's shuttle. Food is coming. The balloons are ready. I'll get everything straightened out. The shuttle's connected and ---

MICHELLE MURPHY

And a man got ripped to pieces.

SOLJAK

That has nothing to do with us, me. That accident was his mistake. Workers make mistakes.

MICHELLE MURPHY

Hear what happened at Whitehall Street? Wait 'til the Mayor gets off his plane and hears about that.

Soljak looks to Terrell: what's she talking about? Terrell has no idea.

MICHELLE MURPHY (CONT'D)

I couldn't begin to explain it, but it's not good.

A Soljak look --- and Terrell's on the phone to get details.

MICHELLE MURPHY (CONT'D)

And now I understand a train is "missing"?

SOLJAK

"Missing"? Who said? We're tracing that unit. Jeez, the rumors ---

MICHELLE MURPHY

Someone named Tupelo's been calling every city office - "my wife was on that train and now she's missing."

SOLJAK

Michelle, on a slow day we get a hundred calls about missing people. And when we start holding trains for investigation, like this, well ---

IN TUNNELS THROUGHOUT BROOKLYN ---

--- trains filled with passengers sit stalled in darkness.

SOLJAK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

--- every fifteen minutes we back up nine other trains - so a stalled train means like eight thousand people ---

ON STATION PLATFORMS THROUGHOUT BROOKLYN ---

--- crowds waiting for trains grow larger

--- are gonna be late, lost, or whatever, times every 15 minutes until we get our schedule back---

IN OFFICES, CLASSES, RESTAURANTS, COURTROOMS ---

--- empty chairs, missing people late for dates ---

--- which at this point could be four or five hours ---

RANDOM FRIENDS AND BOSSES AND LOVERS are annoyed, indifferent, or worried. Some make calls.

INT. DIVISION OFFICE PLATFORM - DAY

SOLJAK

--- so we're gonna get a lot of phone calls from a lot of nuts.

MICHELLE MURPHY

This nut is Richard Tupelo, an assistant professor of physics at Columbia University. I checked.

SOLJAK

The guy was yelling that he was chasing "Tinkerbell"! So what if he's a teacher? He's a nut!

Here comes Bob the Reporter. Michelle lifts her hand: stop. She dictates the party line, wants to control this story:

MICHELLE MURPHY

A city worker - we're checking his blood alcohol level - got careless and was hit by a train. That's worth an inch on page 17 - if you want that exclusive interview.

BOB THE REPORTER

What about Whitehall Street?

MICHELLE MURPHY

Do you want a stalled train story or do you want the mayor?

Bob the Reporter wants the mayor. He backs off.

MICHELLE MURPHY (CONT'D)

(to Soljak, whisper)

I still don't understand how a train disappears.

SOLJAK

Stop using that word. All morning we're detouring units, people throw incorrect switches and Brooklyn trains wind up somewhere in Queens or the Bronx - and then the people who screwed up turn off their phones and try to cover their mistakes; it happens. So let's not create a panic when there's no reason for panic.

MICHELLE MURPHY

How many people on an average train?

SOLJAK

On that one we're talking a #3 at Bergen Street - before rush hour - that's a 6-car train - maybe 12-15 riders in each car - 90 people.

MICHELLE MURPHY

That's a relief: on the day the mayor's opening a new subway line only 90 people are missing.

SOLJAK

No: one person - no, one person who says one person is missing. Michelle, we're in the process of locating our motorman and conductor. They are not our best employees. I'm sorry.

MICHELLE MURPHY

Not good enough. You will now take me to the place that shows where all the trains are and I want to talk to those people in that room.

SOLJAK

Oh: you mean the NASA room ---?

MICHELLE MURPHY

Is that what they call it?

INT. A HIGH TECH ROOM SEEN IN EXTREMELY CRISP, BRIGHT ANTISEPTIC DETAIL ---

--- filled with rows of earnest technicians ---

SOLJAK (V.O.)

The room with the big computer screen like an air traffic control place, the central command where every one of our 6,200 cars is a blinking light with a number that tells you where every train is at any given moment on our 842 miles of interconnecting lines - so we can simply find the train. Is that where you want me to take you?

INT. PLATFORM OUTSIDE THE CANAL ST. INTERLOCK TOWER

Michelle Murphy nods: yes! Soljak smiles sourly:

SOLJAK

That room, Michelle, doesn't exist. In the mind of every passenger, every cop, every person like you that room's in their fantasy imagination. But we don't have any room like that. We have this ---

Points to the crowded, dank room beside them, in a tunnel, with a board displaying a localized section of track and uniform little red lights with no markings.

SOLJAK (CONT'D)

--- and a dozen more just like it. Some even have a big map of the whole subway system. But even there we have no way of knowing which trains those lights represent. We just know that each red light is a train - but which train? That's anyone's guess.

MICHELLE MURPHY

(that sinking feeling)

There's no master computer?

SOLJAK

Well, we sometimes have guys posted in the tunnels with clipboards to mark off the trains as they pass. City budget being what it is we're in the 12th Century down here and that's why we sometimes misplace things. But we always do find them. Besides, I don't know that there even is a missing train ---

Soljak thinks fast, does not want this blown out of proportion, does not want his day ruined:

SOLJAK (CONT'D)

That guy who fell on the tracks, that teacher - I was with him and he saw someone who was on that train, saw her an hour ago.

MICHELLE MURPHY

He did? Well where is he?

SOLJAK

(fishes out Tupelo's
phone number)

I got his number.

MICHELLE MURPHY

I want to see him. Get him here.

Soljak turns to find Terrell. Soljak gives him the number.

SOLJAK

Find this nut. And Terrell: between
Bergen Street and Boro Hall, who's
on clipboard?

TERRELL

(ashen-faced)

We need to get to Whitehall Street.

EXT. BRONX HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Noon. Jamal and some friends bounce out of the side exit.
Tupelo waits, adrenaline pumping.

JAMAL

It's Mister Unreal.
(pokes him)
You real today?

TUPELO

(pushes away Jamal's
hand)

Where's your friend Tinkerbell?

Jamal reacts, sees the bruises on Tupelo's face.

JAMAL

What she do to you?

TUPELO

We ran into each other this morning
- and she almost killed me.

JAMAL

Not her. She's into that peace shit.

TUPELO

Didn't seem so peaceful to me. Look,
my wife's missing and the last
person to see her was your friend.

JAMAL

"Friend"? Who said she's my ---

TUPELO

Tinkerbell's in trouble. Big trouble.

Jamal motions his friends: keep going without me.

JAMAL

What? She steal some spray paint?

TUPELO

The police want her for attempted murder - attempting to murder me. But I need to ask her some questions before the cops get to her - and before she disappears.

JAMAL

Like ask her what?

TUPELO

(snaps at him)

I'm talking, you're listening. This is your fault and you're gonna help me. She knocked me on the tracks. I figured it was an accident, but maybe she followed me 'cause I "touched" her - in which case I'm blaming you, you're involved now.

JAMAL

Me!? It was a joke. Leave me out of this.

TUPELO

She hit me, she jumped on a train - and now that train is missing, and my wife - who was on that train - is gone. But Tinkerbelle's not missing - I saw her - and I need to ask her exactly what happened and you are going to help me find her.

JAMAL

But she's not around today.

TUPELO

Where is she? Where's she live? Be smart. Make me your friend.

JAMAL

What do I get out of this?

Tupelo stares at Jamal: how do I reach this kid? Then:

TUPELO

I can read you. Okay? I know what you're thinking. So here's the deal: if I can read your mind you help me. If I can't --- I give you a hundred bucks.

JAMAL

Wha -? Get away from me.

TUPELO

You scared? Why? If I lose you
get a hundred dollars.

JAMAL

Go ahead. Try. Read my mind.

Tupelo pulls out a twenty dollar bill, writes something on
it, stuffs it in Jamal's shirt pocket.

TUPELO

Okay, look me in the eye. Pay
attention. What's $5 + 5$?

JAMAL

Shit man.

TUPELO

Answer me: what is $5 + 5$?

JAMAL

Ten.

TUPELO

$8 + 2$, c'mon fast.

JAMAL

Ten.

TUPELO

$7 + 3$? Faster.

JAMAL

Ten.

TUPELO

$6 + 4$?

JAMAL

Ten!

TUPELO

$4 + 6$ ---

JAMAL

Ten.

3 + 7 --- TUPELO

Ten. JAMAL

2 + 8 --- TUPELO

Ten! Ten! Ten! JAMAL

Name a vegetable. TUPELO

Uh, uh --- carrot. JAMAL

Take that twenty out and see
what I wrote on it. TUPELO

Jamal pulls out the bill, unfolds it. It says: CARROT

Shit! How the hell did you---!!?? JAMAL

Tupelo grabs Jamal by the sleeve and starts walking him.

I'll tell you after we find her.
Keep the twenty. Let's go. TUPELO

INT. WHITEHALL STREET STATION, MANHATTAN - DAY

Controlled chaos. Soljak and cops huddle around the operator of the train hit by the storm of energy. People get first aid, inspectors take statements. TRANSIT OFFICIALS compare notes:

Sixty-five people taken to the
hospital, sixty treated here and
released, and I guess we're look-
ing at about five hundred lawsuits. TRANSIT OFFICIAL

Subway doors open in a tunnel ---
this leads the evening news. When
the mayor lands - we're screwed. TRANSIT LAWYER

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS climb from the track pit.

ELECTRICAL ENGINEER

(to Soljak)

Every relay's fried all the way
back to Court Street. And get this:
there's a section of rail turned
black. What the hell's that mean?

SOLJAK

I need to take a look at that.

TERRELL

(tugs at Soljak)

They finally sent the tapes over.

SOLJAK

What tapes?

TERRELL

Bergen Street.

SOLJAK

(to the engineer)

Gimme a minute.

INT. WHITEHALL INTERLOCK CONTROL ROOM - DAY

A surprisingly primitive room at the end of an underground platform - tiny lights on a map show a local section of track. Soljak, cops, and TA Officials watch a portable monitor connected to an out-of-date digital video player.

ON THE MONITOR (6:20 a.m.)

A TRAIN PULLS INTO A STATION - WE SEE: Tupelo and Renee rush onto the platform, get on the last car of the train.

SOLJAK

Okay, that's Grand Army Plaza.

TA OFFICIAL

Why the hell's that old car hooked on
it? I thought we junked all of those.

Soljak says nothing as ON THE MONITOR: The train with Car #8686 at the rear pulls out of the station.

TA TECHNICIAN

Now the next station, Bergen Street.

THE IMAGE SWITCHES TO THE BERGEN STREET STATION (6:23 a.m.) -

Train pulls into station. Tupelo steps out. Tupelo reacts to

Renee - starts to get back on. Doors close. He pounds the door. Train moves on. Tupelo left behind. Renee goes to the back window. BANG! ---

--- Tupelo is hit, falls into the track pit as Tinkerbelle chases the train and leaps on to the last car and the train disappears into the tunnel. Cops pull Tupelo from the tracks.

SOLJAK
(to the technician)
Go to Atlantic Avenue - next stop.

The technician hesitates, looks to the TA officials. Then:

TECHNICIAN
We don't have cameras there.

SOLJAK
What!?

OFFICER GARRETT
Only half the stations have cameras.

SOLJAK
No cameras at Atlantic Avenue?

TRANSIT OFFICIAL
Not yet.

SOLJAK
Atlantic Avenue with nine connecting lines --- and no cameras? Is this possible!? You're getting rid of half my ticket clerks who watch everything before you have cameras in all the stations!?

TERRELL
(wants to calm the boss)
What's the next station with a camera?

TECHNICIAN
DeKalb Avenue.

SOLJAK
Go to DeKalb - at what time Terrell?

TERRELL
Train left Bergen Street at 6:23,
should pull into DeKalb at 6:38.

MONITOR VIEW: DEKALB STATION - the time code reads 6:36.
 People begin to crowd onto the platform. At 6:38 - no
 train. RAPT ATTENTION IN THE CONTROL ROOM as they see
 the platform get more crowded. On the monitor: 6:39.
 THE TECHNICIAN FAST FORWARDS - 6:40. 6:43. 6:49---

TECHNICIAN

Nothing arrives until 6:52 - and
 it's a different train.

SOLJAK

(controlled fury)

Great. Terrific. Fine. So a train
 leaves Bergen Street and - what? -
 evaporates? Gets on a boat and goes
 to the Bahamas? Shut down the whole
 tunnel from Bergen Street to DeKalb.

TRANSIT OFFICIAL

There goes our rush hour.

SOLJAK

Let 'em walk. Maybe they'll appre-
 ciate what we do down here. I'm
 gonna walk. Yeah. I'm gonna walk
 that tunnel, personally, and I'm
 gonna find out what the ---

Suddenly: the voice of ---

MICHELLE MURPHY

Mr. Soljak, may I speak to you
 alone for a moment?

This is not good. They step out of the crowded control room.

SOLJAK

Go ahead. Cancel the party. Early
 retirement. As of tonight I quit.

MICHELLE MURPHY

I tried to cancel it, now I can't.

(off Soljak's reaction)

The mayor called from his plane -
 looking down at America he calls
me, and insists on this party ---
 to show strength and confidence,
 'cause he's heard your entire
 goddamn subway's falling apart!

SOLJAK

It's always falling apart

MICHELLE MURPHY

Well fix it before he gets here!
 (then a strange smirk)
 Uh, find that man you were looking
 for? Columbia University? Professor?
 The science guy?

SOLJAK

Not my priority right now.

MICHELLE MURPHY

Make it your priority. Cops were
 just at his apartment ---

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - DAY

Officer Garrett and a DETECTIVE look around the place, see the mirrors, the model car. As they move around the model reflected in the mirrors - the car disappears.

MICHELLE MURPHY (V.O.)

Seems he's also some kind of
 magician. And he does have a wife
 who seems to have vanished. Cops
 are looking for him now. And
 something else about him ---

The detective breaks through the locked bedroom door. Flicks on the light. We don't see what he sees, but his expression is raw.

INT. SUBWAY DISPATCH PLATFORM - DAY

Michelle presses Soljak:

MICHELLE MURPHY (CONT'D)

We might have a psycho on our hands.
 You said you had his phone number.
 Where is he?

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL - DAY

Three sets of parallel tracks through a dark dripping tunnel. WE HEAR that DEEP BASS NOTE - makes our skin crawl.

Switches and light signals in the center track begin to shift and strobe. The missing train is here - invisible - pulling energy from the system.

WE SEE the GLOW, HEAR the GROWL of a very real oncoming train rounding a curve on the side tracks.

NOW WE ARE ---

INSIDE THE MOTORMAN'S COMPARTMENT - MOTORMAN'S POV

Easing the throttle to control the speed as he takes the curve - the lives of five hundred passengers in his hand - the ribbon of glowing track heading towards a station. He HEARS - above the rattle and noise in his compartment - that DEEP BASS NOTE from somewhere.

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL - DAY

The "phantom" train's tracks begin to SHUDDER - rails GLOWING with a surge of energy - the GLOW JUMPING onto the tracks of the passing real train - transferring energy - and control.

INT. SUBWAY - MOTORMAN'S POV - SPEEDING THROUGH A TUNNEL,

It's as if WE'RE DRIVING THE TRAIN as it enters the station. The platform overcrowded. The motorman plays the brakes - needs 110 yards to stop - people push close to the edge - from the motorman's POV we see the inherent danger. SUDDENLY ---

A LITTLE GIRL DARTS OUT TOWARDS THE EDGE.

Motorman presses the brake hard. IT'S LOCKED - won't move ---

Motorman BLASTS his horn.

SOMEONE GRABS THE KID before the train slams her. Brakes now engage - the motorman slams the throttle - WHEELS SCREECHING - stopping the train two cars past the end of the platform.

WE SEE THE MOTORMAN'S FACE:

He's freaked. We're freaked. Now we're all on edge as ---

THAT STORM OF POWER

flashes past the train and continues deeper into the tunnel.

INT. ATLANTIC AVENUE SUBWAY PLATFORMS, BROOKLYN - DAY

In the grip of chaos, crowded - confused people try to hear an announcement that hints at the density of action here:

STATION ANNOUNCEMENT

All D Trains have been taken out of service, transfer to the Q. The 2, 3, 4 and 5 on the lower levels and the M and N will be using the B and R platforms and all F, A, and C Trains in both directions have been diverted to the central platform tracks.

CLOSE SHOT - A FINGER ---

--- on the large subway wall map traces the route of the #3 - the red line - as it moves down from the Bronx and Manhattan into Brooklyn until it reaches ---

ON THE MAP - BROOKLYN: THE BORO HALL-ATLANTIC-DEKALB VORTEX

An overlay of 9 stations where every subway line converges: orange, red, green, blue, yellow, brown - the entire spectrum as if laid out by a shattered prism through which every train in the system eventually passes. The finger belongs to ---

JAMAL

We're here. "The Power Spot" she calls it. C'mon, let's go --- I want to know about that carrot.

INT. THE BORO HALL-ATLANTIC-DEKALB VORTEX - DAY

As Jamal leads Tupelo through the multi-level labyrinth of staircases, tunnels, and passageways, the ballet of people moving up-down-across-and-around seems like an M.C. ESCHER DRAWING of interlocked motion and connection. ON THE MOVE:

JAMAL

So how'd you do it?

TUPELO

It was easy.

JAMAL

If it's so easy why can't you read my mind and know where she is right now?

TUPELO

Don't get cute. That wasn't the bet, that wasn't our deal.

JAMAL

But how'd you do it? Tell me.

TUPELO

The minute we find her.

They move past a row of subway shops - shoe repair, keys, pizza - a radio blares "*Our Lips Are Sealed*" - drowned out by a SUBWAY SCREECH! - and a dark BASS NOTE from some deep subterranean place. Tupelo winces. Jamal keeps them moving.

JAMAL

So how'd you know she was the one?

TUPELO

Tinkerbell?

JAMAL

No man, your wife. How'd you know she was the one for you?

TUPELO

I just felt it. I just knew.

JAMAL

"Just knew" - you got to do better than that, man. Was it what? - her looks? Way she kissed you? Gimme some direction here. Shit, you'd make some lousy father.

Tupelo grabs Jamal, slams him into the wall. Jamal reacts - innocent - it was a joke. Tupelo's face: twisted.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

Chill man. Be the grown-up. What?

Tupelo eases off. Then calmly gives the answer:

TUPELO

It was the way she looked, and the way she looked at me, and the way she would say things, and what things bothered her, and what things didn't bother her, and --- she was great to kiss and we were just - we were a great team.

JAMAL

"Were," "was," "used to," what's all the past tense? You over it?

TUPELO

We've got some problems now. But you don't quit on someone cause you have problems. You try to fix things, try to get things right again. You try to get things back.

JAMAL

Hope it works out. For real.

Tupelo nods, smiles at this kid, then something catches his eye on the wall just beyond Jamal's shoulder ---

THE NYC SUBWAY WALL MAP - CLOSE SHOT - DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN

--- where all the subway lines converge into what LOOKS LIKE A HOPELESSLY KNOTTED WEB OF MULTI-COLORED STRINGS.

TUPELO SEES

some pattern in the map, some pattern in those strings converging in Brooklyn, some pattern he's trying to read, formulate, comprehend. He mutters:

TUPELO
Never saw it like this. This looks
--- it's just like a ---

He digs into his pocket, finds the card Soljak gave him, moves to find a weak cell phone signal. Bangs out Soljak's number.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN - DAY

Soljak on the street, moving, takes the staticky call.

SOLJAK
Who's this?

INT. ATLANTIC STREET STATION - DAY

Tupelo covers his ear, cups the cell phone:

TUPELO
The guy who got pushed on the
tracks. Find that train yet?

INTERCUT STREET AND SUBWAY -

--- both noisy as hell ---

SOLJAK
No. You got it?

TUPELO
What kind of stupid question
is that? You think I ---? So
you can't find it, huh? Well,
I'm looking at a map here ---

SOLJAK
Where are you Mr. Tupelo?

TUPELO
Do you know what a Moebius Strip
is? Tell me about this morning.

SOLJAK

First you tell me: where are you?

INT. ATLANTIC STREET STATION - DAY

Tupelo senses trouble. Ends the call. Stares at the map of knotted lines in Brooklyn. Jamal grabs his arm.

JAMAL

This ain't the art museum. You want Tinkerbelle? Come on!

INT. BERGEN STREET STATION - DAY

Soljak pushes his way downstairs to the station and tunnel where the train disappeared. As transit workers put up barriers---

STATION ANNOUNCEMENT

This station has been closed. We apologize for the inconvenience.

--- a throng of angry commuters exits upstairs - some people bark, others make it easy - intertwined human behavior - but Soljak is not part of this people-world and we realize, even in the crowd, how deeply alone he is. A transit worker wearing safety gear, with clipboard (CLIPBOARD MAN), meets him.

CLIPBOARD MAN

Ever wonder where they're all going?

SOLJAK

No. I'm just supposed to get them there. Let's do this.

INT. IN THE BERGEN-ATLANTIC AVENUE TUNNEL

Soljak and Clipboard Man - reflective vests, flashlights - walk the dark one-track tunnel. If a train comes, no escape. But this track is shut. We hope. A half-mile of signal lights warn: STOP. A dark world of strange noises, trash, and rats.

SOLJAK

A train entered this tunnel. No evidence it came out. Magic, huh?

Clipboard Man tests a smile - sees that Soljak is not joking.

CLIPBOARD MAN

There are no switches until the next stop, sir. Train goes in here, only thing that could happen is ---

SOLJAK

Yeah?

Beat.

CLIPBOARD MAN

I don't know.

Each step deeper into the tunnel echoes louder. Now between the tracks: burnt rats. Clipboard Man looks back towards the lights of Bergen Street Station - a quarter mile away. It's a quarter mile further to Atlantic Avenue Station. They're in the middle. Clipboard Man is already jittery, then:

SOLJAK

Stop.

CLIPBOARD MAN

(wants to run away)

You hear something?

SOLJAK

Give me your light.

Soljak shines both lights on the rails. A section of rail is a dense jet black.

CLIPBOARD MAN

Never seen that before. You?

Soljak has - but doesn't answer.

He moves closer to the blackened rail. Careful. Bends to touch it, wipes the soot - the steel itself has turned black.

CLIPBOARD MAN (CONT'D)

What's it mean?

Soljak finger to lips: shh. A throb in the tunnel. Tension.

CLIPBOARD MAN (CONT'D)

(voice shaky)

Uh, sir --- Chief --- over there---

Soljak aims the lights further down the track.

SOLJAK

Don't move.

Soljak steps forward. Stops. Sees:

TINKERBELL'S BACKPACK

in the muck between the tracks. Covered with scribbled notes. Looks like a bomb.

CLIPBOARD MAN
(backing away)
Don't touch it. Could be ---.

Soljak knows it means *something*, but not a bomb. Still:

SOLJAK
Slap yourself and calm down. We have to follow protocol - call the cops and the FBI. You're in charge here now.

CLIPBOARD MAN
Me? What are you gonna do?

SOLJAK
Cancel a party.

INT. DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Lowest level. Jamal and Tupelo. Alone. Signs: IF YOU SEE SOMETHING SAY SOMETHING. There are rusted doors on the platform wall, so rusted you'd pass them without noticing. But one is freshly spray-painted yellow.

JAMAL
That's her.

Jamal goes to the yellow-sprayed lock. Has a key.

TUPELO
Where'd you get that?

JAMAL
I look out for her sometimes.

The lock CLICKS. Jamal pulls the creaky door open. It's a dark, drippy, rust-streaked entrance to a chilly underworld that leads down to a humming realm beneath the subway.

JAMAL (CONT'D)
She says this leads to hell. Still want to find your wife?

EXT. DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN - DAY

Bomb squad vans SCREAM and PUSH through the traffic. Cops and transit workers evacuate the stations. News and police heli-

copters overhead. Chaos verging on panic. And now it's staring to RAIN. CAMERA FINDS: Soljak - alone in the crowd - keeping something to himself.

TV NEWSWOMAN

The discovery of a suspicious device on the tracks has shut down all subway lines in Brooklyn. Police cannot say when the stations will be re-opened, but investigators---

Nothing Soljak can do here - gets in a waiting car driven by Terrell. Terrell puts a red light on top and kicks the siren.

INT. PHYSICS LAB - COLUMBIA UNIVERSTIY, MANHATTAN - DAY

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW: SIRENS SCREAM through traffic. INSIDE: Soljak and Terrell with department head PROFESSOR WILKIE. Formulas cover the walls. Soljak is shocked as he repeats what Wilkie just said:

SOLJAK

You mean we've been trying to find this guy and now you tell me he's not some kind of professor here?

WILKIE

Not anymore. We lost "Artie." Brilliant student, but ---

SOLJAK

Artie? I'm looking for Richard Tupelo. Who's "Artie"?

WILKIE

That's what we called him: "R-T" - Richard Tupelo - his initials.

SOLJAK

(to Terrell)

Who said he was a teacher here?

TERRELL

Michelle Murphy.

Soljak motions Terrell: we're in the wrong place.

WILKIE

He once taught here. I understand he still is a teacher - a substitute teacher, in The Bronx ---

Substitute teacher? It's migraine time for Soljak.

SOLJAK

Look, we've got a train missing,
he may be involved, and we need to
find him. Where do we look?

WILKIE

Artie's had a tough run, but I
can't imagine ---

SOLJAK

"Tough run" - what's that mean?

WILKIE

He lost a baby - staph infection -
no one's fault, she went so quick,
it just happened ---

INT. TUPELO AND RENEE'S APARTMENT - EARLIER TODAY

The cops push into the locked bedroom --- baby clothes,
a bassinet, changing table, toys and dolls - all tossed
into an angry, ugly pile in the middle of the floor

WILKIE (V.O.)

--- and I hear his marriage ---.

INT. THE LAB - DAY

WILKIE

And he was one of my brightest.
Sadly what he chose to work on
was a mistake.

SOLJAK

I'm almost afraid to ask.

Wilkie explains by drawing a single line across a chalkboard.

WILKIE

This is the electromagnetic spectrum:
this area - radio waves, radar, infra-
red, X-rays, gamma rays - nothing we
can see --- only this very small part
of the wave band, here, in the middle,
just this fraction of the spectrum is
what we can see with our eyes - but
all the rest, even if we can't see it
- it all exists. But we only see this
tiny piece of our world.

SOLJAK

Yeah I get it. I work with engineers.
I'm not an idiot. So what?

WILKIE

The invisible spectrum. Very exciting field. Only he took things too far.

Soljak: which means? Wilkie makes a dot far to the right:

WILKIE (CONT'D)

Out here are electromagnetic waves with stupendously high frequencies. He felt, and taught, that out here the speed of light is not absolute, that pulses of energy could travel faster than light. I warned him it was laughable, but he persisted. I had to ask him to leave.

The (O.S.) RUMBLE of the subway that runs beneath the university. That sound shakes us up. Now it also shakes up Soljak. He pulls Terrell to the exit ---

SOLJAK

Thanks for the class.

WILKIE

Of course now it seems he was right.

SOLJAK

About what?

WILKIE

We're only just developing the tools to prove it but now we know that a pulse of light shot into a strand of optical fiber can depart before it even enters, indeed faster than the speed of light - it's now part of our science. I've always wanted to apologize to "R-T" ---

Soljak squints, Wilkie presses on:

WILKIE (CONT'D)

--- you see, he knew it: if anything is faster than light, imagine the possibilities of perception, dimensions, and what might be happening, right now, all around us and right beneath our feet.

INT. DARK STAIRWAY DEEP IN THE SUBWAY

Dripping with stalagmites and laced with a spiderweb of siz-

zling, hissing wires covered with smoking wet rags, walls crawling with bugs, sounds of scurrying rats as Tupelo and Jamal make their way down the rotted staircase, emerging in---

INT. THE OLD MYRTLE STREET STATION - BROOKLYN

A dark, haunted place with it's signs fallen down, potholes on the platform, and cracked tiles on the walls - one of the dozen gloomy, abandoned New York subway stations.

TUPELO

Myrtle Street. Damn - this was a stop when I was a kid.

Rain drizzles down from the track ceiling. Lights flicker. The effect is a TWINKLING STROBE-EFFECT that plays with our sense of depth, space, and reality. As Tupelo's eyes focus they come to rest on an old rusted plaque on the wall:

THE SUP RVISOR FOR THIS STATION IS CRYTHEN BELL

TUPELO (CONT'D)

(remembers ---)

"Cry Then Bell" --- that was one of her notes. She lives here?

JAMAL

Hides out from the world.

TUPELO

But then she goes to school?

JAMAL

Hot meals for free. Guess she likes other kids. But this is her place.

TUPELO

Where?

JAMAL

Right there ---

Tupelo's breath catches. Twenty steps away a pile of rags and cardboard on a broken subway bench camouflages a fragile human: Tinkerbell. Jamal repeats what Tupelo sneered at him:

JAMAL (CONT'D)

Thing you need to learn is: "as tough as you think your life is, for someone else it's even worse."

TUPELO
 (chastened)
 She have any family?

JAMAL
 Oh, she has people ---
 (shakes his head, disgust)
 That's why she's down here.

TINKERBELL WHISPERS

-- her fury and bravado gone - a frightened kid:

TINKERBELL
 Help me.

Tupelo kneels beside her.

TUPELO
 I want to. But first I need you
 to help me.

She tries to make herself smaller. Covering the grimy wall behind her she's created a collage of old and new found expressions: WHO WILL BE MISS SUBWAYS? - IF YOU SEE SOMETHING SAY SOMETHING - HANDS OFF UNLESS AUTHORIZED - and: "8686" - stuck to the wall with tape and gum.

TUPELO (CONT'D)
 "WHO WILL BE MISS SUBWAYS"? ---
 that's from like fifty years ago,
 where did you see that?

TINKERBELL
 Sometimes my head feels sick and
 I see things. But this morning,
 it was the worst --- like what you
 said: close off a room and inside,
 no one's looking, it's all crazy,
 right? Well sometimes, what you
 said no one can see - well, some-
 times, I can.

TUPELO
 (this is huge for him)
 You can? Really? What's it like?

She looks to Jamal - can I trust him? Jamal nods.

TINKERBELL
 Everything moving real fast, but
 soft, like clouds of color, like
 (MORE)

TINKERBELL (CONT'D)
 the whole world is melting - then
 it goes away. When I tell people
 about it they all wanna lock me
 up, they think I'm crazy. Am I?

Tupelo tests touching her shoulder. She doesn't pull away,
 but her hands are clutched tightly inside her coat. Gently:

TUPELO
 What you see - don't be scared of
 it. It's a gift, a wonderful power
 that I think we're all born with
 and then we forget: the world as
 it is - an accurate vision of light
 and form and color. It's what babies
 see when they first open their eyes
 - before they're trained to just
 see the world as this ---

He motions to the world around them: filth, grease, darkness.

TUPELO (CONT'D)
 What did you see this morning?

Her voice is even, soft, but her eyes are pure terror:

TINKERBELL
 I was running, they were chasing me,
 so I jumped ---

BAM!!!!!! ---

WE ARE BACK IN THE BERGEN STREET STATION AT 6:23 A.M.

TINKERBELL HAS JUST LEAPT OFF THE PLATFORM ---

--- AND CAUGHT ONTO THE BACK OF THE MOVING TRAIN

As Tinkerbell grips the greasy, swinging, clattering guard
 chains and pulls herself up onto the swaying foot plate -
 grime and dust swirling ---

TINKERBELL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I saw this lady's face, she looked
 like she hated me ---

Renee is pressed to the window, terror, fury ---

TUPELO (V.O.)
 That was my wife, she'd just seen
 you push me onto the tracks.

Renee starts banging on the window of the locked rear door -
 all the anger and sadness and disappointments and pain of

her life now focused on Tinkerbell ---

TINKERBELL (V.O.)
 --- but then she looked at me ---

Renee - her eyes locked on Tinkerbell - sees a frightened teenager - and Renee's face takes on an almost-angelic glow.

--- like she cared about me ---

Renee's fists open, her palms to the window, trying to comfort this frightened child. A POWERFUL MOMENT: Renee as strength, hope, promise, and pure love - the Renee that Tupelo loves ---

TINKERBELL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 --- but behind her ---

WE SEE: THE ONCOMING STORM. Renee is framed in its halo, and just as it reaches her ---

CUT TO:

INT. THE OLD MYRTLE STREET STATION ---

Tinkerbell falls silent. Does not want to remember. Tupelo touches her cheek. She continues:

TINKERBELL
 I don't know the words - it was coming right at me and then the train was gone and the lady was gone and just before it got to me I just let go and I fell on the tracks and ---
 (crying like a little kid)
 I hurt myself.

Tupelo puts his arms around her as if she were his own child. He moves the rags from her clasped hands. Her palms and wrists are a HORRIBLE STEW OF BRUISES, CUTS, FILTH, WET AND DRY BLOOD from when she fell.

JAMAL
 Aw --- Tink ---.

Tupelo hugs her closer - father of the year.

TUPELO
 We need to get you cleaned and fixed.

TINKERBELL
 No. No doctors.

TUPELO

You will lose your hands.

JAMAL

(first time: fear)

You got to let him help. He's okay.

TINKERBELL

But it's all gone. I thought it was just those things I see but then people were looking for it and they said the train was gone so it really did happen, right?

TUPELO

Yes. It did. The train disappeared.

Jamal starts to joke, sees Tupelo is serious.

TINKERBELL

I think I know why it happened.

JAMAL

We got to get her to a doctor.

TUPELO

That'll be your job. I'll tell you who to take her to. After.

(to Tinkerbell)

What made it happen?

TINKERBELL

That lady who didn't hate me ---
promise me you'll save her.

TUPELO

That's why I'm here.

She motions: follow me. She leads them towards the end of the platform, ON THE OLD SUBWAY BENCH we see a mark of vandalism on the wood - faded carved initials: "RT".

AT THE END OF THE PLATFORM:

TinkerBell pulls open a sheet of corrugated tin that leads to ---

THE "BENCH-WALL" -

- a narrow ledge right above the tracks that hugs the walls of tunnels and lead to secret rooms and stairways to even deeper depths. As they follow TinkerBell along the slippery ledge it seems they're alone in the center of the earth. Then they hear:

A STRANGE CHORUS OF CHIRPING -

Tupelo: Huh? He peers into a tiny portal, sees a hidden room that sounds like IT'S FILLED WITH DERANGED CRICKETS. This is ---

A RELAY ROOM ---

--- a tarp-covered, rag-filled, spiderweb of wires that hide a crucial part of the subway's nervous system, yet also one of the most ancient - "relays" are small switches flicking on and off, a technology in use since the subway opened in 1904. Tinkerbell tries to explain:

TINKERBELL

Whenever trains go by they always start clicking back and forth ---

TUPLEO

Some kind of electromagnets.
 (sees the cloth-covered wires leading out of the room)
 Must be connected to the tracks somewhere, and when a train passes ---
 (figures)
 It shorts the circuit. Which would let the system know a train is there --- or not.
 (astonished:)
 Those aren't even plastic, they're Bakelite, from the 30's, and all those wires - all wrapped in cloth! Jeez, pure entropy.

JAMAL

What's that mean?

Tupelo wants to keep moving, no time to explain. Jamal holds him, always wants answers. So:

INT. SUBWAY CAR - FLASHBACK - DAY

TUPELO AND RENEE - pressed together in a crowded, moving, subway car - they hold each other, the moment they were most in love ---

TUPELO (V.O.)

It means that anything complex and interconnected ---

CAMERA EDGES BACK: RENEE IS PREGNANT - this is a happier time for them, a time of hope and promise, THEY SEEM TO GLOW ---

TUPELO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 --- unless you keep it right ---

FLASHBACK: TUPELO AND RENEE KISS.

TUPELO (CONT'D)
 Will always break down.

INSTANT PULLBACK FROM INSIDE THE TRAIN AND ---

WE ARE IN A SUBWAY TUNNEL (FLASHBACK CONTINUES) AS ---

THE TRAIN SWEEPS PAST OUR VIEW: RENEE AND TUPELO, GLOWING IN EACH OTHER'S LOVE, become a smear of steel, flesh, and light.

TUPELO (V.O.)
 And when it does start breaking down ---

CLOSE SHOT - THE TRAIN'S UNDERBELLY AND THE TRACKS

BLUE SPARKS as the speeding train's "shoes" scrape the third rail - picking up the current that powers the train.

TUPELO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 --- you might never know how the
 problems got started.

INSTANTLY WE ARE TRANSPORTED ---

--- into a small, hyper-clean UNREAL white room with one simple relay switch atop a metal table.

TUPELO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Like: if this room were empty, anything changes - like a piece of paper near a wire - you'd see it.

A crumbled piece of paper NOW APPEARS --- too close to an exposed wire - ready to spark. Easy to see. Easy to fix.

TUPELO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 But if that same room is ---

THAT HYPER-CLEAN ROOM AGAIN BECOMES THE REALITY: THE SMALL FILTHY RELAY ROOM ---

TUPELO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 --- a maze of distractions crowded with rags and wires - with water dripping and sparks flying - you'd never see the trouble ---

--- that shred of paper about to catch fire can no longer

even be seen.

EXT. HELICOPTER POV - NEW YORK CITY

Thousands of streets and buildings, bridges and highways moving ten million people - an organism of complex and infinite connections, now falling into chaos and crisis ---

TUPELO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 --- and when all those little troubles
 and problems cause the whole system to
 fail - no one would ever know why.

THE HELICOPTER - "CITY OF NEW YORK" LOGO ---

- lands. Michelle anxiously waits on the helipad tarmac to greet --- THE MAYOR. WE RETURN TO:

INT. THE DEPTHS OF THE SUBWAY SYSTEM -

Tupelo, Tinkerbell, and Jamal stand on the slippery benchwall above the tracks, peer into the mess that is Relay Room 243.

TUPELO
 How many rooms like this?

TINKERBELL
 Whole city. In all the tunnels.
 Everywhere. C'mere, gets worse ---

She motions to the slimmest, rustiest, most corroded metal door seen yet - no doubt the passage to some even more horrid, dungeon-like mystery. Tupelo takes a deep breath, then nods: open it. She pushes open the filthy portal ---

ANGLE ON - TUPELO -

--- what he sees takes his breath away. HE SEES:

INT. THE NEW MYRTLE STREET SHUTTLE STATION

A pure white, antiseptically clean, shining SUBWAY STATION - SOMETHING WE NEVER EVEN IMAGINED COULD EXIST --- like a space station with electronic signs and shiny sets of track, even the tunnels leading in and out of this station are spotless. It's like some imaginary wonder-world, but this place is real.

TINKERBELL
 (gives her the creeps)
 They just made it. For the O Line.

FROM SOMEWHERE FAR ABOVE they can hear/feel the rumblings of

trains, water mains, power lines, and a city of ten million people - but down here it's like a beautiful, lifeless tomb.

TINKERBELL (CONT'D)

Like a year ago they started fixing this place up --- and that's when the crazy things started to happen.

Tupelo goes to a backlit 8ft-high subway map set in the wall.

TUPELO

Where are we now?

TINKERBELL

Right here ---

She points to that "Power Spot" confluence of connections in Brooklyn, but now there's a new marking on this map:

THE "O LINE SHUTTLE,"

a silver line that sweeps through Brooklyn's knot of multi-colored transit lines and continues through to Queens, The Bronx, Manhattan, and back to Brooklyn --- tying all the strands of the system together.

ANGLE ON - TUPELO

He is mystified, incredulous, half elated, half horrified:

TUPELO

This is so sick.

JAMAL AND TINKERBELL

What!?

Tupelo points to the subway map on the wall:

TUPELO

You see this new line? You see what happens here? They have no idea, but --- I was right - it's real --- they've created a Moebius Strip!

B-RING! - B-RING! ----

They STARTLE --- huh? - it's Tupelo's cell phone.

TUPELO (CONT'D)

This works ---? We're five levels down into bedrock. How's this ---?

JAMAL

Look: cell phone boosters built
right into the walls. Cool.

Tupelo looks at his ringing phone:

TUPELO

27 missed calls and messages ---
(he answers the
incoming call)
Hello --- ?

Tupelo has to move the phone from his ear ---

SOLJAK

(ON THE PHONE, BELLOWING)
Where the hell you been!?

TUPELO

Ah, my new friend.

SOLJAK (ON THE PHONE)

So Tupelo, this some kind of prank?

TUPELO

Screw you, my wife's on that train.

SOLJAK

Tell me this is a joke. Some magic
shit - smoke and mirrors.

TUPELO

Goodbye.

SOLJAK (ON THE PHONE)

Don't hang up! ---

EXT. ON THE STREET - DAY

GRIDLOCK, SIRENS, CROWDS, COPS, BOMB SQUAD, NEWS, FBI, HELI-
COPTERS OVERHEAD, - Soljak - pacing, on the phone - is
watching the world as he and we know it falls apart.

SOLJAK

Are you playing games with me?

TUPELO (ON PHONE)

What happened at 6:23 this morning
that never happened before?

SOLJAK

6:23 ---? Where are you?

TUPELO (ON PHONE)

In the Myrtle Street Station.

SOLJAK

The old station?!

TUPELO (ON PHONE)

No. The new station.

SOLJAK

The shuttle? You can't be in that station. It's all locked up.

TUPELO (ON PHONE)

And yet, here I am. What happened today at 6:23 a.m?

SOLJAK

What do you care? What's that got to do with ---

TUPELO

Hey Pal, you wouldn't be calling me unless you couldn't call anyone else. You know something's wrong. What happened this morning at 6:23?!

SOLJAK

The shuttle happened. We finally connected the last tracks of the shuttle.

INT. THE NEW STATION - DAY

Tupelo, speaking to Soljak, traces the shuttle line on the map.

TUPELO

And at that moment every subway line in the city was turned into one giant endless loop?

SOLJAK (PHONE)

Yeah. 6:23. First time ever. What's that got to do with the Number 3 going AWOL?

TUPELO

Maybe everything. Soljak, is that train really missing?

EXT. ON THE STREET - DAY

Tightly-wound Soljak responds quietly:

SOLJAK

We've combed every inch of track
in the city ---

(hates to admit:)

Yes. It's gone.

INT THE NEW STATION - DAY

Tupelo's eyes focus on the ominously-glowing subway map, and the Power Spot in Brooklyn where all the lines converge.

TUPELO

Then every train is in danger now.
And the one that's missing --- if
you want it back then get down
here. Alone. No cops. Got that?
Get down here. And I'll find it.

Tupelo disconnects. To Jamal:

TUPELO (CONT'D)

Take her to Brooklyn Hospital. Go
up to the fifth floor, find Nurse
Judy, and tell them Tinkerbell is
Renee's niece.

JAMAL

Who's Renee?

TUPELO

My wife. She's a nurse there and
they'll do anything for her.

(to Tinkerbell)

She was the lady on the train.

TINKERBELL

Do I have to be her niece? Can I
be her kid? Can she be my mother?

TUPELO

She's not ready for that.

JAMAL

What are you gonna do?

TUPELO

Force that train back to where
it escaped from, even if I have
to shut down the whole city.

JAMAL

They won't let you do that.

TUPELO

They'll have to. Now get her to the doctor, get out of here!

Jamal pulls Tupelo aside, concerned, whispers:

JAMAL

If the cops grab Tink' --- gimme your phone number.

Tupelo scribbles the number --- pushes Jamal to go. Jamal and Tinkerbell head towards the secret exit. Tupelo glances once more at the map and its jumble of knotted lines in Brooklyn.

TUPELO

Wait! Tinker--- "Teena" - right? --
- all those little papers you cut
up and write on --- you got a
piece of paper for me?

She nods, finds in her pocket a sheet of paper.

TUPELO (CONT'D)

And a scissors.

TINKERBELL

Scissors? No - I got this ---

A razor.

TUPELO

Fine. And some tape. And a pen!

JAMAL

You gonna get your train back with a razor blade, paper and a pen?

Tinkerbell has tape and a marker. Tupelo kisses her forehead.

TUPELO

Good kid. Both of you. Now get to the hospital. Move!

Jamal won't move:

JAMAL

How'd you know I'd say "carrot"?

TUPELO

It was just a trick. Dumb trick.
Get going.

JAMAL

But how'd you do it? You said
you'd tell me.

TUPELO

(exasperated, but has
to tell him:)

Ask anyone a series of fast simple
questions - 2+8, 3+7, 5+5, 6+4 -
that stops their thinking - then
ask them to name a vegetable. Most
people will say "carrot." It's a
fact. Now get out of here. Go!

EXT. CITY STREETS

A TV NEWS REPORTER giving her LIVE REPORT stands in front of
crowds, cops, and Bomb Squad vans.

NEW REPORTER

A child's backpack on the tracks was
all it took to shut down the subway
at rush hour. But in today's world
most would agree it's better to be
safe than sorry. The good news: all
subway lines are again in operation.
Still, with the system just getting
back underway, expect delays that
will inconvenience millions of New
Yorkers for several more hours.
Better cancel those dinner plans
- everyone is going to be late!

ANGLE ON - SOLJAK

leaving Transit Authority HQ in a car driven by Terrell,
instantly stuck in traffic between buses, news vans, and a
sea of pedestrians. IN THE CAR: Soljak looks out at his
world in collapse. Terrell feeds Soljak even more problems:

TERRELL

She keeps calling: she's with the
mayor and she's looking for you
and she's really pissed.

SOLJAK

Damn this traffic! Do something!

Soljak, frustrated, bolts OUT OF THE CAR.

TERRELL

No Chief. Don't. Don't leave me!

Soljak hurries to a subway entrance - but someone grabs him:

MICHELLE MURPHY

Answer your phone when I call you!
The mayor will be at this new City
Hall Station of yours in 20 minutes.
Be there to meet him: 6 p.m. He
will speak to the press about im-
proved safety - the shuttle will
be his example. There will be no
discussion of missing trains. Under-
stand? And put on a clean shirt.
And I assume you found that train?

SOLJAK

I'm on my way to get it right now.

Soljak dashes down into the subway.

INT. VACUUM CAR - SUBWAY TUNNEL

Soljak has commandeered a specialized, hot-yellow, eight-ton Vacuum Car - a futuristic-looking machine that cleans the tracks of the subway and the only thing now running on the new shuttle line. Its powerful overhead beams illuminate the rails and tunnel ahead. From the wide front window it's an almost-magical view of the underworld of the city.

SOLJAK

(to the Vac-Car operator)
Anything special to running it?

The OPERATOR - it's a woman - shrugs: not really.

SOLJAK (CONT'D)

Wanna let me try? I used to do
this. And today might be my last
day down here.

OPERATOR

(knows she shouldn't, but)
Take the controls.

The operator slides out of her seat and lets Soljak take over - Soljak like a kid with a new set of toy trains. He gives the Vac-Car some power - it hums down the track.

SOLJAK

Yeah. Nothing special - just
the best job in the world.

INT. THE NEW SHUTTLE STATION

Tupelo sits on a shiny plastic bench cutting a 2-inch wide, 10-inch long strip of paper. A RUMBLE from far down the tunnel. He tenses - a powerful beam of light washes the station. And then it arrives, the strangest looking machine he's ever seen. Soljak steps out onto the platform, the Vacuum-Car continues on. Soljak appraises Tupelo ---

SOLJAK

Substitute teacher. Magician. And
now: cutting paper dolls.

(can't believe this)

I'm in your hands.

TUPELO

You ever hear of a Moebius Strip?

Soljak squints. Tupelo shows him the strip of paper. Sounds like a magician:

TUPELO (CONT'D)

Two sides, right? If I make it
into a loop I have an outside
and an inside. But, if instead
of attaching the ends as a loop
I put a twist in the strip, and
then attach the ends, what we've
got is what's called ---

He twists the strip of paper and attaches the opposite ends,
seals them with the tape ---

TUPELO (CONT'D)

A Moebius Strip ---

Looks like a twisted figure eight.

SOLJAK

Yeah --- and?

TUPELO

Now, if I take this marker and
draw a line down the middle of
the strip, look what happens ---

Tupelo draws a line down the length of the twisted paper
coil; as he follows the architecture of the coil the line

comes back to where it started having inscribed both sides of the strip.

TUPELO (CONT'D)

I never lifted the pen. So, we had a strip of paper with two sides that now has only one side. Right? So what happened to the other side? Don't guess. As simple as it seems, this is a profound mystery. You see, when any system makes more and more connections to other parts of itself the connectivity of that system increases in an exponential fashion - in the case of the subway forming a knot of staggering proportions.

Soljak takes the seemingly simple moebius from Tupelo.

SOLJAK

There were two sides. Now there's one side. I'll play: where's the other side?

TUPELO

Inside. I know that's hard to imagine. And by "inside" I also mean "outside."

SOLJAK

"inside, outside" - I don't have time for bullshit now ---

(crunches the moebius)

That train went missing and my system fell apart. Where's my train? - and I want a nuts-and-bolts answer.

TUPELO

I'm afraid there's only one answer: your train, with my wife, has slipped into a parallel dimension.

Sokjak grabs Tupelo and slams him against the wall.

SOLJAK

A para---!!? That's why you brought me here!? Are you---!? You motherf---!

TUPELO

(cool as ice)

Used to be just theory for me, but now I know it's real.

SOLJAK

What's real!?

TUPELO

The world unseen.

SOUNDS GRUMBLE, PILLARS RATTLE - a steady throb of tension.

TUPELO (CONT'D)

It was something I tried to convince myself of, it helped me imagine the work I was doing, helped me imagine that my kid ---, I tried to convince my wife of it, that there was a world of beauty and amazement right beyond our reach, but that only screwed things up more. But now ---

(drags Soljak to ---)

Look at your map, your subway is a 842 mile knot of amazing topological complexity, but now adding the shuttle line makes it even more complex - and the situation is now of an order so high that I suspect the connectivity - the properties of all the connections in the New York Subway System - has now become infinite. Can you imagine the properties of an infinite network?

(off Soljak's look)

I can't either. But the train is no longer in the realm of "where," the whole System is now without a real "whereness," and your new shuttle has caused the #3 train from Brooklyn to jump into another dimension.

SOLJAK

Fuck You.

TUPELO

You wouldn't be here unless you knew something was wrong - something way wrong that you can't explain. Well guess what: that kid who grabbed onto the back of that train - she actually saw it disappear. Now look at this ---

Tupelo starts cutting length-wise through the crunched-by-Soljak-but-not-broken moebius strip:

TUPELO (CONT'D)

Now it really gets weird, watch:
when I cut this again ---

As he makes the final cut ---

LIKE A MAGIC TRICK:

The Moebius strip suddenly snaps itself into two separate moebius strips tied together in a knot! Huh? Soljak reacts. So do we. (NOTE: this actually happens)

TUPELO (CONT'D)

C'mere, you need to see this ---

Tupelo holds the "Moebius Knot" up against THE WALL-SIZED SUBWAY MAP. CAMERA MOVES IN:

THE MOEBIUS KNOT ---

--- IS A PERFECT MATCH WITH THE "POWER SPOT" JUMBLE OF SUBWAY LINES - INCLUDING THE SHUTTLE - ALL COILED TOGETHER IN BROOKLYN!

SOLJAK

What the hell ---!???

TUPELO

Yeah: "what the hell." What time did you connect the shuttle tracks to the rest of the system?

SOLJAK

You know what time I connected it.

TUPELO

When you connected the shuttle tracks this morning you created this. Now I know this map is only an approximation of the system, but the actual connections are even more complex. I got off at Bergen Street. The train continued but never made it to its next stop, but it did enter this newly created moebius knot and moved into a non-spatial plane. It continues to draw power from the System - you know that - so it's got to be somewhere --- but it's somewhere we can't see.

Soljak seems ready to punch Tupelo. Tupelo stands his ground.

TUPELO (CONT'D)

Six hundred years ago people weren't morons - look what they built, the art they created, the cities - all these genius people - and yet for them the world was flat, and the earth was the center of the universe ---

(pure energy)

---and then, suddenly, they were totally mind-fucked - suddenly the world was round - round! - and we weren't the center of existence but one little speck at the edge of space - and then, when the microscope was invented, whoa! - suddenly there's a whole other world --- of tiny little creatures - living inside our bodies! And so, imagine the future, people in touch with sounds and ideas, waves and currents and signals we can't fathom - yet. 'Cause reality itself doesn't change but the reality in our minds always changes. So what the future will know, it won't be just this. So are there other dimensions surrounding us, dimensions of time and space that fill in the gaps we can't explain? Yes. I believe that. Yes.

SOLJAK

It can't be. I gave my life to this machine. Nuts and bolts. "For every action there's a reaction." That's how the world works. Not---.

TUPELO

Then why are you here?

Soljak tries to make the words to answer. Can't. Tupelo moves in close:

TUPELO (CONT'D)

What is it? I see it in your eyes. You know something.

One long moment. Soljak turns away --- mutters.

TUPELO (CONT'D)

I didn't hear you. What did you say?

Almost a whisper:

SOLJAK
That blackened track, missing
train ---
(beat)
It's happened before.

TUPELO
(now he grabs Soljak)
What!? It's happened before!???

SOLJAK
Maybe a year ago, three in the
morning, for a few seconds.

WE SEE QUICK-CUT MOMENTS, VISUAL FLASHES OF ---

SOLJAK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
We were testing the current in the
shuttle tunnel, no tracks yet, just
the power grid, when an F-Train
going through Rutgers Tunnel - it's
marker light goes off, then the
light comes back on. So who cares,
right? Couple a seconds. Coulda
been a short circuit. But when the
motorman pulls in he says some crazy
shit happened - blames the conductor
- conductor also says something
weird happened - says the motorman
must have blacked out at the con-
trols - so now they start throwing
punches at each other so we follow
up: train's fine, the signals are
fine, but the track turned black
where that train went off the board.
But no one wants to get written up
and it's four in the morning - train
was full of drunks, so nobody thinks
about this shit - they just want to
get home. But I think about it. Then
I forget about it. Until now.

Tupelo is astonished, elated - and terrified. His theory:
true. Soljak: more frightened, more confused.

SOLJAK (CONT'D)
But why then, if the tracks did
this ---

TUPELO

Simple terms: trigger a nuclear reaction, before you get to critical mass you get smaller reactions - that's why that circuit test you ran only caused that blip, but now, with the tracks ---

SOLJAK

Then how come every train in the system hasn't --- how come there aren't 10, 20, 100 trains missing?

TUPELO

There must be an exclusion principle operating, such that only one train at a time can occupy the non-spatial network and ---

Soljak's heard enough, gets out his phone, starts a call ---

SOLJAK

I'm getting a railer team down here, we'll disconnect a stretch of track, that'll break your Moebius thing and - POOF! --- we'll get that train back.

TUPELO

(grabs the phone away)
No! No! You can't do that!

SOLJAK

What!? Why not?

TUPELO

The relevant non-spatial property is derived from the shuttle line, but now it belongs to the whole System!

SOLJAK

In English!

TUPELO

If anything changes now, we'll lose that train forever. If you cut the knot ---

Tupelo tears one piece of his paper moebius --- and the knot

instantly collapses into two separate tangled strands.

TUPELO (CONT'D)

---you can't put it back together.
The System has to stay the same
until we bring back that train!

SUDDENLY a pressure in the air, a sizzle of electricity. The hairs on their arms begin to rise. Something about to happen. Then they hear FROM DOWN IN THE TUNNEL A DEEP RUMBLE, then a HORN BLAST YOU CAN FEEL IN YOUR HEART. A FLASH OF SEARING LIGHT, and then ---

A SPIFFY NEW SHUTTLE SUBWAY TRAIN -

all shiny silver, empty, clean - and real - glides through the station. Tupelo has never seen a subway train like this. Like a mirage. But it's real. From Soljak: a sad laugh.

SOLJAK

My life's work.

TUPELO

It's running already?

SOLJAK

Special train.

TUPELO

To where?

SOLJAK

City Hall. I'm supposed to be there
- they were giving me a medal,
front page news, a nice party.

TUPELO

You should be there: friends, family.

SOLJAK

This is my family. There it goes.

Soljak watches the train disappear into the darkness. Tupelo sees that Soljak's cheeks are flushed, his eyes are red.

TUPELO

You gotta have someone.

SOLJAK

I gave up on that a long time ago.

(beat)

Hope you got a plan.

TUPELO

We need to propel that missing train back to where it escaped from and trap it---

(goes to the map)

It's living off the power from the rails, right? So by shutting down its power starting up here - moving from the Bronx down to Brooklyn, Queens to Brooklyn, pushing north from Coney Island, Bay Ridge and Rockaway - by cutting the power grid section-by-section we can chase it, corner it, and ---

SOLJAK

That's your plan? With the mayor back in town reassuring everyone that everything's perfectly normal?

TUPELO

We'll have to, and then we'll direct all that energy into Bergen Street Station to shock our train back into the space we inhabit - it was shocked out, we'll need to shock it back in.

SOLJAK

You want me to tell the mayor I'm shutting down New York "because a subway train's in another dimension"!? They'll put me away.

TUPELO

But we have to do it.

SOLJAK

(no good - final)

Sorry, pal. No. Can't. If that's the only way, we're both screwed.

INT. BROOKLYN HOSPITAL - PEDIATRICS - DAY

Nurse Judy treats the cuts and lacerations on Tinkerbell's hands, wrists, and knees. All around them children are crying - as if they have a special sense that something profound is in the air. Jamal, watching Tinkerbell, concern. He holds Tupelo's scribbled phone number, comments:

JAMAL

Poor man. Lost a baby, now his old lady is gone --- poor Professor What-The-Hell's-His-Name. He said he was gonna shut down the whole city to catch his train. They're never gonna let him do that.

Nurse Carla passes Jamal, growls at him:

NURSE CARLA

How'd you know I'd say "carrot"?

Nurse Judy is attending to Tinkerbelle:

NURSE JUDY

This is going to hurt ---

Nurse Judy puts a wash of antiseptic on Tinkerbelle palm ---

TINKERBELL

Ouch.

A SECOND NURSE gives Tinkerbelle a tetanus shot ---

TINKERBELL (CONT'D)

Ouch!

A THIRD NURSE plucks a steel splinter from Tinkerbelle's knee. Should be "ouch" --- but this time Tinkerbelle does not react. She just re-counts each hit of pain:

TINKERBELL (CONT'D)

One --- two --- three ---

Suddenly she jumps to her feet:

TINKERBELL (CONT'D)

I know how to do it!

AT THE NURSES STATION

Tinkerbelle grabs the number from Jamal, pushes aside nurses, grabs a phone, calls - Tupelo answers. Tinkerbelle screeches:

TINKERBELL (CONT'D)

You don't have to shut down the whole city! I see it how - when there's a fire in a tunnel the trains all keep running. They keep running 'cause it's three different powers down there!

Jamal holds back all the nurses:

JAMAL

Let her do her thing. They're
gonna put her in a genius museum.

INT. THE NEW STATION

Tupelo and Soljak listen to the breathless intensity pouring
out of the cell phone:

TINKERBELL (O.S.)

One's the city electric. One's all
the signals and lights down there.
And then there's the train power!
You can just shut down the tracks!

TUPELO

Is she right?

SOLJAK

(realizes:)

Of course - split system, same since
1904 - every train pulls power from
the third rail - DC current, s'got
nothing to do with the city grid.

(very impressed)

Who you talking to?

ANGLE ON: TINKERBELL - IN THE HOSPITAL

jumping onto the nurses' desk, yelling into the phone:

TINKERBELL

So if you cut the train power the
stations would still be lit, the
city'll still be lit, but all the
trains will stop! And then you can
crash the system! Do it! Do it!

NURSE JUDY

Somebody call Security!

INT. NEW SHUTTLE STATION

Soljak to Tupelo racing up the escalator to the street.

SOLJAK

How do we explain this to people?

TUPELO

We don't. We can't. We've got to bring it back, you and me, now. Before anything changes! We'll do it, and no one on the street will even know it happened.

SOLJAK

How long will it take?

TUPELO

30 - 45 - 60, tops. Trust me.

SOLJAK

An hour? Even a half hour? You kidding? At rush hour?

TUPELO

Who said a half hour!? --- 30, 45 seconds! - we're dealing with the speed of light!

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - DAY

ON TINKERBELL AND JAMAL --- rushing through the hospital lobby down into the subway entrance just outside the doors.

JAMAL

I do not want to miss this.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN - DAY

Tupelo and Soljak muscle through the rush hour crowd, Soljak barking into his phone:

SOLJAK

Morrissey! This is what I need from you ---

EXT. VAN CORTLAND TOWER - DAY

Morrissey (Soljak's friend, the Jamaican dispatcher at the elevated tower in The Bronx), reacts:

MORRISSEY

You want me to do what? Aw, Soljak ---

EXT. DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN - DAY

Soljak is onto his next call ---

SOLJAK

It's just a test. We're running a test. Yes, it's been approved.

INT. 42ND STREET/TIMES SQUARE TOWER - DAY

Busiest station in the city. This dispatcher, a woman, crushes a cigarette pack.

JOANNE THE DISPATCHER

Who orders a test at rush hour?

Okay, Soljak, whatever you say.

EXT. HOWARD BEACH TOWER

Seagulls perch atop a lonely near-deserted modern tower in view of marshes and JFK Airport.

HOWARD BEACH DISPATCHER

I'm not the only one, am I? At what time ---? 6:20?

The dispatcher looks at his clock: now it's 6:11.

INT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS/191ST STREET STATION - DAY

Cave-like, loud, the deepest station in the system. This dispatcher holds his head as he takes the call from Soljak:

DEEP DISPATCHER

If it's gotta be done it's gotta be done.

ON THE STREET

They keep moving. Soljak keeps calling. Then, to Tupelo:

SOLJAK

Say, when you were a kid did you ever take the subway?

TUPELO

All the time. Rode right up front. Looking out the window. Why?

SOLJAK

What school you go to?

TUPELO

I went to private school. Why?

Soljak puts a hand on Tupelo's shoulder.

SOLJAK

Nothing. Just: "R-T," you shoulda
been nicer to the trains.

Off Tupelo's look, Soljak keeps rolling calls ---

INT/EXT. CONEY ISLAND/STILLWELL AVENUE TOWER - DAY

In view of Nathan's, "The Cyclone" roller coaster and the beach. This elevated junction has multiple platforms beneath a vaulted steel roof. A guy on the phone, SECOND IN COMMAND, does not comprehend:

SECOND IN COMMAND

I don't know you or what you're
talking about but I'll tell Bob.

SOLJAK

Just tell Bob it's Soljak, and tell him
to cut power for two minutes at 6:20.

EXT. JAMAICA MAINTENANCE YARD - DUSK

AN OLD BRICK BUILDING looks over the vast Maintenance Yard where subway cars return at the end of their runs to be washed, patched, and then sent out again.

IN THE RED BRICK BUILDING

A small woman, MS. JOHNSON, stands in front of a big panel with 86 levers, her hands in motion like an orchestra conductor, she walks back and forth operating the switches that pump trains into the system. Someone hands her a phone:

MS. JOHNSON

(as she works the levers)
Why Mister Soljak, how is that big
party they got going for you today?
They must have lost my invitation.

ON THE STREET - DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN - DAY

Soljak purrs into the phone for this call:

SOLJAK

Why Ms. Johnson, so good to hear
your voice. I have a tiny little
favor to ask ---

IN THE RED BRICK BUILDING

The little woman stiffens:

MS. JOHNSON

What are you drinking at that party? You want me to stop sending out trains?

ON SOLJAK

Like bitter sugar:

SOLJAK

Just for one little minute. And --- I'm missing the party too.

INT. THE NEW CITY HALL SHUTTLE STATION, MANHATTAN - DAY

SITE OF THE BIG PARTY: balloons, bartenders serving egg creams, that damn "New York New York" song playing over and over again and a giant cake in the shape of a new shuttle train. The MAYOR, at a podium with shuttle logo, makes a speech:

MAYOR

On a day when our coordinated efforts show that despite adversity there is no problem we can't tackle, it's my pleasure to celebrate progress. This auspicious moment for the people of New York could never have happened without a team. There was the Governor ---

APPLAUSE. THE GOVERNOR smiles. As the mayor next introduces DIGNITARIES, THE CAMERA SWEEPS PAST the balloons, band, PARIS HILTON, reporters and cake, to FIND: TERRELL and MICHELLE.

TERRELL

You gotta wait for him. He built this whole thing, he's been waiting his whole life for this!

MICHELLE MURPHY

Your boss has ruined my day.

TERRELL

But this is his party.

The shiny new shuttle train eases into the station. Cheers and applause. The Mayor smiles proudly, jokes:

MAYOR

I am seeing something and I am saying something: Wow!

MICHELLE MURPHY

(to Terrell)

He's late. You see these reporters,
those photographers? We are not go-
ing to wait. By the way ---

Now beside them: Bob the Reporter, who finishes her question:

BOB THE REPORTER

You ever find that train?

MICHELLE MURPHY

Of course they found it. That was
like ten hours ago. Old news.

BOB THE REPORTER

Where was it?

As Terrell stalls, The Mayor wraps up his speech:

MAYOR

--- at last tying together The
Bronx, Manhattan, Brooklyn and
Queens - sorry Staten Island,
you're next, be patient.

(that gets a laugh)

And now for this medal, for the
one person who has been with
this project from the start ---

The Mayor looks to Michelle: who do I give this to? She
shrugs: he's not here. So ---

MAYOR (CONT'D)

This special city medal goes to the
one person without whom there would
be no shuttle --- and certainly no
party today. Let's all salute ---

(he's got to give it
to someone---)

Michelle Murphy!

FLASH POPS as a proud Michelle goes to the podium to accept
Soljak's medal as her own. PICTURES! PICTURES! PICTURES!

MAYOR (CONT'D)

Let's all ride the shuttle!

The mayor, governor, senators, reporters and photographers,
and of course Michelle, all press into the train.

TERRELL

No! You gotta wait for Soljak---

But Terrell is ignored as generators and compressors fire up.

CONDUCTOR

Stand clear of the closing doors.

A ding-dong chime and the doors close. There's a triumphant blow of the train's horn ---

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)

Next stop - Brooklyn!

LOUD CHEERS from within the train as the shuttle train pulls out of the station, disappearing around a curve and leaving Terrell alone on the platform surrounded by balloons and cake.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREETS - SUNSET

A dirt-red setting sun fights with dark rain clouds. Distant thunder. Tupelo and Soljak are pushing their way through the crowded, chaotic streets. It's a few blocks to DeKalb Station: master control for Brooklyn. Tupelo splits off to the right.

SOLJAK

Where you think you're going?

TUPELO

Gotta catch a train at Bergen Street.

SOLJAK

Whoa! No. That station's too dangerous. I shut it down. You can't go there.

TUPELO

(keeps moving)

My wife --- I've got to.

SOLJAK

(chases him, holds him)

You can't! I'm pumping the energy of this whole system into that one stretch - if we do get it back --- maybe you don't wanna be there.

TUPELO

I have to be there. I should have been on that train, should have stayed on it. If I had - my weight, mass - maybe it would have been different - but I gotta be there now. No matter what. With her.

SOLJAK

But those people - after twelve hours, what's ---?

TUPELO

It could be over for them. The stress of the passage - or maybe they're or in some kind of suspended time - everything that ever happened in that tunnel could be wrapped around like a loop - or maybe it's pure terror or ---

SOLJAK

Sometimes when I don't know an answer you know what I say? - "I don't know." What's her name?

TUPELO

My wife? "Renee." And yeah: I know what it means.

SOLJAK

Good luck.

Tupelo dashes down into the Atlantic Avenue Station.

INT. ATLANTIC AVENUE SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

Tupelo rushes towards the end of the platform. He ignores DANGER! DO NOT ENTER! - climbs over the railing.

INT. ATLANTIC-BERGEN STREET SUBWAY TUNNEL - NIGHT

Tupelo runs along the dark narrow ledge towards the glowing lights of the Bergen Street Station - a quarter mile away.

INT. DEKALB AVENUE COMMAND ROOM - NIGHT

Soljak stands at the main board, barks into a headset:

SOLJAK

Okay, Morrissey. Do it.

INT. VAN CORTLAND TOWER, BRONX - NIGHT

Morrissey throws a switch.

INT. CONVERSION SUBSTATION - BRONX - NIGHT

A substation feeding power to the rails. Its motors shut down.

EXT. ELEVATED TRACKS, THE BRONX - NIGHT

Power shuts down along this sector of track - as all trains stop WE SEE A FLASH OF SPARKS AND SMOKE and then a SHIMMER OF ELECTRICITY RETREATING BACK TOWARDS MANHATTAN.

INT. ATLANTIC-BERGEN TUNNEL - NIGHT

Tupelo runs hard along the wall ledge - but the ledge stops a hundred yards short of Bergen Street Station. He climbs over the safety railing, drops down into the track bed, runs towards the lights at the end of the tunnel.

EXT. 145TH STREET - HARLEM - NIGHT

A SNAKE OF SPARKS FLASHES along the path of the elevated track then WHOOSHES down into THE BROADWAY IRT TUNNEL.

INT. BROADWAY IRT TUNNEL - NIGHT

A SIZZLE OF BLUE-SPARKING DC CURRENT and A POWERFUL WIND SWEEPS PAST the 116th Street/Columbia University station ---

INT. BROADWAY IRT RELAY ROOM

The relays are clicking-smoking like crazy, but there's no visible trains running here! - only that FLASH OF ENERGY.

CLOSE SHOTS - DIFFERENT HANDS CLOSING SWITCHES

Little red lights on control boards go dark.

EXT. SHEA STADIUM STATION, QUEENS - NIGHT

Manhattan skyline in the distance. Passengers waiting on the elevated platform see the tracks that curve past Shea Stadium then dip down into the Corona Subway Tunnel. A train heads for the station from the other direction. Grinds to a halt when the power is cut. Suddenly:

THE ENTIRE ELEVATED PLATFORM BEGINS TO SHAKE -

--- RAILS VIBRATING and sending out A BASS NOTE SO DEEP it causes the people on the platform to gasp for air as ---

A CRACKLE OF LIGHTNING ---

--- EXPLODES out from the Corona Tunnel - shoots towards Shea Stadium Station and the now-stalled train - then SCREECHES to a STOP as if hitting an invisible wall and instantly ROCKETS back towards Manhattan.

INT. ATLANTIC-BERGEN STREET TUNNEL, BROOKLYN - NIGHT

Tupelo, running towards the eerie glow of Bergen Street Station - can FEEL the POWER coursing through the system - overhead pipes THROBBING, tracks GROANING and RATTLING.

INT. SUBWAY TUNNELS THROUGHOUT THE CITY ---

WE FOLLOW THE BLUE-SPARKING, SCREECHING, SEARING-HOT CURRENT ---

--- SLAMMING US BACK INTO OUR SEATS as it races 10-20-30 miles in an instant - RICOCHETING BACK FROM INVISIBLE WALLS (where the power's been cut) - trying every way to escape ---

SPARKS AND WIND WHIPPING PAST 468 STATIONS -

--- in the span of a few seconds - from SOUTH FERRY at the south tip of Manhattan up to PELHAM BAY in the Bronx, out to QUEENS PLAZA, then blasting back through TIMES SQUARE ---

INT. DEKALB AVENUE CONTROL ROOM, BROOKLYN - NIGHT

Soljak watches the big board that shows the entire New York City Subway System - red lights are now dark in the Bronx, Queens, and TURNING OFF LIKE A DESCENDING CURTAIN in Manhattan --- THE LIGHTS ON THE BOARD GOING DARK IN SOUTHEAST BROOKLYN - all that remains glowing now is

THE MOEBIUS KNOT

of the interlocked subways lines that all converge in Brooklyn - and one slim line of lights that trails south to Coney Island. Soljak points to that still-glowing line:

SOLJAK

What the - shut down Coney Island!

INT. THE KNOT OF SUBWAY TUNNELS UNDER DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN

The BLUE ARC OF FLAME that carries THE ENERGY STORM is now like A THRILL RIDE WHIPPING AROUND THE MOEBIUS KNOT/POWER SPOT as it tries to find its way out of THE TWISTING MAZE OF SUBWAY TUBES AND TUNNELS, every escape route closing, directing ALL THE POWER OF THE ENTIRE SYSTEM TOWARDS ---

INT. BERGEN STREET STATION - NIGHT

Deserted. Gates locked. Tupelo reaches the pit in front of the platform, reaches to a ladder, HEARS THE ONCOMING ROAR OF THE PULSING ENERGY STORM and ---

TUPELO IS HIT WITH A WALL OF POWER AND WIND

that knocks him down onto the tracks -

AT THE SAME SPOT HE FELL IN THE MORNING ---

--- debris and muck flying - again he loses his glasses ---
the power blasts past him ---

TUPELO

Renee---!!!

THE POWER PASSES THROUGH THE STATION

and disappears into the southbound darkness. Tupelo reacts:
No Renee. No train. Alone between the vibrating tracks he
pounds the wooden ties with his fists - emotional agony:
his plan failed - the train with car #8686 did not return.

INT. DEKALB CONTROL TOWER - NIGHT

All lights are dark on the map of the city - except for
Bergen Street and that string of lights south to Coney
Island. Soljak smacks the board.

SOLJAK

What the hell's going on!?

ENGINEER

They won't shut it down at Coney --
- the special train's out there,
the mayor's train.

SOLJAK

It's not HIS train, it's MINE!

Soljak rips the metal cover off a circuit control board,
reaches in and tears out a handful of wires.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND ELEVATED TRACKS ---

The electrified 3rd rail goes dead.

INT. THE NEW SHUTTLE TRAIN - NIGHT

The train stops with a jolt. People tumble, knocking over the
party food and drink trays. The generator stops. The mayor:
huh? - lights go out, everyone groans, then we hear ---

MAYOR

Michelle!!!!

Outside the window of the now-dark special subway shuttle the

only thing still running on rails in Coney Island is

EXT. THE CYCLONE ROLLER COASTER - NIGHT

People screaming, arms in the air, as they shoot down and around the old wooden coaster's gravity-controlled tracks.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND ELEVATED SUBWAY TRACKS - NIGHT

THE BOLT OF LIGHTNING ROARS TOWARDS CONEY ISLAND AND THE MAYOR'S NOW-DARK SHUTTLE TRAIN, STOPS INCHES FROM SLAMMING INTO THE SHUTTLE TRAIN, INSTANTLY REVERSES and---

SCREECHES BACK TOWARDS BERGEN STREET

along the ELEVATED ROUTE, TEARING A WAVE OF SPIKES OUT OF THE TRACKS, SPIKES RAINING DOWN ONTO THE STREETS BELOW as THE STORM OF POWER arcs down into the subway tunnel under Prospect Park...

... the park now lit by a PHOSPHORESCENT GLOW as ---

INT. BERGEN STREET STATION - NIGHT

Tupelo sees the ONCOMING STORM-WAVE OF POWER BLASTING RIGHT AT HIM - the rails white-hot, the wind and pressure ---

DRAWING POWER FROM THE ENTIRE GRID OF THE SUBWAY SYSTEM

shaking loose pipes and spikes and wires and now Tupelo is

AT THE CENTER OF A HURRICANE -

force and power swirling around him faster and faster and noise ROARING, Tupelo being cut by the sizzling swirling steel dust, wires igniting and steam pipes bursting and EVERYTHING LOUDER AND LOUDER AND THEN ---

SILENCE --- and then:

THERE IS A GENTLE ROCKING SOUND

CLOSE UP - SUBWAY AD:

- WHO WILL BE MISS SUBWAYS? -

INT. SUBWAY CAR - MOVING

Tupelo, is inside subway car 8686 holding onto the pole for balance, looking up at the old SUBWAY BEAUTY CONTEST POSTER. He hears the SCREECH of wheels.

Then he sees:

A PREP SCHOOL KID

back turned to him, at the front --- carving initials into the door: R-T

TUPELO TRIES TO MOVE - HE CAN'T - HE LOOKS OUT THE WINDOWS

Running parallel on a parallel track is a different subway train - A 1940'S-STYLE TRAIN with Casablanca-type ceiling fans, filled with people dressed in 1940's style ---

TUPELO IS MOVING THROUGH SPACE AND TIME -

The parallel subway train edges sideways now, MOVING CLOSER AND CLOSER to the train Tupelo is riding in - Tupelo GRIPS the pole, BRACES for a collision but instead ---

THE TWO TRAINS SOFTY CONVERGE ---

--- becoming one overlapped train in overlapped dimensions

TUPELO IS NOW INSIDE BOTH TRAINS ---

--- folded into each other on A TRIP THROUGH FOUR-DIMENSIONAL SPACE WHERE TIME AND SURFACE WARP AND WRAP through each other as if liquids mixing - a stewing cauldron of images - the famous "WHO WILL BE MISS SUBWAY?" ads floating through air - people long since gone shifting in and out of focus as

THE TRAIN ITSELF CHANGES ---

---its windows now in the shape of portholes, its color scheme an art deco red and grey, morphing in and out of every style of train that has ever run on these tracks - a WOODEN CAR FROM 1904 - Tupelo among men in straw hats - NOW IT'S THE 60'S - bellbottoms, big Afros - the train plastered with graffiti - NOW THE TRAIN IS PACKED WITH PASSENGERS going to Coney Island in the 1920's - all these overlaps fading as

THE TRAIN ITSELF STRETCHES AND BECOMES A TUNNEL ---

--- AN ELONGATED TUBE GROWING LONGER AND LONGER ---

AND THEN CURLING INTO A PRETZEL-SHAPED MOEBIUS STRIP: THE SHAPE OF THE UNIVERSE ---

--- the train turning in on itself without tearing, turning inside out --- without upsetting the point of reference occupied by Richard Tupelo who sees:

RENEE

Sitting at the end of the train---

--- AS THEY DETOUR THROUGH FOUR-DIMENSIONAL SPACE,

Renee tranquil amidst the sounds of STORMS and EXPLOSIONS and
STEEL WHEELS SCREECHING and SUBWAY DRUMMERS and now ---

RENEE IS HOLDING AN INFANT WRAPPED IN A BLANKET ---

Tupelo moves to her. Touches her cheek. Renee looks up:

RENEE

Don't be afraid.

--- they look down together at the cooing, giggling child
observing this wonderful show of light, shape and color. No
longer are there metal edges, plastic veneer, aluminum poles
and vents dripping condensation, INSTEAD ---

THE INFANT SEES:

EXTRAORDINARY PATTERNS and SPECTRUMS of LIQUID CRYSTAL LIGHTS
and COLORS UNIMAGINABLE ---

--- with SPIRALLING PATTERNS of SNOW-FLAKE FRACTALS and crest-
ing WAVE FORMS in a sea of COMETARY KNOTS (the tadpole-like
particle residue of dying stars) and CLOUDS OF ATOMS ---

--- all wrapped in a MICROWAVE-SUPERNOVA GLOW of more-and-more
complex MOEBIUS STRIPS --- a primal vision of beauty and
sensual reality, the world unseen.

RENEE REACHES OUT TO TUPELO,

takes his hand:

RENEE (CONT'D)

You were right, Richard. She lived
- she saw the world, this world,
the world we've forgotten, and she
saw it and had a wonderful little
life, a beautiful life, with the
most beautiful visions and experi-
ences - she had all that - and all
our love --- and she lived.

Tupelo touches the baby, and now, with Renee smiling, he
starts to cry --- has held in so much, now his release ---

TUPELO

I miss her so much. I miss us.

RENEE

I know Richard. But we did good.
She was happy. She lived.

He leans down to kiss her ---

THEIR LIPS MEET

---one long beautiful kiss - one long unimaginable expression
of love - which alters space and time --- and now:

RENEE IS STANDING BESIDE HIM,

No child, the two of them together, same spot they were in
when they argued on the train in the morning -

NOW THEY ARE KISSING,

a kiss that seems to awaken them both from a spell of sadness
--- that's all good, but suddenly

THE TRAIN IS NO LONGER FLOATING THROUGH THE FOURTH DIMENSION

--- instead it is bucking and rocking and all the passengers
from this morning are again surrounding them - devolving
instantly into panic mode: THEY ARE TRAPPED IN A SUBWAY CAR
AND SOMETHING IS WRONG.

WINDOWS SHATTER -

reflecting, refracting the action into thousands of mirror-
images - Renee looks at Tupelo - what is this? Tupelo's plan
has worked - but it ain't pretty:

TUPELO

We're trying to get back home ---

IN CAR #8686

Surfaces are hard again, passengers being thrown from side to
side as THE TRAIN BREAKS THROUGH INTO OUR SPACE AND TIME and
now #8686 is at the head of

A RUNAWAY TRAIN

WHEELS SCREECHING, SPIKES FLYING, SPARKS IGNITING, over-speed
detectors TEARING out of the tracks ---

IN THE TRAIN

the operator's door slams open - no one's inside --- Tupelo
leaps to the booth, reaches for the brake ---

IT GOES SOFT IN HIS HAND ---

--- the train controls are still not back in our world ---
Tupelo is thrown out of the booth to the ground.

HE GRIPS THE HANDLE OF THE FRONT DOOR,

pulls himself up, finds himself eye-to-eye with those old
initials: RT - now angrily glowing. He whispers:

TUPELO

Sorry.

The angry glow fires stronger, then fades - Tupelo forgiven.
He again launches himself into the control booth, pulls back
the throttle and now ---

THE FRICTION BRAKES ENGAGE, THE TRAIN SCREECHING into

BERGEN STREET STATION ---

--- now CAUGHT IN A TORNADO OF ENERGY - METAL SIGNS TEARING
OFF WALLS, COMPRESSED AIR AND WATER PIPES SHATTERING, WHIPPING
THE STATION WITH ICY RAIN ---

IN THE TRAIN

Tupelo turns the key-switch to open all the doors, shouting:

TUPELO

Everybody out. Get out - Now!

WATER MAINS ABOVE THE TRACKS - EXPLODING! ---

--- exit gates now open, passengers rush for the stairs -
strangers helping strangers, Tupelo and Renee carrying
children, helping old people, as ---

A FLOOD OF WATER

Crashes in from ruptured water tunnels - TUPELO AND RENEE
RUSHING UPSTAIRS TO THE STREET look back downstairs to see:

CAR #8686 ---

GROANING AND GASPING AND SCREECHING as it DROWNS in the flood
- sharing the sad fate of its fellow subway cars that were
dumped this morning in the Atlantic. TUPELO SEES: GLOWING
through the dark water, THE FADING INITIALS --- "RT"

EXT. BERGEN STREET - NIGHT

Rescued, disoriented passengers see the street signs:

PASSENGERS

What's going on!!!? --- We just
left Bergen Street!!!

COPS, EMS, FIREMEN arrive, and there's ---

SOLJAK - with Tinkerbell and Jamal. Tinkerbell hugs Tupelo,
Jamal punching his arm.

JAMAL

Mister Unreal. You did it.

SOLJAK

This your wife? Hello Renee. So
Tupelo, you brought back my train!

TUPELO

Yeah, it's back, but we need to cut
the tracks somewhere - now! - break
the loop before it happens again.

SOLJAK

We had to wait until you got back,
right? Now that you're back ---

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL UNDER CONSTRUCTION - NIGHT

Same tunnel where the shuttle tracks were first connected. A
SHOWER OF SPARKS as a WELDER begins to dis-connect the steel
rails. The contractor moans to Terrell:

CONTRACTOR

I don't get you people. The morn-
ing he's barking at me to finish
the job now he's barking at me
to take it apart!?

TERRELL

He gives the orders. Not me.

INT. MAYOR'S SPECIAL SHUTTLE TRAIN - NIGHT

Stalled at Coney Island, lights off, dignitaries howling,
and Michelle Murphy screaming into her cell phone:

MICHELLE MURPHY

I don't care what he said! I give
the orders: Turn on the power for
this train! Do it!

EXT. CONEY ISLAND/STILLWELL AVENUE TOWER - NIGHT

A hand moves a switch, overrides the main circuit and a half-

mile away the mayor's special shuttle train lights up and starts moving.

INT. THE SUBWAY TUNNEL UNDER CONSTRUCTION - NIGHT

A final blast of SPARKS. A section of shuttle tracks is separated. The Moebius Knot is cut.

EXT. BERGEN STREET - NIGHT

SIRENS, CHAOS, CROWDS. Renee takes Tinkerbell's bandaged hands.

RENEE

I was worried for you.

TINKERBELL

And I was worried about you.

Tupelo first now sees that Tinkerbell and Jamal are with Soljak - the cops want them, but one look from Soljak and the cops keep their distance. Soljak, impressed by Tinkerbell, to Tupelo:

SOLJAK

Kid knows more about the subway than I do. Where'd you find her? And this other one - asks me to name a vegetable. I say "cabbage" and he says "fuck you." What's that about?

Tupelo shrugs, innocent - goes to Renee and Tinkerbell who are looking down into the flooding subway.

TUPELO

No one's going to believe this.

TINKERBELL

Except us.

RENEE

And me.

SOLJAK

And you're all gonna keep quiet about it. It was a water main that busted, train got diverted, and now it's here. End of story.

JAMAL

Who's gonna believe that?

SOLJAK

Okay then, I'll say a train got
lost in the 4th dimension.

TUPELO

Maybe we'd better stick with "the
busted water main" version. But you
did cut the line somewhere, right?

SOLJAK

Yes, Master. The knot's broken.
Take your wife and go home. I'll
keep an eye on these two.

Tupelo and Renee hug the kids goodbye.

RENEE

Call me.

TUPELO

Stay out of trouble.

JAMAL

You stay out of trouble. You're
the crazy one.

(to Soljak)

Let's try it again - what's 2+2?

Soljak motions to Renee and Tupelo: go.

ANGLE ON - TERRELL - ON THE STREET, IN THE CROWD

Pushing through rescue workers, cops, reporters. Finally he
finds Soljak. Soljak raises a hand: stop.

SOLJAK

No Terrell. Please. Every time you
open your mouth it's bad news. So
please ---

(with Tinkerbell and Jamal)

I made some new friends. Bother
someone else. Call Michelle. I'm
retired, effective now. I'm done
here. I'm leaving. I quit.

TERRELL

(needs to speak)

Chief, the special train, with
Michelle and everyone and the mayor
- someone musta turned the power
back on before we broke the link,
but - now that train's missing!

Soljak growls. Soljak can't leave. He's part of the loop.

EXT. ON THE STREET - TWO BLOCKS AWAY - NIGHT

Beyond the crowd. Tupelo and Renee walking. City lights and stars above sparkling.

RENEE

Let's start our life together
all over. That okay?

It's all Tupelo has ever wanted to hear ---

TUPELO'S VOICE

That's okay with me.

--- life as an unending Moebius Strip. Tupelo and Renee, arms around each other, draw closer together - like interlocking spirals - and as they rejoin the world that we can see ---

TUPELO TAKES OFF HIS GLASSES (the opposite of how our story began), and THROUGH HIS EYES THE SCREEN BECOMES:

A SWIRL OF STRANGE IMAGES

AS IF WE'RE IN THE VORTEX OF AN EXPLODING QUASAR IN DEEP SPACE

SPLASHES OF BEAUTIFUL SHAPES AND BREATHTAKING COLORS

OVERLAPPING AND FOLDING INTO EACH OTHER---

--- a vision of how light and reality might really be.

Then, amidst the sounds of the city, we hear ---

- Tupelo! -

--- and at the faint GROWL and SCREECH of a subway train somewhere beneath the city streets, we ---

FADE OUT TO:

THE END