

WORST CASE SCENARIO

Written by

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WGA REGISTERED

FADE IN:

INT. TORTURE ROOM. THE DAY BEFORE INDEPENDENCE DAY.

A shadow of a man - filthy, naked, and shivering - cowers in a dark corner.

When the overhead fluorescents FLICKER to life, his eyes dart in their sockets like cockroaches scurrying for cover.

J.T. (V.O.)
"In war, truth is the first casualty."

The heavy manacles that shackle his hands CREAK in protest, as he brings his fingers to his mouth and sucks on them for comfort.

J.T. (V.O.)
My name is Joseph Turner and I am
the most dangerous man alive.

HEAVY FOOTSTEPS in the hall draw near, like thunder before a storm.

J.T. (V.O.)
At least that's what the President
of the United States called me.

A steel door is thrown open, and the prisoner raises up clenched fists to shield the flood of light.

The fingernails on his battered right hand have been torn out - most likely by a set of needle-nose pliers.

Two hooded MEN enter and slip on thick rubber gloves.

They grab their captive and drag him toward an industrial steel tub, set in the center of the room.

He tries to fight, but his body is broken.

The two men lift him into the empty basin, and hold him there, while a third uses a hose to add a few inches of water.

J.T. (V.O.)
A much smarter man...I think it was
Oscar Wilde, said "All great ideas
are dangerous."

The third man tosses the hose aside and picks up two electrodes, which snake out from a small generator.

When he touches them together, the sparks fly and the lights flicker.

J.T. (V.O.)
That was my crime.
(beat)
A great idea.

He looks at J.T. one last time, but the prisoner remains silent.

He nods to the other two, and they tighten their hold.

J.T. (V.O.)
These guys? They're the good guys.

The third man completes the circuit and drops the wire into the shallow water.

A small puff of smoke comes out of the tortured man's nostrils, followed by snot and blood, before the lights go out.

He chokes out a horrible SCREAM from the darkness.

INT. HOLLYWOOD STUDIO CONFERENCE ROOM. THREE WEEKS EARLIER.

A PRODUCER opens the blinds, letting in the light.

J.T. looks much better than when we first saw him.

At first glance, his casual dress presents the image of mere disheveled good looks. A second, more careful examination digs deeper and finds a sometimes scattered, but always intense energy in his dark eyes.

PRODUCER #1
J.T., I think I'm speaking for
everyone in this room when I say...

INT. A SECOND CONFERENCE ROOM. A FEW HOURS LATER.

The room is nearly identical - only the movie posters are different.

PRODUCER #2
...that we're big fans of your
writing. We hear you have a...

INT. A THIRD CONFERENCE ROOM. A FEW HOURS LATER.

PRODUCER #3
...movie for us. We're always looking
for...

INT. A FOURTH CONFERENCE ROOM. A FEW HOURS LATER.

PRODUCER #4
...the next big thing.
(beat)
Tell us your story.

J.T. starts talking.

EXT. LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. THE NEXT DAY.

A plane ROARS out of the smog and hits the runway.

INT. LAX. THAT MOMENT.

TRAVELERS wait on long lines to pass through heightened security.

Eager to get where they are going on this hot summer day, they GRIPE quietly to one another, as Transportation Security Administration GUARDS search and scan bags.

Two SOLDIERS stand by, their rifles held high and ready.

POP! POP!

The soldiers instinctively tighten their grips on their weapons and turn toward the sound.

J.T. jumps up from his seat.

A burst red balloon rests there; his weight the cause of its demise.

A LITTLE GIRL glares daggers at J.T, who is on hold on his cell.

J.T.
Sorry.

She gently picks up the useless latex, as if she were cradling a loved one.

He moves a safe distance away from his new enemy, and his party comes back on.

AGENT (O.S.)
J.T., you still there?

J.T.
Barely.

AGENT (O.S.)
Look, like I was saying, everyone's
afraid some psycho fuck will blow
something up and then their movie
will be blown up. It's not you,
it's the subject matter. They all
like the writing.

J.T.
So what do I do now?

AGENT (O.S.)
Now you write something else.

INTERCOM
Flight 715 final boarding for New
York.

AGENT (O.S.)
Let's talk next week. I gotta take
this call.

J.T. hangs up, then heads toward the gate and hands the
ATTENDANT his boarding pass.

ATTENDANT
Mister Turner. Could you step aside
please?

J.T.
Sure.

A dour looking T.S.A. GUARD scans him with a wand.

T.S.A. GUARD
Your shoes, sir.

He slips them off and she inspects them.

T.S.A. SUPERVISOR (O.S.)
Mister Turner?

J.T. turns to see a big man with a commanding voice.

T.S.A. SUPERVISOR
Mister Joseph Edgar Turner?

J.T.

That's me.

He hands over his driver's license, as the Flight Attendant closes the gate.

J.T.

My flight...

T.S.A. SUPERVISOR

Sir. I regret to inform you that your name has appeared on our no-fly list. You will not be getting on that plane.

J.T.

(Smiles)

You're kidding, right? I just flew on this airline less than a week ago.

T.S.A. SUPERVISOR

You'll have to arrange some other form of transportation. Amtrak or Greyhound-

J.T.

I don't have two weeks to take a bus to New York.

T.S.A. SUPERVISOR

I'm sure it won't take two weeks, Sir.

J.T.

This is utterly ridiculous. You must have me mixed up with some other Joseph Turner. Who do I talk to? Where's your supervisor?

T.S.A. SUPERVISOR

I'm in charge of security for this airport. Unfortunately, we cannot allow you to fly. You have every right to petition the Transportation Security Administration to have your name removed from that list. If you accompany me to my office, I'll see that you have the proper forms.

J.T. moves toward the gate.

J.T.
I paid for my ticket. I'm getting
on that plane.

Four armed T.S.A. GUARDS step into his path.

J.T.
Fine.

He starts off.

T.S.A. GUARD
Sir. Your shoes.

She hands them to J.T., who does his best to put them on as
he storms away.

INT. LAX. LATER THAT NIGHT.

An irritated J.T. slumps down in a chair in the near deserted
terminal.

He pages through a stack of T.S.A. forms - then angrily tosses
them into the trash.

J.T. pulls out a small voice recorder - and PLAYS back some
of his story ideas...

J.T.'S VOICE
...medical student...works nights in
a morgue...uncovers a plot to use
biological weapons for
assassination...
(Fast forwards)
...political science grad student
stumbles onto a spy ring set on
Embassy Row...
(Fast forwards)
...grandson of a Nazi hunter teams
up with grandson of a Nazi to search
for-

Thoroughly frustrated, he stops the device - cutting himself
off.

INT. AIRPORT BATHROOM. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

A black, nondescript suitcase is set against the wall outside
the last stall. Inside, its owner happily WHISTLES an off-
key tune.

J.T. enters, goes to the sink, and SPLASHES water on his tired face.

The toilet FLUSHES, and a MAN in a grey suit steps out of the stall. As he washes his hands in the sink next to J.T., he looks up and LAUGHS nervously.

J.T. forces a smile, and the man exits.

After a few moments, J.T. notices that the man's case has been left behind.

J.T.
You forgot...

J.T. goes to pick it up, but suspicion freezes him, so he steps back from it.

He bumps into the man, who has returned.

GREY-SUIT #1
(another nervous laugh)
I forgot my bag.

J.T. bends down to hand him the case, as the man continues to TITTER.

J.T.
What's so funny?

Before the man can answer, J.T. looks in the mirror and sees a second GREY-SUITED MAN standing behind him.

He throws a black hood over J.T.'s head and presses the damp cloth over his mouth and nose.

He fights to get free, but before long the drug overcomes him.

The sound of the first Grey-Suited Man's sick LAUGHTER fades, as J.T. loses consciousness.

INT. PRISON CELL. SOME TIME LATER.

In the cell across the hall, a YOUNG ARAB pukes into a filthy, open toilet.

J.T. wakes to the sound of his RETCHING. He finds himself on the floor of a cell of his own. He uses the bars to get to his feet and tries to shake off his hangover.

The Young Arab, his stomach finally empty, looks up from the toilet and at J.T. The Arab's face is covered with fresh bruises and scrapes.

J.T.
Where are we? Guantanamo Bay?

YOUNG ARAB
Min taht sharmoota...

He LAUGHS hysterically.

J.T.
Sure. Everyone gets the joke but me.

He turns to survey his cell, then suddenly feels woozy.

His fellow prisoner HOWLS with laughter, as J.T. drops to the cold stone floor, and loses consciousness.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. comes to in a chair - his hands and feet bound by straps.

As his vision comes into focus, the first thing he sees is a faded quote etched on the wall in front of him:

THE TREE OF LIBERTY MUST BE REFRESHED FROM TIME TO TIME WITH
THE BLOOD OF PATRIOTS AND TYRANTS - JEFFERSON

He turns his head and finds Hamilton (Grey Suit #1) at a table, furiously writing.

J.T.
Who are you? What do you want?
(beat)
Hello?

Hamilton finishes up and closes a file, as Burr (Grey Suit #2) enters.

BURR
Sorry. Let's continue.

J.T.
Who are you people? What is this about?

Burr sits across from J.T. and gets comfortable.

HAMILTON

(opens a file)

Exhibit K. A record of the internet history taken from the subject's home computer which indicates he has been spending large amounts of time on several sites on DHS watchlists.

J.T.

My computer. How-?

HAMILTON

Sites sponsored by Hamas, Al Qaeda, Hezbollah, the IRA, the KKK.

J.T.

I was doing research.

HAMILTON

Exhibit L and M. Receipts for book purchases and library circulation records indicating an interest in biological and chemical weapons design and delivery.

J.T.

That doesn't prove-

Hamilton sets down J.T.'s recorder.

HAMILTON

Exhibit N. A recording device with the subject's voice detailing a plot to use biological weapons for assassination.

J.T.

This is crazy. That's just a story idea!

Hamilton holds up a document - as Burr takes off his jacket and starts to roll up his sleeves, like a man about to do some dirty work.

HAMILTON

Exhibit O. A manifesto entitled "The Terrorist".

J.T.

Manifesto? I'm not saying anything until you tell me who you are and what I'm doing here.

Burr unrolls a cloth to reveal an assortment of sharp tools which glisten in the dull light - and gets J.T. talking.

J.T.

It's a treatment. For a movie. An idea for a political thriller. I'm a writer. I was just out in Hollywood.

HAMILTON

This document details a plan to use poison gas in a float at the Thanksgiving Day parade in New York City.

J.T.

It's a story.

HAMILTON

(Reads)

Exhibit O, Excerpt 1: "They will remember this day of blood."

J.T.

It's just dialogue. He's the villain.

HAMILTON

Exhibit O. Excerpt 2: "I will slaughter Americans like turkeys."

J.T.

That might be a bit over the top. It's a first draft.

Burr runs his hands over the tools until he decides on the needle-nose pliers.

J.T.

What the hell is that for?

GREY SUIT #3 sticks his head in.

GREY SUIT #3

I need the room. I have that Yemeni.

J.T.

I thought you guys weren't allowed to torture anymore...

BURR

We won't tell if you don't tell.

HAMILTON
Give us five minutes.

GREY SUIT #3
My guy's ready. He hasn't slept for
four days.
(With a look at J.T.)
I won't be long.

INT. J.T.'S CELL. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

As Burr locks J.T. in, Hamilton shoves a file into his chest.

J.T.
What's this?

BURR
Your confession. If you're smart,
you'll sign it.

J.T.
I told you. I'm just a writer.

BURR
Well, Hollywood, then you should
have no problem coming up with a
better story.
(Hamilton snickers)
See you soon.

INT. J.T.'S CELL. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. sits in the corner and tries to make some sense of his
nightmare.

The lights suddenly flicker. A distant but still
bloodcurdling SCREAM echoes from down the hall.

He looks across to see that the Young Arab is gone.

Newly motivated, J.T. pulls the pen from the file that holds
his "confession". He goes to the cell door, slips it into
the lock, and starts to pick it.

It SNAPS off and spatters ink all over his hands.

J.T.
Mightier than the sword, my ass.

He wipes the mess on his sweatshirt.

A hint of a smile curls the corners of his mouth, as he gets an idea.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE J.T.'S CELL. MINUTES LATER.

The lock releases and J.T. steps into the hall.

Sweat dampens the back of his tee shirt, as he moves away from his cage and through the hot underground maze.

He comes to a T-intersection and pauses. He looks down the corridors, but they both trail off into darkness.

From his left, he hears the ECHO of Hamilton's LAUGHTER.

J.T. hastens to his right. At first, he moves slowly and quietly, but before long he is running full speed through the labyrinth.

The dim overhead lights cast his panicked shadow on the wall, as he flees. He turns a corner, and barely screeches to a halt before running into a dead end.

J.T.

Beautiful.

He heads back the way he came.

When he gets to the fork, the voices and laughter are gone.

J.T. moves down the left hallway. As he comes around a bend, he bumps into Hamilton.

HAMILTON

Well, hello there.

J.T. hits him in the mouth and runs.

INT. CORRIDOR. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. finds himself at another intersection.

FOOTFALLS from behind draw closer. Strangely familiar MUSIC from the right drifts toward him.

A muffled Star-Spangled Banner.

INT. RIGHT CORRIDOR. MOMENTS LATER.

The anthem grows louder and stronger, as the corridor begins to grow narrower and shorter.

J.T. looks up at the low ceiling just barely above his head, where a piece of canvas hangs. He tears it away and has to squint into the bright sunlight.

A metal grate offers escape. He pushes it up, looks out, and cannot believe what he sees.

A MARCHING BAND is the source of the music. American flags are everywhere. Crowds of TOURISTS queue up to get a closer look at the landmark on the other side of the island.

The Statue of Liberty.

J.T. tries to push the grate up further, but no matter how hard he strains the rusted hinges will not allow it to open more than a few inches.

Four POLICEMEN stand a fair distance away, eating hot dogs. J.T. starts to call out, but realizes that his cries will be lost in the music.

He lets the grate slip and moves further down the tunnel, closer to where the cops stand. He finds another opening and tears away the canvas.

He puts his shoulder to the grate and it CRIES out in protest.

J.T.
Hey! Hey! Over here!

The policemen do not hear him.

J.T.
Hey!

The HOT DOG MAN turns toward his voice.

J.T.
Hey hot dog! Over here.

The Hot Dog Man looks around, then comes over with his cart.

HOT DOG MAN
Hello there.

J.T.
Get those cops! Please...someone's got me locked up down here. Help me move this grate!

The Hot Dog Man puts his hands on the metal, but instead of pulling up, starts pushing down.

J.T.
What are you-?

HOT DOG MAN
Sorry, Mister Turner.

He steps on J.T.'s fingers and puts his boots down on the grate.

Back inside the corridor, Burr now stands behind J.T.

He ZAPS the writer with a taser, and J.T. goes out.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

An unconscious J.T. is strapped back into his chair.

Hamilton lightly pats him on the cheek, as Burr enters.

BURR
You're going to have to hit him
harder.

Hamilton CRACKS J.T. across the face - winces, then GIGGLES nervously.

BURR
That's better.

HAMILTON
Where were you?

J.T. starts to come out of it.

BURR
Helping with the Yemeni.

HAMILTON
You have some on your shoes.

Burr takes out a handkerchief and rubs what appears to be blood from his wingtips, as J.T. spits the bad taste out of his mouth.

HAMILTON
Here we go.

WASHINGTON, the grey suit in charge, enters.

HAMILTON
Mister Turner?

J.T.

Yeah?

J.T. spits again - then Hamilton offers him a tin of Altoids.

HAMILTON

Mint? Those tasers leave that metallic taste.

The writer shakes his head and pulls on his restraints.

WASHINGTON

Mister Turner? Are you with us?

J.T.

What do you want?

Washington throws down the zipper from J.T.'s sweatshirt.

WASHINGTON

You used this to pick the lock on your cell. How?

J.T.

I told you. I'm a writer. I wrote a script on Houdini. Also pitched a prison break movie. Did a lot of research on locks.

WASHINGTON

I told you this was our man. That's exactly the kind of thinking we're looking for.

J.T.

Who are you guys?

WASHINGTON

This is Mister Hamilton and Mister Burr.

J.T.

If my fourth grade history serves me, aren't you two assholes supposed to shoot each other?

WASHINGTON

I'm Mister Washington.

J.T.

I can't believe you guys started the revolution without me. Can I be Jefferson or Franklin...or are those already taken?

WASHINGTON

Mister Turner, this is a serious matter. You are currently in the custody of the Federal Government of the United States of America.

(beat)

You are being held as an unlawful enemy combatant, under the Patriot Act. Under Sec 811 of that same code, attempts or conspiracies to commit terrorist acts are to be treated the same as the acts themselves.

J.T.

What acts? What conspiracy? You can't just grab me in an airport bathroom and tie me to a chair. I want to see a lawyer.

Hamilton TITTERS.

WASHINGTON

This is a war. You have no rights. We will do whatever is necessary to protect the American people.

J.T.

I'm one of those people you're supposed to be protecting!

HAMILTON

Are you?

J.T.

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

WASHINGTON

Like our former President so eloquently stated, "You're either with us, or with the terrorists."

(beat)

"Min taht sharmoota." That's what the Yemeni said to you when you asked him where you were.

J.T.
I don't speak Arabic.

BURR
We do. It means "under the whore".

WASHINGTON
That's what these people think.
That liberty is a whore. That it's
dirty. That our way of life is
unholy. And they're willing to die
trying to destroy it.

J.T.
So what do you want with me? You
know I'm not a terrorist.

Washington looks at J.T. for a long moment - then nods to
Burr, who goes to the writer and uncuffs him.

WASHINGTON
You're, of course, familiar with the
9/11 Commission's report. The
Commission faulted the intelligence
community's lack of imagination in
foreseeing the attacks.

J.T. looks at the three grey-suited men.

J.T.
Might want to start with your
wardrobe.

WASHINGTON
I'm in charge of the Aeschylus
Project.

J.T.
Aeschylus. The Greek playwright?

WASHINGTON
The father of modern drama. We're
assembling a team of creatives to
imagine terrorist plots in order to
help prevent them.

J.T.
Are you C.I.A.? Homeland Security?

WASHINGTON
The less you know about us the better.
(MORE)

WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

We're offering you an opportunity. You will be paid ten thousand dollars a week for thirty hours work. A bit more than you're used to making.

(beat)

We have connections that can help our friends and hurt our enemies.

J.T.

That sounds like a threat.

WASHINGTON

Let's just say that you're a friend. We will pay you handsomely to exercise your creative muscles in the service of your country. We also have relationships with several parties in Hollywood. That is how your treatment fell into our hands. We could help introduce you to the right people to help get your movie made.

J.T.

And if I decide to pass?

WASHINGTON

Then we would have to consider you an enemy.

(Pulls out a file)

I'm looking at your tax returns for the past five years. You're currently employed as a temp for the Marathon Agency in Greenwich Village. Last year you claimed eleven thousand dollars in wages. And deducted eight thousand dollars in expenses.

J.T.

I told you I'm a writer. I-

HAMILTON

Eight thousand dollars - that's a lot of paper clips and printer cartridges.

WASHINGTON

And eleven thousand dollars would barely cover your rent. I think our friends at the Internal Revenue Service would be interested in examining your returns.

J.T. gets up.

J.T.

I'll take my chances with the I.R.S. When people find out that you're torturing U.S. citizens under the Statue of Liberty, I'll be the least of your worries.

WASHINGTON

I would hope, as a writer, you would have an appreciation for the dramatic. I realize our screening process is a bit extreme, but it was necessary to determine your loyalty to the United States.

J.T.

I think my answer is fuck you and no thank you. It's still a free country, right?

BURR

We're trying to keep it that way.

J.T.

What did you do with my stuff?

WASHINGTON

You'll find your property in your apartment.

(beat)

Your country needs you, Mister Turner. All we ask is that you consider our offer.

Washington hands a ferry ticket to J.T.

J.T.

So now I know the real reason the Statue of Liberty was closed. So you could build a prison down here.

WASHINGTON

This facility is over one hundred years old.

BURR

America used to be a lot more careful about who they let in.

WASHINGTON

We'll contact you in the next forty eight hours. Then we'll know whose side you're on. Mister Burr will see you out.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND. MINUTES LATER.

Burr leads J.T. out a steel door and across a rocky path along the water.

He unlocks a gate on a fence topped with razor wire and hands J.T. his bundled, ink-stained, zipperless hoodie.

BURR

If I were you, I'd keep your little visit to Lady Liberty to yourself. Be smart. Go back to your miserable little existence as if this never happened. We'll be watching you very closely from now on.

J.T. moves through the opening. As he climbs a flight of stone steps, the Statue is there to greet him.

He looks back at the gate and sees the sign:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY - NO ACCESS.

EXT. FERRY. MINUTES LATER.

J.T. stands on the bow of the boat and watches the Statue grow small.

Even though it is mid-summer, he shivers and puts on his sweatshirt.

INT. SUBWAY STATION. MINUTES LATER.

J.T. stands on the deserted platform, and looks down the black tunnel for his train.

The writer catches a MAN at the other end of the platform watching him.

As J.T. considers retreating, a WOMAN joins the man and kisses him passionately.

The writer CHUCKLES at his own paranoia, then stares back down the tracks.

A strong gust of hot air slaps him in the face, as the approaching TRAIN pushes it from the tunnel.

EXT. 125TH STREET. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. emerges from the underground.

The neighborhood in which the writer's life is set is not a very nice one.

INT. J.T.'S BUILDING. MINUTES LATER.

J.T. enters the rundown lobby and goes to the elevator. He pushes and pushes the button, but nothing happens.

J.T.

Of course.

He starts to climb the six flights to his floor.

INT. J.T.'S APARTMENT. MINUTES LATER.

A framed original placard announcing a 1912 New York City Houdini appearance hangs on the back of the door.

J.T. enters the small flat. He uses his keys to turn the deadbolt, locking himself in, and the rest of the world out.

He sees his luggage - tagged SECURITY RISK by the airline - but delivered as promised.

He grabs his backpack, fishes out his cellphone, and dials.

NYPD (O.S.)

Police. 25th Precinct.

But before J.T. can speak, the call is disconnected, so he dials again.

NYPD (O.S.)

Police. 25th Precinct.

Again the call is cut off.

J.T. hangs up and takes apart his phone - looking to see if it's been tampered with - but finds no signs.

He reassembles the phone and dials his voicemail.

Beneath the messages, there is a series of annoying little CLICKS.

Whoever is listening in, wants J.T. to know about it.

EXT. J.T.'S APARTMENT. MINUTES LATER.

J.T. exits, checking the police station's street address on his phone.

He starts in that direction - then suddenly freezes when he sees a car idling at the corner with its lights off.

After a long moment, J.T. loses his nerve and retreats into his building.

INT. J.T.'S APARTMENT. LATER.

J.T. tries another call - doing his best to ignore the underlying STATIC.

PIZZA GUY (O.S.)
Anthony's.

J.T.
Yeah, I'll have a-

PIZZA GUY (O.S.)
Hello? Hello?

J.T.
I'd like a large pie with pepperoni
and onions-

Unable to hear him, they hang up.

He tosses the phone down - and after a moment, picks up his recorder and speaks into it.

J.T.
A struggling writer is coerced by
Federal Agents to imagine terrorist
plots...

INT. A DESK SOMEWHERE IN THE CITY. THAT MOMENT.

J.T.'s words ECHO in the small space...

J.T.'S VOICE
...in order to prevent them.

...as a laptop records what he records and transfers it to an Ipod with an "I LOVE NY" skin.

INT. J.T.'S APARTMENT. THAT MOMENT.

J.T. shuts off the device and shakes his head.

J.T.
No one would believe it.

INT. BEDROOM. LATER.

From across the street, a giant neon sign floods the room with flashes of red light.

The twin mattress is squeezed next to what probably is a desk buried beneath the piles of notes and books. Hitchcock movie posters cover most of the cracked, peeling walls.

A restless J.T. gets out of bed and goes to close the blinds, but they fall down.

He tries in vain to fix them, then throws them in a tangle on the floor.

A soft, annoying TUNE drifts up through the open window.

J.T. looks down and spies a Mister Softee ice cream truck parked directly across the street.

EXT. 125TH STREET. MINUTES LATER.

J.T. approaches the truck and seems to catch MISTER SOFTEE a bit off guard.

J.T.
You tell Washington to-

MISTER SOFTEE
Washington?

J.T.
I know what you're doing.

MISTER SOFTEE
I'm working.

J.T.
At five o'clock in the morning?

MISTER SOFTEE
It's a hot night. People out on the street, they gotta eat too, you know?

A HOOKER taps J.T. on the shoulder.

HOOKER

You buying, handsome? I'll take a
vanilla with cookie crunchies.

MISTER SOFTEE

You got it.

He makes her the cone, and J.T. steps aside. The Hooker sees that J.T. is not going to pay, so she fishes a dollar from her bra, then heads down the street with her ice cream.

MISTER SOFTEE

What's yours?

J.T.

Forget it.

INT. J.T.'S APARTMENT. THE NEXT MORNING.

A sleepless J.T. clings to a huge mug of coffee.

He gulps down the brew, opens his laptop and pecks out: "FADE
IN"

INT. ABANDONED OFFICE BUILDING ACROSS THE STREET. THAT
MOMENT.

Whatever the writer types - keystroke for keystroke - echoes
on a laptop set on a window sill.

INT. J.T.'S BUILDING. THE NEXT MORNING.

On his way out, J.T. stops at his overstuffed mailbox.

As he sorts through what is mostly bills and letters from
creditors, a BESPECTACLED WOMAN enters and opens the box
next to his.

J.T.

I think this is yours. Five F. I'm
Six F.

He hands her an envelope - and she moves toward the elevator
without a word.

J.T.

I think it's broken...

She steps inside and, to J.T.'s dismay, it takes her up.

He turns back to his mail and looks at his bank statement as
if it was bad news.

It is. He is severely overdrawn.

J.T. stuffs the bills back into his box and goes.

INT. DOWNTOWN TRAIN. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. dozes against a faded sign which proclaims: "IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING", asking the public to be alert for suspicious activity.

INT. CONDOR BAR. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

This watering hole is named for the giant stuffed bird of prey which looms over the bar.

Only a few CUSTOMERS have come in for a liquid lunch, washed down with chicken wings and/or potato skins.

J.T. has set up camp at his corner table, tapping away at his laptop.

AMELIA, a striking young woman, comes in and takes her place behind the taps.

DANNY, the bar's owner, crosses with a keg.

J.T.
New talent?

DANNY
First day. See if she works out.

J.T.
She works for me. Actress or model?

DANNY
Actress. I think.
(beat)
You look like shit.

J.T.
Jet lag.

DANNY
L.A.'s a foreign country. Didn't I
tell you don't drink the water?

Danny sees J.T.'s eyes are still on Amelia.

DANNY
She's a little young for you.

J.T.
And out of my league. But she doesn't
know that.

DANNY
Yet.

J.T.
Just have to raise my game.

DANNY
Good luck with that.

INT. CONDOR BAR. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

A distracted J.T. glances up from his work at the new bartender, as GRASSY KNOLL EARL, a daytime regular, has cornered a GYPSY CAB DRIVER.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
Look at multivitamins. U.S.R.D.A.
The United States Recommended Daily
Allowances. What's in 'em?

GYPSY CAB DRIVER
Vitamin A, B...

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
No, no, no. Iron, eighteen
milligrams. Magnesium, a hundred
milligrams. Zinc, fifteen milligrams.

J.T. finally works up the nerve to approach the bar.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL (O.S.)
Copper, two milligrams. Chromium, a
hundred and twenty milligrams.

AMELIA
Hi.

He holds up his coffee mug and she refills it.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL (O.S.)
Manganese, two milligrams. What the
fuck is manganese and why do I need
it in my body?

J.T.
I'm J.T.

AMELIA

Amelia. Danny tells me you're a regular.

J.T.

A regular, yes. Not to be confused with normal.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL

They're all metals. You go to the airport, you go through a metal detector, right? Those "walk-don't walk" lights, they got on every corner? Metal detectors. They can monitor where you are and where you been.

GYPSY CAB DRIVER

So how do you get your vitamins?

Earl takes the celery out of his Bloody Mary.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL

Vegetables, my friend.

AMELIA

Who is that guy?

J.T.

Grassy Knoll Earl. A conspiracy nut. He claims that he was on the grassy knoll in Dallas when J.F.K. was shot.

She slides the sugarbowl toward him.

AMELIA

Crazy city, huh?

J.T.

In New York a little paranoia might be a good thing. You're Scottish?

AMELIA

Impressive. Most people guess British. Can't tell the difference.

J.T.

Big Sean Connery fan. The original, and one and only James Bond.

He retreats back to his table, glances up long enough to catch a lingering look, then goes back to work.

INT. WEST FOURTH STREET STATION. LATER.

J.T. gets off a train.

INT. STATION PASSAGEWAY. MOMENTS LATER.

Like a rat in a maze, he moves down the narrow, deserted corridor.

He hears a DISTANT RUMBLE - and breaks into a sprint to catch his train.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM. MOMENTS LATER.

A hard plastic case sits on a bench unattended.

The train PULLS away from the tracks - just as a breathless J.T. ascends from a staircase onto the platform.

A post-it stuck to the case waves at him in the subway's wake - so the writer goes to it to see what it says:

J. TURNER

As he reaches out for it, a hand falls on his shoulder and he wheels around, ready to fight.

TESS
Easy, killer.

TESS, J.T.'s ex, is an attractive, well put together woman.

J.T.
Tess...

TESS
You're not returning my calls or texts.

J.T.
I'm having problems with my cell.
(beat)
How'd you find me?

TESS
We lived together for a year, remember? You're a bit predictable.
(MORE)

TESS (CONT'D)

You get up, write for an hour, get on the train, go to the bar, write for eight hours, get back on the train.

J.T.

So you were going to just leave this here?

TESS

The same way you just left it at my place. You've promised to come get it a thousand times since we broke up and I'm tired of moving it every time I want to go out on my fire escape. It weighs about a hundred pounds.

J.T.

(Turning on the charm)

Help me lug this back home. We'll get a beer and catch up.

TESS

(Been there, done that)

J.T., you're the smartest guy I know. You should do something. Cure cancer, save the whales, build a better mousetrap.

J.T.

I'm a writer.

TESS

That's your problem. You need to stop writing about life and go out and live it.

She leaves him with his burden.

INT. J.T.'S APARTMENT. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

A weary J.T. enters, sets down the case, and opens it.

He looks at the antique typewriter and runs his hands over the keys.

He reaches to the desk for a sheet of paper to take his old friend for a spin, accidentally knocking a thick folder labelled "TERRORIST RESEARCH" to the floor.

He curses under his breath and gets on his knees to gather the assorted paper ranging from neatly-typed outlines to barely legible notes scribbled on cocktail napkins.

A page torn from a magazine gives him pause - and he studies it for a very long time.

The bold font asks "WHY WE FIGHT" and the image beneath it answers - a graphic color photo of a toddler with both his hands blown off.

INT. ABANDONED OFFICE BUILDING ACROSS THE STREET. THAT MOMENT.

Someone watches J.T.

INT. J.T.'S APARTMENT. THAT MOMENT.

J.T. looks up from the disturbing photo to the stack of his life's work - all unsold and unproduced stories no one thought were worth anything.

He picks up his phone and calls his voicemail, again getting those annoying little CLICKS beneath the prompts.

J.T.
Washington? I'm in.

He hangs up and waits.

INT. J.T.'S APARTMENT. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. answers an urgent KNOCK at the door - and is surprised to see a PIZZA DELIVERY MAN.

J.T.
I didn't order-

PIZZA DELIVERY MAN
Large pie with pepperoni and onions,
right?

J.T. shakes his head, then goes to the dresser.

J.T.
I think I might have some cash...

He looks back to see the Delivery Man is already gone.

INT. J.T.'S APARTMENT. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. finishes his third slice and is reaching for a fourth, when he sees that something has been written on the inside bottom of the box.

1300 REVERE STREET

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET. THE NEXT MORNING.

The writer turns onto Revere Street, where old, seemingly abandoned warehouses line the cobblestone road.

He looks up at the number of the building in front of him.

The bright colored letters above the door read: "BROOKLYN PARTY OUTLET".

INT. BROOKLYN PARTY OUTLET. THAT MOMENT.

BPO is one of those warehouse outlets where anything and everything you might need for a party can be found in large quantities at cut-rate prices.

Products celebrating the Fourth of July, the next upcoming holiday, are featured prominently.

J.T. enters and wanders through the store.

INT. BPO. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. finds himself in the Halloween aisle.

Someone jumps out, a monster mask held to his face.

HAMILTON

Boo!

Hamilton lowers the disguise and tosses in back into a pile.

HAMILTON

You don't scare easily, Mister Turner.
That's good.

J.T.

I thought I was in the wrong place.

HAMILTON

(Clasps J.T.'s shoulder)
No. You're the right man in the
right place at the right time.

Hamilton leads him through a locked door marked "BPO Employees Only".

INT. BACK OF THE STORE. THAT MOMENT.

J.T. follows him down a long, dark hallway.

HAMILTON

We can't very well have a top secret operation in a government building. Everyone would know about it. You'll do your work here...your checks will say "Brooklyn Party Outlet, Inc."

J.T.

So it's a front.

HAMILTON

Oh, more than that. It helps to subsidize our operations. Party goods is big business. We did the Republican National Convention a few years back.

A service elevator opens - and Burr waits - as Hamilton takes a small metal box from a table.

HAMILTON

I'll need your phone and your recorder. You'll get them at the end of your shift.

J.T. deposits his devices.

HAMILTON

And here's where I turn you over to Mister Burr.

INT. SERVICE ELEVATOR. THAT MOMENT.

Burr closes the doors and starts their descent.

He suddenly SLAMS on the brake between floors - then turns to a nervous J.T. with an envelope and a pen.

J.T.

What's this?

BURR

Your contract.

J.T.

Contract?

BURR

It states that BPO, Incorporated will pay you ten thousand dollars a week to develop scenarios. Term is thirteen weeks, with the Company's option to renew for four terms. All work you do is considered work for hire and the property of BPO.

(beat)

You don't have to sign it. Nobody's got a gun to your head.

J.T.

Not today, at least.

J.T. turns back to the thick document.

BURR

There's also a confidentiality clause. You don't tell anyone at BPO your real name or where you live, and you don't discuss your work here with anyone outside BPO. Violation of this clause will result in immediate termination and prosecution under the Patriot Act.

J.T.

I need time to look this over.

BURR

Of course. You have sixty seconds.

Burr puts his hand on the elevator's control lever.

BURR

We can go up, and you can go back to answering phones and stuffing envelopes. Or we can go down, and you can help save innocent lives and jumpstart your poor excuse for a career.

J.T.

I've come this far. I might as well go all the way.

He signs the document and hands it back to Burr, who throws the lever down. The elevator LURCHES, then starts to drop.

BURR
Congratulations and welcome to
Operation Aeschylus. In order to
protect you, you will be given a
code name. Henceforth, you will be
referred to as "Creative 2" or C2"

J.T.
Get serious.

BURR
C2, I am dead serious.

The elevator hits bottom, and Burr unlocks a heavy metal door.

INT. AESCHYLUS WORK AREA. THAT MOMENT.

Burr locks them in and leads him down a nondescript hallway.

J.T.
Who else is here?

BURR
Your job is to provide answers, not
to ask questions.
(beat)
You work in intelligence, you work
in a competitive environment. We're
on a limited budget. You need to
produce, or you're out. Understand?

J.T.
Sure.

Burr stops in front of an unmarked door and opens it with a key.

INT. J.T.'S OFFICE. THAT MOMENT.

They enter the windowless room - more a prison cell than an office.

A computer sits on the desk - which along with the chair is bolted down.

BURR
You can access the internet through
our secure server. You can download,
but not upload. You are not able to
send out files or emails.

J.T.

And if I can't find what I need online?

BURR

Click on the Aeschylus icon. There's a crack research team at your disposal.

(Clicks a file)

You seem to have a good understanding of poison gas dispersal.

J.T.

Sure. I guess.

BURR

We'd like to start you off with this scenario. Plan a poison gas attack using the New York City subway system. Here's the layout, blueprints of the system, current N.Y.P.D. and Transit Police patrol routes, and train schedules.

J.T.

Where do I start?

BURR

Think like a terrorist. Put yourself in his head. Brainstorm through any possible defenses we may have.

J.T.

Do you want the possibilities or what I think is most likely-

BURR

Just work the scenario, Hollywood. You'll figure it out.

(beat)

Lunch will be sent in at one. Today's Tuesday, so it's Chinese. Menus are in the desk drawer. Try to keep it under fifteen bucks. Like I said, we're on a budget.

(beat)

I'll be back at five to escort you out. Good luck.

Burr goes - and J.T. hears the deadbolt click behind him.

J.T.
What if I have to...?

He sees a small screen and peeks behind it.

J.T.
Oh.
(Sits at his desk)
Okay. Think like a terrorist.

INT. J.T.'S OFFICE. SEVERAL HOURS LATER.

J.T. is staring at the blinking cursor on the blank page -
when Burr throws the door open.

BURR
Time.

J.T.
Five more minutes. I'm about to-

BURR
Time.

J.T.
That's not the way I work.

BURR
C2, I have security concerns that
your vivid and gifted imagination
could not even begin to fathom.
When I say "time", it's time. You
can walk, or I can carry you out.

J.T. throws up his hands, scribbles something on a pad, and
starts for the door.

BURR
No notes leave this room.

J.T. tosses the pad on his desk.

INT. BACK OF THE STORE. MOMENTS LATER.

Burr hands J.T. off to Hamilton - who gives J.T. his phone
and voice recorder.

HAMILTON
Good first day?

J.T.
I'm off to a bit of a slow start. I
have some ideas...

HAMILTON
I'm sure you'll do excellent work,
once you've settled in.
(beat)
Oh, I almost forgot to mention, we
had the French Ambassador slip your
little story to Johnny Depp. You
should hear something in a couple of
weeks.

As he unlocks a door for a starstruck J.T., he flashes a
Joker's grin.

HAMILTON
See you tomorrow. Nine A.M.

EXT. BPO. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. comes out of a service entrance.

A red van marked "Brooklyn Party Outlet" pulls up to the
other side of the building.

Two GREY-SUITED MEN step out and unload large white boxes
with American eagles on them.

HOMELESS MAN (O.S.)
Hey my friend. You got a dollar?

J.T. fishes in his pocket and pulls out a twenty.

HOMELESS MAN
You serious?

J.T.
I am, friend.

HOMELESS MAN
Thanks!

He hurries away - and when J.T. turns back, the van is gone.

INT. SUBWAY STATION. MINUTES LATER.

J.T. stands on the platform, considering the possibilities.

J.T.
 Johnny Depp.
 (Chuckles to himself)
 Okay.

When the writer boards his train, he does not notice an ARAB MAN, who discreetly follows.

INT. CONDOR BAR. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Amelia pours J.T. a draft.

AMELIA
 Is that smile for me?

J.T.
 Everyone gets one. It's a good day.

AMELIA
 It's my birthday.

J.T.
 Well, happy birthday.

J.T. catches Earl staring at him.

J.T.
 Earl.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
 You staying out of trouble?

J.T.
 Nothing I can't handle.

Earl keeps a suspicious eye on J.T., as he drinks his beer.

EXT. 125TH STREET. LATER.

Heat rises off the streets in a wave, as J.T. comes out of the subway station.

The Mister Softee truck has a long line of people waiting to buy late-night ice cream.

INT. J.T.'S APARTMENT. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T., stripped to his boxers and dripping with sweat, works on a chocolate cone.

Praying for a breeze that will not come, he stands in front of the open window and looks out at the neon sign.

EXT. BENEATH THE NEON SIGN ACROSS THE STREET. THAT MOMENT.

Someone still watches the writer through binoculars.

INT. J.T.'S OFFICE. TWO WEEKS LATER.

J.T. paces back and forth, his wheels turning.

J.T.

If the subways are the arteries of
New York, then Grand Central Station
is the heart.

He locates the point on the subway blueprints and traces a series of tunnels outward through the city's underbelly.

J.T.

Maybe...

His train of thought is broken by the sound of water DRIPPING.

He steps behind the screen and looks for the source of his distraction - tracing the noise to a pipe beneath the sink.

As J.T. turns a valve there, he accidentally bumps loose the large washer where the pipe disappears into the wall.

When J.T. leans down to try to reset it - a faint yet familiar sound greets him.

Someone TYPING.

There is a small, dime-sized hole in the wall between offices.

Unable to control his curiosity, J.T. looks over his shoulder, then speaks in a hushed voice.

J.T.

Hello?

The TYPING abruptly stops - and after a moment, there is the sound of someone coming over.

His shadow falls over the hole.

J.T.

I didn't know they had anyone else
working here. Are you C1? I'm Joseph
Turner-

C1

I don't want to know your name, pal.

J.T.
I know we're not supposed to talk-

C1
Then why are you talking?

J.T.
I...

He trails off, as he sees that C1 has pushed something in front of his side of the hole - and the TYPING - now more muffled - starts again.

J.T., too, goes back to work.

INT. J.T.'S OFFICE. LATER.

J.T. finds what he is looking for.

J.T.
Z Junction.

He pours over the Grand Central blueprints.

J.T.
That's the where. Now the how...

INT. J.T.'S OFFICE. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Grey Suit #3 enters to find J.T. POUNDING away at the keys.

GREY SUIT #3
Quitting time.

J.T.
Where's Burr?

GREY SUIT #3
He's busy. What do ya got?

J.T. considers him.

J.T.
It can keep.

INT. CONDOR BAR. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

The bar is BUZZING, but J.T. is in his own world - his beer untouched, random thoughts scribbled down on cocktail napkins.

INT. CONDOR BAR MEN'S ROOM. LATER.

As J.T. finishes up at the sink, a woman's voice cuts through the open window.

AMELIA (O.S.)
Get your goddamn hands off of me!

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE CONDOR BAR. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. comes out the back and sees Amelia pulling away from a THICK-NECKED man her age, who has a less than friendly hold on her wrist.

J.T.
Hey. Asshole.

The pair turns to him.

THICK NECK
Mind your own business, buddy.

J.T. holds his ground during their stare-off, and Amelia drifts toward the writer.

THICK NECK
Fine. Bitch.

He SLAMS his hand into a dumpster, gives J.T. one last look, then sulks off.

A relieved J.T. turns to receive Amelia's gratitude, but the girl has already retreated back into the bar.

J.T.
You're welcome.

INT. SUBWAY STATION. LATER.

The writer waits on the deserted platform.

As his train comes, someone suddenly steps up from behind to grab J.T. and rush him toward the tracks.

At the last second, J.T.'s assailant removes him from harm's way.

J.T. turns to see Burr.

J.T.
That's not funny.

BURR
Maybe I wasn't joking.

He leads J.T. onto the train.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN. THAT MOMENT.

Burr sits across from a furious J.T. The lights in the empty car FLICKER on and off, as they ride.

BURR
You need to be more careful, C2.
You're a valuable asset. These people
we're dealing with, if they knew you
were working for us, they'd put you
under a train.

The lights flash out, then back on.

BURR
I hear you've been looking for me.

J.T.
I'm sorry I found you.

BURR
I'm still waiting for your subway
attack scenario.

J.T.
I'm close on something.

BURR
Then let's have it.

J.T.
I'm not ready to show it just yet.
It's still too rough.

BURR
You've had over two weeks. We expect
results.

J.T.
I'm not used to working this way.
Locked up like a rat in a cage.
I've been blocked.

BURR
Then get unblocked.

J.T.
That's not the way it works.

BURR
We've paid you twenty thousand
dollars, Hollywood. If money doesn't
motivate you, we can find other ways.

Again a long moment of blackness, then light.

J.T.
What is that supposed to mean?

BURR
You're the writer. Read between the
lines.

A final black, then light, and Burr is gone.

J.T. looks out the window and sees his stop go by in a blur.
He looks up at the digital display, which reads: EXPRESS -
NEXT STOP - GRAND CENTRAL.

J.T.
Wonderful.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM. GRAND CENTRAL STATION. A SHORT WHILE
LATER.

J.T. waits alone for an uptown train, trying to put the pieces
of his idea together.

A SUSPICIOUS CHARACTER comes down the stairs and passes, a
bit too close.

J.T. moves as far away from the platform's edge as he can.

SUSPICIOUS CHARACTER
Is there a problem?

J.T.
Sorry.

They don't take their eyes off each other, as Suspicious
moves to the other end of the platform.

Suspicious takes one last look around, then reaches into his
jacket and pulls out...

...a Quarter Pounder with Cheese.

He looks directly at the writer, as he lets the wrapper float from his hand down onto the tracks.

J.T. gives the litterbug a dirty look, but the man has now turned his full attention to eating the messy burger.

The thin paper wrapper RUSTLES, and then suddenly takes flight along the track.

J.T. looks to see the oncoming TRAIN, which has pushed all of the air out of the tunnel in front of it in a quick and sudden gust.

The Suspicious Character gets on the train, but the writer stays behind on the platform, inspired.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. looks up at the famous brass clock in the middle of the Main Concourse.

The writer cases the station as if he were a terrorist.

INT. TRACK 44. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. comes down the stairs, stands on the platform, and looks into the tunnel's mouth.

He can just make out the door that he is looking for.

"TO Z JUNCTION"

He turns back to the platform and spies a flyer that has been taped to a pole:

"100,000 MESSAGES OF PEACE, HOPE, AND LOVE - EAST RIVER FIREWORKS, JULY FOURTH"

J.T. RIPS it down, then inches along the platform's edge and into the tunnel.

He opens the door and slips inside.

INT. Z JUNCTION. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

A small dot of light approaches.

J.T. arrives at the junction, a pen light in his hand. Six different tunnels branch off from where he stands.

He waits, until a distant RUMBLE causes him to step off the tracks. He shreds the flyer into small pieces.

After the train ROARS through the junction, J.T. steps into its wake and tosses a handful of paper into the air.

The scraps FLUTTER into six tunnels in six different directions.

INT. TRACK 44. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. makes his way back to the platform - and quickly pulls out his recorder.

J.T.

When a train moves through a subway tunnel, it displaces an equal volume of air.

(beat)

If someone were to use a gas-

J.T. shuts off his device - as a burly COP approaches.

COP

Hey! What were you doing back there?

J.T.

Just looking around. I'm a writer. I'm working on a subway scene.

COP

No kidding? For TV? A movie? Put me in it.

J.T.

It's not-

COP

Come on. I'd be good in it. My second cousin was in a Clint Eastwood movie.

J.T.

I'm just the writer.

With the dream of a career change shattered, the Cop's tough attitude returns.

COP

Well, you can't just go wherever the hell you want down here.

J.T.

Sorry.

The Cop keeps an eye on J.T. - who hustles away.

INT. J.T.'S OFFICE. THE NEXT DAY.

J.T. types furiously.

He leans back, takes a look at his work, then clicks on the Aeschylus icon - sending the message:

"AWAITING RESEARCH ON Z JUNCTION, GRAND CENTRAL."

A long moment, then a response.

"NO DATA."

J.T. starts to type something, but is interrupted.

"SERVER SYSTEM SHUTDOWN FOR SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE. SORRY FOR THE INCONVENIENCE"

J.T.
What the hell?

J.T. goes to the door and BANGS on it - but no one comes.

He tries the knob, but already knows he is locked in.

The writer goes behind the screen into the bathroom and considers conferring with his coworker on the other side of the wall - then thinks better of it.

He plops back into his chair - and almost falls out of it when he sees Washington staring back at him through the computer screen - like the Great and Powerful Oz.

WASHINGTON
C2.

J.T. starts to sweat a little - expecting an accusation.

WASHINGTON
You've done some nice analysis on this subway attack scenario.

J.T.
You read my work?

WASHINGTON
We of course have access and monitor everything on your workstation. So yes.

J.T.

It's really so simple, it's scary.

(beat)

There's this point in the tunnels.
Z Junction. Release a chemical agent
there and a single passing train
could deliver it into six major
tunnels leading across the city.

WASHINGTON

We know about Z Junction.

J.T.

You know about it.

WASHINGTON

We have it covered.

J.T.

I just walked in there last night.
Through an unlocked door. There's
no security. It didn't seem
"covered".

WASHINGTON

Security is not your concern. Let
us worry about that.

J.T.

I should have a few alternative-

WASHINGTON

Forget about Z Junction. We're moving
you onto something hotter.

His image retreats to a corner of a screen and other files
open - displaying maps and data.

WASHINGTON

We've picked up some chatter regarding
unsecured plutonium. It's being
moved on the black market from these
three points in the former Soviet
Union. Devise a scenario to get
this material into the United States,
through or around Customs. This is
our top priority.

J.T.

You're the boss.

INT. BACK OF THE STORE. END OF THE DAY.

Burr hands J.T. off to Hamilton, who walks him out.

J.T.

I'm stopping in the store to get a birthday card? Any employee discount?

HAMILTON

You can afford to pay retail. Depp likes your treatment...has some notes. After the Fourth, they'll set something up.

J.T.

Yeah?

HAMILTON

You should know by now, it's who you know.

He unlocks the door and releases the writer.

INT. BPO. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. looks over the belated birthday cards for Amelia - and finds them all lacking.

J.T.

Someone actually got paid to write-

A bloodcurdling SCREAM from the back cuts him off.

INT. BPO STORAGE AREA. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. follows the SOUND to the wedged open door and sticks his head in.

The cry falls SILENT.

J.T.

Hello?

J.T. wanders around in the dimly lit storeroom - where party goods somehow take on a sinister air.

He turns a corner and almost steps in a trail of blood.

He comes to a pool of it - and almost jumps when a voice barks at him from the dark.

BLONDE BPO GIRL
Who the hell are you?!

A small BLONDE with a big attitude closes in on him.

BLONDE BPO GIRL
Don't move. And don't touch anything!
(beat)
That vampire blood gets all over.
My boss is gonna kill me.

J.T. sees the label on the case of fake plasma that she dropped, as the Blonde goes off to find something to clean up the mess.

The writer laughs - then sees that he has blood on his hands.

As he looks around for something to wipe away the gore, his eyes fall on the large white boxes he saw being taken off a truck earlier.

J.T.
Why would Washington's men in grey
be unloading stock?

He considers the bird of prey logos on the side of the cartons, then wipes his hands on his pants and carefully opens one.

He reaches in and pulls something out - a single, red balloon.

The box is filled with uninflated rubber.

J.T.
(Smiles)
Weapons of mass destruction.

The overhead lights suddenly go on.

A startled J.T. turns and knocks into a row of small green tanks of helium marked "Property of BPO".

They CLINK together loudly and almost fall, but the writer is able to steady them, then rushes out.

After a long moment, someone moves in.

It does not take long for them to find J.T.'s bloody fingerprint on the carton.

EXT. BPO. MINUTES LATER.

J.T. slips out the service entrance and starts down the street.

The Arab watches from behind the wheel of his dark sedan.

He is about to follow - when his phone rings - and his face darkens at what he hears.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET. MINUTES LATER.

J.T. rushes down the stairs to catch his train - but finds the gate locked.

INT. DINER. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. enters and goes to the counter - but no one is there.

He is about to leave when the kitchen door swings, and DINER GUY comes out.

J.T.
Are the trains running? The station
across the street is closed.

DINER GUY
We're open.

J.T. sits to kill some time.

INT. DINER. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. nurses a coffee as he tries to find something on the subway closure on his Iphone.

The BELL on the door rings, and a BALD MAN enters.

He sits in the stool next to J.T. and orders a coffee to go.

J.T.
Any idea why the trains aren't running
...during rush hour?

BALD MAN
It's always something.

The Bald Man looks up from his phone and points to a pile of money on the counter between them.

BALD MAN

That my change or yours? Oh, here's mine. Sorry.

J.T.

You got a little blood...

He points to the Bald Man's collar - which he quickly pulls up - then offers a strange smile.

BALD MAN

Too close a shave...
(Gets up to go)
Be careful out there.

J.T.

You too.

As he moves off the stool, his shirt slips - and we see a thick fresh scar runs across his throat - but J.T. is too absorbed in his phone to notice.

J.T. scoops up the bills - leaving the change - and exits.

EXT. DINER. MOMENTS LATER.

The block is eerily empty for this time of day - as J.T. starts back toward the subway station.

Something across the street catches his eye.

He walks - then runs - to stare through the window of a discount electronics store.

The bank of televisions all play different images of a news report of the same event.

Horrific images tell the story as the captions read:

TERROR IN TOKYO - MUSEUM BOMBING LEAVES 83 DEAD - HUNDREDS WOUNDED

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET. MINUTES LATER.

J.T. hurries down the block - while watching CNN live on his phone.

CNN ANCHOR

This is what we do know.
(MORE)

CNN ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Authorities believe the bomb was placed inside a piece of art, a sculpture that was hollowed out and filled with explosives.

Images of the carnage are replaced by a picture of the suspected artwork.

CNN REPORTER

...would certainly be large enough to plant a great deal of explosive material inside. And, it's my understanding that this sculpture would be too big to be X-rayed. Who would imagine that someone would use a piece of art as a weapon?

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. is transfixed to his phone as SARA LEBEL makes a statement. The caption identifies her as head of the Joint Task Force on Terrorism.

LEBEL

We have reason to believe that the individuals behind this heinous act have ties to a group in the United States.

J.T. turns onto Revere Street.

LEBEL

We have several suspects, are pursuing all leads, and believe we are close to making an arrest.

A large black van idles in front of BPO.

Two men in Hazmat suits jump out and run into the building.

J.T. is about to look into the back of the van when a hand falls on his shoulder and wheels him around.

WASHINGTON

C2. What the hell are you doing here?

J.T.

I saw what happened in Tokyo.

WASHINGTON

Are you alone? If someone followed you, you could jeopardize this whole operation.

J.T.

What's going on?

WASHINGTON

We had a threat. We're dealing with it.

J.T.

I wanted to help.

WASHINGTON

The best thing you can do is keep doing your job. Let us do ours.

J.T.

They said you were close to making an arrest. That it was somebody here in the States.

WASHINGTON

Oh, we're close all right. Very close.

(beat)

Go home...so we know where to find you.

J.T.

I want to do something.

WASHINGTON

Then work your scenarios. Help us prevent the next attack. That's your role in all this.

(slaps J.T. on the back)

You're a good American, Mister Turner.

He sends a reluctant J.T. on his way.

INT. J.T.'S APARTMENT. MINUTES LATER.

The writer enters - and locks himself in.

Neon from the sign on the roof across the street bathes him in scarlet blinks, as he stares down at his antique typewriter.

He pulls the sheet of paper from it and reads what someone else typed there:

I'M SORRY

When he looks back up, in between the flashes of blood-colored light, a small red dot now glows on his chest.

J.T. picks up the typewriter just in time - a silenced bullet SPARKING against the metal.

He looks across to the rooftop, where Mister Softee takes aim and FIRES again.

J.T. shields himself again with the antique, then scurries out the door.

INT. STAIRWELL. THAT MOMENT.

J.T. starts down the stairs.

Two floors down, he pauses. Someone CLIMBS toward him.

He reverses direction.

EXT. ROOF OF J.T.'S BUILDING. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. looks for a way out.

He sees a door that offers escape, but it is on the roof of the adjacent brownstone. Fifteen feet separate the two buildings.

J.T. gets a running start.

EXT. ROOF OF THE NEIGHBORING BUILDING. THAT MOMENT.

He clears the gap and tumbles in a heap.

J.T. looks over his shoulder at his building, then races for the exit.

It suddenly BURSTS open. Mister Softee stands in the doorway and raises his rifle.

J.T. flees and leaps back onto his building.

EXT. ROOF OF J.T.'S BUILDING. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. glances back, but no one follows.

MISTER SOFTEE (O.S.)

Help!

The writer moves to the edge and cautiously looks over.

Mister Softee clings with one hand to an overhang. The rifle dangles uselessly from a shoulder strap.

MISTER SOFTEE

Please!

J.T.

Who the hell are you, and why are you shooting at me?

MISTER SOFTEE

Just help me. I'll tell you whatever you want.

J.T.

Drop the gun.

MISTER SOFTEE

How am I supposed to do that?

J.T. realizes that his request is impossible, so he leans down and offers his hand.

Mister Softee smiles and suddenly jerks him over the edge. He attempts to fling him down to his death, but J.T. grabs onto the rifle.

The gunman starts to pry the writer loose.

As J.T. starts to slip, his finger finds the weapon's trigger and squeezes.

A SHOT Mister Softee falls, taking the writer with him, six stories down.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND J.T.'S BUILDING. THAT MOMENT.

They LAND on a dumpster.

A fortunate J.T. rolls off the assassin's body, which broke his fall and saved his life.

J.T. starts to fish through the man's pockets, but an approaching SIREN panics him, and he runs off.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET. THAT MOMENT.

Steam pours out of an open manhole cover - the deserted street closed for repairs.

A bloody and battered J.T. pulls out his phone and dials 911 - but only gets those annoying CLICKS again.

INT. A DARK ROOM SOMEWHERE. THAT MOMENT.

J.T.'s location pops up on a computer screen.

GREY SUIT #4
I've got him.

Lebel moves in from the shadows.

LEBEL
Take the shot.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET. THAT MOMENT.

J.T. gives up on his phone when he sees a cab idling at the end of the street.

INT. CAB. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. jumps inside and BANGS on the glass.

J.T.
Someone's trying to kill me!

The driver turns.

GREY SUIT #3
You're right. We are.

He fires through the hole in the partition - a bullet ripping through J.T.'s right hand.

J.T. slams the window closed on the gun - causing the next SHOT to hit the rear window - which SHATTERS.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET. THAT MOMENT.

J.T. scrambles out of the cab and runs for his life.

Grey Suit #3 gets his target in his sights.

GREY SUIT #3
Gotcha.

But before he can pull the trigger - a missile hits the cab. The EXPLOSION knocks J.T. off his feet - and he turns back to look at the burning wreckage.

J.T.
What the fuck?!

He gets to his feet and again tries 911 - then realizes the CLICKS are making him a target.

He turns to flee and SLAMS into Mister Softee - who though bleeding like a stuck pig - pulls out a knife.

J.T.
It's for you.

J.T. tosses the phone to the killer - then plunges into the open manhole.

INT. SEWER. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. hits the dry ground hard and rolls away.

An EXPLOSION from above sends a ball of fire down the hole - and some plaster raining down from the city's underbelly.

J.T. tries to get to his feet - but the blood he's lost from the wound on his hand - and the shock of all that has happened are too much for him.

He blacks out.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. SEVERAL HOURS LATER.

J.T. wakes in a hospital bed - an IV in his arm.

BURR
You were dehydrated. Running around
in this heat.

J.T.
Someone shot at me. Two men-

BURR
Where is Meeks, C2?

J.T.
Meeks?

BURR
What did Meeks tell you?

J.T. notices that he is strapped to the bed - and when he looks at his other arm he sees a second IV in his right arm, then a third and a fourth.

J.T.
Does Washington know you are doing this?

HAMILTON
He knows.

Hamilton opens a laptop.

J.T.
What's all this? What are you pumping into me?

BURR
Just water. Ordinary H2O.
(beat)
Ever do any research on hyponatremia?
(beat)
Hyponatremia's the opposite of dehydration. Your body literally drowns from the inside out. Right now we're flooding your bloodstream with fluids. There'll be cramping, nausea, headache, coma, then death.

J.T.
Please...

BURR
What did Meeks tell you?

J.T.
Meeks? I don't know-

BURR
Thomas Meeks. The Bald Man. At the diner.

J.T.
The diner...?

Hamilton PLAYS a pair of synced videos - one from a traffic light cam, the other from an ATM camera across the street.

Through the diner's window, Meeks and J.T. exchange words which cannot be heard.

HAMILTON

Tell us what he told you.

J.T.

Nothing. What did Meeks do? What-?

Burr RIPS out one of the IV's and stabs J.T. through the bandage on the bullet wound on his hand.

The writer SCREAMS in agony, then pleads...

J.T.

If I knew something, I'd tell you!

But I don't, I swear.

(beat)

We're on the same side here!

HAMILTON

Are we?

J.T.

Look, I can't be any good to you dead.

BURR

If you don't know anything, then you're no good to me alive either.

Burr and Hamilton turn up the volume on the IVs - which set off warning ALARMS.

J.T.

Don't...!

BURR

Fade out, Hollywood.

They are about to leave J.T. to die - when a car SLAMS through the wall.

The wreckage buries Burr and Hamilton.

Amelia gets out of the sedan, goes to them, and promptly puts SILENCED bullets in the Patriots's chests.

She unstraps a shocked J.T. from the table.

J.T.

You're-

AMELIA

British Secret Service. When Aeschylus targeted you, I was assigned to watch you. They're not preventing attacks. They're planning them.

J.T.

Oh my God. Then who is this Bald Man...Meeks?

AMELIA

If we could find Thomas Meeks, this would all be over.

(beat)

But don't worry about that now. I'll clean up the mess here. Take my car, but ditch it when you get clear. Meet me at the Condor in two hours and I'll explain everything.

J.T.

The Condor? Won't they be looking for me there?

AMELIA

No, but Meeks will. Between you and I, we've practically wiped out Washington's army. There's no way he'd dare show his face there.

J.T. gets in the car and backs it out through the broken wall.

EXT. TRAILER. THAT MOMENT.

We see that the room J.T. was being held in was a only trailer in a Staten Island scrapyard.

He puts the car in gear and TEARS away toward the Manhattan dawn.

INT. AMELIA'S CAR. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. is parked in the shadow of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge - recording the twists and turns of the conspiracy.

J.T.

...and that's all of it. The whole story. Meeks is the key.

(beat)

Oh, and then there's this girl.

(MORE)

J.T. (CONT'D)

Amelia. Just told me she's British Secret Service. A bit of a wild card, but right now she's the only friend I've got. I'm meeting her at the Condor.

INT. A DESK SOMEWHERE IN THE CITY. THAT MOMENT.

The laptop still records J.T.'s recorder.

J.T.'S VOICE

Apparently, Washington is all out of foot soldiers.

As J.T. signs off - we see the space is a storage locker...

...and that someone is there listening.

That someone takes the "I LOVE NY" Ipod with J.T.'s narration - and exits, pulling the metal door down behind them.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. abandons the car and heads for the subway - nervously looking over his shoulder.

LITTLE BOY

Look, Mommy. That man's on TV!

He points out J.T., but his MOTHER pays him no mind and drags him past.

J.T. looks up and sees his and Meeks's faces plastered fifty feet high on one of the giant television screens in the square.

The graphic underneath the image reads: "HAVE YOU SEEN THESE MEN? FBI HUNTS TERROR SUSPECTS"

J.T. ducks into a phonebooth.

INT. PHONE BOOTH. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. pretends to be on a call, until his face disappears from the screen.

J.T.

At least they don't know my name... yet. That picture's from the diner.

J.T. reaches into his pocket, grabs whatever money he has, and slams it on the shelf.

Two quarters are the only coins.

J.T.
One phone call. Better make it good.

Before he figures out who to call - he suddenly grabs up a bill.

Someone has drawn horns on the face of a dollar.

J.T. stares at the devilish George Washington and knows it's not a coincidence.

J.T.
Meeks.
(beat)
You warned me in the diner about
Washington. Whose side are you on?

He turns the bill over and sees something scrawled across the back in red ink:

232-9999

J.T. looks at the payphone and sees that its number also has a 232 prefix.

He drops the quarters in the slot - and dials the number.

VOICE ON THE PHONE
Scheherazade Cafe.

J.T.
Where are you located?

INT. SCHEHERAZADE CAFE. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

A still bloody and bandaged J.T. cautiously enters the dimly lit Middle Eastern restaurant.

He takes a table and a WAITER looks at him with suspicion.

J.T.
I'm here for Meeks.

The Waiter looks at J.T. for a long moment, then disappears into the back.

J.T. looks over the few patrons, trying to decide if any of them present a threat to him.

The Waiter sets a small cauldron before J.T.

J.T.
What's this?

WAITER
You came for "leeks". Leek soup.

J.T. LAUGHS.

WAITER
You are hungry, yes?

He watches J.T. taste the soup.

J.T.
It's good. Thank you.

The Waiter moves off.

J.T.
A restaurant recommendation. That's what Meeks gave me.

INT. SCHEHERAZADE CAFE. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. slips into the back and through the kitchen.

INT. BACK ROOM. THAT MOMENT.

The writer enters to find an OLD MAN - who kneels on a mat, praying.

He finishes, then turns to face J.T. - his eyes all whites.

He ASKS a question in Arabic and cocks his head for J.T.'s answer.

J.T.
Meeks. Meeks sent me to you. I don't know what you people are...

He looks down to see that a SMALL BOY has taken his wounded hand.

The Old Man speaks to the child in their tongue, the child answers, and his elder gives some instruction.

The child returns with a basin and bandages and to the writer's amazement, tends to his injuries.

J.T. looks around the room, and what he at first thought was a den of terror, he realizes is simply a home.

J.T.
You don't even know Meeks, do you?

The Boy finishes and smiles up at J.T.

J.T.
Thank you.

He leaves them.

EXT. CONDOR BAR. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. pauses to record his thoughts.

J.T.
The restaurant was a red herring.
232-9999. The number Meeks gave me
...if it's not a phone number, what
is it? Code for something? What
does it mean?

INT. CONDOR BAR. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. slips in - and relieved to see a game on the TV - goes to Danny who works behind the bar.

J.T.
No CNN?

DANNY
Got tired of that Tokyo bombing
talking heads bullshit.

J.T.
Amelia around?

DANNY
She quit. No call, no show. Some
guy was in asking for you.
(beat)
Bald...and mean looking.

J.T. notices two UNIFORMED COPS come in.

J.T.
Sounds like my agent.

As the cops sit to grab lunch, J.T. slips toward the back of the bar.

INT. LIQUOR ROOM. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Someone enters and looks over the rows of rows of liquor.

INT. J.T.'S HIDING SPOT. THAT MOMENT.

J.T. holds his breath - unable to see who it is.

INT. LIQUOR ROOM. THAT MOMENT.

The person settles for a bottle of rum, and moves away...

...but then pauses at the door, ceremoniously opens the alcohol, and sprinkles it on a pile of cardboard boxes.

They hold a lit match to a Condor Bar matchbook, then drop it onto the boxes - which catch with an audible WHOOSH as the flames flirt with the walls in the old wooden room.

INT. J.T.'S HIDING SPOT. THAT MOMENT.

J.T. hears the door close and relaxes for a second, before he smells the smoke.

Half the room is on fire.

He rushes to the door and finds it locked. He puts his shoulder to it, but then is forced to retreat.

J.T. glances around for an exit and spies a small window in the back.

He chokes his way through the smoke, and climbs on top of a keg.

When he gets to the opening, he finds it blocked.

Someone else is in the processing of escaping...

The Bald Man.

J.T. grabs his arm, but Meeks wrenches away, and J.T. falls to the floor.

A shelf of fire teeters, then topples.

J.T. manages to roll out of the way, just in time.

But the shelf's contents act as a giant Molotov cocktail - engulfing the wall with the window in liquid fire.

J.T. climbs the last remaining shelf and watches as the fire makes its way up to him.

The top of a stacked keg POPS and SPRAYS beer all over the ceiling.

Bottles of alcohol boil and explode, and the writer seems to go under in the smoke like a drowning man.

He comes up for air one last time, and looks down at the flames which eat through the worn wooden floor.

J.T. wraps his arms around the keg and takes it with him as he dives to the floor.

INT. BASEMENT. CONDOR BAR. THAT MOMENT.

J.T. and the keg CRASH through the charred wood in a cloud of smoke and flames.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE CONDOR BAR. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. BURSTS out of the cellar door, as the SCREAM of sirens approach.

He CHOKES out smoke - then quickly moves away - and is about to jump into a cab when...

GRASSY KNOLL EARL

Hey!

Earl holds up J.T.'s treatment.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL

You asked me to read this a few months ago. I've been busy, but-

J.T.

I can't talk. I-

GRASSY KNOLL EARL

You want my two cents, it's not very believable. And coming from a guy who believes everything, that's saying something.

J.T.

Thanks.

J.T. takes his treatment, SLAMS the door shut, and the taxi pulls away.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
I've got page notes!

INT. CAB. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. looks at the cabbie's ID - he must be pushing 80 - and is no threat.

OLD CABBIE
Where to?

Sirens HOWL as firetrucks pass on their way to the burning Condor.

J.T.
Just drive.

J.T. stares at his treatment - the source of all his trouble - its title almost an accusation:

THE TERRORIST - BY JOSEPH TURNER

He is about to toss it on the seat when the only other thing on the title page catches his eye:

WGA REGISTRATION #2329011

J.T.
(to Cabbie)
Writers Guild of America, East.
Hudson and Broome Street.

INT. WRITERS GUILD. MINUTES LATER.

J.T. gets off an elevator and follows a sign that reads:
SCRIPT REGISTRATION.

INT. REGISTRATION OFFICE. MOMENTS LATER.

A WRITER exits with a registration receipt, as J.T. enters.

WGA EMPLOYEE
Can I help you?

J.T.
Yes. I need to get a script I registered back from you guys.

WGA EMPLOYEE
 You realize once you take it out,
 you lose all protection-

J.T.
 Yeah, yeah. I know. I just need
 it.

WGA EMPLOYEE
 Okay. Name?

J.T.
 Meeks. Thomas Meeks.

WGA EMPLOYEE
 (Typing on computer)
 ID?

J.T.
 ID. I have the registration number.
 It's 232-9999.

WGA EMPLOYEE
 You need ID.

J.T.
 Sure.

He fishes out his wallet - with no idea how he's going to
 bluff this when...

WGA EMPLOYEE
 Meeks and Turner. "Trojan Horse".

J.T. covers his shock and shows her his license.

J.T.
 That's right. I'm Turner.

WGA EMPLOYEE
 Give me a minute.

She disappears into a back room.

INT. WRITERS GUILD LOUNGE. MINUTES LATER.

J.T. flips through the treatment - then turns on his recorder.

J.T.
 The Tokyo Art Gallery bombing
 scenario. Meeks is Cl.
 (MORE)

J.T. (CONT'D)

(beat)

He didn't know either.

J.T. clicks it off - then looks at the Queens address on the cover page.

EXT. QUEENS APARTMENT BUILDING. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. finds "Meeks, T" on the directory.

INT. MEEKS'S APARTMENT. MINUTES LATER.

The lock CLICKS and J.T. enters.

Two words have been spray painted on the wall:

I'M SORRY

J.T.

You too, huh?

A makeshift noose dangles from a broken ceiling beam in the center of the room.

J.T. looks through the papers on the desk...

...there's assorted junk mail, take out menus, a flyer for the Fourth of July peace rally...

...and blueprints of a museum, sketches of a sculpture, and directions on how to make a bomb.

J.T.

They really did a number on this guy.

J.T. picks up a framed photo from the desk.

J.T. and Meeks have their arms around Osama Bin Laden - in what appears to be an Al Qaeda training camp.

J.T.

Good times. Bet I have one of these in my apartment...

He hears someone else PICKING the lock - so he rushes to the fire escape.

The window sill is lined with glue traps - spotted with dead bugs.

The irony not lost on him - J.T. quietly pushes a few aside to make his escape - but then hears a NOISE from the fire escape as well.

He freezes - as the door BURSTS open and the Arab points a gun.

ARAB

Right there! Don't move!

J.T. lifts his hands in surrender - then glances out the window at the unknown presence, which tips the Arab.

ARAB

The person on the fire escape. Is that Meeks?

His question is answered with GUNFIRE, which he returns.

J.T., caught in the crossfire, ducks for cover.

The Arab hears his assailant RELOADING and makes his move.

He runs to J.T. - his weapon raised - as the curtains blow in to reveal Amelia.

Just as the Arab is about to shoot her in cold blood, J.T. turns suddenly and SLAPS something against his face.

One of the glue traps the writer took from the window sill.

The Arab tries to pull it off, but it is caught in his mustache and eyebrows.

The Arab FIRES blindly. J.T. shoves him aside, then hurries out the window, as the intruder continues to DISCHARGE his weapon.

The Arab RIPS the gluetraps from his face with a ROAR of pain - but J.T. is gone.

EXT. QUEENS STREET. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. races down the block - until he is rudely yanked into an alley.

EXT. QUEENS ALLEY. THAT MOMENT.

Amelia smiles at J.T.

J.T.

You stood me up at the bar.

AMELIA

By the time I got there, people were roasting marshmallows.

J.T.

I almost got roasted myself.

(beat)

You said all of Washington's men were dead. So who's this Arab guy?

AMELIA

No idea. Be a lot easier if everyone went around declaring who they worked for.

J.T.

Meeks worked for Aeschylus...just like me. They've set us up to take the fall for Tokyo...and God knows what else.

AMELIA

Got any proof of that?

J.T.

Meeks left a treatment at the Writers Guild - with both our names on it. The plan for the museum bombing. A terrorist wouldn't do that.

AMELIA

Smart. So we just need to get it from the Guild.

J.T.

I already did. I had to toss it, but there's a digital and paper trail.

AMELIA

I've been busy too.

(Reaches into her pocket)

Meeks's phone. I was searching the apartment before you broke in...and ducked onto the fire escape.

J.T.

Throw that away. Now.

AMELIA

If you're worried about drone missiles it's too populated an area. Won't happen. Plus they're taking heat over using them against you earlier. Though I'm certain DHS is on their way right now.

The phone in her hand RINGS.

AMELIA

Hello?

She listens for a few seconds - then the caller hangs up.

AMELIA

Meeks wants to meet.

She smashes the phone against the ground and leads J.T. out.

EXT. LINCOLN TUNNEL. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Rush hour traffic clogs one of the major traffic arteries in and out of the city.

As the sun sets at their backs, J.T. and Amelia watch from a short distance away.

J.T.

I don't like those cop cars.

AMELIA

They're always there...as a deterrent.

Amelia indicates the police scanner - which she monitors through an earpiece.

AMELIA

There's an accident in the center tube, so those cars are unmanned.

(beat)

The south tube is closed for construction. Meeks said he'll meet you at its center. It's less than a mile.

J.T.

You're not coming?

AMELIA

He said just you. You're the only person he trusts.

J.T.

You'll have to forgive me if after all that's happened, the thought of going into a tunnel a hundred feet under the Hudson River makes me just a little nervous. I'll be trapped like a rat in there.

AMELIA

Meeks's treatment isn't enough to clear you. With all the evidence against you...

J.T.

I need Meeks.

AMELIA

If both of you come out telling the same story the truth will follow.

(Hands him a scrap of paper)

Here's the address of a safehouse.

Get Meeks. Bring him to Jersey.

(As she goes)

Good luck.

J.T.

Not that I'll need it.

He slips down toward the mouth of the tunnel.

INT. LINCOLN TUNNEL ENTRANCE. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. enters and clicks on his recorder.

J.T.

Entering the Lincoln Tunnel to meet Meeks. Probably not the dumbest thing I've ever done...but we can debate that if I come out the other side.

He clicks off and starts toward New Jersey.

EXT. LINCOLN TUNNEL ENTRANCE. THAT MOMENT.

Amelia switches off the police scanner - and onto a call.

AMELIA

He's in.

INT. CENTER OF THE LINCOLN TUNNEL. THAT MOMENT.

J.T.'s footsteps ECHO as he moves toward the tube's center.

INT. LINCOLN TUNNEL. MOMENTS LATER.

Construction materials - hardhats, safety vests, flares - have been carefully placed on the narrow maintenance walkway which lines the tunnel.

J.T. comes around the curve and stops dead.

A tarp has been thrown carelessly over something in the center of the road.

J.T. pulls it away to see what is clearly a bomb...

...and it's TICKING.

J.T. takes off the casing and looks for a way to disarm it - then suddenly EXHALES in relief.

J.T.

The detonator's not even hooked up...

(Realizing)

...and I just put my fingerprints
all over it.

He drops the bomb components on the walkway and backs away - but then hears a LOW HUM.

Something is coming through the tunnel.

Headlights suddenly turn the corner and cars ACCELERATE toward him.

J.T. dodges them just in time.

He catches his breath - but then realizes more CARS are coming.

The tunnel has now been opened for traffic.

Another car BEARS down on him - and misses - barely.

He starts running west - but headlights cut across his body - and he somehow manages to again avoid being hit.

J.T. scrambles for the maintenance walkway - but it is not there anymore...

...its removal the reason for the construction.

He steps out into the road and waves at a truck to stop - but the driver just leans on his HORN and gas pedal - forcing J.T. to dive onto the asphalt.

He scrambles away from a series of CARS - then realizes he'll never make it to New Jersey without becoming roadkill.

The writer abruptly reverses direction and cuts through the oncoming TRAFFIC toward the bomb.

He somehow finds his way back there and grabs its casing - leaving the explosives behind.

J.T. avoids a pair of yellow taxis and a motorcycle - then holds up the harmless device to...

...a camera.

INT. SECURITY CAMERA POV. THAT MOMENT.

J.T. makes a point of showing his "bomb" to whomever may be watching.

EXT. LINCOLN TUNNEL ENTRANCE. MOMENTS LATER.

The call comes in less than a minute later - and the police scramble to close the tunnel.

EXT. LINCOLN TUNNEL EXIT. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

The tunnel has been shut down in both directions.

COPS search vehicles as they crawl out of the south tunnel.

An OLD COP stops a maintenance vehicle and jaws with the driver.

MAINTENANCE DRIVER
What's going on?

OLD COP
Someone had a bomb in the tunnel.

MAINTENANCE DRIVER
Don't let 'em blow it up. We just finished fixing it.

The Old Cop waves them on - then nods to J.T., who now wears a hardhat and an orange vest - and has casually stowed away on the back of the vehicle

INT. SAFEHOUSE. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. enters the small Weehawken apartment - where a TV plays in the background.

He moves to the other rooms and starts to tear it apart - frantically searching for something...

...as Tess's worried face fills the screen - the first in a series of captioned CNN interview clips:

EX-GIRLFRIEND OF TERROR SUSPECT:

TESS

...I just don't believe he could be involved.

OWNER OF BAR WHERE TERROR SUSPECT WAS A REGULAR:

DANNY

He said he was working on something big. I had no idea that what he was working on was blowing people up.

(beat)

Son of a bitch burned down my bar.

NEIGHBOR OF TERROR SUSPECT:

BESPECTACLED WOMAN

He was very shady character. Just the other day, I caught him going through my mail. He wasn't very friendly, even by New York standards.

CONDOR BAR PATRON:

GRASSY KNOLL EARL

I think this kid is innocent. Just another Lee Harvey Oswald. The F.B.I. and the C.I.A. and the U.N. are just looking for a scapegoat.

J.T. comes back in and glances at the screen.

J.T.

Look who I have sticking up for me.

He mutes the TV and sees Amelia's now standing there.

AMELIA

You made it. Where's Meeks?

J.T.

Why don't you tell me?

(beat)

You tried to torch both of us at the Condor, planted that photo of me at Meeks's place, then sent me into that tunnel...where they'd find me run down with the bomb parts and the address of this place in my pocket.

AMELIA

(Takes out her gun)

If you knew all that, why'd you come?

J.T.

This goes beyond Tokyo. That's all on Meeks, right?

(beat)

I wanted to know what I was going to do...so I could stop it.

(beat)

The whole apartment's mine, right? I bet there's all kinds of damning evidence and a grenade launcher tucked under the bed.

AMELIA

Might as well come out, boys.

The bedroom door opens - and Burr and Hamilton step out.

J.T.

Didn't see that coming.

(beat)

You "rescued" me from these two jokers, so I'd trust you...and lead you to Meeks's backup at the Writers Guild.

AMELIA

Something like that.

Hamilton finishes searching J.T. - and finds the voice recorder...

HAMILTON

Your side of the story?

...and tosses it to Burr.

BURR

Too bad no one will ever hear it.

He SNAPS the device in half.

AMELIA
Turn around.

J.T.
So what happens now? You shoot me?

AMELIA
I would if I liked you. Spare you
what comes next. But I don't like
you.

J.T.
That's a relief. I thought I was
going to have to let you down easy-

She strikes him on the back of the head with her weapon -
and J.T. goes down and out.

INT. SAFEHOUSE. MINUTES LATER.

A woozy J.T. stumbles to his feet.

A stun grenade CRASHES through the window and blinds him
with a flash.

A swarm of DHS AGENTS descend on J.T. - knocking him back to
the floor.

INT. TORTURE ROOM. THE DAY BEFORE INDEPENDENCE DAY.

J.T. is as we saw him at the beginning - filthy, naked, and
shivering - the fingernails on his right hand torn out.

J.T. (V.O.)
I told them everything. About
Aeschylus, about Meeks, about Trojan
Horse. About Washington, Hamilton,
and Burr. But it didn't matter...
because it wasn't the truth they
wanted to hear.

One of the two hooded men pokes J.T. with his foot - but the
writer is playing - or could actually be - dead.

J.T. (V.O.)
"In war, truth is the first casualty."

The third man steps into the light and pulls off his hood.

The Arab - who looks down at his captive with disgust.

J.T. (V.O.)
Our friend the Greek playwright,
Aeschylus said that.

ARAB
Clean him up.

The two hooded men grab J.T...

J.T. (V.O.)
Fuck Aeschylus.

...and drag him out.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING. HOURS LATER.

J.T. sits in another grey room, handcuffed to a table.

Two MEN in grey suits enter.

J.T.
Here we go again.

The Arab - now also dressed in a suit - enters with Lebel,
who sits across from J.T.

LEBEL
Mister Turner, I'm Agent Lebel.
You've already met Agent Nazar.

The Arab smiles - and makes a point of looking at his
perfectly manicured fingernails - as if to acknowledge that
he was the one who pulled J.T.'s out.

LEBEL
I've got bad news for you.

J.T.
I could use some bad news.

LEBEL
The device you tried to set off in
the Lincoln Tunnel failed. All three
tubes will be open for tomorrow
morning's commute.

J.T.
Thanks for the traffic report, but
I'm more of a mass transit guy.

LEBEL
Where is Thomas Meeks?

J.T.
Did you look under the Statue of
Liberty?

LEBEL
That facility is no longer in use.
How long have you known Meeks?

J.T.
Like I told your friends, I just met
him three weeks ago.

LEBEL
Tell us about BPO.

J.T.
You've been to BPO?

LEBEL
We've been to BPO. You've got some
good people working for you. We
know you were doing something there
you shouldn't...but all we found
were piñatas, streamers, and
noisemakers. The place is clean.

(beat)

You and Meeks have been running
Brooklyn Party Outlet, Incorporated
as a front for your terrorist
activities.

(beat)

We have legals and financials...with
signatures...yours and his...on the
same page...dating back two years.

(beat)

You have deposits totaling twenty
thousand dollars in your checking
account here...and others in excess
of half a million dollars in your
Zurich account.

J.T.
Zurich. I was wondering where I put
that half a million dollars.

LEBEL
Since you don't want to talk about
Meeks, let's talk about one of your
other friends.

She tosses a series of photos of Mister Softee onto the table.

LEBEL

Zafar Abdul-Matin. A Saudi citizen, he fought for the Taliban in Afghanistan. We found a weapon outside your 125th Street residence with your prints on it - and a bullet in his body that came from that weapon. Did you two have a disagreement?

J.T.

You could say that. He wanted to shoot me and I wanted to live.

LEBEL

You want to live, you need to tell a better story. Right now, with the charges you're facing and the evidence we have, you're looking at a death sentence.

J.T.

I already told you the truth. You want me to make something up?

LEBEL

Sure. You say you're just a writer, but your narrative is shit.

J.T.

They're going to use poison gas in a subway attack at a point called Z Junction.

LEBEL

And you know this because?

J.T.

I know this because...I planned it for them.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM. LATER.

The image of J.T.'s admission freezes on the screen.

Lebel sits at a table with a bunch of ANALYSTS.

LEAD ANALYST

We checked his backstory.

ANALYST #1

Born 1983, Uniondale, New York, only child, father in business, mother homemaker, both deceased. Left him some real estate, stocks...which he liquidated. It's all pretty vague... and could easily be fabrication for deep cover. We're still digging.

ANALYST #2

Tax records date back five years. Odd jobs here and there...most recently as a temp here in the city.

LEBEL

How's he pay his rent?

ANALYST #2

Mostly living off of his "inheritance".

ANALYST #3

Voice analysis concludes with a 65.4% certainty that English is not his first language. Right now, we're leaning towards Eastern European, maybe Russian.

LEAD ANALYST

Though the way he riffs seems more like Stasi training than old KGB.

(beat)

Given his association with Abdul-Matin, his survival of the Hellfire missile attack, his knowledge of explosives used in the Lincoln Tunnel attempt, his resistance to sophisticated interrogation techniques...

LEBEL

You mean torture.

LEAD ANALYST

Bottom line is he's too good at this to be a citizen.

ANALYST #1

And he's not much of a writer.

LEBEL

Maybe he's just lucky.

LEAD ANALYST

You know we don't believe in that here.

LEBEL

So he's a bad guy.

LEAD ANALYST

But not a true believer. We'd say there's an 84.1% certainty he's a handyman - doing work for hire.

Lebel stares at J.T. on the screen - and closes his file.

INT. OUTSIDE THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S OFFICE. MINUTES LATER.

Lebel waits impatiently with the file, as the UNDERSECRETARY comes out of the office.

LEBEL

The Deputy Secretary-

UNDERSECRETARY

Doesn't want to see you.

(beat)

I just spent the last hour and a half trying to convince Janeway why you should keep your job.

LEBEL

I'm sorry?

UNDERSECRETARY

You authorized a drone strike on a Manhattan street. Up until this point, they've been able to cover the explosion up as a gas leak. This isn't Baghdad or Kabul-

LEBEL

Abdul-Matin wasn't in Baghdad or Kabul. And he wasn't here in New York to catch the fireworks. He was here to kill people. We-

UNDERSECRETARY

Sara, it's a holiday weekend. Do yourself and everyone in this building a favor and go roast a weenie. Hell, maybe even have a beer or two. Go have a life.

LEBEL

This Turner thing doesn't stop with Tokyo-

UNDERSECRETARY

We're cutting Turner lose.

LEBEL

We've got hard evidence linking this guy to that museum plot...an admission of planning a chemical attack on the New York subway system...not to mention videotape of him setting a bomb in the Lincoln Tunnel...and you're letting him walk?

UNDERSECRETARY

Turner's not working alone. We keep him within arms length until he leads us down the rabbit hole...to Meeks or anyone else.

INT. TRANSPORT VAN. THAT MOMENT.

J.T. sits - shackled and hooded - between two plainclothes AGENTS.

The van slows and they pull the bulletproof vest from him and undo his shackles.

AGENT

Personal effects.

He slaps an envelope into J.T.'s hands then dumps him out of the back of the moving van.

EXT. UNDERNEATH THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE. THAT MOMENT.

The van SPEEDS away - and J.T. pulls the hood from his head.

J.T.

You say that like I'm already dead.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN. MINUTES LATER.

J.T. sits - casually looking through scratched glass into the adjacent car.

Someone follows him.

INT. SUBWAY STATION. MINUTES LATER.

J.T. gets off the train and makes no effort to lose his tail.
In fact, he makes it very easy for them to trail him.

EXT. BPO. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. turns onto Revere Street and looks at the darkened building - then glances back into the shadows and whomever follows.

J.T.
Washington's right. These people
have no imagination. I'll just have
to lead them by the noses-

HOMELESS MAN
Hey friend!

J.T.
Hey. I'm a little short today.

HOMELESS MAN
Happens to the best of us. You'll
get me next payday.

J.T.
They close down?

HOMELESS MAN
Had some kind of accident. Little
blonde who works there? She came
out on a gurney and in went a bunch
of dudes in spacesuits.

J.T.
Thanks, friend.

INT. BPO. MINUTES LATER.

A creepy Uncle Sam mannequin looks on disapprovingly, as
J.T. breaks the glass on the door and lets himself in.

INT. BACK OF THE STORE. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. is surprised to find the service elevator waiting...

INT. AESCHYLUS WORK AREA. MOMENTS LATER.

...but not surprised to find the workspace has been stripped
clean.

INT. J.T.'S OFFICE. MOMENTS LATER.

This one has too...

INT. STORAGE ROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

...and this one...

J.T. studies an ugly stain on the wall - one someone might not notice who hadn't been there before.

He finds a seam in the panelling and starts to tug at it, until it SNAPS off.

Hundreds of roaches, which were trapped between the panel and the wall, RAIN down on him.

J.T. SWEARS in disgust - brushing the bugs from his clothes and hair.

J.T. looks at the flood of dead insects and picks one up.

J.T.
What could kill a New York City roach?
What was in those tanks?

INT. J.T.'S OFFICE. MOMENTS LATER.

J.T. goes to empty desk and finds a pen but no paper.

He digs in his pocket, removes his personal effects envelope, and dumps its contents into the desk.

J.T.
Think like a terrorist.

Despite his missing fingernails and the bandage on his hand from the gunshot wound, he starts writing.

EXT. GRAY'S PAPAYA. THAT MOMENT.

Lebel has taken her boss's advice - and is about to bite into a hot dog - when her phone CHIMES.

She reads a tweet:

CATCH OF THE DAY

She tosses her meal in the trash and rushes off.

EXT. FULTON FISH MARKET. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Lebel walks past the rows and rows of dead fish.

At the end of the aisle, an old Korean FISHMONGER nods at her - and she follows him inside.

EXT. PREP ROOM. THAT MOMENT.

A young KOREAN unloads squid onto a long metal table.

The Fishmonger says something to him in Korean, so he stops his work and comes over to Lebel.

FISHMONGER

My nephew, Gi. He asked me to convey his appreciation for liberating him from the North.

LEBEL

Someone will be by to talk with him.

The young Korean bows and goes back to his squid - using a rather ominous looking knife to spill their guts onto the stone floor.

LEBEL

You were right about the party store. What's fresh today?

FISHMONGER

Cicada.

LEBEL

Cicada's not fresh. Cicada's a fish story...a Cold War myth. An operative with no support...completely cut off from contact until he rises through the ranks...that's a fairy tale told by the Soviets to divert our resources.

FISHMONGER

Myth is based on truth. The cicada burrows into the ground and sleeps... benign...for seventeen years. When it awakes, it does great damage.

The young Korean stops hacking away and wraps a generous portion in paper.

LEBEL

The idea that a foreign agent was,
is, or will be placed in deep cover
in the CIA or DHS is untenable.

(beat)

People play the long game. But nobody
in intelligence has the patience,
resources, or commitment to play
that long a game.

He takes the package from his nephew and hands it to Lebel.

FISHMONGER

You know I only trade what's caught
in clear waters.

Lebel smiles.

LEBEL

Last time the abalone was exceptional.

He bows in gratitude for the compliment and Lebel turns to
go.

FISHMONGER

There was another name associated
with Cicada...

Lebel pauses long enough to hear...

FISHMONGER

Aeschylus.

...then does not react - just walks out with her squid.

INT. J.T.'S OFFICE. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

J.T. stares at what's he written on the envelope - trying to
make sense of it all:

Z JUNCTION - PATRIOTS - GAS - AESCHYLUS

J.T.

The Feds know about Z-Junction. So
how are they going to deliver the
gas?

J.T. tosses down his pen in frustration - his eyes falling
on the random items on the desk - his wallet, Metro card, a
few coins, and...

...the red balloon that he found in the BPO storage room.

J.T. picks it up and looks at the logo on it, but cannot read it.

He blows up the balloon, so that he can see what is printed there.

PEACE

Just as it all falls into place, someone BURSTS his balloon from behind...

Washington.

J.T.

It's not Z Junction.

(beat)

It's the East River fireworks.
Tomorrow. One hundred thousand messages.

WASHINGTON

One hundred thousand balloons.

(beat)

Your idea...a poison gas attack on a major American holidays...using balloons as a delivery system...was a little too close to ours. We needed to get your treatment...and you...out of circulation.

J.T.

It also makes me the perfect fall guy. They'll never believe I did this-

WASHINGTON

(Holds up a document)

They will when they read your signed confession.

J.T.

I didn't sign any...

(beat)

My Aeschylus contract. The fine print probably details my plan to slaughter innocent Americans, right?

(beat)

What kind of agent's inside those tanks? Biological? Chemical?

Burr and Hamilton appear behind J.T.

J.T.

You don't honestly think DHS would let me go without putting a tail on me. At this moment, there are federal agents right outside the building.

WASHINGTON

Inside the building, too.

He and his henchman flash their government ID's.

WASHINGTON

We didn't release you to follow you.
We released you to catch you.

Burr gets J.T. in a choke hold...

BURR

Fade to black, Hollywood.

...tightens his grip around J.T.'s windpipe, and the writer loses consciousness.

Washington answers his BUZZING phone.

WASHINGTON

This is Deputy Secretary Janeway.

(beat)

Yes. Put her through.

EXT. UNION SQUARE. THAT MOMENT.

Lebel moves through the square - where scores of TOURISTS have arrived for the Fourth of July peace rally.

LEBEL

Sir, our contact at Langley just confirmed the existence of Aeschylus. It never made it past the planning stage. It was deemed too big of a security risk.

WASHINGTON (O.S.)

So...

LEBEL

What if the other side took our idea and ran with it?

(beat)

If we believe Turner's story, then the people he's working with are

(MORE)

LEBEL (CONT'D)
 pros...like us. What he's pitching
 is that there's a terrorist cell
 planted deep within the intelligence
 community. Cicada-

INT. J.T.'S OFFICE. THAT MOMENT.

Burr and Hamilton gather up J.T.

WASHINGTON
 Cicada?! That's what you're calling
 me with? Cicada's pure fiction.

LEBEL (O.S.)
 I have an asset that reports-

WASHINGTON
 Your asset is mistaken. New
 intelligence has come to light.
 Joseph Turner is acting alone.

LEBEL (O.S.)
 Sir?

WASHINGTON
 Call the detail that's following him
 and have them bring him in.

Washington hangs up - and watches as they drag the writer
 out.

INT. METAL SHACK. THE NEXT DAY.

An overhead ROAR wakes J.T.

He gets up off a cot and looks around the one room shack.

There are two doors at opposite ends. He goes to one and
 tries it but it is locked.

The other knob turns in his hand. He eases it open.

Someone springs out at him. J.T. jumps out of the way, and
 the figure hits the floor hard.

Meeks. His dead body had been stuffed into the small closet.

After a long moment, J.T. lifts him up and puts him back
 where he found him.

He sits down on the cot and buries his head in his hands.

INT. METAL SHACK. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

The other door opens and Hamilton enters.

The writer lies motionless on the cot with his coat over his head - his bandaged hand dangling to the floor.

HAMILTON

Joseph Turner, your place in history
awaits.

Hamilton rolls his prisoner over, but it is not the writer he expected.

He pulls out his gun - just as J.T. bursts out of the closet.

Hamilton LAUGHS wildly, as the two men struggle for the firearm.

J.T. finds himself holding the barrel.

HAMILTON

You can have that end.

He pulls the trigger, but J.T. is able to rip his hand away before the gun goes off. The bullet RICOCHETS around the small metal room.

J.T. hits Hamilton in the face and finds his feet. He rips open the door to find yet another gun pointed at him.

Grassy Knoll Earl stands in J.T.'s way and FIRES his weapon.

J.T. RECOILS from the shot, but is surprised to find that the bullet somehow missed him.

He looks back over his shoulder to see where it hit.

Hamilton stands directly behind him. He drops his gun, as his shirt darkens with blood. Shot through the heart, he gives one last GIGGLE, then falls dead.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL

You okay?

J.T.

For a second there, I thought you
were in on it.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL

That would be funny, wouldn't it?
(MORE)

GRASSY KNOLL EARL (CONT'D)
A conspiracy theorist a part of a
conspiracy.

J.T.
It seems like everyone else is.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
Yeah? Who?

J.T.
Amelia.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
The little Scottie hottie you were
always talking to? That's no
surprise. Women always go for the
bad boys. It's the greatest
conspiracy of all. Why they don't
like nice guys like you and me.

J.T.
How'd you find me?

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
I was at the Federal Building to
offer my weekly unsolicited
consultation when I saw them leading
you out the back. They had you
hooded, but I recognized your walk.

(beat)

I always notice people's walks. You
can tell a lot about where they've
been and where they're going.

(beat)

Watched them dump you in Brooklyn
Heights, then I tailed you to the
party store. Saw Shits and Giggles
here carry you out with his friends,
so I followed.

(beat)

They take your fingernails?

J.T.
Yeah.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
They grow back. Takes about a year.

J.T.
I don't want to know how you know
that.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
This is big, right?

J.T.
Very big.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
Like Dealey Plaza big?
(beat)
Dealey Plaza. Dallas. November 22,
1963? John F. Kennedy's
assassination? You do know who
Kennedy was, right?

J.T.
Where are we?

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
J.F.K.

J.T.
Will you stop with J.F.K. and just
tell me where we are?

A low flying 747 ROARS past.

J.T.
Kennedy Airport. Sorry.
(beat)
You got a car?

INT. GRASSY KNOLL EARL'S CAR. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

Earl's sedan is spray painted with various accusations against governments, churches, corporations, and individuals - along with a plug for his website - GRASSYKNOLL.COM.

J.T.
Where did you get a gun anyway?

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
Bought it on Ebay. I'm surprised it
worked. It's a replica of the one
Jack Ruby used to kill Lee Harvey
Oswald. If you believe that Ruby
did kill Oswald.

J.T.
Didn't he shoot him on live
television?

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
They said it was live.

EXT. EAST RIVER. THAT MOMENT.

Several VOLUNTEERS unload boxes filled with messages of peace, hope, and love from all over the world.

VOLUNTEER #1
Have you seen the red balloons?

VOLUNTEER #2
Just got a text. They're on their way.

EXT. PARKING LOT. THAT MOMENT.

The boxes with eagles have been loaded, along with the tanks of gas.

Burr SLAMS the door shut and drives toward the city.

EXT. PAY PHONE. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

The Manhattan skyline casts its shadow over J.T. - who is on the phone, as Earl idles in his car.

J.T.
You really don't have a phone?

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
Like I want them knowing where I am at all times?

J.T.
Good point.
(beat)
First the F.B.I., and now 911 has left me on hold

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
It's a government holiday. Looks like we'll just have to stop this ourselves.

J.T. hangs up.

J.T.
I'm the most wanted man in America.
I'll be shot on sight.
(MORE)

J.T. (CONT'D)

I'm done being in a Hitchcock movie...
done being at the wrong place at the
wrong time.

(beat)

The fireworks start at dark...which
gives the powers that be a few hours
to stop all this.

(beat)

I'm just a writer.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL

So you sit in your little room and
you write about stuff.

J.T.

Yeah. That's what a writer does.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL

This is life, man. You need to stop
writing about it and start living
it.

J.T.

You're the second person to give me
that very same advice and it's almost
gotten me killed so many times I
can't even count.

(beat)

And what are you talking about? You
spend all your time in a bar talking
about stuff that happened fifty years
ago.

Earl gets out of his car.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL

You're right. Fifty years ago, I
sat on that grassy knoll, and I
watched some dude in a grey suit...
it's always the suits...take out a
rifle and blow J.F.K. away.

(beat)

That dude didn't run. He looked
right at me, a smoking gun in his
hands, and laughed. Then he just
walked away. He knew that I wouldn't
do anything. Wouldn't say anything.
Because he knew that I'd be looking
out for Number One. That's the
American Way.

(MORE)

GRASSY KNOLL EARL (CONT'D)

(beat)

I died that day. Hell, part of America died that day.

(beat)

Today's the Fourth of July. More than two hundred years ago a bunch of fat cats put aside their self interests and stood up for what was right. They didn't just talk about it. They made a Declaration, they dumped some tea, and they kicked some ass.

(beat)

The suits were a different color then. Long red coats...grey Brooks Brothers...it doesn't matter. They'll keep getting away with all kinds of murder until someone steps up to stop them.

J.T. just stares at Earl for a very long time, then opens the car door.

J.T.

You read my work. You know I'm a sucker for a good monologue.

(beat)

You coming?

Earl grins like a little kid on Christmas and gets behind the wheel.

EXT. 59TH STREET BRIDGE. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

As traffic slows to a crawl, Earl's car gets stuck on the exit ramp for the FDR Drive.

INT. GRASSY KNOLL EARL'S CAR. THAT MOMENT.

They look down at the East River's bank, where THOUSANDS of people have already staked out a good spot to watch the fireworks.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL

We'll have to find an alternate route.

J.T.

There isn't one. Which means they have to bring the gas in this way.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
What if it's already there?

EXT. 59TH STREET BRIDGE EXIT RAMP. THAT MOMENT.

J.T. gets out of the car and looks down at the avenue below - where a POLICEMAN waves traffic, which flows freely south.

J.T.
They'd wait until the last possible
moment...to maximize casualties.
Like right about...

A red BPO van, directly below them, waits to move on.

J.T.
...now.

Earl sticks his head out of his window.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
That's the guy? We'll never catch-

But J.T. has already stepped over the rail and started to climb down.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
Just a writer, my ass.

INT. BPO VAN. THAT MOMENT.

As Burr glances into the rear view mirror to check his cargo...

BAM!

...something hits the van.

EXT. BPO VAN. THAT MOMENT.

Burr gets out and checks the back to make sure it is still locked.

Horns HONK impatiently behind him.

DRIVER (O.S.)
Come on! Move it!

Burr holds up his hand, as he examines the large indentation on the roof, then looks for what might have made it.

The van suddenly SPEEDS away.

INT. BPO VAN. THAT MOMENT.

J.T. sits behind the wheel, his foot on the gas, as Burr grows small in his sideview mirror.

J.T.
That was too easy.

A POLICEMAN waves for him to slow down.

J.T.
I'll just give him the van and end
of story.

J.T. pulls over, and the cop approaches.

Recognition dawns on the Policeman's face. He pulls out his gun and points it directly at J.T.

POLICEMAN
Hands! Keep your hands on that wheel!
(beat)
Out of the car, asshole! I know who
you are. You're that terrorist!
Joseph Turner.

J.T.
You're right, Officer. I'm
surrendering to you-

POLICEMAN
Shut up.
(into his walkie)
This is Goldman. I've got a man
with a van on the FDR. The guy who
did the Tokyo thing.
(beat)
Out of the vehicle.

J.T. starts to comply.

POLICEMAN
You blink and I'll shoot-

An out of breath Burr SHOOTs the cop where he stands.

J.T., half in and half out of the van, steps on the accelerator.

The vehicle SCREECHES away, but not before Burr can grab onto the back.

J.T. pulls himself in, SLAMS the door shut, and races south.

A sudden draft tosses his hair, as the van's back doors are thrown open.

In the rearview mirror, he sees Burr in the cargo area behind the RATTLING tanks, his gun raised.

As the windshield EXPLODES from a gunshot, J.T. turns the van hard, hoping to spill the assassin out.

EXT. FDR DRIVE. THAT MOMENT.

The van CRASHES through a divider and crosses the northbound lane. It heads straight for the crowd, which scatters.

A VOLUNTEER leaps out of the way, just as the out of control vehicle CRASHES through a table.

INT. BPO VAN. THAT MOMENT.

As Burr raises his weapon to take another shot, J.T. SLAMS the vehicle through a construction barrier.

Burr is thrown off his feet, and grabs onto the tanks for dear life.

The van comes to a sudden stop and the engine dies.

EXT. FDR DRIVE. THAT MOMENT.

The front half of the vehicle dangles precariously over the East River, forty feet below.

The back half clings to the mangled construction barrier.

INT. BPO VAN. THAT MOMENT.

Slumped over the steering wheel, J.T. picks up his head and looks around.

POLICE SIRENS rapidly get closer and closer.

Burr stands in the back of the van. Even the slightest movement threatens to tip the scales and send the vehicle over the edge.

Burr raises his empty hands, his gun lost in the crash, then smiles.

BURR
Have a nice flight, Hollywood.

He grabs a single tank and leaps out to the street.

The van GROANS at the loss of weight and starts to slip over the side.

EXT. FDR DRIVE. THAT MOMENT.

The van and its deadly cargo PLUNGE into the river.

It sinks fast and hard. People, BUZZING over the early fireworks, rush over and look down.

Earl pushes his way through. When he looks over the edge, a big smile breaks across his face.

J.T. clings to a piece of construction netting which dangles from the roadway.

Earl helps to pull him up, then turns to the crowd.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
This man just saved all of your lives!

The CROWD breaks into APPLAUSE and waves their flags.

J.T.
Which way did he go?

People point west into the city.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
What's our next move?

J.T.
Tell the cops to call DHS. Ask for Agent Lebel. They need to shut down the trains. Tell her Burr's gone to Z Junction.

GRASSY KNOLL EARL
You told me on the ride over here that they closed that off. You said there was no way in.

J.T.
I just thought of one.

INT. DOWNTOWN 5 TRAIN. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

A winded Burr steps onto a packed train, the small green tank under his arm.

He beats an OLD LADY to a seat, and catches his breath.

INT. DOWNTOWN 5 TRAIN. MINUTES LATER.

The train pulls out from the 59th Street station.

ANNOUNCEMENT

...the next stop is Grand Central.

Burr gets up and makes his way to the end of the car.

He suddenly reaches up and pulls the emergency cord.

Passengers SCREAM, as the train BRAKES violently, and Burr exits.

INT. BETWEEN SUBWAY CARS. THAT MOMENT.

As the 5 slows in the black tunnel, Burr leaps to the tracks with the tank.

He rolls, then finds his feet, as the lights on the braking train grow small.

The third rail throws off angry SPARKS, whose light reveals a long black arrow beneath writing on the wall:

TO Z JUNCTION

Burr heads in that direction.

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL. MINUTES LATER.

An empty-handed Burr comes back the way he came - but J.T. stands in his way.

J.T.

Where's the tank?

BURR

You wrote the scenario, Turner. You know where it is. It's on Track 11. When the 7:15 Uptown 6 train leaves Grand Central...

(checks his watch)

...in four minutes, it'll hit the tank. And the gas will be spread all over the city. Above ground, below ground, what's the difference? I'll still get paid.

J.T.
This is about money?

BURR
The people I'm working for have themselves convinced they're doing God's will. But the only God that matters in this world is green.

J.T.
So that's all you are, Burr?
Sharmoota? A whore?

BURR
Skip the speech. It's not your strength.
(beat)
Now plot, plot is something you're good at. So tell me what's next. Do you make a move, or do we just stand here and wait for a train?

J.T.
You'll die too.

BURR
I don't think so. We're downwind of the gas.
(beat)
You want to be a hero? Here you are. I'm a trained killer and you're just some ordinary guy. Everyman. Well come on, Everyman. Let's see what you got.

J.T. hits Burr with everything he's got...but he's only got one good hand...and the Patriot fights dirty.

He beats the writer down, then drags him into the darkness.

INT. Z JUNCTION. MOMENTS LATER.

CLICK. CLICK.

J.T. finds himself handcuffed to a rusty pipe. A few feet to his left, the canister of gas rests on the tracks.

BURR
You wanted to know what was in the tank. Looks like you'll be the first person to find out.

Burr leaves J.T.

As he struggles with the handcuffs, a light at the end of the tunnel begins to grow large.

The 7:15 6 train is right on schedule.

J.T. reaches for the tank, but it is just out of his grasp.

The oncoming train's horn BLASTS a warning.

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL. MOMENTS LATER.

The 6 train COMES and GOES in the adjacent tunnel.

Burr smiles, and continues walking.

J.T.

Hey Burr. I think this is yours.

J.T. hits Burr on the back of head with the tank. The killer falls hard onto the tracks, and the canister rolls away toward the rails.

BURR

Houdini research. Forgot about that.
I underestimated you, Hollywood. I-

Burr pulls a military blade from his leg sheath and buries it in J.T.'s calf.

The wounded writer falls right next to the tank, as Burr stands over him.

BURR

That's the best thing about trains.
You miss one, another one always
comes along.

(checks his watch)

In three minutes.

(beat)

Maybe you'll get lucky and bleed to
death before you get a whiff of the
gas.

(beat)

Excuse me.

As Burr bends down and puts his hands on the tank, J.T. yanks the knife out of his leg and drops it between the canister and the adjacent third rail, completing the circuit.

Burr is fried, as six hundred volts go through his body.

Smoke comes off his dead body, as he falls away from the tank.

J.T. lies back down across the tracks to catch his breath. He grimaces at the pain in his leg, and presses his hand there to stop the bleeding.

Light spills over him and a horn SOUNDS, as another speeding train BEARS down on him.

He grabs the tank and rolls off the tracks, just in time.

EXT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION. A SHORT WHILE LATER.

A bleeding J.T. limps out onto the street, the tank tucked safely under his arm.

The first of the fireworks light up the sky in the distance.

INT. OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY. A FEW HOURS LATER.

Washington rushes in, and hastily begins stuffing documents and other incriminating evidence into a large briefcase.

POP! POP!

He turns toward the sound, which came from his closet.

When he pulls open the door, scores of red, white, and blue balloons spill out.

Peace, Hope, Love.

He trips over himself, trying to get away, his face blanched with fear.

The door opens, and Lebel and other Agents enter.

LEBEL
They're just balloons, Deputy
Secretary Janeway. They can't hurt
you.

She nods to the Agents, who scrape the Patriot off the floor and take him away.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE WALKWAY. A FEW DAYS LATER.

Agent Lebel walks from the Manhattan side to meet J.T. halfway.

J.T.
I see we didn't make the news.

LEBEL
It's quite an embarrassment to the Administration. They feel its better if the American people didn't know about this threat.

J.T.
So Earl was right.

LEBEL
We had a nice little chat with Mister Levy. He offers a lot of interesting scenarios - some of which we'll be exploring.
(beat)
But as I told him, security is about confidence...not truth.

J.T.
And Washington?

LEBEL
Deputy Secretary Janeway has resigned. We'll get him to plea to obstruction. He'll do twenty. Minimum.

J.T.
I know this ending. It all gets covered up, and we all go back to our lives and pretend that it never happened.

LEBEL
I think there's still a First Amendment in this country. We can't stop you from telling your story.

J.T.
Yeah, I'd write it...but no one will buy it. You guys are too damn good at story. The only thing I have on my side is the truth.
(beat)
Besides, I've got this idea for a romantic comedy...

She hands him two envelopes.

LEBEL

That's a letter from the Secretary of Homeland Security. It exonerates you from any involvement in the Tokyo bombing and the Lincoln Tunnel incident.

J.T.

What's this one?

LEBEL

Now that Aeschylus is shut down, it looks like you're unemployed. It's a job offer.

J.T.

You want me to come work for you.

LEBEL

In the War on Terror, we could use a creative mind like yours.

(beat)

If not Homeland Security, then maybe something else. We have lots of powerful friends, Mister Turner.

J.T.

I've heard that one before.

LEBEL

Think about it.

J.T. smiles, and tips his cap to her.

J.T.

I'll let you know.

She watches the writer limp away - like the hero at the end of a movie - as the sun sets over the city skyline.

EXT. BROOKLYN END OF THE BRIDGE. MINUTES LATER.

J.T. stops at a trash can - seemingly weighing the Homeland Security job offer in his hand.

Just as it looks like he may dump it, a MAN ON A BICYCLE stops to throw out a Gatorade bottle.

J.T. does not make eye contact, as he reports...

J.T.
Aeschylus is dead...
(beat)
...and I'm in.

He stuffs the envelope into his bag.

J.T.
Sorry we got cut off. The device
was broken...but not discovered.
You've reviewed my reports?

The Man on the Bicycle barely nods, as he pats his Ipod -
which we see is the one with the distinctive "I LOVE NY"
skin.

MAN ON A BICYCLE
Gute arbeit.

J.T.
Now what?

MAN ON A BICYCLE
Wir warten. We wait.
(beat)
Bis später...Cicada.

J.T.
Bis später.

They go their separate ways...

...and the man we knew as Joseph "J.T." Turner goes down a
staircase and disappears back underground.

END CREDITS.