

The Vanisher

Treatment and Original Screenplay
by Richard Daub

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Main Characters

John Vander (Editor of a trade journal father of J.J.)
Rebecca Vander (John's wife, she is a law school student at NYU)
J.J. (John and Rebecca's three year old son)
Jim the Homeless Man
Nass (Knife-wielding Gang Member)
Subway Man (the second "Vanisher")

Setting

Greenwich Village, NYC
Abandoned Subway Tunnel
Crown Heights, Brooklyn
Various Other NYC Locations

Treatment

John Vander is the editor of a pharmaceutical trade journal. He lives in Greenwich Village with his wife, who is attending NYU Law School, and their three year old son J.J.

John walks J.J. to pre-school every morning through the streets of Greenwich Village, and every morning they encounter the same homeless man ("Jim") sitting in the same doorway. Every day Jim asks John for money, and every day John tries to ignore him. Eventually John gets fed up with this ritual and gives Jim five dollars to go somewhere else. Jim agrees and gets up and goes. The next morning, however, Jim is right back in the same spot. John becomes very annoyed and tells him that if he's there again the next morning, he is going to find a cop and have him removed for good.

That afternoon after work, John steps out of the subway station and is confronted by a man who demands money from him. This man is relentless and follows John and yells at him for

stepping on his turf and starts demanding five dollars. John tries to ignore him but says to himself, "Go away, you piece of shit" while walking away. When John no longer hears the guy yelling after him, he turns around to see that the guy is no longer there. No one is behind him, and he looks around a little bit in the doorways and around the corner, but the guy is nowhere to be found.

That evening, John and Rebecca are in bed and John says he thinks he made a man disappear and tells her about the walk home from the subway. Rebecca doesn't believe him and says that the guy probably just ducked into a building or an alley. John realizes that he sounds foolish and tells her that she's probably right, but he still inwardly believes that he was responsible for making the man disappear.

The next morning, Jim the homeless guy is there again. John confronts him and tells him he is going to find a cop, but Jim refuses to leave and tells John to do what he has to do. John walks away with J.J. to find a cop, but after taking a few steps, J.J. looks back and sees that the man has disappeared. John turns around to see that he is no longer there. They go back to the doorway and see the guy's stained coffee cup that still has change in it and some other miscellaneous possessions, but the man is nowhere to be found.

That evening in bed, Rebecca sarcastically asks John if he made anyone disappear today. This annoys John and he says "No". He doesn't say another word about it, but he has trouble falling asleep. He eventually goes out to the living room and turns on the TV and starts watching *Death Wish*. He sees Charles Bronson shooting a mugger and then the scene where the cops are talking about how the crime rate in the city has dropped and how it is safer than it has been in a long time with the vigilante still on the loose.

The next day when John is walking J.J. to school, Jim the homeless guy is no longer there. The coffee cup is still there, but it is tipped over and the change that was in it is gone.

Later that day, John calls Rebecca before leaving work and tells her that he has to stay late at the office. However, he leaves the office at the usual time, and instead of taking his regular train home, he takes the downtown 4 train to the end of the line at Utica Avenue in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. He starts wandering around near the projects looking for signs of trouble, and he eventually encounters a man yelling at a woman pushing a stroller about how she doesn't show him any respect. The woman tells him that she would respect him more if he got a job and used what little money they had to buy food and pay the rent instead of buying jewelry and hanging out on the street. The man gets even angrier and yells at her some more about how he commands respect on the street but can't even get respect from his own "bitch." John is watching and is disgusted by this display and makes the guy disappear. The woman was walking away when it happened and she didn't seem to notice.

John walks around Crown Heights some more, now emboldened to the point where he makes eye contact with every guy who is dressed like a gangsta rapper. Eventually some guy dressed in gang colors ("Nass") takes offense to his stare and pulls a knife on John, and John makes him disappear.

The following Saturday John is taking J.J. to the playground. On the way they see a homeless man urinating in a doorway. John confronts the man, who in turn curses John out, prompting John to make him disappear. John then asks J.J. if he saw the man disappear, and J.J. says he did and asks where the man went. John says he doesn't know, but tells J.J. not to mention it to Mommy. When they get home, however, J.J. blurts out that he and Daddy saw a man disappear. Rebecca looks at John suspiciously and asks what J.J. is talking about, but John says he doesn't know and downplays the incident. However, John is clearly affected by what he has done and goes into the bathroom to avoid any further questions from Rebecca.

Summer eventually turns to fall, and John continues to make people he sees on the streets who are doing bad things disappear: drug pushers, muggers, a man he sees slap a woman, someone

running from the police, etc. This goes on until the winter holidays.

One day on his way home from work, John encounters a strung out woman panhandling on the subway claiming that her building burned down and that she needs money so her kids won't have to sleep out in the cold that night. John is disgusted by this and makes her disappear. The other passengers in the car are ignoring her and don't notice that she has disappeared. However, a man standing near John leans over and says in his ear, "I saw what you just did." John pretends not to know what the man is talking about and hurriedly gets off the train at the next stop, but the man follows him. John finally stops and asks the man what he wants, and the man explains that he can't just vanish people whenever he wants. This man also has the ability to make people disappear, and he explains to John his own struggles of how he has come to terms with this ability that he now sees as a curse. John is not impressed and tries to walk away, but the man says that John must answer for what he has done to the woman and anyone else he made disappear.

The man vanishes John, who suddenly finds himself in an abandoned subway tunnel trapped with all the people he made disappear. After a few of them recognize him as the man who made them disappear, they assume a mob mentality and want to kill him. But Jim the homeless guy is there and calms them down by explaining that because John is the one who sent them there, he is the only one who can get them out.

Jim and John then talk privately, and Jim tells John the story about how he became homeless. John realizes that Jim is not a bad person, but someone who has made some mistakes that led him to homelessness. They figure out that in order to send everyone back, John has to understand the people and what led them to the behavior that John witnessed and made him angry. It was John's anger that enabled him to send them here, and it is his compassion that will enable him to send them back.

John's newfound compassion reverses the process and sends Jim back. The others notice that Jim is gone and demand that John

send them back to. Nass in particular is ready to kill him if he doesn't send him back, but the others convince Nass to give John a chance. John offers to talk to Nass first. Nass tells John that his father left before he was born, his mother was a crackhead, and that he was raised on the street by gang members, who were the only people who cared about him. That is enough for John to feel the compassion necessary to send him back.

After everyone is sent back, John is left alone in the tunnel. He's not sure how to send himself back, but then a train appears at the end of the tunnel. John tries to run in order to avoid being struck, but he is not fast enough to get away. Just before being struck, John sees that the train is being driven by the man in the subway who had sent him there. At the moment the train is about to strike, everything whites out.

An alarm clock goes off. John is back home in bed and lets the alarm go off until Rebecca finally asks if he is going to get up and take J.J. to school. John gets out of bed, gets dressed, and gets J.J. ready for school.

On the way to school, they encounter Jim the homeless guy back in his old spot. Jim does not ask for money, but John takes out all the money in his wallet and hands it to J.J., instructing him to put it in Jim's change cup. John tells Jim that he hopes he uses the money to get back on his feet, and Jim says that he will.

John and J.J. continue on their way, and J.J. looks back and sees that the man is still there. He then turns to John and asks him if he is going to make the man disappear again, and John says he isn't going to make anyone disappear anymore.

END OF TREATMENT

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1. EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK CITY - DAY

John is walking on the sidewalk in Greenwich Village holding J.J.'s hand on their way to drop J.J. off at pre-school. They eventually encounter a homeless man (Jim) sitting in the doorway of a vacant storefront office. A stained paper coffee cup for spare change is on the ground in front of him.

JIM

(to John)

Good morning, sir. Do you happen to have any spare change so I can get some breakfast?

John gives him a dirty look, but doesn't stop or say anything. After they have passed, J.J. turns and looks at the man while still holding John's hand, struggling a little to keep up.

2. EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK CITY - DAY

(Same scene as previous except it is a different day and John and J.J. are wearing different clothes). John is walking on the sidewalk holding J.J.'s hand on their way to drop J.J. off at pre-school. They eventually encounter Jim the homeless guy sitting in the same doorway with his stained coffee cup for spare change.

JIM

Good morning, sir. Do you happen to have any spare change so I can get some breakfast?

John gives him a dirty look, a little bit more annoyed than in the first scene, but he still doesn't stop or say anything. After they have passed, J.J. turns and looks at the man while

still holding John's hand, struggling a little to keep up.

3. EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK CITY - DAY

(Same scene as previous except it is a different day and John and J.J. are wearing different clothes). John is walking on the sidewalk holding J.J.'s hand on their way to drop J.J. off at pre-school. They eventually encounter Jim the homeless guy sitting in the same doorway with his stained coffee cup full of spare change.

JIM

Good morning, sir. Do you happen to have any spare change so I can get some breakfast?

John can no longer contain his annoyance. He stops and looks down at the man.

JOHN

Do you really think that if you keep asking me every single day that I'm going to change my mind?

JIM

I'm just hoping to get a little breakfast, sir.

JOHN

You've been asking me every day for the past month, and not once have I ever stopped to give you money. After the first few hundred times I thought that maybe you'd get the hint.

JIM

I didn't hear you say "no", sir.

JOHN

I've been doing my best to just pretend you're not here.

JIM

I apologize for disturbing you.

JOHN

Listen, if I give you five bucks, will you go somewhere else?

JIM

Okay.

John reaches into his wallet and puts a five dollar bill in the coffee cup.

JIM

Thank you, sir. Where do you want me to go?

JOHN

Anywhere but here.

Jim slowly starts to gather his belongings, including his coffee cup, blanket, and a few other miscellaneous belongings. John and J.J. start to walk away slowly, both of them looking back.

4. INT. JOHN AND REBECCA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

John and Rebecca are in bed reading just before going to sleep, and John puts his book down and looks at Rebecca for a moment before speaking. Rebecca is wearing an NYU Law t-shirt.

JOHN

I'm really getting tired of the city.

REBECCA

(still reading and not looking at John)
Well, when I'm done with school and get a job, we'll buy our house in Westchester.

JOHN

I know, I know. I'm just saying that it's getting to me. I'm so sick of stepping out the door and constantly being harassed by junkies asking me for money every five feet. I don't think I'd mind it as much if it wasn't for that. I used to be a little more sympathetic, but I just don't care anymore. Ever since J.J. was born, I don't really care about anything outside of our own little world here. The whole world can fall apart,

but I wouldn't give a crap as long as we're okay.

Rebecca puts down her book and gives John an amused look.

JOHN

I just don't like J.J. being constantly exposed to panhandling junkies every time we step out of the house. I wish they would all just disappear.

REBECCA

Where would they go?

JOHN

Anywhere else. I don't care. As long as we don't have to see them and be harassed by them every time we go outside.

5. EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK CITY - DAY

Same scene as previous exterior scenes, except it is a different day and John and J.J. are wearing different clothes. This time, John becomes visibly annoyed when he sees Jim back in the same spot.

JOHN

(to himself)

I don't believe this...

(to Jim)

Hey, what are you doing? I gave you five bucks yesterday to go somewhere else.

JIM

I did.

JOHN

No, no, that was for you to go somewhere else *for good*.

JIM

I don't recall you saying that.

JOHN

Well, I'm sorry I didn't make myself more clear. So I'm telling you now. That was to go somewhere else for good.

JIM

This is my spot. I wouldn't permanently give up prime Manhattan real estate for only five bucks. Would you?

JOHN

No, no, this isn't your spot. This spot belongs to the owner of this building.

JIM

Would that be you?

JOHN

No. I live around the block.

JIM

Do you know the owner of this building?

JOHN

No I don't.

JIM

Then how would you know he doesn't want me sitting here?

JOHN

If it was my building, I wouldn't want some homeless person living in the doorway.

JIM

I'm here every day and no one has ever told me I couldn't sit here. And everybody around here knows this is my spot.

JOHN

Everybody knows? What the hell are you talking about?

JIM

You ever see anyone else here?

JOHN

Oh no, I don't want to hear about some code of the street. This neighborhood

belongs to the people who legitimately live here. That's the code that we in the legitimate world live by, and it's against the law for you to be trespassing on someone's property doing drugs and drinking and pissing and doing whatever the hell it is you do. My wife and I and everyone else who lives in these buildings pay a hell of a lot of money to live here, and I'm sure I can speak for every one of them when I say that we don't appreciate some drug addict using our sidewalk as their personal drug den and bathroom. So I'm only going to say this one time. When we come by tomorrow, I don't want to see you here. Got it? And if you are here, I'm going to find the nearest cop and make sure that he drags your ass out of here and assures me that you won't come back. Got it?

Jim looks hurt, but doesn't say anything. John walks away with J.J. in hand, and again J.J. is looking back, but then he looks up at John.

J.J.

Daddy, why did you yell at that man?

JOHN

Because he's not supposed to be there.

J.J.

Why?

JOHN

Because the owner of that building doesn't want people living in his doorway, and the people who live here don't want him to make a mess on the sidewalk.

J.J.

Does he live in his own building?

JOHN

I don't think so.

J.J.

Does he live in a house like Grandma's?

JOHN

No.

J.J.

Why doesn't he have his own building?

JOHN

I don't know, J.J. Let's talk about something else now, okay?

J.J.

(disappointed)

Okay.

6. INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

John is at work at his office (he is the editor of *Pharm Industry* magazine, a trade journal for the pharmaceutical industry, and his office in the Graybar Building on Lexington Avenue adjacent to Grand Central Station). John is carrying his messenger bag as if on his way home for the day and approaches the cubicle of one of his reporters.

JOHN

How's that Pfizer story coming along?

REPORTER

Good. I should have it wrapped up by the end of the day tomorrow.

JOHN

No hurry, we have time to stretch it another day if we have to. We just need to make sure we got it right. They were pretty pissed about that little error in our last feature. Alright, I'm outta here. See you tomorrow.

REPORTER

Alright, good night, John.

7. INT. GRAYBAR BLDG ELEVATOR/GRAND CENTRAL - DAY

John steps off the elevator and is seen walking through Grand Central Station and then exiting at Madison Avenue.

8. EXT. 42nd STREET & MADISON AVENUE - DAY

John walks east on 42nd Street next to Bryant Park. He is seen entering the Bryant Park subway station (he is going to get on the downtown B or D train).

9. INT./EXT. SUBWAY STATION AT WEST 4th STREET - DAY

John is shown climbing the stairs onto the street at the West 4th Street subway station in Greenwich Village. At the top of the stairs he is confronted by a young panhandler who doesn't appear as dirty as some homeless people, and he is demanding.

PANHANDLER

Hey, man, give me a quarter.

John flashes him an annoyed look but continues walking north towards his apartment on West 9th Street. The Panhandler follows.

PANHANDLER

Don't ignore me, dude. I know you got it. If you don't have change, I'll take a bill.

JOHN

(turning to look over his shoulder but still walking)
I don't have any money.

PANHANDLER

Don't give me that shit, I know you got it. Just give me a buck and I'll be on my way.

JOHN

(stopping and angrily looking at him)
I said I don't have any money. Now get lost.

John continues walking, but the panhandler continues to follow. (Only John should be shown at this point, but the panhandler should still be heard).

PANHANDLER
Who the fuck you think you talkin' to, jack? You can't pass through my corner and talk to me like that. Now I want five bucks, motherfucker.

JOHN
(to himself and not looking back)
Go away, you piece of shit.

John continues walking, but the panhandler is no longer heard. John eventually turns around to see that the panhandler is no longer there. In fact, there is no one in sight from his location to the subway station entrance. He looks around but does not see him. He starts slowly looking back and even looks into a couple of doorways, but the panhandler is nowhere to be found. He is perplexed because from where he is standing, it looks nearly impossible to disappear that quickly. Finally he continues on towards West 9th Street.

10. INT. JOHN AND REBECCA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

John and Rebecca are in bed reading just before going to sleep. John puts his book down and looks at Rebecca for a moment before speaking.

JOHN
I think I made a man disappear today.

REBECCA
(puts down her book and looks at him with amusement)
Oh yeah?

JOHN

I know it sounds crazy, but when I got out of the subway, this guy started following me and started demanding money. At first it was a quarter, and then a dollar, and then he wanted five bucks. I told him to get lost, but he kept following me. I was getting really pissed, and I felt this rage building inside of me. It was really strange, I had never felt that degree of anger before. After he demanded the five bucks I just said to myself "Go away, you piece of shit." It wasn't loud enough for him to hear. Suddenly everything got really quiet, even the regular street noise, so I turned around and he was gone. It was so strange because there was no way he could have disappeared that quickly without me seeing him. I stopped and looked into a couple of doorways, but he was nowhere to be found. In fact, there was no one around. It was surreal.

REBECCA

(pausing for a moment looking
incredulous)

You don't really believe that you made him disappear?

JOHN

I don't know, Becks. Something definitely happened. It wasn't just that he disappeared, but it felt like something happened, the way everything got so quiet. It was almost like I willed it to happen, and I turned around and he was gone. There's just no way he could have vanished that quickly.

REBECCA

There's a million little cracks and crevices in this city that people can simply disappear into.

JOHN

I know, but this wasn't just visual. I *felt* it happen.

Rebecca just stares at John, still looking amused.

JOHN

I know it sounds crazy. It just felt so real.

REBECCA

I guess the city really is getting to you.

JOHN

I know, you're right, but it felt so real.

REBECCA

I know this is tough. I know we wanted to be living in a nice big house by now, but we're almost there. And I know you've been working really hard lately, and I appreciate it. And so does J.J. in his own way. And he likes living in the city.

John smiles.

JOHN

I love you. Good night, sweetie.

REBECCA

I love you too. Good night.

They kiss and John turns off the lamp on his nightstand.

11. EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK CITY - DAY

John is walking J.J. to preschool again, the same as in the previous scenes. Once again Jim the homeless guy is there in his regular doorway.

JOHN

(to Jim)

What are you still doing here?

JIM

This is where I work.

JOHN

Did you even hear me yesterday when I told you I was going to find a cop and have you removed?

JIM

Yes, I heard you.

JOHN

Did that not register in your mind?

JIM

Do what you have to do, mister. It won't be the first time I've been harassed by the cops.

JOHN

I was hoping that it wouldn't come to this.

JIM

Me too.

JOHN

It's not too late, you know. If you get up and go now and not come back, I won't do it.

JIM

This is where I work. This is how I survive. I'm not going anywhere.

JOHN

Okay.

John walks away, and J.J. turns to John a few feet away.

J.J.

(worried)

Daddy, are you going to tell the police on that man?

JOHN

I'm afraid so. I really wish he would have just gone away.

They keep walking, and a few moments later J.J. turns around.

J.J.
Daddy! The man just disappeared!

JOHN
(still walking)
What's that?

J.J.
The man was just there looking at us and then he wasn't there anymore!

John turns around to see that Jim is no longer there. He just stares for a moment, and then he and J.J. walk back to the doorway. Jim's stuff is still there, including the stained coffee cup with the change still in it. There is a dirty old blanket that he had been sitting on.

J.J.
Where did the man go?

JOHN
I don't know, J.J. Maybe he just went to the store or something.

J.J.
What store did he go to?

JOHN
I don't know.

They both just stare at the vacant doorway for another moment.

JOHN
Alright, bud, we have to get you to school.

They resume walking.

J.J.
Are you going to tell the policeman that the man disappeared?

JOHN

No, I'm not going to tell a policeman.
In fact, let's not tell anyone that the
man disappeared. Let's make this our
little secret. Okay, bud?

J.J.
Can I tell Mommy?

JOHN
No, I don't want you to tell Mommy or your
teachers or anyone else. It will be our
secret, just you and Daddy. Okay?

J.J.
(disappointed)
Okay.

John and J.J. continue walking towards
school.

12. INT. JOHN AND REBECCA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

John and Rebecca are in bed reading just
before going to sleep (similar to other
scenes).

REBECCA
(still reading)
Did you make any panhandlers disappear
today?

John gives Rebecca an annoyed look.

JOHN
(still reading)
No.

Flash forward to John and Rebecca in bed
later that night with the lights out. The
clock radio shows 3:01 (am). Rebecca is
sleeping soundly, but John is still awake
twisting and turning. Eventually he gets out
of bed and goes into the living room. He sits
on the couch and turns on the TV and starts
flipping through the channels with the
remote. He stops when he sees *Death Wish* and
starts watching it. He sees Charles Bronson
shooting one of the muggers and then sees the

scene where the cops are talking about how the crime rate in the City has dropped and how it is safer than it has been in a long time with the vigilante still on the loose. He watches the movie all the way to the end before going back to bed.

13. EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK CITY - DAY

John and J.J. are walking to school in the morning, same as in the previous scenes. This time, however, Jim the homeless guy is not there. The stained coffee cup is still there, but it is tipped over and the change that was in it is gone. The blanket is still there, as are a couple of other of other miscellaneous possessions.

J.J.
(still walking)
Daddy, the man is still disappeared.

JOHN
That's right, bud. I think he just went somewhere else.

J.J.
Did the policeman take him away?

JOHN
I don't think so, bud. I think he just moved somewhere else.

J.J.
Is he going to come back?

JOHN
I don't know, bud. But I don't think so. I think he just found a new place to work.

14. INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

John is sitting in his office when one of his staff reporters knocks on the open door and pokes his head in.

REPORTER

Have you had a chance to look at the Pfizer piece?

JOHN

Yes I did, it came out really great. I had to make a couple of little changes to make it fit, but nothing major. Nice job.

REPORTER

Do you need anything else before deadline?

JOHN

No, the issue's pretty much wrapped up. I just have a couple of things to clean up, but I'll do that tomorrow. It's nice to actually finish up before deadline for a change. Why don't you knock off for the night. You can work from home tomorrow if you want.

REPORTER

Thanks, I'll do that. Alright then, have a great weekend!

JOHN

You too.

After the reporter leaves, John gets up and closes the door. He sits back down, picks up the phone, and calls his home number.

JOHN

(into the phone)

Hey sweetie. Listen, I have to work late tonight. We're having a major issue with the Pfizer story we're working on. I probably won't be home until after eight. How was yours and J.J.'s day?

(pause, he is listening to Rebecca)

That's great. Okay, I'll see you in a few hours. I love you.

John hangs up the phone and stares at the clock. It is 5:00. He gathers his belongings and shuts out the light in his office and leaves for the day.

15. INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - DAY

John is walking through Grand Central Station, but instead of going his usual way out the Madison Avenue exit, he heads down to the subway inside Grand Central. He then stops and studies a subway map and then goes to the downtown 4 train towards Brooklyn and gets on the train.

16. INT. SUBWAY (4 TRAIN) - DAY

John is shown riding the 4 train that gradually empties out. He takes it to the last stop, Utica Avenue in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. An announcement is made that this is the last stop on the train.

17. EXT. UTICA AVENUE SUBWAY ENTRANCE/CROWN HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN - DAY

John is shown slowly emerging from the Utica Avenue 4 train subway station looking around like he doesn't know where he is. At the top of the stairs he stops for a moment, looking around trying to figure out what direction to go. From there he just starts wandering around the streets and eventually winds up near the projects, where he sees a young man wearing lots of jewelry and hat to hip-hop fashion ("Bling Man") yelling at a woman pushing a stroller with an infant in it ("Stroller Woman"). John is across the street and a little bit behind so he is not seen by them, but they are shouting loud enough for him to clearly hear what they are saying.

BLING MAN

You better start showing me some respect, bitch!

STROLLER WOMAN

I'll start showing you some respect when you find a job and stop wasting all our money on bling and sneakers.

BLING MAN

I command respect on the street, and I need the right look. My boys show me respect because they know they better. Everyone on the street shows me respect, but I can't even get respect from my own bitch.

STROLLER WOMAN

I'm not going to respect you if you keep calling me your bitch, and I'm not going to respect you if you're not even man enough to pay the rent and buy food for your own child.

BLING MAN

I'm lining things up, bitch. That day is just around the corner, and you better step into line or else you're gonna be out the door when that day comes.

STROLLER WOMAN

It's time to wake up and realize that day ain't coming. I'll respect you when you start being a man. You're just lazy, and that's why you don't want to find no job. It's time you start being a man to your son and not some lazy motherfucker trying to impress all those other lazy motherfuckers you hang out with on the corner all day!

Bling Man stops while Stroller Woman keeps walking.

BLING MAN

(enraged, yelling at Stroller Woman, who is walking away)

Damn you, bitch! I ought to slap you upside the head right now, bitch! You keep talking like that, I'm gonna give you a beating like you've never seen!

John is shown here watching with an angry expression. While John is being shown, Bling Man is no longer heard, and everything gets

quiet. John is shown for a moment longer before the woman is shown across the street continuing to push the stroller, but Bling Man is no longer in sight. She doesn't look back and continues on her way as if nothing was out of the ordinary. John is shown once more, no longer looking angry but with a look of contentment as if he believes he did the right thing. He then continues on his way feeling emboldened and making eye contact with everyone he passes who is dressed like a hip-hop gangster or anyone else who looks like a dangerous character. Finally he looks at a guy wearing some kind of colors that identifies him as a gang member ("Nass"). He immediately takes exception to John looking at him this way and pushes him into a doorway and pulls a knife on him.

NASS

(pressing John against the door
with a knife to his throat)
What you looking at, bitch?

JOHN

I don't know, but you're not exactly making a good first impression.

NASS

Who are you? I know you ain't a cop.

JOHN

How do you know?

NASS

I can smell a pig from a mile away. Who are you?

JOHN

My name is John. I'm a writer. Who are you?

NASS

Nass. That's short for "Nasty," because everyone around here knows I'm a Nasty motherfucker. Now I want you to tell me what the fuck you're doing here before a slice your sack off and shove it up your ass.

JOHN

I'm just passing through, Nass.

NASS

You looking to die, bitch? I ain't no fool. You didn't look at me like you were just passing through. What are you doing here?

An old woman ("Old Woman") is shown staring at the doorway. A moment later John is shown in the background still in the doorway with the woman still staring at him, only now Nass is not there. John eventually notices the woman.

JOHN

(to Old Woman)

Did you see it? Did you see that guy disappear?

OLD WOMAN

All I see is you standing there babbling to yourself like a damned fool.

JOHN

(stepping out of the doorway)

You didn't see the other guy? You didn't see Nass?

OLD WOMAN

(stepping back away from John)

All I see is a damned fool talking to himself in the doorway. Now don't you take another step towards me. I may be old, but I can still whoop some white fool's ass if I have to.

JOHN

I apologize for disturbing you, ma'am. I'm going to go away now.

The Old Woman watches John walk away. John looks terribly frightened and shaken up as he walks back to the subway.

It is Saturday morning. Rebecca is sitting at the table typing on her laptop, and John and J.J. are on the floor playing with J.J.'s trucks.

JOHN

Hey, bud, do you want to go to the playground?

J.J.

Okay. Can Mommy come too?

REBECCA

Sorry, bud. Mommy still has homework to do.

JOHN

Okay, bud. Let's get your shoes and socks on.

J.J.

Okay.

Flash forward to John and J.J. about to leave.

REBECCA

Can I get a hug, bud?

J.J. runs to Rebecca, who is crouching and waiting for J.J. to come hug her. J.J. runs to her and hugs her.

REBECCA

(still hugging J.J.)

You have fun with Daddy, okay?

J.J.

Okay.

Rebecca stands up and John kisses her.

JOHN

We'll be back in a little while.

REBECCA

Okay, have fun guys.

19. EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK CITY - DAY

John and J.J. are shown exiting their building on West 9th Street. They start walking towards the playground holding hands. It is sunny and hot.

JOHN

Hey, bud, It's really hot out here, so I don't think we're going to stay at the playground for too long.

J.J.

(disappointed)

Okay.

John looks down at smiles at J.J. They continue walking, and when they get to the doorway where Jim used to sit, they see a man urinating ("Urinating Man"). The stained coffee cup is still there tipped over, and the stream of urine is landing on the cup.

JOHN

(to Urinating Man)

Hey, what the hell?

Urinating man turns around and flashes John a look but continues to urinate.

JOHN

(yelling)

Hey! Ass hole!

(softly to J.J.)

Cover your ears, J.J.

J.J. covers his ears.

JOHN

You better get the fuck out of here now, you degenerate scumbag! And if I see you around here again, I'll personally make sure you don't come back!

URINATING MAN

Fuck you, man. I'll piss where I want.

J.J. is shown covering his ears. A moment later his eyes widen and he uncovers his ears.

J.J.

Daddy! The man disappeared!

JOHN

That's right, bud. He's gone. That's what happens to bad people—they disappear.

J.J.

Where do they go?

JOHN

They go to jail.

J.J.

Is that where the other man went, Daddy?

JOHN

Yep. That's where all the bad people go. To jail.

J.J.

Where is the jail?

JOHN

I'm not sure. I just know it's very far away. Listen, bud. Don't say anything to Mommy about this, okay?

J.J.

Why?

JOHN

Because it's our little secret. Only you and Daddy are supposed to know about it, so don't tell Mommy or anyone else about it. Okay?

J.J.

(disappointed)

Okay.

20. EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE PLAYGROUND - DAY

John and J.J. are at the playground. John is shown pushing J.J. on a swing. While J.J. is having fun and smiling, John is very clearly

out of it and distracted thinking about what had just happened.

21. INT. JOHN AND REBECCA'S APARTMENT - DAY

John and J.J. are shown entering the apartment. Rebecca gets up and goes over to greet them.

REBECCA

Hey, bud, did you have fun with Daddy?

J.J.

Yes.

JOHN

Yeah, we had lots of fun at the playground. Right, bud? You went on the swings, we played in the sandbox, you went down the slide-

J.J.

And Daddy made the man who was going pee-pee disappear!

Rebecca looks at John incredulously.

REBECCA

What?

JOHN

Oh, we saw some guy pissing in a doorway and I told him to get out of here and he disappeared into the alley.

J.J.

(excitedly)

And he was there going pee pee standing up and Daddy yelled at him and then he disappeared and wasn't there anymore!

JOHN

Yeah, that's right. Daddy told him to go away.

J.J.

(excitedly)

Yeah, Daddy told the man going pee-pee to go away and told J.J. to cover his ears and Daddy started yelling at the man and then he disappeared and he wasn't there anymore and Daddy said he went to jail very far away!

JOHN

(to Rebecca)

I just told him that bad people went to jail.

Rebecca says nothing and looks at John suspiciously. John just shrugs and goes into the bathroom and locks the door. He is sweating profusely and turns on the cold water and splashes his face several times. After he is done splashing, he looks into the mirror with an expression of fear and uncertainty.

22. EXT. VARIOUS NEW YORK CITY LOCATIONS - DAY/NIGHT

Sequence scene that opens showing that the leaves have changed colors to indicate that it is now the fall. John is then shown walking the streets and looking angrily at people he sees doing bad things: selling dime bags in Washington Square Park, a mugger, a man he sees slap a woman, someone running from the police, etc. During the sequence, the season changes to winter, and ends around the December holidays.

23. INT. SUBWAY - DAY

John is on the subway (D train) on his way home from work when a female panhandler ("Female Panhandler") enters through the door at the end of the car. She looks strung out and is staggering a little bit. The subway car is not that crowded, and there are about ten or fifteen other passengers. None of them are paying attention, they either have I-Pods on or are reading newspapers and magazines or both. None of them look up when she comes in.

FEMALE PANHANDLER

(loudly so everyone in the subway car can hear and sounding very rehearsed)

Ladies and gentlemen, I apologize for the interruption, but I need your help. Last night my apartment building burned down, and now me and my three children do not have a place to stay tonight. As you know, it is very cold outside and people have been known to die from exposure in this kind of weather.

John is shown looking at her with disgust.

FEMALE PANHANDLER

(continued, with John being shown as she talks)

As a mother I do not want to subject my children to the cold, so I hope you will find it in your heart to spare anything you can so that we can stay at a hotel tonight. I'm not asking you to do this for my sake, but for my three children so they don't have to spend the night out in the cold and possibly freeze to death.

John is still being shown when all gets quiet. A moment later, the area where the Female Panhandler was standing is shown, but she is no longer there. None of the other passengers seem to notice that she is gone. John is then shown looking in her direction when a man standing behind him ("Subway Man") leans over to say something in his ear.

SUBWAY MAN

(quietly, in John's ear)

I saw what you did.

John turns around and looks at the man. He looks to be in his 50s and is wearing a long black overcoat and a black hat and dark sunglasses. John looks at him somewhat fearfully for a long moment before he finally responds.

JOHN

Excuse me?

SUBWAY MAN

I saw what you did to the woman asking for money.

JOHN

What woman? What are you talking about?

SUBWAY MAN

The woman who was here a minute ago asking for money because her building burned down. The woman you vanished.

John looks at him for a long moment but does not say anything.

SUBWAY MAN

You can't just vanish people because they are a nuisance.

The train is pulling into the West 4th Street station. John looks very worried now. When the train stops and the doors open, John hurriedly exits onto the platform. The Subway Man follows.

SUBWAY MAN

(calling after John)

You can't just make the world's problems disappear by vanishing people. It doesn't work that way.

John finally stops and turns to face the Subway Man.

JOHN

That woman was a lying drug addict playing on people's emotions so she could get her next fix.

SUBWAY MAN

Yeah. So? Does that give you the right to make her disappear?

JOHN

As for as I'm concerned, she doesn't have the right to harass me or my family so that she can shoot up or smoke crack or whatever the fuck she does. Hell, I just did her a favor.

SUBWAY MAN

Do even know what happened to her?

JOHN

Honestly, I really don't care.

SUBWAY MAN

I can tell that you have done this before. Have you taken the time to consider what happens to these people after you vanish them? Do you even know where they go?

JOHN

Like I said, I really don't give a shit what happens to them as long as they aren't near me or my family.

SUBWAY MAN

Do you think they die?

JOHN

No, I don't think they die. They just disappear, and that's all I know. I can't even help it most of the time. I just see people do things that make me angry, and then they disappear. I don't know how, and I don't know why. I'm having a hard enough time convincing myself that I'm not going fucking insane. What is it to you, anyway? Who the hell are you?

SUBWAY MAN

I was just like you at first. I thought I could make the world a better place by getting rid of all the scum when I first discovered I had this little ability of ours. I even went around looking for people to vanish.

JOHN

You can do it too?

SUBWAY MAN

Of course. How else would I have recognized it in you? I saw the way you looked at her. It was hatred. I was the same. I thought I could make the world a better place by making the people who

did bad things disappear. But it doesn't work that way. Most people aren't bad, but a lot of them are weak. They succumb to the pressures of the world and give in. Those people need help, not punishment. As for the people that are bad—the murderers, rapists, child molesters—I tried to get rid of them. I went around looking for them, and when I did find them, I would almost always end up getting killed myself. And then when I did make them disappear, it didn't seem to make a difference—the world was still the same awful place. So I started looking for easier targets. I thought I could at least make the world a more pleasant place. I figured that getting rid of addicts would reduce the demand for drugs and put dealers out of business. I thought I was doing the world a favor, but I was actually becoming a far worse person than the people I was making disappear. I became full of hatred, and it just kept getting easier and easier to vanish people. If you let it go on too long, you'll eventually start getting rid of people for the sake of convenience. Long line at the store? Let's just make a few of those awful people on line ahead of you disappear.

JOHN

I wouldn't do that.

SUBWAY MAN

You will eventually if you keep doing it.

JOHN

I only do it to people who are a threat to me or my family.

SUBWAY MAN

So, you're saying that the woman on the subway was a threat? I don't know about you, but she seemed pretty harmless to me. Annoying, certainly. But dangerous?

JOHN

Listen, guy. I didn't ask for this. I don't know why this is happening. It just happens when I see something that pisses me off.

SUBWAY MAN

You didn't ask for this? You didn't walk around seeing all these junkies on the streets wishing they would just disappear?

JOHN

Who doesn't think that?

SUBWAY MAN

I know you can control it. That's why that woman disappeared. You allowed her to make you angry, and you knew that would make her disappear.

JOHN

Alright, if you're such an expert, why don't you tell me what the fuck is happening to me?

SUBWAY MAN

I don't know. I don't understand it myself. I am just speaking to you from my own experience. I don't know where it came from, and at this point I've stopped asking because I don't even want to know. At first I thought I had this great gift, this power that was given to me by God for the purpose of making the world a better place, but it turned out to be a curse. I lost my humanity. My reasoning for vanishing people kept becoming broader and broader. Soon it wasn't just the junkies. Eventually it was someone I saw stumble out of a bar and get behind the wheel of a car, or a woman I saw walking out of an abortion clinic, or someone I saw slipping a can of pork and beans into his pocket at the supermarket. And then it became teenagers I saw doing that stuff that most teenagers do—vandalism mostly, stupid stuff that I myself had done, that most of us have done. I truly believed that I was cleaning up all the

little messes in the world, and by doing so I would make it a better place. It became an obsession. I was out of control. Then finally someone came along who knew what I was doing. I had to answer for what I had done, and then I had to learn how to control it so it wouldn't keep happening. It was tough, but I eventually learned how to control it. I had to figure out how to keep myself from getting angry, and the best way to do that was to try to understand why people do what they do. I had to open my eyes and ears. I couldn't keep wandering aimlessly through the world letting things blindsides me. I had to understand who I was and where I was, and who were the people around me. I had to talk to them, and when I did I found myself wanting to help. But when I did try to help, I found that most people were resistant to my efforts. Most of them didn't want my help. Finally, though, I did find that someone who accepted my offer. That's when I realized that this curse had actually led me to a gift.

JOHN

(sarcastically)

That's great, I'm happy to hear it. Listen, I'd love to stick around and chat some more, but I have to get home to my family. They're the ones I have to help.

SUBWAY MAN

What about the woman you vanished?

JOHN

I'm sure she's in a better place. If it makes you feel better, I'll be more careful in the future. Good night now.

John turns and starts to walk away.

SUBWAY MAN

You have to answer for what you have done. You made a woman disappear. I'm sure you've sent others away too. It's

important that you understand what you have done to these people. It's important that you see where you have sent them.

John stops and turns around.

JOHN

It's more important that I get home to my family.

The Subway Man is shown for a long moment looking in John's direction. Then the area of the platform where John was walking is shown, and he is not there, and the platform is completely deserted. The Subway Man is shown once more before the scene fades to white.

24. INT. ABANDONED SUBWAY TUNNEL - NIGHT

The scene fades in from white to an abandoned, dimly lit subway tunnel with a single set of train tracks. John slowly wakes up on the tracks and is startled when he sees a giant rat right in front of him. There are a lot of other people in the tunnel as well, about fifty or so, and they all look dirty and haggard. There is a campfire down the tracks where most of them are gathered. Nobody notices John at first. John watches them for a few moments before finally getting up and walking towards the fire. There are a couple of people sitting against the wall fast asleep, and John looks at them as if they look familiar, but he can't quite place them. He walks by a few more people who are staring at him as if they recognize him but aren't quite sure, and a couple of them say to each other that he looks familiar. When he gets to the fire, he sees a man sitting on one of the rails just staring into the fire. When John approaches, the man turns and looks up at him. John immediately recognizes him as Jim the homeless guy.

JOHN

You...

JIM

It's me. I had a feeling you were going to turn up here sooner or later.

JOHN

Where are we?

JIM

I was hoping you would be able to tell me.

John looks around at some of the others, all of whom are staring at him. He then stops and sees Nass the Gang Member walking towards the fire. Nass looks up and immediately recognizes him.

NASS

Motherfucker!

Nass attacks John and they both fall to the ground. Nass continues his attack on John, but Jim yells at him to stop and tries to pull Nass off and asks the others to help. It takes several people to finally pull Nass off.

NASS

This is the motherfucker that sent me here! I know it was you, bitch!

The Panhandler who followed John down the street from scene 9 comes to the fire and also recognizes John.

PANHANDLER

Yeah, I know this motherfucker too. He's the last person I saw before I wound up here.

Some of the others start to talk, and a few of them say they saw him just before they wound up here too.

NASS

(still being held back)

Let me go, I'm gonna kill this motherfucker!

JIM

(shouting)
Wait! Everyone just wait and quiet down!
He can help us!

Everyone eventually quiets down.

PANHANDLER
If you don't let him kill him, I will!

The Panhandler tries to get to John, but Jim yells at the others to restrain him, which several of them do.

JIM
(while still holding Nass back)
He's the only one who can get us out of here!

The Panhandler stops struggling, and everyone is looking at Jim.

JIM
Don't you see? He was the last person we saw before we came here. He brought us here.

A random homeless person ("Random Homeless Person") is shown.

RANDOM HOMELESS PERSON
I've never seen this guy before. How is he going to get us out of here? We're walled in at every direction.

JIM
Yes, but if he managed to get us in here through those walls, he must also know how to get us back out. I know we didn't get here on foot. He did something to us. One moment I was out on the street, and then there was a white flash and here I was. I don't know how he did it, but whatever he did to get us here is also probably the only way to get us out.

Everyone is now looking at John, who is looking back at them trying to digest the situation. Then the Bling Man from scene 17 is shown.

BLING MAN

You better get us out of here. You ain't gonna last too long down here if you don't.

The crowd agrees with this sentiment and starts to assume a mob mentality. John looks scared and confused.

JIM

Hey! Everyone just calm down, okay. We're going to figure this out. He's going to get us out of here. Let me talk to him and we'll put a plan together that will get all of us back home.

Jim approaches John and takes his arm. He leads John down the tunnel a bit to where it is quiet.

JIM

Have a seat.

John pauses for a moment. Jim gestures with his hand for John to sit down, and he finally does with his back to the wall. John does the same.

JIM

I don't believe we've formally introduced ourselves. My name is Jim.

Jim holds out his hand to shake, and John shakes it.

JOHN

(shaking Jim's hand)

John.

JIM

Your little boy isn't here, is he?

JOHN

No. I hope not. I don't think so.

JIM

What is his name?

JOHN

John. John Junior. We call him "J.J."

JIM

How old is he?

JOHN

Three. He's going to be four in a few weeks.

JIM

He's an adorable little boy. You're very lucky.

JOHN

Thank you.

JIM

I'm glad he's not here. This place is hell.

JOHN

I don't know if I can help you. I don't know how I did it. I would just see people doing things that made me angry and then they would just disappear. That's how it happened with you. I didn't know where you went. J.J. said you disappeared, and I turned around and you were gone. That other guy back there, he followed me out of the subway demanding money and cursing at me. I was so angry, but then I turned around and he was gone. I told my wife about it, but she thought I was crazy. She said the guy probably just slipped into an alley or something, and I thought maybe she was right. But when you disappeared, I knew there was something going on.

JIM

So this just started happening right around the time you sent me here?

JOHN

Yeah. Just out of nowhere. A couple of nights earlier I was saying to my wife that I was tired of living in the city and being asked by homeless people for money all the time. I just didn't want J.J. to be constantly exposed to it.

JIM

Why?

JOHN

He's three years old. He's too young to understand things like that.

JIM

How old are you?

JOHN

Thirty-three.

JIM

It doesn't seem that you understand things like that either. Maybe that's why you sent us here. You just didn't want to see us and have to think about it. You just wanted us to disappear so that you wouldn't have to.

JOHN

Maybe.

JIM

That's the way most people are. And the ones that do claim to want to help us always want to do it on their terms. Send us to a shelter. Get us off the streets. Make us stand in line for hours to eat shit food. Believe it or not, it's usually easier to deal with people like you than the ones who claim they want to help.

JOHN

You seem like a smart guy. How did you end up sitting in doorways asking for spare change?

JIM

I worked for a dot-com startup in the '90s. I cashed in some of my stock options before the bubble burst and I made a fortune. I bought a big house, several cars, and I started living life in the fast lane. I eventually quit my job because I had more than enough money to live comfortably for the rest of my

life. But I developed a very expensive cocaine habit. At one point I was spending 50 grand a week. I was out of control. It didn't take long for the money to run out. I still had some stock options, but then the bubble burst. I cashed those in, but at that point they weren't worth much and I went through that pretty quickly. I lost the house, the cars, everything. I declared bankruptcy. I was forced to get straight simply because I couldn't afford to keep up my habit. I went to rehab and sobered up, and then they set me up with a minimum wage job at some warehouse and an apartment in the projects in Brooklyn. I have a bachelor's degree, but my success had more to do with luck than anything, so it seemed pretty hopeless that I was ever going to get back to the level where I was. My life lost all meaning. I would get up every morning, go to work at that shit job, and come home every night fighting my way through all the crack dealers selling rocks right outside the building. It was a temptation. Five bucks and I could have gotten off instead of just sitting in front of the TV all night doing nothing and facing the prospect of another day of work at that horrible warehouse. So one night I gave in. I thought I could control it. I bought two rocks, one for after dinner, and the other one for before bed. I did that for a couple of weeks, and work got easier. I had some incentive to get through the day. I don't know if you ever smoked crack, but the high doesn't last long, and as soon as it's over, you want more. So one night I smoked my two rocks right after dinner, and then I went out later and bought a couple more. I didn't show up for work the next day, and they gave me a warning. When I went back, I couldn't take it. I just left. It seemed easier just to give in than living some bullshit life fighting off temptation every minute of the day. Needless to say, I lost the apartment,

but that didn't even matter because at that point I wasn't there most of the time anyway. I would be out asking for change, and when I had five bucks worth I would go turn it in for a five dollar bill and then go right to the dealer. But that didn't last long, so I managed to replace the crack with alcohol because it's a lot cheaper and it lasts longer. Just buy a cheap bottle and sip from it all day. I learned the way of the street, and I went into Manhattan because it's easier to collect there than it is in Brooklyn. It's a tough real estate market there, and I went through a lot of spots before I got the one where you see me every day. I know it doesn't look like much, but I was at peace with myself, and I was free. I lived on my own terms. I didn't have to answer to anyone, except maybe the cops every so often, but most of them in the neighborhood knew me and knew I was harmless. So they only bugged me when people complained. For a while I was actually happier than I was when I was living in the projects, and to some extent even when I was living the high life because back then I knew the money was eventually going to run out and I was worried about it all the time, but I didn't want to stop doing what I was doing. Out on the street I could survive on less than ten bucks a day and I didn't have any bills to pay. No creditors chasing me down, no worries about money, no bosses to answer to. It certainly wasn't ideal, but for a while it seemed better than trying to go straight.

John is shown looking at Jim, but doesn't say anything for a long moment before finally speaking.

JOHN

I'm sorry.

JIM

Don't feel sorry for me. I did this to myself. And don't feel sorry for sending me here. It sobered me up. I'm actually starting to think that maybe I can give going straight another try now that I've had some sober time to think about it. I just need to take a different approach than I did before. I need to find some kind of work that has meaning, and not just something that provides me with nothing more than a paycheck that I can barely make a living off of. I'm not saying it's the money matters, it's the work itself that matters. And being down here with these people has made me realize that I have the ability to help others. That's meaningful. I've helped them cope with being in this place. And I think being here has done some of the others some good too. Did you send all of us here?

JOHN

Yeah, I think so. Some of them I didn't mean to—they were just people I saw doing something that made me angry, and they would disappear. But after a while, I knew they would disappear if I let it get to me. I thought maybe I was doing something good, so I didn't try to make it stop. I thought that by making them disappear, the world would be a better place. But I guess it doesn't work that way. It was kind of stupid to think because I never considered where I was sending them. I didn't think I was killing them, but I thought I was just sending them far away, like to Siberia or something. It never occurred to me that I could have been sending them right around the block, or down into this tunnel. But then I made that woman over there disappear on the subway. She came into the car talking about how her building burned down and how her kids were going to have to sleep out in the cold if nobody gave her money. She was clearly strung out. It pissed me off that she was using that as a story. I mean, come on, if your building burned

down last night, is your first reaction to leave your kids behind and jump on the subway to panhandle?

JIM

People are desperate.

JOHN

Yeah, I guess, but as a parent it really pissed me off. I guess I could have ignored her, but I really wanted her to disappear. But then some guy saw me do it and confronted me. He had the same ability. He said I couldn't just make people disappear because they were annoying, and then he sent me here. He said I had to answer for what I have done.

John and Jim sit silently for a moment.

JIM

You've might have a bit of a problem with that. A few of these people want to kill you for what you did, and in a way I can't blame them. But like I said, you also did some of them some good. You took them out of their environments where they had their own power to do whatever the hell they wanted without anything stopping them. Here they don't have any reason to behave the way they did out there, and it has given them a chance to think about their lives. We've talked to each other about our lives on the outside, and we've realized that we could have been better people. Some of them have had a spiritual outlook on it and think they were sent here by God as punishment for the way the behaved. I've heard some of them pray and say that if they get back out, they'll be better people. It's had a similar effect on me, and that's why I want to give going straight another try. But now you're in a bit of pickle because now they know that you sent them here and not God. And if you don't send them back, they just might try to kill you.

JOHN

I don't know if I can send them back.

JIM

I'm sure you can.

JOHN

How?

JIM

You said that you were angry when you sent that woman here, and that you were angry when you sent me here. It's probably safe to assume that your anger triggered this ability to send us here.

JOHN

It seems that way.

JIM

Well, I don't see how you becoming angry with us again will enable you to send us back, but maybe you can somehow reverse that feeling of anger.

JOHN

What do you mean?

JIM

Maybe it can be just a new feeling, like compassion. Maybe if you understand why we did what we did that made you angry, you will feel something else that will send us back.

John turns away from Jim and looks at the crowd down the tunnel.

JOHN

(still looking away from Jim at the crowd)

That's what the guy who sent me here said. But I don't know if that will work. After hearing your story, I feel compassion for you, but you're still here.

When Jim doesn't answer, John turns back to see that Jim has disappeared. John then hears someone say that Jim was gone, and the mob

starts to form again and they start demanding that John send them back too. John gets up and confronts them.

JOHN

(yelling over their noise)

Listen up! I can help you, but the only way I can is if you don't hurt me, and I can only help one person at a time.

The crowd quiets down.

JOHN

(no longer yelling)

I know I was wrong to send you here. I had no right to do it, and I apologize. Now I have to fix what I have done. I was angry, and that anger that I was feeling is what sent you here. But I was talking to Jim back there, and he told me about himself and I got to know him a little bit and understand how he wound up where I found him. He's had some bad breaks in his life, as I'm sure all of us had. I felt compassion for him, and I think that's what enabled me to send him back home. I will do that for each one of you, but I will need to talk to you individually. I need you to tell me about yourself. I need to get to know you, and to understand what it was that made me angry. That's how I'll be able to send you back.

NASS

Why should we believe you, motherfucker? You better send us back or else we'll kill you!

JOHN

I'm trying to help you, Nass.

BLING MAN

Hey, listen to him, man. He's like God or something.

NASS

He ain't no God!

JOHN

I'm not God, and now I'm stuck here just like the rest of you. I want to go home just as bad as you do. I want to get back home to my wife and my little boy, and I believe that the only way that will happen is if I am able to send all of you back first. So it is in my best interest to send you home. I'm very sorry for what I have done, and I want to make it right. Nass, why don't we go over here and we'll talk, and I'll try to help you first.

BLING MAN

Do it, man. He's the only one who can get us out of here.

Nass looks at Bling Man and then back at John. He finally steps away from the crowd and they go over to where John was sitting with Jim.

NASS

What you want to know?

JOHN

Listen, I was wrong to send you here. I know that, and I apologize. I shouldn't even have been where I was when you and I first met. And then I became angry when you pulled the knife on me, and that's what made it happen. But now I want to correct my mistake. What I realized with Jim is that there was a reason he wound up where he was. He told me about how he became homeless and a drug addict, and when I understood that, I wasn't angry anymore. I felt compassion for him. I'm sure that you're not a bad person either, but we met each other under the wrong circumstances. We were both angry at each other. So maybe you should just tell me about yourself. Tell me who you are.

Nass is looking at John angrily.

JOHN

I'm trying to help you get back home. Just tell me about yourself. Anything.

Your childhood, what you want to do with the rest of your life. This is the only way I know how to help you.

NASS

My father left before I was born. My mother was a crackhead. I was raised on the streets by my brothers. What else you need to know?

John is shown looking in Nass' direction. A moment later Nass is shown to be gone. The rest of the scene is a sequence showing John talking to each and every one of the people in the tunnel until they have all disappeared and he is the only one left. John is left standing on the tracks looking around.

JOHN

(calling out to no one in particular)

Hello? Hello? Is anyone else here.

John looks around some more and starts walking.

JOHN

(Calling out)

Hey! Can anyone hear me?

One of the dim lights on the tunnel wall is shown to start vibrating. John then looks and sees a small light at the end of the tunnel that is an oncoming subway train. John looks panicked for a moment but then starts to run as the train gets closer. John eventually reaches a wall at the end of the tunnel and can go no further, but the train does not slow down. At the last moment, just as he about to be struck, he sees that the driver is the Subway Man who from scene 23 who had sent him to the tunnel. At the moment of impact, everything fades to white.

25. INT. JOHN AND REBECCA'S APARTMENT - DAY

The white out fades back in to John lying in his own bed. A moment later his alarm clock

goes off. John lets the clock radio alarm go off until Rebecca finally sits up in bed.

REBECCA

Are you going to get up and take J.J. to school?

JOHN

(reaching for the button to turn the alarm off)

Yeah.

John gets out of bed, and then is shown getting J.J. ready to go to school, and then they leave the apartment.

26. EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK CITY - DAY

John and J.J. are walking to preschool like they do every morning. While they are walking, J.J.'s eyes widen and he points.

J.J.

Daddy! The man is back from jail!

Jim the homeless guy is back sitting in his old doorway with a new, clean paper coffee cup (it is the same as the other one, only clean without stains). John and J.J. stop in front of him, and John looks down at Jim with an expression of understanding. John does not look angry at all. Without saying anything, John reaches for his wallet and pulls out all of the cash he has (three twenties, a ten, and two singles). He hands the money to J.J.

JOHN

(to J.J.)

Hey bud, can you put this in the cup?

J.J.

Okay.

J.J. takes the cash from John and then very carefully puts it into the coffee cup.

JIM

(smiling appreciatively to J.J.)
Thank you.
(now looking up at John)
Thank you.

J.J.
You're welcome.

John gives Jim a slight nod.

J.J.
(to Jim)
Did you go to jail?

JIM
(lets out a little laugh)
Something like that.

JOHN
(to Jim)
I know it's not much, but I hope you use
this to help you get going again.

JIM
I will. Thank you.

JOHN
I don't know what else I can do, but let
me know if there is.

JIM
Thank you, I will. And thank you for
understanding. I don't know if this will
mean anything to you, but I give you my
word that I won't use this money to get
high. I'm going to try to get out of
here, and I'm going to take as many of
my brothers and sisters as I can with me
because I know I can't do it alone. If
you mean what you said, you can help
too.

JOHN
I will.

John and J.J. walk away, and J.J. is looking
back behind him as if to see if Jim is going
to disappear again. At one point Jim waves at
J.J. When Jim is finally out of sight, J.J.
looks up at John while they are walking.

J.J.

Daddy, are you going to make that man disappear again?

John looks down at J.J. for a moment before answering.

JOHN

No, bud. Daddy's not going to make anyone disappear anymore.

FADE OUT.

THE END