

TUBE

by

Mikey Jackson

Episode 1

60 minute gritty drama pilot

www.mikeyjackson.com

BLACK. No sight. Just SOUND.

The metallic squeal of brakes. Double doors swish open. Hurried footsteps. People. Herding themselves like animals. Voluntarily.

Rapid beeps. The double doors close. Next comes the gradual building hum of electric motors powering up once more. Then the cold, hollow rattle of metal and the ever recurring, strangely rhythmic chugga-ta-ta of the rail system.

That's when we FADE IN:

INT. TUBE CARRIAGE - LATE AFTERNOON. DAY 3

ROB JOHNSTON. Suited. Briefcase perched upon his lap. Just another homeward bound city commuter.

Around him, SEATED PEOPLE. Empty vessels minding their own business. All they want to do is get home undisturbed.

ROB idly surveys the carriage occupants. His eyes fall upon PREGNANT 30-SOMETHING sitting directly opposite. She doesn't seem too happy. Nor does SLIMY GIT in the flash suit beside her. Stubborn post-argument silence.

ROB'S eyes meet hers. A trance-like, unwavering duel. SLIMY GIT notices. Cue the territorial scowl.

SLIMY GIT

Oi. You. Do you mind?

ROB looks away. Doesn't want any trouble. He directs his gaze to the poster above the woman's head. Yellow paper. Big bold lettering.

"SEEN ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS? REPORT IT."

SLIMY GIT

I can't stand this silence any longer.
We need to talk.

PREGNANT 30-SOMETHING

There's nothing more to say. I've made
up my mind.

ROB half-watches. Doesn't want to get caught again.

SLIMY GIT

Why can't you see sense, Jennifer?
Going back to him won't work.

PREGNANT 30-SOMETHING

I haven't even left the man.

SMALL BOY, 11, scruffy school uniform, sits next to SLIMY GIT. He's got his eye on the expensive phone protruding from his jacket pocket. He reaches for it. Carefully.

SLIMY GIT

Just think about what you're --

PREGNANT 30-SOMETHING

Tim. Please. Now is not the time.

SMALL BOY is so close to success, fingers almost touching that phone. Then oops, he notices ROB'S scrutiny and abandons his plans. It's obvious he's no expert thief.

ROB, almost embarrassed for causing the theft failure.

SLIMY GIT

This isn't over, Jennifer.

PREGNANT 30-SOMETHING rolls her eyes, as if to say "tosser."

ROB'S eyes wander once more. Next to PREGNANT 30-SOMETHING is TIMID MAN. Bruises on his face, left hand bandaged. He stares hopelessly at the floor.

Beside him, SHE WHO WEARS THE TROUSERS. Not bad looking, but starchy. Tough demeanour, almost regimental.

That's when he spots her, sitting at the far end of the carriage watching him. The WOMAN IN BLACK. They lock glares. They know each other. Uh-oh, dark animosity.

ROB breaks the stare. He suddenly finds his own shoes more interesting. A deep breath, then he sits up straight again.

Next to him, YOUNG FOREIGN GUY of Pakistani descent. Head low. Sweating. Trembling. Rocking to and fro, clutching a rucksack for dear life. ROB notices the young man's unease.

ROB

Excuse me. Are you all right?

YOUNG FOREIGN GUY looks at him. No reply. Then he returns to contemplating the rucksack. ROB shakes his head, miffed. He was only being bloody friendly.

YOUNG FOREIGN GUY produces an ancient mobile phone from his pocket. Pre-2000, cracked fascia, casing held together with insulation tape. He gazes vacantly at it. And to and fro, he rocks.

ROB finds his actions odd. Eyes drawn back to the poster.

"SEEN ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS? REPORT IT."

He returns his attention to YOUNG FOREIGN GUY. The sweating. The rocking. The old phone. The rucksack. Uh-oh, a cold wave of dread washes over him.

Eyes back to the poster, as if it's going to say something different this time. The words now seem larger. Blacker. Bolder. Screaming at him!

"SEEN ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS? REPORT IT."

One final peek at YOUNG FOREIGN GUY. Shit. This is serious.

The tube pulls into the next station. The doors swish open. ROB stands up. This is his chance. Get out of there. Now!

INT. TUBE STATION 1 - LATE AFTERNOON. DAY 3

Numb, ROB rides the escalator. Into the station lobby, turnstiles ahead of him. He's not sure what to do. A bench. He sits down, briefcase parked beside him, and attempts to take stock of the situation.

Aha, he spots a SECURITY MAN. He stands up and walks towards him; his briefcase left on the bench, forgotten.

ROB

Excuse me.

The SECURITY MAN looks at him expectantly. ROB thinks about it. This is dumb. Just his imagination.

ROB

It's nothing. Sorry.

He feels a bit of a twat and departs. Quickly.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE TUBE STATION 1 - LATE AFTERNOON. DAY 3

ROB emerges from the station and finds himself in a strange street. He looks left, looks right, scratches his head, where the hell is he? Clearly not his usual stop. He chooses a random direction and starts walking.

INT. JOHNSTON HOUSEHOLD - HALLWAY - EARLY EVENING. DAY 3

ROB is home at last. Coat off. That's when he realises.

ROB

My briefcase.

HELEN JOHNSTON, his wife, rushes into the room, distraught.

HELEN

Oh, thank God you're safe! Where the hell have you been?

ROB

I... couldn't be bothered with the tube. Fancied a walk for a change.

HELEN

You fancied a walk? Shit, I thought you were bloody dead!

ROB

What are you talking about?

HELEN

You mean you haven't heard? There's been an explosion on the Central Line. They think it might have been a terrorist attack.

ROB'S face freezes over. He was right. OMFG!

INT. TUBE CARRIAGE - LATE AFTERNOON. DAY 3

And we're back on the tube. To save confusion, it's a character and timeline establishing shot before the attack. We focus solely on YOUNG FOREIGN GUY, the phone, the rucksack.

EXT. OUTSIDE TARIQ'S BEDSIT BUILDING - AFTERNOON. DAY 2

RAHEEM. We recognise him as YOUNG FOREIGN GUY from the tube. He chooses a buzzer from the intercom list and presses it.

TARIQ (V.O.)

Who is it?

RAHEEM

Raheem.

CAPTION: "The day before the attack."

TARIQ (V.O.)

You're late.

A buzz. The front door shudders loose. RAHEEM enters.

INT. TARIQ'S BEDSIT - AFTERNOON. DAY 2

RAHEEM sits on a wooden chair, nervous, out of his depth. TARIQ looms over him, menacing, yet not much older than RAHEEM. TARIQ offers him the rucksack. Yes, that rucksack. RAHEEM hesitates... then accepts it.

TARIQ

Don't shake it, don't drop it, don't piss around with it at all. Take it home. Hide it. Forget about it until tomorrow.

He hands over the ancient phone.

TARIQ

That's your detonator. One press of any button. Doesn't matter which one.

RAHEEM

Right.

RAHEEM studies it. Looks up at TARIQ, hesitant, unsure.

TARIQ

Is there a problem?

RAHEEM

My family.

TARIQ

We've been through this. They will be looked after. Generously.

RAHEEM

Tariq. What if I'm not ready for this?

TARIQ

Raheem, you can't back out now. It's too late. This is happening. Tomorrow. Just like we planned.

RAHEEM stares at him for the longest time. Will he refuse? No. He half-heartedly surrenders with a nod.

INT. TUBE CARRIAGE - LATE AFTERNOON. DAY 3

Back on the tube. SMALL BOY, still embarrassed by that failed phone theft. And we go straight to --

EXT. HIGH-RISE COUNCIL BLOCK - EARLY MORNING. DAY 3

-- earlier that day. A communal access balcony, five floors up. Along it, a seemingly never-ending parade of front doors.

SMALL BOY walks along it. His name is JAKE. There's a look on his face. Guilt. Over his school uniform, an oversized coat. Heavily laden pockets weigh down the garment.

INT. TRACY'S FLAT - KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING. DAY 3

The contents of JAKE'S pockets are turned out on the table. Baked beans. Spaghetti. Ravioli. Meatballs. A small loaf of bread. And a block chocolate bar. Off comes the coat. A shameful face. He hates shoplifting.

His mother TRACY appears. Trashy. Dark-rooted peroxide hair, short denim skirt. She puffs away on a cigarette.

CAPTION: "The day of the attack."

TRACY
Did anybody see you?

JAKE
No.

TRACY
Better not be lying.

TRACY examines the haul. Picks up a tin of beans.

TRACY
You donkey. I asked for skinny beans.
You know I'm on a diet.

JAKE
It's all they had.

TRACY
Then you should have taken your
business elsewhere.

JAKE screws up his face. Business?

TRACY
Don't look at me like that. Be thankful
you're getting breakfast today.

JAKE
I wish you wouldn't make me steal.

TRACY stubs out her cigarette. Starts opening the tin.

TRACY
I wish for a lot of things, Jake. Never
bloody get them though, do I?

JAKE seats himself at the table

JAKE
It's wrong.

TRACY

You think I enjoy making you shoplift?

He stares at her and says nothing.

TRACY

Well?

JAKE

No.

TRACY pours the beans into a saucepan and puts it on a hob.

TRACY

Oh, Jake. It won't always be like this.
Things will get better. I promise.

Ah, but JAKE has heard it all before.

INT. JOHNSTON HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - EVENING. DAY 3

And we fast-forward to the present moment. ROB, alone at the table, eyes vacant. His meal sits before him, cold and unloved. HELEN appears at the doorway.

HELEN

They've just confirmed it on the news.
It was a suicide bomber.

ROB

Christ.

HELEN

Rob, stop torturing yourself. It's not
your fault. There's nothing you could
have done to prevent what happened.

ROB doesn't reply. He knows she is so very wrong.

HELEN

Oh, look. You haven't even touched your
dinner.

ROB

I'm not hungry.

HELEN

Don't be silly. You've got to eat.

ROB

I said! I'm not hungry.

HELEN takes his plate and leaves, nothing more to say.

INT. RAHEEM'S HOUSE - HALLWAY/LOUNGE - AFTERNOON. DAY 2

And we're back to RAHEEM'S story, the day before the attack. He saunters in, head low, carrying the rucksack. Instantly, he hears jubilant voices emanating from the adjoining lounge.

Puzzled, RAHEEM enters the lounge to discover his MOTHER with an official looking letter in her hand, standing beside ALINA, his SISTER. Two happy faces geared towards him.

RAHEEM'S MOTHER

I'm sorry, Raheem, I couldn't wait any longer. I had to open it.

RAHEEM

Open what?

ALINA

You've won a place.

RAHEEM'S MOTHER

This is the proudest day of my life. My son is going to university.

RAHEEM'S face drops from a great height. He didn't expect this. Congrats and hugs all round. Amid the celebrations, RAHEEM'S sheer trepidation passes unnoticed.

INT. JOHNSTON HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING. DAY 4

The breakfast table. HELEN, buttering toast. ROB, unshaven, still in his pyjamas. Also present, their daughter GEMMA, 7.

HELEN

I didn't hear you come to bed last night.

ROB

I made sure I didn't wake you.

HELEN

What time was that?

ROB

Don't know. Four, maybe five.

HELEN

It's not good for your health to stay up all night.

ROB

What was the point in me turning in? I couldn't sleep.

That certainly told her.

HELEN
Shouldn't you be thinking about getting
ready for work?

ROB
I'm not going in today.

HELEN
Oh. Right. Okay. Would you like me to
call in sick for you?

ROB
No need. Already sorted it.

HELEN
Oh? I never saw you.

ROB slaps his palm down hard on the table, inviting neighbouring
crockery and cutlery to sing chinks of protest.

ROB
Look, what is this? If you must know, I
did it from my mobile when I was
upstairs.

HELEN doesn't want conflict. She rises to her feet.

HELEN
Time for school, Gemma.

GEMMA dutifully leaves the table. She grabs her coat and
satchel. HELEN dons her own coat and looks at ROB.

HELEN
Will you be all right here on your own?

ROB doesn't want to be mothered, and it shows.

ROB
I'll be fine.

INT. TUBE CARRIAGE - LATE AFTERNOON. DAY 3

Back on the tube before the attack. TIMID MAN and SHE WHO WEARS
THE TROUSERS both sit in silence. We go right on over to --

INT. SHIRLEY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON. DAY 1

-- loud, urgent knocking at the front door. SHE WHO WEARS THE
TROUSERS appears, real name SHIRLEY. She opens the door to
FLINT, the typical late 20s hardnut type.

CAPTION: "Two days before the attack."

SHIRLEY

What the bloody hell do you want?

FLINT

I think you'll find your car is in my parking space. Again.

SHIRLEY

I think you'll find it's our parking space, not yours.

FLINT

My van takes up two spaces.

SHIRLEY

Then buy yourself something smaller.

She tries to close the door. FLINT'S boot says otherwise.

FLINT

Either you move your car... or I move your teeth.

He means it. She's scared, but tries not to let it show.

SHIRLEY

Do you make a habit of threatening defenceless women?

FLINT

I'd hardly call you defenceless, Shirley. We've all heard the rumours. You've got five minutes.

He walks away. Shaken up, she slams the door shut.

INT. SHIRLEY'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - AFTERNOON. DAY 1

SHIRLEY enters and scowls at TIMID MAN, AKA GEOFF, who stands cautiously in the centre of the room. We note there are no bruises on his face and no bandage on his left hand.

GEOFF

Who was that?

SHIRLEY

Who do you think? That nutter Flint again. He wants us to move the car.