

216 Westbound: A Topography of Latent Fear

Shona Illingworth, John Tulloch and Caterina Albano

Shona Illingworth's film *216 Westbound* (2014),¹ made in collaboration with media sociologist John Tulloch, explores how the post-traumatic stress disorder experienced by Tulloch, a survivor of the 7/7 London bombings, can amplify another less visible but powerful effect of the attacks: the mapping of a topography of latent threat and fear onto space.² The explosion caused dramatic shifts in Tulloch's sensory perception of time and space. His body was embedded with fragments of glass, his eardrums ruptured, and he was unable to look up at the sky. The assault on his body and sense of identity was further exacerbated through the subsequent global media dissemination of a photograph of his injured body which was used to promote then-Prime Minister Tony Blair's proposed 90 days without charge anti-terror bill; a move that Tulloch strenuously opposed.³

In *216 Westbound*, images surveying London's skyline and near Edgware Road tube station (where the attack on the 216 Westbound train took place) dissolve into scattered flashes of light to convey Tulloch's feeling of what he described as 'assembling and disassembling' sensations during the explosion. This 17-minute single-screen artist film is interspersed with bursts of vivid colour and combines layered sound, fragmented voice and animated text with close-up and panoramic views. The film suggests a discrepancy between Tulloch's lived experience of trauma and its dispersal in the media's collective reconstruction and exploitation, while pointing to the intersection of individual experience with broader geopolitical scenarios of terror. The precariousness caused by the terrorist attack, shock wave and heightened state of alert unravels affectively as sounds and images. Atmospheric pressure, vertigo, acoustic interference and mediatic distortion convey the rupture of trauma as well as the sense of insecurity and uncertainty on which the boundaries of a fractured reality are felt more acutely.

In this chapter, Illingworth and Tulloch, together with writer Caterina Albano, reflect back on *216 Westbound* by examining the effect of the terrorist attack at the level of embodied experience, media reporting and the machinery of state control. It includes the transcript of the film, and is structured around eight still images from the video work and short texts that respond and expand on the themes of *216 Westbound*. These texts have developed over extensive conversations among the authors. They relate dialogically to the film and across the chapter. They also suggest the different positions of the authors: Illingworth as the filmmaker (SI), Tulloch as one of the authors and the subject of the film itself (JT), and Albano as an external commentator (CA). Illingworth's voice emerges from her mapping of the film as it unfolds and discussion of the critical approach of her filmmaking practice. Tulloch reflects on his own experience and its broader implications today. Albano opens up a consideration of the work to other cultural trajectories, such as vertigo as an intimation of precariousness, the politics of recollection, and the criticality of affect. Intentionally, the authors have chosen this layered structure to generate readers' dialogical responses to the work and their potential interpretations.

Embodied experience

INCREASED PRESSURE
FORMS ON THE SURFACE OF THE EXPANDING VOLUME OF THE
EXPLODING OBJECT

IT TRAVELS AS THE

BLAST WAVE

SI: John walks towards the entrance to Edgware Road tube station. The image dissolves into a cloudy summer sky. An explosion, compressed and intensified in the underground tunnel deep under the city, sends out a blast wave. The physics of its velocity, mass and destructive energy echo the invidious psychosocial and political impacts of the explosion as people in the train feel its full force and it spreads out across the city, media and institutions of power.⁴ Intense formations on the surface of an expanding volume travel faster than the speed of sound. John's own voice reverberates in the memory space as sensation struggles to find form.

Deep yellow

Deep yellow

Deep yellow, orange

Deep yellow

This fragmented imagery is now caught up in a pixellated sky. The air is dense with signals, communications and surveillance data, noise, and an incessant ringing.

We hear John's voice as he recalls the tube train carriage being stretched and pulled, disassembling in slow motion. His world is a dark, unpleasant urine yellow, the saturating colour of the explosion. Multiple temporal frames begin to layer and shatter. The shock wave coursing through the underground tunnel and into the ear canals ruptures John's tympanic membranes, severing image from sound, sound from space. Sensory overload spreads through interconnected complex neural networks – an emotional bomb breaking up memory representation as it is being formed.⁵ Traumatic splinters become deeply embedded.

Above ground, the familiar cycle of daily weather reports and early morning transport news gives way to urgent talk of a catastrophic power surge, a network emergency, a major incident, as rising terror presses through the confusion, chaos and layers of institutional containment.⁶ Below ground and across the city's internal transport communications networks, tube operators, station staff and emergency services frantically relay disjointed accounts of bodies emerging from tunnels blackened by smoke.

This entanglement of memory, media, body and technology sharpens and intensifies as it spreads through the city. Already the press and the government are assembling to disseminate, to contain, to enforce, to control. The autonomy and agency of every person, different communities and civil society are perilously threatened as the shock wave pushes outwards. And then the void pulls with sudden implosive force, as the blast wind carrying debris, dust and the sounds of injured people and voices rushes back to the site of the explosion.

JT: To me Shona's passage above maps the 'above ground/underground tunnel' geography of these opening images of clouds/explosions, and introduces the analogy of the ear/tunnel (body/material world) interface, as well as its absences. But it also offers one possible *style* of intermeshed writing in this chapter that expresses the far-reaching, interdependent affects of the event; like the perilous



Figure 12.1 *216 Westbound*, commissioned by Animate Projects, digital video still. Shona Illingworth, 2014.⁸

shock waves Shona describes, the threat to the agency of person, community and civil society is challenged by the different velocities, histories, accomplishments and interrogations of three differently placed writers. For instance, the analytical description of her video work includes details from conversations with me while she was in production. This can be seen in her mention of the concept/analogy of ‘waves extending outwards’ and the association of this with the yellow city and the yellow explosion that produces the composite effect that ‘traumatic experience isn’t just within the body ... but extend[s] to the relationship with the outside world’. There then follows her point about its multifarious affects – ‘the internal and emotional level’ – registered in all populated social spaces, from the explosion victims to the Control Order victims at the end of the film.⁷

Shona’s material about the visually pixellated sky and the spaces above and below ground introduces the coming story of early media resistance and denial; and then my very gradual recognition below and above ground (as well as among media and emergency services) of terrorism. That sky represents a time/space ‘full of signals’ but offering fragmented narratives. *216 Westbound*’s soundtrack mixes and melds these different spaces, resistances, memories and future experiences.

*I can’t look straight up at the sky
I get this sense of vertigo*

Feeling of falling
Feeling of falling away

Deep yellow
Deep yellow, orange
Deep yellow

Darkish yellow

It will be rather cloudy at times with occasional heavy showers, sunny intervals developing with a top temperature of 21 degrees Celsius, 70 Fahrenheit. Now unfortunately for public transport you've got some major incidents occurring at the moment. Just had a word with TFL. They are asking that please people avoid the whole tube network. Tickets are being honoured on several bus routes

I had an instantaneous impression of colour
It was a horrible urine, sort of nasty urine colour

I've had a report that...
We've had a report that...

Black, they just look black, covered in smoke, yeah yeah. They're being treated for... I can't tell how many there are, I think there's probably three or four people on the floor being treated. It looks like they're moving...

We're hearing an explosion on a train

Tickets being honoured on bus routes – but a bus will be destroyed by a bomb later!

SI: The explosion blows bodies and worlds apart. Visceral and physical, it creates a violent rupturing of memory while presaging an increasingly violent future. In the film, past trauma fractures and overwhelms the present. Complex neural networks are repeatedly reactivated as John moves through the city years later. He wears a peaked cap to shield his eyes because he can no longer look straight up at the sky without feeling as though he is falling. The vertigo is nauseating: this *'feeling of falling, feeling of falling away'*.

Objects bend, twist, break up, become embedded in flesh. In this dark world there is also feeling, sensation, touch and heat. As John tries to find words for embodied feelings, memory loops back to micro-details to seek anchor in the chaos, and to his attunement to the faint sounds of crying heard through his shattered eardrums. There is confusion, distress, but also a tenderness in his voice, and a sensitivity to the acute precariousness of life and the intimate connectedness to human presences in the dark.

Hearing these very faint sounds
 Carnage
 I did seem to hear some very faint
 crying
 A faint wailing sound

Intensely present, memory combines with the desperate attempts to comprehend, to rescue, to care that are also palpable in the recordings of the voices of tube and emergency services workers at the scene. This is an evolving entanglement between past and present. At the human scale, we travel on the arc of the film in a sequence of interconnected entrapments. We move from the 'fullness' of sensorial, emotional pain present in voices and memories of the immediate aftermath of the bombing to the charged, politicized spaces between citizen and state where the media operates at the cynical edge of patriotism and fear. Here the use, without his consent, of a photograph of John's injured body by *The Sun* newspaper to support the proposed 90 days without charge anti-terror bill traces a dangerous line that leads to the clinical dissection of the social, cultural, connected and active body via the imposition and rationalized violence of the Control Orders and the machinery of state control.

JT: Shona, your material here is about me at Edgware Road as 'not a straight chronology'. The film's narrative arc here represents developing time and space as agency ('you are not covered in blood' in the second appearance at the station). This is an 'agency of the individual in relation to the state', as your film interrogates the much-diminished social space between them – which the media seek to fill out with their own closures. This is the arc that the film seeks to carry the viewer across, from the opening to the closing images of Edgware Road station, with me as a tiny figure. But this conveying of the viewer from beginning to end of the work is also via a question. What does this walking isolation of a diminished figure in a much-diminished social space mean for the film? You

offer the time/space binary borders of ‘synchrony and diachrony: continuous entrapment/agency’ as a human-centred, often intimate dramatic action. And in actual time – my own historical time – I also walk away, past that station, among the public (where the film ends), and *into* the British media to offer to this same public an alternative view of 7/7 (as in ITN’s two-episode 2006 news item, ‘John’s Journey’, where I walk through the streets again, this time of Beeston, Leeds, to find out more about Mohammed Sidique Khan who detonated the bomb in my train carriage, and his colleagues).

CA: Since the scientist Robert Boyle famously demonstrated the proportional inverse relationship between the volume and pressure of gas in the seventeenth century, thin air became more elastic and malleable. It began to be regarded as matter. As a result it turned thicker with affect. But Boyle’s experiments on air were not victimless. To prove that a vacuum could be generated by extracting air with a pump from a bell jar, he would place a bird under the jar that would die for lack of oxygen.⁹ As air turned into measurable expandable matter, in other words, vertigo emerged as the side-effect of the pliability of volumes and pressures. At a time when the expansiveness of air was infused with awe, the apprehension of its potential compression or contraction quivered with disquiet. Air was made precarious.

Today, according to Michel Serres, matter has become ‘airlike’ – ‘more informational than material’.¹⁰ Matter is volatile in its informational data-like state, but the density of air itself has intensified, as the concentration of information has turned it from a mere conduit to a receptacle of data – ecological data, surveillance data, and data related to traces of contamination and other violations of air. Under these conditions, it is as if the relationship between volume and pressure has been reversed, generating saturated atmospheres of colliding communication and pervading emotional charge. Vertigo is the *affect* of these environments of pressured informational matter, where parameters of orientation are blurred by interference and the obfuscation caused by the implosions of its uses.

If, from this state of vertigo, we consider Boyle’s experimentation with vacuum, one question arises: what did the bird experience? Historical sources refer to the scientific explanation of the experiment and to what spectators experienced when witnessing it. But there is no account of what it felt like for the bird to be under the bell jar, to feel the air inside rarefying, and then being unable to breathe until collapsing. These narratives are still missing from today’s data-saturated air. Vacuums are still created and perspectives

obliterated. Still we find ourselves out of bearing with the making of histories and their precariousness.

JT: Caterina's point is about the human and humane. *216 Westbound* articulates for me and others my own bell jar experience of breathlessness and vertigo from the data-saturated air, as vacuums begin to be filled with empathy and dialogue through intimacy and 'embodied listening'.

SI: A fleeting silence, a pause, time slows, John looks out straight through the screen.

No sound

As the explosion was happening I heard no sound

And then everything seemed to be moving around I just saw this

This carriage being stretched and compressed, assembling and disassembling

I was lying in the dark on my back

A lot of glass and smoky stuff and just darkness really

That's when my body took over

We've got reports of walking wounded

Oh my God

Call required to Edgware Road

Yeah Circle and Hammersmith Station in Chapel Street northwest one

Right I just think we're mobilizing at the moment, just bear with me

Then I saw a lighted train right next to me, these two worlds were not commensurate

One was silhouettes, people alive scrabbling, they seemed to be scrabbling at windows

And then in three dimensions, in brute reality, there were the blood and bodies

The contrast between the projected screens and surfaces of the media and embodied space is mirrored in the unbridgeable chasm between the 'brute reality' of the destroyed train carriage, the 'blood and bodies', and the lighted window of the train next to it on to which silhouettes, people alive 'scrabbling

at windows', are cast. The ruptured tympanic membrane, which separates the inside world of the mind and the outside world, and on whose surface sound waves resonate and become meaning, now echoes this breach.

When people are asked to bear witness, they are predominantly asked to describe what they saw. This requires engagement in distancing strategies that are involved in constructing coherent narratives for events. This detaches people from their own experience, connections with others, and an intimacy with the scene. This also introduces a rationalized, formalized and often singular dimension of scale. Working closely with John involved an exploration of memory for embodied experience, sense of space, temperature, touch, disorientation across multiple scales, and attentive, embodied listening. As a filmmaker, this form of listening does not just attend to what is being recounted, but also to what is held in the body: the materiality of the voice, the shape of the breath, the rise and fall of emotion, the struggle to access feeling, imagery, sensation, to convey experience that is extremely difficult to share. It is important to me to recognize that in the overwhelming space of trauma, there remain delicate networks of connectedness that hold people, materiality and place together.

This form of listening takes time. It reveals other stories, dimensions and questions, which are so often flattened out and delimited as they are co-opted into the instrumentalizing narratives that underpin institutionalized order and control, such as in the much delayed Coroner's inquest.¹¹ While the prolonged gathering of evidence may or may not have offered the bereaved and survivors 'some memorial closure', it represented 'a monumentalizing opportunity



Figure 12.2 *216 Westbound.*

(by the state and the security services in particular) to close down particular narratives around preventability of and accountability for the bombings, as well as other speculative news discourses.¹² None of this assuaged the rising anxiety and its opaque dispersal within an expanding topography of fear and threat in the personal, domestic, institutional and public spaces of the city and its populations: anxiety that is drawn into well-worn narratives that are used to drive increasingly extensive and pervasive forms of surveillance and disempowerment.

JT: Shona's material on an 'important moment of silence' develops the theme of my entrapment/agency as 'remembering and speaking' via 'a break of silence in the film' where I move 'from being an image to having voice'. This paralleled my own actual moves within the media, as in 'How *The Sun* stole my voice' *Guardian* article and in the *Newsnight* end-of-2005 programme.¹³ But *216 Westbound* operates differently, interfering with *The Sun's* two-dimensional space, as developed in the ensuing text and in what follows through her emphasis on the intimacy of hands.

Both my eardrums had been blown away

The blast wave is a pressure wave, a shock front of high pressure, that travels very fast

Faster than the speed of sound

They'd ruptured and that was generating this separation between the interior space of my body and any thing outside it

Parts of the train became embedded in my body
There was the shrapnel that's still inside my forehead

A RUPTURE TO THE TYMPANIC MEMBRANE
RUPTURES THE BOUNDARY THAT SEPARATES
THE INSIDE WORLD OF OUR BODY
FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD AROUND US

SI: Edgware station entrance appears again, like a ghost. Blurred people move through air thickened by slowed time. Lights flicker across the surface of the screen. This is the site where the media captured John as he emerged bruised and disoriented from the wreckage in the tunnel below.

Media reporting

JT: Shona's visual shift here is from the 'ghostly' space where I was first 'captured' by the media to the 'miasmic yellow' city – the mediasphere. Now my memory is operating differently from when I was underground, as well as in the ghostly space of the triage at Edgware Road. In the mediasphere my image is appropriated 'through echoes', and then reflected back to me, so that I am located but also dislocated. Shona turns towards 'two points of silence [that] are very important, very short but like transitions'. They act as audio-visual *pauses* of questioning and address for the reader before *The Sun* and hands sequence that follows.

CA: The time of remembering is both synchronous and diachronic, as past and present intersect in memories as we create a narrative of the past that resonates for the here and now. Such temporal intersection also relates to the functions of memory that, according to current neuro-psychological understanding, refer to how we use personal but also socially and culturally shared memories to make sense of current situations, to project into the future, and to create social bonds. In memory processes, selectivity plays an important role since it determines what we remember. Put otherwise, unconsciously we choose what memories we use to tell our stories and what memories we supposedly 'forget' since they disturb not only a specific image of the past but also how such an image helps to corroborate ideas about the present.¹⁴ Silencing in remembering also happens when we listen to others selectively recalling past events. Our own individual memories or details in them morph to converge with those that are presented to us. At the same time, mnemonic convergence – the way in which memories of events tend to overlap among groups as a result of how the media or public figures present them, or of how individuals share their recollections – contributes to creating closeness among people. It can also produce authoritative reductive versions of the past – whether about ourselves or as shared accounts within a group or societies at large.

In *216 Westbound*, the two shifts from urban external panoramic views of Edgware Road tube station and the London skyline to John's ear and head are marked by a brief yet noticeable moment of silence. More than internal markers, they are performatively dynamic. In the first instance, conflicting explanations of what might be happening increasingly build tension and imbue the atmospheric space created by the work with fear. This affective space alludes to a site of public memory formation where selectivity begins to define the accepted version of

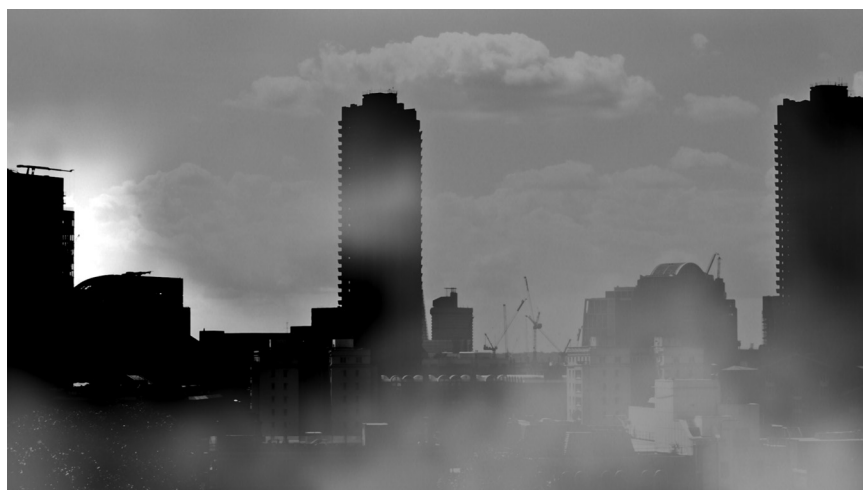


Figure 12.3 *216 Westbound*, original image in colour (yellow).

events. The pause that indicates the shift from this external perspective to John's intimate recollection of what he experienced underground evokes silences in remembering. Like audio signals whose intensity is lessened or even muted, silenced memories do not disappear. Rather they become inaudible presences in the atmospherics of remembering. They are traces that persist, affecting memory processes. This pause acts as a suspension for the viewers who can turn to themselves and feel the gathering of sensations and emotions that the growing affective charge of Shona's work provokes, and is emphasized by the close focus of the camera lens on John's ear. We hear his voice, and his voice is a trace of his body and of his remembering.

The second pause in *216 Westbound* points again to a transition from an external site of shared recollection to an internal point of view. The underground explosion has happened, and past and present already overlap as memories: who remembers, what is remembered? Sound interference and the yellowish saturated images point to a conflation of perspectives, to the infiltration of politics and the media into the visual and verbal articulations of events, to appropriation and selectivity. This sequence alludes to the space where the 'official' version of the attack is formed and consolidated. Heightened tension is perceptible as the images of clouds condense, before the camera lens moves to John as he turns towards the viewer. The silence that characterizes these frames is unsettling. It can be understood as the internal disturbance that repressed memories cause to remembering. It can also intimate resistance. It invites viewers to contemplate their experience of the work and perhaps allow their own memories of 7/7 to



Figure 12.4 *216 Westbound.*

intersect the film's unfolding. Silenced memories, even if they do not reach consciousness, can facilitate the emergence of new memories by generating associative chains in recollection. We can imagine the frayed fabric of social remembering to potentially renovate itself with an impression of the past that both differs from and complicates official accepted versions. Fleeting, an interrogation of the past can provide insight and understanding in the present.

When you are as physically threatened as that and injured
 The world outside closes in around you
 You're fastened in the survival space
 and that's now a separated space from the outside world

WE EXPERIENCE SPACE THROUGH ECHOES
 IF YOU DON'T HAVE ECHOES
 YOU CAN FEEL OPPRESSED
 AS THOUGH THERE IS NO SPACE AROUND YOU ANY MORE

SI: The cityscape appears, and it is changing, consumed by a drifting yellow miasma emanating as if from the film itself. John is fastened to the survival space.

When the tympanic membranes are blown, you can no longer hear echoes, and space closes in. It loses its dimensions, flattens out, and you can no longer locate yourself in it in the same way. We orientate ourselves through an ever-changing intricacy of acoustics, frequencies that fill the air within a sensorium that reflects back to us. With it, memory allows us to know and feel space

around us and sense our being in the world. The loss of a sense of space signifies a profound vulnerability for self and being, and this aligns with the split-second media-arrest of the photograph of John. The delicate web of almost imperceptible interaction with the world is shattered as he becomes caught in media narratives constructed around this now global iconic image of the attack. It is a form of media violence against being and the physical, social, political, cultural, emotional and psychological dimensions of self.

And again, silence, there is a momentary cut in the sound space of *216 Westbound*. John is isolated close to the surface of the screen in an intimate but airless vacuum. Time is slowed as his eyes turn outwards and break the frame. His thoughts and memory turn inward, remote and inaccessible. A subtle instant of agency in the questioning space that opens out in this gap is followed by John not as a victim but as someone who is being, thinking, remembering, speaking. It is a counterpoint to the politicized image of John's injured body on the front page of *The Sun*, used as a cipher for the phrase 'Tell Tony [Blair] He's Right'. For John, that is a triple loss of agency – personal, social, political.

The broken glass of the train re-emerges from John's body over days, from his forehead, his mouth, from under his tongue. Sound speeds up as though winding in on a coil. In the film, John's voice cuts over the sliding blocks and frames that disassemble his image on the front page of newspaper, never allowing our eyes to rest or consume it. Across this intricate visual architecture of static and moving parts, John's description of this moment of media entrapment provides a



Figure 12.5 *216 Westbound*, original image in colour (red).

set of coordinates: the fixity of his gaze on his bag, an extension of himself, now dislocated and hanging from the shoulder of an emergency services worker, his bleeding mouth next to the text 'Tell Tony He's Right'.

The glass that for days afterwards was coming out of my body
 When I began to feel this nausea most strongly, that's the time when
 The photographers were taking the image of me that
 Emerged so strongly in the media
 The image of the victim that I resisted

It's almost encrusted this blood on my face
 Tattered clothes below
 My eyes are all unfocused

I'm kind of fixated on the bag, the bag on her shoulder

This one had to have a mouth
 The bleeding mouth
 It had next to it, 'Tell Tony He's Right'

The *Sun* newspaper using my image
 The words next to the mouth, which said, 'Tell Tony He's Right'
 Right next to my mouth

90 days without charge legislation

I totally opposed that legislation



Figure 12.6 *216 Westbound*, original image in colour (red).

Finally, the sliding frames settle to reveal John's wounded hands, the human touch of a health worker on his arm. Images that emerge almost as if from chemical darkness into the low saturated frequency of red light, poised briefly before human touch fades to black at the edge. In Australia, John's wife Marian sees him on the front page of a newspaper. She cannot recognize his bandaged face, but her eyes fall on his hands. She instinctively recognizes how he holds them, the projective curl of the fingers around the pain in the palms, the taut limpness turning in towards the body, and she knows it is him.

When Marian looked at that photograph for the first time, she didn't recognize it was me

She only recognized me by the way I was holding my hands

Disempowerment

Loss of my voice

Use of my image

JT: Contrary to our notion of fetishized images, my fragmented past here becomes a new whole, a moment of intimate discovery, recognition, embodiment and human agency. Something that is shared yet is both new and accustomed. It shimmers against the bombers' yellow and the tabloid's red top as a breach in the two-dimensional reality of terrorist, media and government control.

CA: In the newspaper's photograph, John's hands are both the focal and affective point. In *216 Westbound*, the original photograph is sliced into three frames. The two middle frames show John's hands as they turn towards the body, as if in a pause of movement. They convey restraint and poise, even reluctance and protection. The camera lens meets reservation. As viewers we do not share Marian's insight, her intimate knowledge of those hands. Nonetheless they act as a visual site of utterance. They are *otherwise* eloquent. Rather than the conventional loud emotional appeal that the image of John's bandaged face calls for, those hands mutely draw one's attention. Shona gleans their tacit centrality to subvert the media's instrumentalization and fetishization of this photograph to make us look more carefully, and to allow us as viewer to bring our own understanding of this image – be it emotional and/or intellectual understanding.

All images, as Jacques Rancière reminds us, belong to systems of other images and established modes of representation and, I would add, of bodily postures suffused with affect.¹⁵ Contrary to the media's deployment, the picture of John

itself contains a point of resistance. While the photograph is designed to portray ‘a victim’, John’s holding of his hands counteracts such intention. By isolating them, Shona evidences their iconographic resonances with classical statuary and Renaissance painterly compositions where hands visually express the dramatic and narrative tensions within the depiction but can also suggest the internal emotional state and ethical bearing of a figure. Unwittingly, John’s hands contradict the attempt of victimization by gathering the energetic composure of the whole body and imbuing it with intensity and disruptive force. They free John’s photograph from the instrumentalized emotional investment to which it has been subjected by *The Sun* and open it to a questioning of what we look for and feel when we look at images in the media.

In the third smaller section, on the left-hand side, we see the hand of a health worker lightly touching John’s arm that reveals a gesture of care. As viewers, we feel the slight pressure of those anonymous fingers, their haptic reassurance. This detail was cut in the printed version of the photograph, thus removing its empathic association and by extension the possibility of the viewer’s identification with such a gesture. Unlike the objectifying intent of that shot, the hand’s contact is one of individualization, suggesting an interpersonal exchange and a recognition of pain. If included it would have provided a reflective clue to what the picture showed, raising questions about ‘the construction of the victim as an element in a certain distribution of the visible’ – in this case, that was effected by the media – and how such distribution ‘governs the status of the



Figure 12.7 *216 Westbound.*

bodies represented and the kind of attention they merit'.¹⁶ And, we could add, the kind of political exploitation they become subjected to.

JT: That excluded health worker's hand reconstituting my reality was extended after the bombing through new intimacies of the body: the hospital physiotherapist who so carefully wheeled me to my friend's flat, who raised with a wooden frame the most appropriate chair to reduce my vertigo when I sat down or stood up, and who showed me how to protect my damaged ears as she bathed me; the health worker who threw an orange to my left, right and centre – not to catch it, but for me to learn to 'duck and weave' so that I would be able to walk once again on crowded Camden Town streets; the different ladies who helped shower and dry me with their hands each day, and encouraged me in lifting my foot on to the bath edge to stand on one foot while still with vertigo and dry myself once more. These were my professional carers who I wished I could keep as friends. They gave me confidence in the goodness and pleasure of small things.

Machinery of government control

JT: Neoliberalism is the state's yellow, institutionalized. It is *The Sun's* yellow too, Rupert Murdoch's yellow, seeping through democracy, destroying the commons, privatizing not only the National Health Service but also transport and even

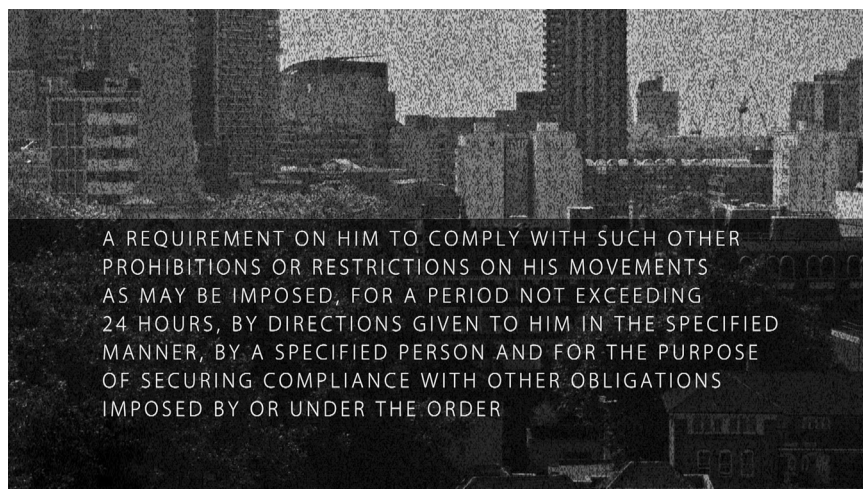


Figure 12.8 *216 Westbound.*

poverty itself. Neoliberalism deregulates even as it seeks to impose 90 days without charge. It dehumanizes through control orders. Neoliberalism promotes terminal terror to planetary health through fossil fuel. During a pandemic it threatens the vulnerable – always the weak, the poor, the old, the Indigenous, the young people of the future – through its systemic urge to ‘reopen the economy’.

SI: In *216 Westbound* I wanted the viewer to read each Control Order as they slide one after another across the cityscape. Each subsequent order identifies and isolates a part of human personal, social and political interaction with the world with brutal efficiency. The dehumanizing and rationalized violence that frames this legal construct is accentuated by its bureaucratic language. It is underpinned by, and a driver of, intensifying forces of fear and threat that spread out, operating below levels of consciousness. This systematic approach, and the forces and histories that underpin it, provide the mechanisms for increasingly sophisticated and invasive use of technological forms of surveillance and control.

The sequence now pauses on the Control Order: A REQUIREMENT ON HIM TO ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED.

90 DAYS DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGE

A PROHIBITION OR RESTRICTION ON HIS POSSESSION OR USE OF SPECIFIED ARTICLES OR SUBSTANCES

A PROHIBITION OR RESTRICTION ON HIS USE OF SPECIFIED SERVICES OR SPECIFIED FACILITIES, OR ON HIS CARRYING ON SPECIFIED ACTIVITIES

A RESTRICTION IN RESPECT OF HIS WORK OR OTHER OCCUPATION, OR IN RESPECT OF HIS BUSINESS

A RESTRICTION ON HIS ASSOCIATION OR COMMUNICATIONS WITH SPECIFIED PERSONS OR WITH OTHER PERSONS GENERALLY

A RESTRICTION IN RESPECT OF HIS PLACE OF RESIDENCE OR ON THE PERSONS TO WHOM HE GIVES ACCESS TO HIS PLACE OF RESIDENCE

A PROHIBITION ON HIS BEING AT SPECIFIED PLACES OR WITHIN A SPECIFIED AREA AT SPECIFIED TIMES OR ON SPECIFIED DAYS

A PROHIBITION OR RESTRICTION ON HIS MOVEMENTS TO, FROM OR WITHIN THE UNITED KINGDOM, A SPECIFIED PART OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OR A SPECIFIED PLACE OR AREA WITHIN THE UNITED KINGDOM

A REQUIREMENT ON HIM TO SURRENDER HIS PASSPORT, OR ANYTHING IN HIS POSSESSION TO WHICH A PROHIBITION OR RESTRICTION IMPOSED BY THE ORDER RELATES, TO A SPECIFIED PERSON FOR A PERIOD NOT EXCEEDING THE PERIOD FOR WHICH THE ORDER REMAINS IN FORCE

A REQUIREMENT ON HIM TO GIVE ACCESS TO SPECIFIED PERSONS TO HIS PLACE OF RESIDENCE OR TO OTHER PREMISES TO WHICH HE HAS POWER TO GRANT ACCESS

A REQUIREMENT ON HIM TO ALLOW SPECIFIED PERSONS TO SEARCH THAT PLACE OR ANY SUCH PREMISES FOR THE PURPOSE OF ASCERTAINING WHETHER OBLIGATIONS IMPOSED BY OR UNDER THE ORDER HAVE BEEN, ARE BEING OR ARE ABOUT TO BE CONTRAVENED

A REQUIREMENT ON HIM TO ALLOW SPECIFIED PERSONS, EITHER FOR THAT PURPOSE OR FOR THE PURPOSE OF SECURING THAT THE ORDER IS COMPLIED WITH, TO REMOVE ANYTHING FOUND IN THAT PLACE OR ON ANY SUCH PREMISES AND TO SUBJECT IT TO TESTS OR TO RETAIN IT FOR A PERIOD NOT EXCEEDING THE PERIOD FOR WHICH THE ORDER REMAINS IN FORCE

A REQUIREMENT ON HIM TO ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED

A REQUIREMENT ON HIM TO CO-OPERATE WITH SPECIFIED ARRANGEMENTS FOR ENABLING HIS MOVEMENTS, COMMUNICATIONS OR OTHER ACTIVITIES TO BE MONITORED BY ELECTRONIC OR OTHER MEANS

A REQUIREMENT ON HIM TO COMPLY WITH A DEMAND MADE IN THE SPECIFIED MANNER TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO A SPECIFIED PERSON IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DEMAND

A REQUIREMENT ON HIM TO REPORT TO A SPECIFIED PERSON AT SPECIFIED TIMES AND PLACES

JT: Thus is terrorism fixed in place by the neoliberal state, itemized, dissected and specified as commodities of 'terror'. The current pandemic is also underpinned by neoliberalism. Its treatment through private care homes and privatized quarantine has been killing on behalf of the pandemic. And neoliberalism – backed by Murdoch who disbelieves in climate change – is fuelling the new era of Australian mega-bushfires, terrorizing our people, our animals, our common world.

During 2020, facing COVID-19 and three mega-bushfires at the same time on the east coast of Australia, I felt viscerally that I was returning to that tube carriage at Edgware Road. Beyond that 216 Westbound underground train I *recovered* my voice and walked with the populace past the station and through the media. But now the violated personal spaces of bushfire threat or personal lockdown reverberate only with risk, anxiety and frustration. Once more I have no voice, and am disconnected from the echoes that contain me. Where are the membranes of freedom within neoliberal constraint? There is little indeed to be found in government spheres. We are left without social beings beside us. Their body parts – as one victim of 7/7 who lost his legs complained – are itemized for terrorism compensation 'like the Argos catalogue'; or else, in the case of COVID-19, are offered up for often hopelessly mismanaged government inoculation rollouts in separated bursts of vaccination nationalism.

Yet, agency is emerging among the people. The Australian Institute's report in October 2020 shows bushfires as the public's highest of all climate change concerns (82%), and indicates the remarkable shift from 20 per cent to 79 per cent between 2013 and 2020 in Australian belief that climate change is occurring. There is support for the closure of coal-fired power stations (83%), a desire for Australia to become a global leader in climate change (71%), with half believing that fossil fuel producers should pay for climate activity.¹⁷ Rebecca Colvin of the Australian National University, who researches public attitudes to climate change, argues in particular that the recent Institute poll indicates that COVID-19 has not obliterated these climate change concerns, which are now the highest in thirteen years of Institute polling.¹⁸ She says she is surprised by this; but one potential motivator could well be the role of sections of the Australian media. For example, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation ran through October 2020 a series, 'Big Weather (and how to survive it)', which, as well as practical advice regarding further fires and floods similar to the black

summer of 2020, brought together climate change research by New South Wales and Victorian school students with ‘cultural cool burn’ traditional technology from Indigenous Australians in Queensland. Both are beginning to receive government and Rural Fire Service notice by way of this media intervention, while traditional custodians and firefighters have been working together for some years with cool burns. Children, First Peoples and volunteer firefighters are now taking climate change leadership across their commonality in the face of government lethargy. My paralysis between terrorism, government ordering and media power after 7/7 could partially be challenged by my own media efforts. The disempowerment was then shockingly restored through the precarity of climate change, but has in turn been interrogated on a much wider media scale by combining these new and ancient powers of young people and First Nations.

SI: In *216 Westbound*, as the final control order slides out of view, sound gives way to air and the low city hum, and the camera pans quietly over an almost empty city skyline. At street level, John’s head almost fills the frame. It is turned away from us towards the entrance of Edgware Road station, we are in a real-time sound space looking over his shoulder at a world in slow motion. This creates a temporal disjuncture between John and the scene he both inhabits and looks on to. Here the present and memory are folded into one another. We are outside of both, looking in. Nothing happens other than time and thought held in these moments of suspension. Finally, we are returned to the opening view. Again, we see John walking towards the entrance of the tube station. The bag he was so fixated on is now over his shoulder. This time, though, he walks past the entrance to become a small figure in the scene, part of the city, part of the commons.

Notes

- 1 *216 Westbound*, dir. Shona Illingworth (Animate Projects, London). Artist film, 17 min.
- 2 On 7 July 2005, four co-ordinated terrorist suicide attacks, known as the 7/7 London bombings, targeted travellers on London’s public transport system during the morning rush hour. 52 people died and over 700 were injured, of whom more than 100 required hospital treatment.
- 3 Following the 7/7 London bombings, the UK government proposed a new bill to allow police to hold terrorist suspects for 90 days without charge. The proposed legislation was defeated in the House of Commons on 9 November 2005.

- 4 From Shona Illingworth's conversations with Tobias Reichenbach, auditory neuroscientist and expert in bomb blast injury at Imperial College London in 2014.
- 5 For this conceptual connection, see Martin A. Conway's explanation in Shona Illingworth's *The Watch Man Balnakiel* (London: Film and Video Umbrella, 2011), 57.
- 6 The London Assembly Report of the 7 July Review Committee, 2006, provides a detailed account of the hour following the first bomb explosion at 8.50 am on the Eastbound Circle Line train. The fact that the first three bombs exploded underground and transport communications systems were rendered inoperable contributed to the ensuing chaos, where '[m]ultiple, often conflicting, reports were being made, some to London Underground's Network Control Centre, some to the emergency services, and some to the media.' Meanwhile, the UK government maintained their official line that the disaster was caused by a catastrophic power surge. London Assembly, 'Report of the 7 July Review Committee', Greater London Authority (report) (June 2006), 12, <https://www.london.gov.uk>.
- 7 Control Orders were introduced as part of the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 and contained 'obligations' considered necessary to prevent or restrict a person's involvement in terrorism-related activity. These far-reaching powers to restrict a person's liberty could be applied without a criminal conviction and last indefinitely. The sixteen main obligations are detailed in *216 Westbound*. The Act was opposed by leading human rights organizations. It was repealed on 15 December 2011.
- 8 All images in this chapter are copyrighted by Shona Illingworth, 2014.
- 9 Bruno Latour, 'Air', in *Sensorium: Embodied Experience, Technology, and Contemporary Art*, ed. Caroline A. Jones (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 105–107. See also Isabelle Stengers, *Cosmopolitics I*, trans. Robert Bononno (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
- 10 Michel Serres and Bruno Latour, *Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time*, trans. Roxanne Lapidus (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 121.
- 11 The Coroner's inquest into the 7/7 London bombings led by Coroner Lady Justice Hallett began in October 2010, over five years after the bombing. The Coroner delivered her verdict and series of recommendations on 6 May 2011.
- 12 Andrew Hoskins, '7/7 and connective memory: interactional trajectories of remembering in post-scarcity culture', *Memory Studies* 4, no. 3 (2011): 270.
- 13 John Tulloch, *One Day in July: Experiencing 7/7* (London: Little, Brown, 2006); John Tulloch and Warwick Blood, *Icons of War and Terror: Media Images in an Age of International Risk* (London: Routledge, 2012), 175–80.
- 14 For a broader discussion of memory processes, see William Hirst, Alexandru Cuc and Dana Wohl, 'Of sins and virtues: memory and collective identity', in *Understanding Autobiographical Memory: Theories and Approaches*, eds. Dorthe Berntsen and David C. Rubin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012),

- 141–59; Bernhard Pastötter and Karl-Heinz T. Bäuml, 'Retrieval inhibition in autobiographical memory', in *The Act of Remembering: Toward an Understanding of How We Recall the Past*, ed. John H. Mace (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 202–227. See also Caterina Albano, *Memory, Forgetting and the Moving Image* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 132–37.
- 15 Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2009), 99.
- 16 Rancière, *Emancipated Spectator*, 99.
- 17 Audrey Quicke and Ebony Bennett, 'Climate of the Nation 2020', The Australian Institute (report) (27 October 2020), 1, <https://australianinstitute.org.au/report/climate-of-the-nation-climate-change-concern-hits-82/>.
- 18 Michael Slezak, 'Climate change worrying more Australians than ever before, Australia Institute report reveals', *ABC News* (27 October 2020), <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-28/australia-institute-2020-climate-change-report-concern-growing/12764874>.