

= Subway ( Homicide : Life on the Street ) =

" Subway " ( sometimes referred to as " The Accident " ) is the seventh episode of the sixth season of the American police television drama Homicide : Life on the Street , and the 84th episode overall . It first aired on NBC in the United States on December 5 , 1997 . In the episode , John Lange ( Vincent D 'Onofrio ) becomes pinned between a subway train and the station platform . The Baltimore homicide department is informed that Lange will be dead within an hour and Pembleton tries to solve the case while comforting Lange in his final minutes .

" Subway " featured guest star Bruce MacVittie as a man suspected of pushing Lange into the path of the train . The episode was written by James Yoshimura , who co @-@ produced with David Simon . It was directed by Gary Fleder and was the only episode of Homicide : Life on the Street helmed by the feature film director . Yoshimura based " Subway " on an episode of the HBO hidden @-@ camera documentary show Taxicab Confessions , in which a New York City detective described a real @-@ life instance of a man trapped between a subway train and platform .

" Subway " was filmed on location in a Baltimore Metropolitan Transit Authority station . Fleder included cinematic elements that were uncommon in the traditionally naturalistic show . This led to conflicts between Fleder and director of photography Alex Zakrzewski . " Subway " received overwhelmingly positive reviews but ranked number three in its time @-@ slot during its original broadcast , capturing 10 @.@ 3 million viewers but falling behind ABC 's 20 / 20 and CBS 's Nash Bridges .

The episode won a Peabody Award for excellence in television broadcasting and was nominated for two Emmy Awards , one for Yoshimura 's script and one for D 'Onofrio 's guest performance . " Subway " was the subject of a two @-@ hour PBS television documentary , Anatomy of a " Homicide : Life on the Street " , which originally aired on the network on November 4 , 1998 . Screenwriter Vince Gilligan said " Subway " directly influenced an episode of The X @-@ Files that he wrote , which in turn helped inspire the casting of Bryan Cranston in Breaking Bad .

= = Synopsis = =

During an altercation on a crowded subway platform , John Lange ( Vincent D 'Onofrio ) falls against a moving train and is pinned at waist level between a subway car and the edge of the platform . Detectives Pembleton ( Andre Braugher ) and Bayliss ( Kyle Secor ) arrive to investigate and are told the man 's spinal cord is severed . Although Lange is not feeling much pain , emergency personnel tell the detectives he has less than an hour to live and will die as soon as he is moved . Bayliss questions Larry Biedron ( Bruce MacVittie ) , who was involved with the altercation that led to Lange 's fall . Biedron says he was bumped from behind with Lange , but witnesses give conflicting reports : some say Biedron pushed Lange , some that Lange pushed Biedron , and others say it was an accident . Pembleton tries to talk to Lange , who becomes uncooperative and angry when told he will die .

Lange says his girlfriend , Sarah Flannigan ( Laura MacDonald ) , is jogging by the harbor , so Pembleton sends detectives Lewis ( Clark Johnson ) and Falsone ( Jon Seda ) to look for her . Lewis and Falsone talk about the nature of death while questioning random joggers ; their search effort proves fruitless . Lange tries to convince EMT Joy Tolson ( Wendee Pratt ) to give him painkillers , but she refuses because it will reduce their chances of saving his life , even while she insists he cannot be saved . Pembleton keeps Lange company , despite his initial annoyance at Lange 's bullying and mean @-@ spirited attitude . The emergency personnel plan to use airbags to push the subway train away from the platform , then pull Lange free and rush him to the hospital .

Pembleton and Lange grow closer ; Lange experiences more pain as time passes and switches among remorse , anger , and casual small talk during their conversations . Later , Pembleton holds Lange 's hand to comfort him and confides about his recent stroke . Bayliss grows suspicious when Biedron says he cannot recall his last place of work or when he moved to Baltimore . Biedron eventually admits he had been criminally charged and placed into a psychiatric ward for pushing a man in front of a Chicago subway train for no reason . Biedron is arrested and Bayliss confirms to

Pembleton that Lange was pushed ; Pembleton decides not to tell Lange because he does not think it will comfort him , but Lange figures it out for himself by observing their conversation . Lange experiences greater pain and starts to lose consciousness . After saying " I 'm OK " to Pembleton , Lange falls unconscious and the EMTs push the train with the airbags . Lange dies immediately after he is removed . A shocked and disoriented Pembleton leaves the subway and , after staring at Biedron in the back of a police squad car , walks to his vehicle while recalling a line about how sugar maple leaves behave when it rains ( a line that Lange said as he was dying ) . He then drives away with Bayliss . The episode ends with Flannigan jogging past the subway station .

= = Pre @-@ production = =

= = = Conception = = =

James Yoshimura , one of the Homicide : Life on the Street writers and supervising producers , first conceived the story for " Subway " after watching an episode of the HBO series Taxicab Confessions , which features hidden @-@ camera footage of taxi passengers discussing their lives with the drivers . In the episode he saw , a New York Police Department detective discussed an experience in which a man was pushed and trapped between a subway train and station platform . Although the man was initially still alive , the homicide department was called in to investigate because emergency officials said they knew he would eventually die . The detective said the incident was the most upsetting thing he ever saw . He likened the twisting of the body to that of a plastic bag being spun around quickly and turning like a corkscrew , and said when the train was removed and the body was twisted back , " All your guts fall down and in less than a minute , you 're dead . "

Yoshimura first pitched the show to the Homicide : Life on the Street production team in May 1997 at the San Francisco production center of executive producer Barry Levinson . The episode was discussed and well received during a round @-@ table discussion involving Levinson , executive producer Tom Fontana , producer David Simon , supervising producer Julie Martin , and consulting producer Gail Mutrux . During that meeting , Markin suggested that the transit authority should pressure the police to resolve the homicide case quickly and get the trains moving again , an element which Yoshimura eventually added to the script . Levinson suggested ending the episode with the detectives walking back to the surface , then feeling the hum and vibration of the train starting back up under their feet . This suggestion , however , did not appear in the final episode .

Distressed from a long stretch of poor ratings , NBC executives placed pressure on Homicide : Life on the Street producers to improve its viewership and become more popular than its higher @-@ rated time @-@ slot competitor , Nash Bridges . Yoshimura and the other producers , however , decided to continue pushing the envelope with " Subway " because they felt the series needed to maintain its quality and survive . " Subway " had to be greenlighted by NBC before a script could be written and Yoshimura anticipated backlash about the episode . He said , " Every episode , we have trouble with NBC , so this is no different . We 've fought that battle , we 've had five years of that , so it doesn 't matter to us . " However , the executives were surprisingly enthusiastic about the premise . Warren Littlefield , then @-@ president of NBC Entertainment , said his first reaction was " the classic response of a network programmer : ' Oh my God , this is scary ' " , but that he quickly came around to the idea and greenlighted the project .

= = = Writing = = =

In writing the script for " Subway " , Yoshimura wanted the Pembleton character to be confronted with his own mortality , a theme that had continued from the previous season where the character suffered a stroke . Although Pembleton does not typically discuss his own feelings , Yoshimura wanted him to be placed in a situation where he not only discussed death , but where the unique circumstance of Lange 's subway incident would cause Pembleton to confide his stroke experience

to an almost complete stranger . From the beginning of the writing process , Yoshimura specifically wanted the Lange character to be mean and unpleasant , rather than the nice and innocent victim more typically portrayed in such television episodes : " Tragedy can happen to jerky people too and I think it 'd be much more interesting to see how that kind of character 's circumstances transcends the typical cliched TV kind of victim . "

Yoshimura wanted Braugher to treat D 'Onofrio like he was " bad luck " and try to keep his distance at first , but gradually come to view him as a person and form a close bond with him by the end of the episode . A New York City firefighter , Tim Brown , was a consultant for most of the technical information in the episode . In addition to helping Yoshimura with the dialogue from medical staff characters , Brown advised Yoshimura on the method of using air bags to push the subway train forward and remove Lange 's body . Yoshimura included conflicting reports from witnesses about how the incident took place , which the writer described as a " Rashomon thing " , in reference to the 1950 Japanese film in which several characters offer differing descriptions of the same murder . " Subway " continued a sixth season trend in which the detectives became more personally involved with the victims , and thus becoming more emotionally drained at their deaths . For example , in the sixth season episode " Birthday " , Falsone interviewed a victim who eventually died at the conclusion of the episode . It was the first television script Attanasio ever wrote .

Yoshimura included a B story of Lewis and Falsone looking for Lange 's girlfriend to provide comic relief and so that the entire episode would not be confined to the subway platform location . Yoshimura wanted the two detectives to also discuss the nature of mortality and death , but deliberately included black humor in their dialogue and made sure the characters did not act " teary @-@ eyed [ or ] philosophical " , because he believed it would be cliched and an inaccurate depiction of how real detectives would behave . Some viewers were offended or startled by the flippant nature of the discussions about death between the two characters . Lange 's girlfriend jogged behind Lewis and Falsone during a scene in which the two detectives were distracted in a discussion . Yoshimura deliberately included this in the episode to create a moment of irony . The line by Falsone to a jogger , " Are you sure you 're not Sarah ? " , and Lewis ' mocking reaction to the question , were both ad @-@ libbed by the actors .

Executive producers Barry Levinson and Tom Fontana reviewed the script after it was finished and made minor suggestions for changes . In the original script , Yoshimura made Pembleton more confrontational with the firefighters and emergency personnel , but this aspect of the script was changed when Fontana suggested it was too distracting . NBC executives indicated they would have preferred Lewis and Falsone find Lange 's girlfriend and bring her back to the subway station before Lange died , but Yoshimura described that scenario as a " typical TV ending " and was vehemently opposed to any such change . Fontana also defended the original ending because he said Pembleton ends up filling the role that Lange 's girlfriend would have filled .

On August 18 , 1997 , four days before shooting on the episode began , NBC censors provided 17 pages of notes to Yoshimura requiring changes regarding violence and language . A typical Homicide : Life on the Street episode usually results in only three or four pages . Yoshimura made several modifications with the help of his writing assistant Joy Lusco , a future writer on Simon 's HBO series The Wire . The changes included removing several instances of the words " ass " and " bitch " from the script . Lange 's line , " Why am I even saying the son of a bitch 's name ? " was changed to " Why am I even saying the twerp 's name ? " , and his line , " Go find another train and throw your miserable stupid ass in front of it " was changed to " throw yourself in front of it " .

= = = Casting and director hiring = = =

Consulting producer Gail Mutrux recommended feature film director Gary Fleder to direct " Subway " because she believed he would provide visually engaging direction without distracting from the story in the script . Other Homicide : Life on the Street producers were not familiar with Fleder . When Mutrux told them the name of one of his previous films , Things to Do in Denver When You 're Dead , Yoshimura became concerned Fleder was " one of these indie kind of guys [ who is ] going to come in and try to reinvent our show " , a problem he had experienced with other directors in the

past . After watching Things to Do in Denver When You 're Dead , however , Yoshimura believed Fleder would be perfect to direct " Subway " because he felt Fleder could provide strong visuals to a story that took place in one location , and prevent the script from becoming too static and boring . Upon being offered the job , Fleder thought it would be a challenge due to most of the action being confined to a single set , but accepted the director position based on the strength of Yoshimura 's script : , " The script was terrific . And for me , the big issue from day one was , ' How do I not screw it up ? ' " Yoshimura said feature directors often struggle with Homicide : Life on the Street because they are used to working at a slower and more deliberate pace than the typical eight @-@ day filming period of a single episode . Additionally , Yoshimura said , they have little time to adjust to the regular cast and crew , which he described as a " closed community [ who are ] used to shooting or working a certain way on this show , and then have their rhythms and their patterns and their habits " .

Casting director Brett Goldstein contacted Vincent D 'Onofrio 's agent about playing the part of John Lange , but the agent said D 'Onofrio would never work in television and refused to even suggest the part to the actor . Goldstein remained convinced the actor was right for the role , and mailed the script directly to D 'Onofrio . The actor liked the script and agreed to play the part . The agent later contacted Goldstein a second time and they got into a dispute over how much money D 'Onofrio would be paid . Yoshimura said D 'Onofrio was not the kind of actor he originally envisioned for the part , although he later praised his performance . D 'Onofrio said he was attracted to the part based on the strength of the script and the reputation of Homicide : Life on the Street , although he had never seen the show himself . Fleder , D 'Onofrio and Andre Braugher had only between two and three hours to read the script , discuss the characters and rehearse the material . Braugher said his first reaction to the episode premise was that it was a " horrifying idea " because he thought it would be sensational and end with a clichéd moral , which Braugher said " frankly , nauseated me , the idea of that " . But Braugher said he was extremely satisfied with Yoshimura 's final script .

Bruce MacVittie auditioned for the role of Larry Biedron by mailing a tape of himself performing to the show 's producers . Yoshimura had previously seen MacVittie perform on the New York City stage and thought he was a " wonderful , wonderful actor " . After watching his rehearsal tape , Yoshimura settled on MacVittie for the part not only based on his acting , but on his short physical stature . Yoshimura said , " I 'm watching this tape and I 'm thinking , ' Yeah , this little guy ! Who would suspect this little guy to have these murderous kinds of tendencies . ' " Laura MacDonald was also cast as Lange 's girlfriend Sarah Flannigan based on an audition tape she sent to the show . Wendee Pratt was cast as emergency medical technician Joy Tolson , who works to help Lange throughout the episode but does not get along with him . Yoshimura said he particularly enjoyed Pratt 's performance " because she 's not playing at all sympathetic . This guy 's a pain in her ass . " Shari Elliker , a WBAL ( AM ) disc jockey from the Baltimore area , made a cameo appearance as a witness in the subway .

= = = Preparation = = =

NBC sought permission to film " Subway " in a Baltimore Metropolitan Transit Authority station , but the authority was initially hesitant to allow filming for a script that portrayed their train as the source of a fatal accident . Since it was too late to build a set , co @-@ executive producer Jim Finnerty told Yoshimura to wait before writing the script because of the strong possibility the episode could never be filmed . When Yoshimura insisted on continuing anyway , Finnerty angrily stormed out of the meeting . However , Finnerty was eventually able to convince the authority to allow filming in one of their stations . Yoshimura also sought 300 extras to play firefighters , emergency medical personnel , transit workers and commuters . Finnerty authorized the use of more extras than an episode usually received , but refused to pay for 300 extras , forcing Yoshimura to make minor modifications to the script .

Seven days of pre @-@ production began on August 15 , 1997 . On the first day , Fleder met with Yoshimura and Fontana to discuss the script and the director 's vision for the episode . Fleder suggested modifying the prologue , and storyboarded the introduction that was included in the

episode . The new prologue involved commuters coming down to the train station while a street band performed , leading up to the subway accident before the opening credits rolled . The song featured in this prologue , " Killing Time " , was written by Lisa Matthews , the lead singer of the Baltimore @-@ area band Love Riot . Matthews also had a brief cameo on " Subway " as one of the witnesses to Lange 's fall . On August 16 , the show creators scouted out the Johns Hopkins Hospital Metro Subway Station , where the episode was to be filmed . At the request of the authority , the subway was renamed the fictional Inner Harbor station during filming . Fleder himself had only one hour to scout the location with his technical crew . Art director Vincent Peranio created a dummy wall to place in the empty space between two subway cars , making it appear the two trains were one big car . Inside the dummy wall was a space where the actor could stand and appear cut . Stunt coordinator G.A. Aguilar also choreographed the accident that day , and Peranio simulated the accident itself by tying a dummy into the hole in the dummy wall . Peranio originally wanted a stuntman to fall against the moving train , spin and fall into the padded hole in the dummy wall , but the transit authority refused to allow it .

= = Production = =

= = = Filming = = =

The episode was filmed in seven days , starting on August 26 , 1997 . The Baltimore Metropolitan Transit Authority gave permission for filming to take place in one of their subways , but only allowed shooting to take place between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. when the trains were not running . The restrictive hours , short preparation time , confining shooting space and excessive heat due to lack of ventilation created additional stresses to the crew of more than 100 people during the filming of the episode . The tight schedule and lack of rehearsal time was difficult on the actors , but D 'Onofrio said it added " a certain velocity and energy " to the shoot , which made the dialogue from the actors feel less rehearsed and more spontaneous . Yoshimura served as the on @-@ set consulting editor during filming along with fellow producer David Simon , who wrote the book *Homicide : A Year on the Killing Streets* , from which the series was adapted . The cast and crew shot between seven and nine pages of the script each of the seven production days . Fleder said he was impressed by this pace because he usually shoots between one and two pages per day during his movies , and he said the actors on *Homicide : Life on the Street* were better prepared and more cooperative than his usual film actors .

Fleder dedicated a great deal of focus to establishing the correct chemistry between Braugher and D 'Onofrio . Fleder said , " The energy between them had to be [ strong ] because they 're carrying the episode . The audience is centered on them and if either of them falters , the whole episode kind of falls apart . " The first day of shooting had to take place outside the subway station , so all outside scenes were shot first . As a result , the final scenes of the film were shot on the first day . Among those scenes were Pembleton leaving the subway in a daze following Lange 's death ; Yoshimura deeply regretted that this was one of the first scenes shot because he felt the performance would have been more moving if Braugher had some previous dramatic interaction with D 'Onofrio .

The stunt simulating Lange 's fall into the subway train was filmed on August 27 , the second production day , and Yoshimura said it was the most challenging part of the shoot . D 'Onofrio and MacVittie had to arrive at the platform just as the subway train was approaching , and their scene had to be reshot several times because the train did not pass the actors on time . The crew also filmed shots of a dummy dressed as Lange being dragged by the train inside the dummy wall , but most of those scenes were not used in the final cut . The remaining five filming days focused primarily on the scenes between Braugher and D 'Onofrio , which Yoshimura and Fleder felt were the most crucial element of the episode . During the filming of the climactic scene with Pembleton and Lange which ends with Lange 's death , several members of the crew reacted emotionally , something Yoshimura said is extremely rare since the crew members typically look at their work as a job and do not become emotionally invested in the story they are filming .

While shooting the first subway scenes , D 'Onofrio 's performance was over @-@ the @-@ top and bombastic . Yoshimura asked him to act a little calmer during the earlier scenes and save the energy for the later scenes , because " if he did go up right away , there was nowhere else for him to go after that " . D 'Onofrio agreed and modified his performance accordingly . Fleder also clashed with MacVittie over his portrayal of the Biedron character . Fleder felt the character appeared too crazy in earlier scenes , and the actor was telegraphing the twist in which MacVittie would turn out to be a murderer . MacVittie approached Yoshimura about the criticism , but Yoshimura agreed with Fleder 's interpretation . After MacVittie toned down the character 's behavior , Fleder said he was extremely pleased with the end result .

Many of the firefighters appearing as extras in " Subway " were Baltimore firefighters . Yoshimura said the firefighters who appeared to be running in the episode were actors , while the real firefighters walked slowly because , based on their real @-@ life experience , they knew there would be no need to rush in a situation involving a fatality . Although power on the railings were turned off during shooting , the crew and producers were not aware that some residual electricity continues to run through the cars even after the tracks have been shut down . At one point during the shooting , D 'Onofrio felt a charge of that electricity run through him and said , " I 'm really feeling something strange here . " The crew initially believed D 'Onofrio to be ad @-@ libbing a line of dialogue in character , but eventually realized he was being electrified . When the Baltimore Metropolitan Transit Authority explained about the residual electricity , the crew installed rubber insulation so D 'Onofrio would not touch the metal of the train and experience any electricity . Fleder was impressed that D 'Onofrio continued with the shoot , and said , " Most actors I worked with would 've left the set at that point . "

= = = Photography = = =

" Subway " was shot by Alex Zakrzewski , the series ' regular director of photography . The episode was staged so that Pembleton is initially keeping his distance from Lange , but gradually moves closer and closer as they begin to bond , and by the end he is sitting next to him and holding his hand . Accordingly , the initial scenes included wider shots with Braugher and D 'Onofrio on the outer edges of the frame , but later scenes included more close @-@ ups of the two sitting together . Although Homicide : Life on the Street typically employs a number of back @-@ and @-@ forth whip pan @-@ style cuts , Fleder asked that the style be modified for this episode . In earlier scenes , Fleder asked for wider long shots to create a sense of setting within the subway station , and as the episode progressed and the story became more intense , he then allowed more close @-@ ups and whip pans . This led to disagreements on the set between Fleder and Zakrzewski , who felt Fleder was trying to being too disruptive and difficult . Fleder said of his behavior , " I have to admit , I 'm not the most charming guy on the set . I 'm just not . When I 'm on the set , I 'm very focused and my humor goes away and I become not so charming . " After the episode was complete , Fleder said he and Zakrzewski settled their differences and were both happy with the final result .

Fleder also asked for stylistic touches on the episode which were inconsistent with the show 's typical emphasis on documentary @-@ style realism . For example , he arranged for red scrim lighting to reflect on the subway car to add an artistic visual touch , even though there was nothing in particular in the subway station that reflected such a light . Upon hearing of the technique , Yoshimura was initially concerned , saying " Oh , he 's getting artsy fartsy with me . " Just before Lange 's death , Fleder included a close @-@ up with Braugher looking directly into the camera , breaking the fourth wall in a way typically forbidden on the show . During an outdoor dialogue scene between Johnson and Seda while the characters were driving in a car , Fleder filmed it by placing the camera outside the car 's front windshield and panning back and forth between the two actors . Unbeknownst to Fleder , all car shots on Homicide : Life on the Street are only allowed to be filmed from inside the car to keep the scene more realistic . As a result of Fleder 's car scene , a memo was circulated to the cast and crew reminding them of this policy and threatening to fire anybody who allowed a scene to be shot through the windshield again .

### == Editing ==

The episode was edited by series regular Jay Rabinowitz in a Manhattan NBC facility , with consultation at various times by Fleder , Yoshimura and Tom Fontana . Rabinowitz edited the episode for several days alone , then worked with Fleder for four days , making hundreds of edits to the episode . Yoshimura worked with the editor next and was disappointed with the first cut of the episode that he saw , claiming it needed to be " a lot more frenetic and chaotic at the end , and not so artsy " . Yoshimura also told Rabinowitz the final cut of the episode should place strong emphasis on Braugher because he felt the story is experienced " through his eyes " . During the editing process , Yoshimura originally removed a scene featuring a silhouette of Pembleton riding the escalator out of the subway station after Lange died . Yoshimura felt the shot was too sentimental , but Levinson personally had it placed it back in the episode after Fleder claimed to have " begged " for it to be included . When Fontana first watched the episode , he felt the prologue was too confusing because it was difficult to tell what happened during the accident scene . It was edited so that rather focusing on medium shots of D 'Onofrio and MacVittie , it included a wider shot to establish the presence of a subway train before the accident so viewers would not be so confused .

Audio tracks were mixed with recorded sounds from real subway cars , as well as PA system announcements , to make the episode sound more authentic . In the original episode , Pembleton grabbed Biedron by the collar of his shirt while Biedron sat in the back of a squad car during one of the final scenes . The scene was modified so that Pembleton only looked at Biedron because Yoshimura felt the scene was just as effective without him grabbing Biedron . During the last scene of the episode , in which Lange 's girlfriend jogs by the subway station and ignores the emergency vehicles , Rabinowitz was originally instructed to include a musical score . He tried many different types of music , including rock music , Irish music , classical music , jazz , and piano riffs . When none of the music worked , Fontana suggested including no music at all , and it was agreed the silence was the most effective solution . Fontana said after watching the episode repeatedly during the editing process , he said he liked the final product but doubted he would watch it again for a long time because it was " too emotionally draining " .

### == Reception ==

### == Reviews and ratings ==

" Subway " was originally scheduled to air during the 1997 November sweeps season , but lower @-@ than @-@ expected ratings for the three @-@ part sixth season premiere , " Blood Ties " , prompted NBC to move its broadcast date to December 5 and heavily promote it . The strategy also gave the press more time to preview it and generate reviews . Warren Littlefield said , " The feeling was let 's get out of the insanity of the sweeps and say , ' This is a little different ' ? hopefully we 'll bring more people to this episode . " During this time , the episode was renamed " The Accident " in some advertising materials .

When all the Nielsen ratings markets were accounted for , " Subway " was listed as having been seen by 10 @. @ 3 million households . It was the third @-@ highest ranked show in its time @-@ slot , behind ABC 's 20 / 20 , which was seen by 17 @. @ 7 million households , and CBS 's Nash Bridges , which was seen by 11 @. @ 9 million . NBC executives had hoped that the extensive promotion and press coverage of " Subway " would help it outperform Nash Bridges and so lift Homicide : Life on the Street above its usual third place in the rankings . When it did not , " Subway " was considered a commercial failure , and helped fuel already existing discussions within NBC on whether to cancel the show .

Reviews were overwhelmingly positive for " Subway " . It was identified by The Baltimore Sun as one of the ten best episodes of the series , with Sun writer Chris Kaltenbach declaring , " Dramas don 't come any better than this . " Kinney Littlefield of The Orange County Register said it was " perhaps the best Homicide episode ever " and praised D 'Onofrio 's performance . USA Today gave

the episode its highest rating of four stars . Tom Shales of The Washington Post called it , " a tour de force for D 'Onofrio and Braugher " . Entertainment Weekly writer Bruce Fretts said , " This is as gripping an hour of television as you 're ever likely to see . " Television and literary critic John Leonard said " Subway " was " an artistic experience that is as genuine and accomplished and crafted as you will get anywhere " . David P. Kalat , author of Homicide : Life on the Street : The Unofficial Companion , said of the episode , " Writer James Yoshimura proves that he has not lost his touch , with yet another truly grueling screenplay . "

= = = Awards and nominations = = =

" Subway " won a 1998 Peabody Award for excellence in television broadcasting . The episode also received two Emmy Award nominations during the 50th Primetime Emmy Awards season . James Yoshimura was nominated for an Emmy for Outstanding Writing in a Drama Series for the episode 's script , and Vincent D 'Onofrio received a nomination for Outstanding Guest Actor in a Drama Series . It lost both nominations ; NYPD Blue won the best writing Emmy for the fifth season episode " Lost Israel " , and John Larroquette won the guest actor award for his appearance in " Betrayal " , a second season episode of The Practice . However , Jay Rabinowitz and Wayne Hyde won an International Monitor Award for best editing in a film @-@ oriented television series . In 2009 , TV Guide ranked " Subway " # 25 on its list of the 100 Greatest Episodes .

= = = Cultural influences = = =

Vincent D 'Onofrio 's character in " Subway " partially inspired the creation of the antagonist played by Bryan Cranston in " Drive " , a sixth season episode of The X @-@ Files , which first aired on November 15 , 1998 . In the episode , Cranston 's character is unpleasant and anti @-@ semitic , but he is dying throughout the episode , and screenwriter Vince Gilligan intended for the audience to sympathize with him despite his unlikeable qualities . Gilligan said this was influenced by " Subway " which he called an " amazing episode " . He said of D 'Onofrio 's character : " The brilliant thing they did in this episode , the thing that stuck with me , was this guy ? s an asshole , the guy really is unpleasant , and yet at the end ( you ) still feel his humanity . " The casting of Cranston in this role directly led Gilligan to eventually cast him as the lead in his television series Breaking Bad .

= = PBS Documentary " Anatomy of a ' Homicide : Life on the Street ' " = =

WGBH @-@ TV , a Boston @-@ based Public Broadcasting Service station , produced a 75 @-@ minute television documentary about the episode " Subway " called Anatomy of a " Homicide : Life on the Street " . The documentary was written , produced and directed by filmmaker Theodore Bogosian , and was originally broadcast on November 4 , 1998 at 9 p.m. on PBS . The film focused predominantly on James Yoshimura , beginning with his conception of the script and ending with his reaction to the episode 's television broadcast and the ratings numbers . The documentary included a brief featurette about Homicide : Life on the Street and its history of both critical acclaim and low ratings . It also focused on the balance between art and business , with Yoshimura and the other producers trying to produce an intelligent , high quality episode while also capturing high ratings .

The documentary crew put wireless microphones on several of the actors and crew and followed them through the conception , pre @-@ production , filming , editing , screening and reception of " Subway " . Many people involved with the show found the process extremely disruptive . In particular , Fleder said he hates to be photographed and found the camera crew distracting and stressful . Fleder , who agreed to interviews for the documentary but refused to wear a microphone on the set , said of the crew , " To pull off a show like this , a seven @-@ day shoot with this much dialogue and this many shots per day , you have to be really , really focused , and for me the thing with the documentary crew kept pulling away from the focus . "

Rob Owen , television editor of the Pittsburgh Post @-@ Gazette , said the documentary provided an interesting , entertaining and detailed look behind the scenes of the show . Owen said this was "



rare , because TV doesn 't usually reveal details about itself . It 's nice to see PBS pulling back the curtain on its competition , and I wish it happened more often . " Manuel Mendoza of The Dallas Morning News praised it , calling it " a documentary as rare to public TV as Homicide is to commercial television " , but said it " falls short of being definitive " because it cannot address all elements of the series due to its brief running time . Several commentators praised the humorous scene in the documentary where Yoshimura goes line @-@ by @-@ line through his script and replaces curse words based on orders from NBC censors .