"UNDERGROUND TECHNIQUE"
Transcript (00:36:09)

KRIS TAPLEY
This is *50 MPH*!

[INTRO MUSIC]

DENNIS HOPPER (as "Howard Payne")
Pop quiz, hotshot!

DENNIS HOPPER (as "Howard Payne")
There's a bomb on a bus.

JEFF DANIELS (as "Harry Temple")
You're deeply nuts, you know that?

DENNIS HOPPER (as "Howard Payne")
Once the bus goes fifty miles an hour, the bomb is armed.

SANDRA BULLOCK (as "Annie")
Stay on or get off?

DENNIS HOPPER (as "Howard Payne")
If it drops below fifty...

SANDRA BULLOCK (as "Annie")
Stay on or get off?!

DENNIS HOPPER (as "Howard Payne")
...it blows up.

ALAN RUCK (as "Stephens")
Oh, darn.

DENNIS HOPPER (as "Howard Payne")
What do you do?

KEANU REEVES (as "Jack Traven")
You have a hair trigger aimed at your head. What do you do?

DENNIS HOPPER (as "Howard Payne")
What do you do?!

KEANU REEVES (as "Jack Traven")
What do you do?

KRIS TAPLEY
I'm your host, Kris Tapley, and you're listening to an oral history of director Jan de Bont's 1994 summer blockbuster, *Speed*, straight from the people who made it happen. Now, don't forget to fasten your seatbelts. Let's hit the road!

KRIS TAPLEY
Alright, with today's episode, we have finally reached the end of the track on the production phase of *Speed*. Today we'll be covering the third act of the movie, better known as the subway sequence. If you haven't heard our locations episode a few weeks back detailing how they secured permitting and whatnot to shoot in what was, in 1993, a very new subway system in Los Angeles, I'd encourage you to do so. But this sequence goes far beyond the tunnels running underground from downtown to Hollywood. I've often said this is the part of the movie that really fires me up, because however you feel about the subway sequence in a narrative sense, that the movie feels like it's already over by this point or what have you, you can't deny the craft on display here. We're talking about an amalgam of set decoration, rear-screen projection technique, clever lighting conceptions, miniature model train work and, of course, a full-blown stunt on Hollywood Blvd. as the subway bursts out and onto the street in front of the famed Mann's Chinese Theatre, just in time for Jack and Annie to catch a screening of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. OK, let's start digging here. We'll begin with our guy, director Jan de Bont, talking about this blend of techniques.

JAN DE BONT
I just want to bring John Frankenheimer up again. That's what he did, too. He tried to really make it all look so easy and so effortless, while there's an enormous effort being made to getting it all right. The trick is to make all those different approaches seamless. They cannot stand out. If you do them seamlessly, nobody is even aware of what it is. I mean, I don't want people to even think about, "Oh, that was rear-screen and that was whatever" To me, it's like, I only want them to think, "Oh my God, we are in a tunnel, on top of a train, and they are almost killing each other." But right now, when you have those big visual effects movies, you know that everything is an effect. So, you cannot trust anything. But here, in this movie, because there are so many real-life moments in it, you mix it up, there is no time to even consider. No, you don't see it. That is, I think, the trick that some old-time filmmakers were able to do extremely well.

KRIS TAPLEY

And here is visual effects journalist Ian Failes, certified *Speed* superfreak and one of the top minds on all this stuff.

IAN FAILES
You know what's interesting is the model trains. If you watched just that clip of just the model work, it's one of those situations in movies where you know that it's a model, but you're OK with it. Maybe that's how sometimes I feel about old Star Wars, original Star Wars. It's, like, you kind of know that it's a model, but you accept it. And I feel like with *Speed*, we were still at that point where we were OK with, like, a bit of – in fact, the reason it works is because it's a bit of everything. Full-scale, you know, blue screen, rear projection, models. You know, and because it's an action film, it all goes together so quickly. That's actually a deliberate thing, and partly, it was what they could do in 1993 and '94, right? And in fact, if it was manicured too much, it wouldn't suit the grittiness of *Speed*, you know, which is moving camera – not shaky camera, really. But it would feel too manufactured.

KRIS TAPLEY
Let's talk about designing these elements so that they look good on camera, and how the aesthetic here differed from what we saw for an hour or so on the bus. We'll start with the interior subway car stuff. Here's production designer Jackson De Govia followed by set decorator K.C. Fox.

JACKSON DE GOVIA
It's a much sleeker and up-to-date look, you know? The bus itself, it's an old tool and it's the aesthetic of a previous generation, and the subway is, like, the way we would do it now, and it's glamorous and it's higher speed, and, you know, it is called *Speed*. It's like the essence of speed. It's going faster.

K.C. FOX
We had to rebuild a bus chassis to look like the interior of the subway, right? So, all of that subway material had to be screen-printed, before we could use it. And there were all those brass fittings, stainless-steel fittings, and everything came from some other country. You know, we went through the City of LA transportation department and sort of picked through their graveyard for some samples of the kind of stuff, but it was all – that sort of job is fairly thankless, because you're just trying to make it look real.

KRIS TAPLEY
And here is gaffer Chris Strong talking you through the lighting design challenges.

CHRIS STRONG
It was just, you know, complicated to make light changes, because you're going past lights that are on the walls. And actually, we put the subway car, and we took, basically – closest to the front end, we put two lights on each side. We went about 100 feet away and we put, like, eight-by mirrors on 45-degree angles. So that we had lights on the left side of the bus going into a mirror, to a mirror, and coming back, and the same on the other side of the bus. So, then when guys would do their hands and flags, it felt like

lights changing on both sides of the bus, I mean the subway car, and changing color. Basically, if you're looking down at a sheet of paper, and draw the bus in the middle, and then quite a ways away on the left side and right side of the bus, you put a 45-degree angle – like, 8-by-8 reflective, at a 45-degree angle- coming in the front corners. Then you go the far end of the bus, and that's where you put your lights. So, the lights would go along the side of the bus, not going in it, but hitting the 45 on the one side, which would bounce over to the 45 on the other side, which would come back down the other side of the bus – the subway car, sorry. And so, we had lights on both sides, and then people were doing stuff with their hands, with flags, and it really didn't exactly have to match what you saw outside, but it gave the feeling of it.

KRIS TAPLEY
So, that's the interiors with Keanu and Sandra and Dennis doing their thing. Someone else was in that subway car, though. Do you remember the poor driver of the thing who gets blown away by Howard Payne when he goes to reach for the radio? If you look closely, you'll see that that is well-known character actor Richard Schiff, although he was hardly well-known at the time. Now we move outside the subway car for a real mishmash of filmmaking techniques. So, we're really going to get our hands dirty on some stuff. Let's start with the rear-screen projection component and go back to director Jan de Bont to tee us up.

JAN DE BONT
The fight on the train, we could not do that on a real train. They would never let us, and also, there was really not enough space. And we needed just a little bit more head room for them to really not get hurt. It was just way too dangerous. So, you film it in a way where the presence of the tunnel is really close, where you're kind of claustrophobic and close, but it is – there's a softness to it that you can feel more the speed of the tunnel than actually the clarity of the tunnel. So, it's a trick you have to do, a little bit, so that the focus will go to the actors, only, and to what they're doing. And then you have to make a background shot from every angle – the front, the side – wherever the camera is, those shots have to be first filmed, and then, of course, rear-projected. And these are really big rear projections, because to get them on the camera close, you have to use a wide-angle lens, and it means, also, the background screen has to be really big.

KRIS TAPLEY
Just to briefly explain, what this entails is going down into the subway at night, when they're closed, and mounting cameras on the top of a subway car so you can get visual effects plates. The crew would grab a number of different angles on a moving car that they would then lay in behind Keanu and Dennis in the fight sequence by projecting that footage onto a massive screen behind them as they duked it out on top of a stationary car. They set this all up at a massive airplane manufacturing facility in Downey, according to first assistant camera Vern Nobles Jr., and as far as I can tell, it would have been the old North American Aviation Downey Plant, which is where they built airplanes in the '40s and '50s and then later stuff like the Apollo spacecraft and even Space Shuttles. It later became a full-fledged movie production space for films like *Space Cowboys*, *Spider-Man*, *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*, *Iron Man* and

Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull. You needed a massive space for this because they needed a big throw for the projection of the moving subway footage. Throw meaning the distance from the projector lens to the screen, and the reason for that is they wanted it to be big and immersive behind the actors. Let's hear a little bit from visual effects supervisor Boyd Shermis on this technique.

BOYD SHERMIS
It was a huge pain in the butt to set up and use and you didn't always get the results you wanted. It was the kind of thing you'd often see with driving footage, you know, with that image out the window and you could always tell it was a rear projection because there was a balance in the background that wasn't in the foreground or vice versa, and/or it looked washed out or grainy or whatever. And so, you tried not to use it if you could avoid it back then. But it was something that, for what we were planning on top of the train sequence, in the subway, was a perfect application for it. So, Dave Drzewiecki and I spent, I don't know, a couple of nights on the, at that time, the very new LA subway. And they gave us the subway and a couple of tunnels for a couple of nights to just set some VistaVision cameras up on a couple of different trains – or one train, I should say – on a couple of different positions, and get a bunch of footage, running footage of trains, so that we could put Dennis Hopper on the top of a train car set piece in front of a rear projection screen. It was kind of the perfect scenario, the perfect way to use rear projection, where a lot of its flaws weren't revealed. Because it was such a kinetic, fast-moving thing, and there was wind blowing and, you know, the train's rattling and rolling on the tracks, and, you know, if it didn't sync up, it sort of made sense, almost. The train is just kind of rolling and going crazy. It was the last time I ever used that technique, that technology, in the visual effects, of shooting VistaVision and doing rear projection with Bill Hansard and sons. That was sort of the premier, and maybe the only, company that was doing pin-registered, VistaVision rear projection at the time. You'd do what they call registered prints, which is where the lab really takes their time to get the prints steady and get the color exactly right, and you'd pay a premium and you'd have to go through a bunch of iterations at the printing lab, which at the time was CFI – Consolidated Film Industries, I think it was called. CFI. And they would go out of their way and it was very expensive, and you'd use the best film stock. But they would print up just beautiful prints, and you could only run them through the projector a couple of times. You'd have to have multiple copies of these registered prints if you were intending to do multiple takes, because they'd gather dust or they would get a print scratch on them or, you know, shit happened. It would reveal the gag. That technique has come full circle, and what they're doing now with LED video walls in shows like The Mandalorian, that is today's equivalent of rear projection, where you would put somebody in front of a screen, and there would be an image projected onto it, and if you're balancing your contrast and your, you know, your blacks and your whites and your color – your color is all balanced and your exposure is balanced, you can get, in-camera, what appears to be a composite image. But you're getting it live and you don't have the restrictions of your camera motion or perspective and things of that nature.

KRIS TAPLEY

I mean, I told you we were about to get our hands dirty. We're deep inside the sausage maker at this point. But before we get into the train miniatures and whatnot, I had this interesting nugget from former Fox exec Jorge Saralegui. We haven't heard from him in a while because, once production started, his role, being a development executive, sort of dwindled. But in the movie, after Payne gets his head knocked off on top of the subway car, you'll recall that Jack comes back to find Annie handcuffed to a pole. Then he goes into the cabin to try and stop the train or slow it down, but after Payne riddled poor Richard Schiff with bullets, he damaged the console. So, nothing works. Except, apparently, the accelerator.

[*SPEED* CLIP]

KEANU REEVES (as "Jack Traven")
There's a curve ahead. I'm gonna speed it up, make it jump the track.

KRIS TAPLEY
Well, apparently that whole beat was sort of cobbled together. The only person who had much of a memory of it was Jorge, so here's what he recalled.

JORGE SARALEGUI
I think it felt like something was missing and we came up – or we or Joss came up with something. It was right at the end when I think Hopper's dead and Keanu is driving the subway train. I'm actually not sure if we reshot something or not now that I'm thinking about it, but what we did do is we changed the story. We either reshot it or this is one of those examples where we used existing footage and made up a moment. It's where Keanu says, "I'm going to speed it up." Take a look at it. I'm almost positive you hear the line not on his face. Now look at his face and tell me if you're driving that train, and you're going a million miles an hour and you're about to crash, if you would look as relaxed as he looks. Since he had looked pretty intense the whole movie, right? Take a look in his eyes and see if he looks a little unfocused. It's a non-take. Now, it's a fast cut, but that's, like, after a cut. It's in between takes. He's standing there. That's old footage that we repurposed, and then what we did – and this is what we reshot – I don't remember if Keanu himself did it, actually, or not. He probably did. But it's the hand pulling the lever back to speed it up. It wasn't going to be that.

KRIS TAPLEY
He actually pushes the lever forward, but anyway, I did want to circle back to Payne getting his head knocked off. I never did reach out to anyone on the makeup team to talk about stuff like Payne's disfigured hand or Beth Grant's ill-fated dummy that gets run over by the bus, but I did have this funny aside from key set production assistant Michael Risoli. We first heard from Michael in the grab bag episode two weeks ago. I've got some great photos I'll share at our website of him hanging out with Dennis Hopper during the shooting of this sequence, and more to the point, him hanging out with Dennis Hopper's decapitated head.

MICHAEL RISOLI

Why was that head just laying around? Like, I'm taking Polaroid pictures. Like, that doesn't happen these days. Like, the head was just on set, like, standing by. Like, I think I even remember Sardi saying, "Risoli, bring over the head!" And I brought over the head. There's such special care taken with things like that these days.

KRIS TAPLEY
Moving on, Boyd mentioned someone a moment ago named Dave Drzewiecki, and it's just about time to get him into the mix. Dave was the visual effects director of photography on this sequence. He basically headed up, with Jan, a whole separate camera department to shoot these visual effects elements. He did the plate photography on the moving subway cars, and then he shot the model trains that were used for the big crash and derailment sequence. Dave is kind of amazing. He started, just like Boyd, with a company called Apogee, which was John Dykstra's visual effects company in the wake of the original *Star Wars*. As you talk to Dave, you realize how much he is a figure of another time in film production history who has evolved and kept himself quite relevant and in-demand as a DP and camera operator. One of his credits is the visual effects DP on Christopher Nolan's *Tenet*, and you can certainly understand why a guy like Nolan, who counts *Speed* as one of his favorite movies, would be interested in someone with a skill set like Dave's. I want to save some of this material for our visual effects episode that is still to come, but just to rattle off some more credits, Dave worked on *Ghostbusters II*, *Die Hard with a Vengeance*, *Volcano*, *Titanic*, *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence*, *X2* and *Iron Man 3*, to name a few. Last we spoke, he had relocated to Atlanta, just like the industry had. He also has my heart because he spends a great deal of time refurbishing old CRT television sets. Anyway, let's hear from Dave a bit.

DAVE DRZEWIECKI
I shot the background plates, those RP plates, also, and I know they were used in something else later on. Andrzej Bartkowiak remembered them when he was shooting some other movie and re-used them. All that rear-projection equipment from Hansard, I think that stuff has been cut up and thrown into trash cans and bins. I don't think it even exists anymore. I know all that camera stuff that we used, the majority of that came from Apogee and I think the guy that ended up with that gear just found that he had this giant warehouse full of stuff that nobody was going to ever use again, probably, so I think a lot of that equipment got thrown away, too. You know, *Speed* was one of those movies that – because up until that point, you didn't have a lot of this super frenetic, handheld, high-octane camera movement sort of stuff. You know, movies were made different differently. So, *Speed* was one of those early movies that had this – yeah, it was like an energy that came through camera movement that was unique. There were sort of conventions in filmmaking and cinematography in those days. I don't think the conventions really exist anymore, but there was the day of, like, "This type of lighting was the way professionals light" and, "This type of lighting was the way the amateurs light," and, you know, that kind of sensibility. And I think *Speed*, absolutely, was one of the early movies that broke a lot of those barriers. It was a point of reference in terms of what he had in mind, and also, in a way, it was just sort of me interested in how he would shoot something, just asking him questions about, "Well, if you were going to

shoot this, you know, for real, how would you do it," you know? And then you sort of take those ideas and you scale them down. These trains were all 1/8 scale, but they were heavy. You know, they might have been 150 pounds when they were all loaded with batteries and everything.

KRIS TAPLEY
So, we're into the model train stuff now. These trains were built by a guy named Jack Sessums, who is no longer with us. But I wanted to have someone who could speak to what was going on in his shop, so I managed to track down a guy named Michael Sajbel. Michael is a director and cinematographer who was credited as the photographic assistant for Sessums Engineering on *Speed*. It was actually from Michael that I got a good idea on the timing of when this was all being shot, by the way, because the official production dates for *Speed* were September 1, 1993 to December 23, 1993. But this particular part of the sequence had not been shot yet when the year was up, and Michael recalls having to find alternate routes down to the Culver City set because of the damage caused by the Northridge earthquake on January 17, 1994. By this time, an assembly of *Speed* had been screened and the studio was far more excited about its potential in the marketplace than they were at the start of production, so the pressure was on. Here's Michael.

MICHAEL SAJBEL
We were kind of gearing up — I wouldn't say casually, but we were gearing up to do *Speed* and the studio got a call from James Cameron saying, "I'm not going to have *True Lies* ready for its early summer release. I want at least another month." And *Speed* was all filmed, except for, you know, a few of the things at the beginning with the elevator and toward the end with the wreck of the subway cars. And they said, you know, "We're going to move *Speed* up." And there was this really – how do I put it kindly, with compliment – a real tough lady at 20th Century Fox. A real, you know, assertive woman called us and said – and I'm sure she gave Dave Drezwiecki and the producers at Imageworks the same marching orders – "You no longer have a personal life. You are going to work every day to the point of exhaustion and all day Saturday and all day Sunday until you are done." And I think we were at around six weeks. But it was almost like a wartime footing. And, of course, after eight hours, we went into time and a half. After 12 hours, we went into double time. And then on Saturday, we started off at time and a half and went into, you know 3x. And on Sunday, we started at 3x and, you know, I bought a BMW after a couple of weeks. It's like James Cameron says, when he was accused of possibly abusing his crew on *Titanic*. He said, "I get the best people available and I pay them really well. And they're here as a result of their own decision-making. I'm not forcing anybody to do anything." So, you just have to know that you're going to go on a holy crusade or a big, you know – a war thing, you know? It's kind of fun, actually, being in the trenches with these guys.

KRIS TAPLEY
On that point of a time crunch, here's Boyd Shermis.

BOYD SHERMIS

Well, what that meant to us, on the post side of things, was that we didn't have time to do anything. We were working seven days a week around the clock, quite literally, trying to get these miniatures photographed and then get it into a post-production pipeline. And at a certain point, the studio just didn't care about the money. They were, as we often said back in those days, backing up the Brinks truck and handing us wads of money just to make sure it got done on time. Because, you know, the release slot that *True Lies* vacated, you know, they had to put something in there, and the only thing to put in there at that point was *Speed*.

KRIS TAPLEY
I want to come back to Michael here, though, to help paint this picture of Jack Sessums. It sort of bums me out that these two titans of miniatures, Jack Sessums and Grant McCune, who did the elevator shaft miniature, aren't here to speak on all of this because this stuff is a massive component of the bookending sequences on *Speed*. But for Jack's part, I think Michael is a wonderful spokesman, so here's what he had to say about the man.

MICHAEL SAJBEL
Jack Sessums himself was the son of an Army general. Gosh, I hope I got that right. I'm pretty sure US Army. When World War II ended, Jack's dad was in charge of the occupation of the Philippines and Jack, as a kid, grew up going out into the jungle and finding these old tanks that were blown up, and I think he had a collection of munitions at one point that he got from the tanks. The Department of Defense actually raided Jack's bedroom and confiscated a bunch of stuff. So, that was when Jack was a teenager. And Jack just grew up building stuff, exploding stuff, and all of that. I don't think he had a formal education, per se, but he had, like, always, three or four Chevys, '55 through '57, always built. He actually started manufacturing parts for '57 Chevys to sell to collectors all over the country. So, Jack was this guy who could take one look at something and figure out how it was made, how it worked and all of that. Well, concurrent to all this are these guys who are fanatics about railroads, miniature railroads, live-steam engines, where you actually fill it up with whatever charcoal or burning material it is, boil the water, and it's self-propelled. So, Jack was just this guy who kind of never grew up, and a really likable guy. He had a number of friends. Some of them were real, actual train engineers, guys that really run the trains that you see going through the country. None of them really liked LA, you know? They came in now and then if they had a gun to their head, you know? Just as an aside, when we would go, like, for *Broken Arrow* or some of the other features up in the Page, Arizona area, and we'd be driving along, we'd have a caravan of maybe five to six vans, cargo vans, whatever. And whenever there was a sign that said "fireworks on the right," blinkers all went on and we would pull over and buy a ton of fireworks. So, you know, it was just guys playing in a sandbox. But Jack could hold his own with any studio effects guys and we got to know every one of them at the time. And so, at a certain point in our juncture, my film crew became kind of de facto partners with Jack. I mainly handled all the photography in town, whether it was Panavision, Hill Production Service or whatever. I interacted with the labs. I picked the film stocks. I interacted with the directors of photography, who were first unit and all of that. And Jack was about materials, train

trucks, what are the exact kind of wheels and what kind of miniature springs make it look like an authentic, you know – especially in motion, where you would not pick up, even if you were somewhat of an expert, any false indications that it was a miniature and not the real thing.

KRIS TAPLEY

So, I think that's a pretty solid assessment of the kind of guys we're dealing with here. Now, Michael mentioned Imageworks a moment ago, as in Sony Pictures Imageworks, Sony's in-house visual effects company that had literally just started when *Speed* came in as a client. If *Speed* wasn't their first feature, it was their second. They shot all this derailment stuff with the miniatures in a building a few streets over from the Sony lot in Culver City. Dave even remembered the street: Hayden Place. That's where the Imageworks facility was and so they built up a soundstage to shoot the crash and all of that. Let's go back to Michael.

MICHAEL SAJBEL

So, for *Speed*, I became a production manager, and when we were filming, I operated B camera or A camera, whatever. If you were to look at the film and you see a really tight shot of the train car being panned, I followed that thing with about two inches on either side of it perfectly. So, that was one of my things that I picked up as a DP and an operator, was when you're doing miniatures, you shoot in high speed and things happen more quickly, to recover the momentum and the inertia and all the other physical characteristics of a miniature to make it look real. When we were filming at Sony Imageworks, we had to build the train tracks out the building and up ramps so that they would come down at a certain speed. But I believe, unless I'm corrected, but they were one-inch scale. So, these train cars were about 10 feet long. And there are there all kinds of formulas. I'd to think they're from the Tibetan Book of the Dead, but they're actually in the ASC manual. Plus, we've picked up the formulas ourselves and perfected them. What's the one-to-one ratio for a one-inch? You know, 84 frames, somewhere in there. 120 will give you a slightly dampened look, and all of that.

KRIS TAPLEY

Back to Boyd Shermis.

BOYD SHERMIS

Like the taillights on the train, were shot separately and independently from the train car itself, because the exposures had to be done differently. So, it was shot with motion-control. And motion-control allows you to shoot the same camera movement multiple times and get the exact same camera movement, but you can set different exposures for different things, be it lights or a background or the train or a reflection or, you know, you want to fill in some shadows, a shadow pass, you want to create a shadow, what have you, but you shoot all these things separately, and then you layer them together in a composite image.

KRIS TAPLEY

While we're on this, I want to bring in a guy named Ron Brinkmann. There isn't a ton to talk about from a post-production visual effects standpoint on this sequence. I mean, there is, but we'd be stuck in the weeds for quite a while. So, rather than save this bit for our upcoming visual effects episode, I figure I'll throw Ron in here now. Ron was the computer graphics supervisor for Sony Pictures Imageworks on the team. Here's what he recalled of working on the subway crash sequence.

RON BRINKMANN
The CG stuff in that was, you know, nice, but it was just, like, multi-pass stuff. It was all repeatable movement, for the most part. So, we'd shoot a second pass with just the lights on and then we can comp those in later and control how much of that light you see and, you know, you get a nice trail and all that. A little bit of clean-up work, if I remember right, you know, pulling some C-stands out of the shots and adding dust. I'm sure we added sparks. That was actually our crew T-shirt. Jan was always, like, "I think we need more sparks. We need more sparks in this." So, I remember the crew T-shirt, at least one of them, was, "I need more sparks." And so, I absolutely remember putting extra sparks. I mean, a lot of sparks were practical, but we ended up adding a few more or comping in some additional practical ones, like when the brakes were locking up or the wheels were going against the stuff and everything. So, yeah, it was kind of – the visual effects stuff was sort of fun, where you're just augmenting and cleaning up and enhancing it a little bit without going out of control on it. But for the most part, I mean, it was a large miniature running through a giant tunnel that was built and crashing and going off the rails and some of the shots are just little insert shots of the wheels squealing and everything like that.

MICHAEL SAJBEL
You know, Jan de Bont, is famous for multiple takes, and the same with Boyd Shermis. When I was around Boyd and he was talking to Grant about the elevator sequence, it was, "Do it again. Do it better. Do it this way. Do it that way." But we did that in one take. Three cameras, one take, Jan de Bont said, "That's it. Put it in the movie."

KRIS TAPLEY
And now, the big finale. After the train derails, it comes barreling out of an incomplete subway station and out onto Hollywood Blvd. I think we did a pretty good job of covering that in the locations episode a few weeks back, but remember, that was another bus outfitted to look like a subway car. And there was more to it than that. Here's stunt driver Gil Combs.

GIL COMBS
The jump coming out of the sign, I think that was Smrz, did that jump. And then when it went on its side, we built a deal where there was a pickup truck inside that moved it. Because it was just slightly off the ground, you know, continuing the slide down the street, where it taps that tour van. That, I drove. I was inside driving the truck that was making that thing move on its side.

KRIS TAPLEY

Set decorator K.C. Fox.

K.C. FOX
That was very well-crafted. Those were a lot of spots. And then in the end, that sort of ricochet system that when it finally breached the street in front of the El Capitan Theatre, how they made that happen, it was just fascinating. I mean, it was like this giant rubber band thing that just allowed it to push through.

KRIS TAPLEY
And, not to repeat a joke, but cue the Billy Idol. How about that? Guys, that's it. We're done shooting. We have all of our footage. We've gone from downtown to Venice to Santa Monica to Long Beach to the 105 freeway to Los Angeles International Airport to the Mojave Desert to the Fox lot to the subways to an aircraft manufacturing facility to a Culver City soundstage and finally, smack dab in the middle of Hollywood. What a legendary production. Four months of work. But you heard Michael. The pressure is on. We've got a fast-approaching release date, so now, we've got to put all of this material together. It's time for post-production. But... we're going to step away for the holidays. I think we've all earned it. So, take a break, our best to you and your loved ones. We will see you in the new year. Here's what to expect.

[OUTRO MUSIC]

KRIS TAPLEY
Next week on 50 MPH...

KRIS TAPLEY
We move from the film set to the post-production suite as film editor John Wright begins his soon-to-be Oscar-nominated work.

JAN DE BONT
The tempo of the movie, that is really, a big part, thanks to him. That's why gifted editors are so important.

KEVIN ROSS
He was nominated for the Oscar that year, and I'll go to my grave saying he should have beat *Forrest Gump*.

KRIS TAPLEY
In his last interview ever, the late John Wright details his efforts in assembling one of the greatest action films of its era and his collaboration with Jan de Bont.

JOHN WRIGHT
Working with documentaries, I learned how to tell a story with film even if it wasn't real structured, and it helped me a lot on *Speed*...I could tell by his reaction he was very happy and very surprised...He didn't particularly spend much time in the editing room,

and I don't think that's because he didn't care. I'm not sure he knew what he was supposed to do when it came to my relationship with him.

KRIS TAPLEY
All of that and more next week right here on *50 MPH*!

KRIS TAPLEY
Thanks so much for listening. *50 MPH* is written, produced and edited by yours truly, Kris Tapley. You can find us on Twitter @50MPHPod. I'm @kristapley. That's Kris with a K. You can also catch every episode and more at our website 50MPHpodcast.com. If you dug the show, please like and subscribe and do all the things. We'll see you next time.