

## **The Hothouse Project**

**Charles Shaar Murray's Journalism as Craft and Art writing course**

[www.charlesshaarmurray.com/hothouse/hothouse-course](http://www.charlesshaarmurray.com/hothouse/hothouse-course)

**Autumn 2013 coursework**

### **CATY MACAULEY: Mia Wallace on the rails.**

Think of the rails, like those of the London underground. You're waiting for the Victoria Line. A woman has previously obscured your path while you tried to make it onto the last train and yet here both of you stand. On your left, she is speaking loudly to a friend she has not seen in ages, shrill voices circulate through the tunnel. To your right a man wearing a suit shares your same look of vexation: you're not alone.

Imagine you're sat in a Buddy's Diner, you've ordered a Martin and Lewis milkshake, and you're facing Vincent Vega. He's killed before; maybe he's pushed someone onto the tracks. Your conversation: Hendrix drowned in a pool of his own vomit, Jim Morrison, overdosed naked in the bath tub and Brian Jones drowned in his own swimming pool. Other ways to look at it; Hendrix was poisoned or forced to overdose, or that Morrison was killed in that club and moved to the tub. Jones didn't drown; he was pushed and in his state could not swim. Jerry Lee Lewis' C'est La Vie begins playing; he definitely has used the tracks as a cover-up.

If you stand at the edge looking at the tracks waiting for the train the thought must follow: has anyone jumped from here before? It's common knowledge that these serious incidents are not so rare. How is this any different from the carefully raked lines of cocaine? You see them, 10 slender lines but they are not all for yourself. But what would happen if you hoovered up all 10?

If you were to jump down to the metallic vertical strips, how long would you have to jump out? The train says three minutes. It took you a moment to get there, three minutes is an easy save. But would it? As a child everyone is told that there is a live rail with train tracks. Would this slip your mind this time? And if it did, would you know

which line were the crucial hot wire?

At the tube station again, this time an open air station, the same thought injects itself into your brain. You're not going to jump, but there is still that 'what if' lingering. Behind you a woman is waiting for the train in the opposite direction. Her hair is pristine and she is immaculately turned out, even though it's the end of the day and there is no doubt she is returning from a day at work. She has that look, and an invisible label looming over her head saying 'I'm-so-fucking-London'. She looks like Uma Thurman in *Pulp Fiction*. She's been at this end of London buying class A drugs. Maybe her night will end up with her foaming at the mouth with John Travolta. She'd definitely jump on the rails before you.