

New York, c. 1980

This black and white photograph is 15,8 centimetres wide by 23 high. It shows four people – a man and a woman and two children – on a bench seat on a subway train. They are close to us, filling the frame, and are seen slightly from below, as if the photo was taken from a camera on the lap of someone on the opposite side of the carriage. Although they all face forwards, no one is looking in the direction of the camera.

Above the train bench on the right, there is a darkened window behind the man's head – presumably the train is travelling between stations. To the left of the picture, behind the woman, a window displays the partial words 'INGTON AV EXP' (for Lexington Avenue Express). There is marker pen graffiti on the white metallic wall above and below this sign, including letters, numbers and a cartoon face.

To the far left is a black woman in her twenties with short hair waved over her brow and gold hoop earrings. She wears a white polo neck under a black leather jacket with wide 1970s collars, and holds a large leather handbag on her lap. Her expression is a mixture of sadness and worry, looking up at someone or something off to the right. Beside her is a black girl of about six in a duffel coat, the furry hood framing her face as she sleeps, her eyelids relaxed, a slight smile on her lips.

A white man in his sixties sits on the right-hand side of the picture. He wears a trilby hat with a narrow brim, a woollen coat and a dark patterned shirt and tie. He looks in

the opposite direction from the woman, up to the left, with a slightly watchful expression. On his lap he holds a boy of about four or five whose pale cheeks and nose are just emerging from a woolly balaclava. He also has a thick sweater under a dark wool coat. The boy's head is turned to the left, looking toward the sleeping girl. The man holds a folded newspaper in his other hand, blurred at the far right-hand edge of the photo.

[ENDS]