

a l t i t u d e
an original screenplay

written by
michael s. palmer

magnet management
6380 wilshire blvd.
suite 1606
los angeles, ca 90048
323.658.8095

1979. An Influenza outbreak occurs on a jetliner in Anchorage, Alaska. A three-hour ground delay and an inoperative ventilation system are responsible for the high attack rate of this airborne infection.

1975. A mysterious illness appears in a small southern Connecticut town. Eventually classified as Borreliosis, or Lyme Disease, to this day, the USDA denies any link between this outbreak and tick-virus experiments conducted at a secret germ warfare laboratory known as Lab 257, which is located on Plum Island...

Less than 10 nautical miles away.

A blue sky. An empty runway. A quiet day...

EXT. LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (LAX)

Until a government issue CROWN VIC fishtails onto the tarmac.

Lights flash. Sirens off. Engine screams. As it passes, we turn and follow. Reveal --

Surrounded by a fleet of rescue, HAZMAT, police, fire, and FBI vehicles, we see a U.S. AIRWAYS 767 at the end of a runway. Engines idle in the morning sun. Something wrong.

SUPER: *December 24, 2008. 10:03AM PST.*

As the Crown Vic slides to a stop, notice a SWAT team dispersing strategically around the plane's perimeter.

Weapons trained.

Safeties off.

Out of the Crown Vic's driver's seat steps FBI Special Agent in Charge THOMAS DOYLE, 42. Intense, careful, wouldn't break a sweat if he were sitting on the sun.

Barks to an LAX POLICE OFFICER:

DOYLE

Where are my stairs?

Doyle eyes the plane as he finds the SWAT TEAM LEADER (adrenaline incarnate). Yelling over the jet engines:

DOYLE

Any movement?

SWAT TEAM LEADER

None. Plane's dark. Spotters on terminal rooftops still say no-motion.

INTERCUT: Nearby terminal rooftops. SNIPERS. Scopes scan the darkened windows of the 767. Nothing.

DOYLE

Jesus.

SWAT TEAM LEADER

What's the debrief, sir?

DOYLE

U.S. Airways flight 1024 out of Denver. ATC lost contact with the plane as it made its final descent. No alarms. No 7500. That was 23 minutes ago.

SWAT TEAM LEADER
Hostages?

DOYLE
Unknown.

The LAX Police Officer makes a "10 minutes" hand gesture.
SWAT reads the puzzled look in Doyle's eyes.

SWAT TEAM LEADER
What?

DOYLE
U.S. Air says autopilot's still
engaged. ILS brought her in.

SWAT TEAM LEADER
Sir?

DOYLE
As far as the airline, its engineers,
ATC, and the FAA are concerned...
No one landed this plane.

CUT TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 (DENVER TO BOSTON) -- CONTINUOUS

A Boeing 737. Rows 1-4 are FIRST CLASS; 10-31 are ECONOMY.
There are four *overwing* EMERGENCY EXITS.

SUPER: 10:05AM PST. *Somewhere over Ohio.*

Full flight. Some sleep. Some fidget. Some ease fears
with Bloody Marys. Some talk of holiday plans. Others are
glued to their personal in-seat DIRECT TV systems.

A MAN (O.S.)
No you didn't.

Row 10, meet GAVIN ELSTER. 35, killer smile, designer jeans
and sweater. A friend to all, especially the sexy flight
attendant, LISA, 21, he's (successfully) hitting on.

LISA
I *did*.

GAVIN
I knew it from the moment I saw you--

Whispers in her ear. She giggles. Mischievous. BUMP.
Jostled by the sweating, frazzled, FRANTIC MAN, 32.

FRANTIC
Sorry. Sorry.

Gavin turns back to Lisa, but she follows Frantic into:

FIRST CLASS

Frantic bangs open the lavatory door. Gavin sees something metal, electronic, in Frantic's right hand.

LISA

I'm sorry, sir. This lav's for--

KA-LINK. Door locks. Lisa knocks.

FRANTIC (O.S.)

I'll be out in a minute.

She listens through the door.

LISA

Sir? Is everything all right?

Gavin and the first class passengers all stare. Behind them in economy, a few notice the commotion.

RUPERT (O.S.)

Did you see it?

Gavin looks down. A weasel-like business man (RUPERT - 50s) in a pinstriped SUIT sloshes a scotch. Glares.

RUPERT

In his hand. What was in his hand?

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT -- DAY

Doyle stands atop a moving staircase. Waives a WHITE FLAG as men push him to the plane door of U.S. Air Flight 1024.

Underneath the jet, SWAT fans out. Someone scrambles up the front landing gear.

DOYLE

(knocking)

Federal Agent. Open the door.

(beat)

I'm Special Agent in Charge, Thomas Doyle. Please open the door.

In his ear, SWAT RADIO NOISE. Waiting for a command to enter.

INTERCUT: The rooftop Snipers. No signs of movement.

Doyle wraps on the door again. Tries to peer inside. Squints into the sun's reflection. Jet engines. Still idling.

A "Go Ahead" call is made. Doyle draws his weapon, backs down the stairs.

SNIPERS (on radio)
We have motion. WE HAVE MOTION.

SWAT TEAM LEADER (on radio)
Is that us?!? Talk to me.

From inside, a LOUD BANG. All around the 767, guns up.

RADIO NOISE
We're in. JESUS CHR---

STATIC. Doyle sees a SHADOW in the windows. Coming at him. Sniper scopes follow it. Fingers itching to pull.

SWAT TEAM LEADER (on radio)
TALK TO ME, GOD DAMMIT.

And endless silence...

RADIO NOISE
All clear.

Air hisses as the door opens. Doyle runs up the stairs.

DOYLE
What is it?

A SWAT team member walks out. The terror in his eyes is unmistakable even through his GAS MASK:

SWAT GUY
Don't go in there.

CUT TO:

INT. A HOUSE -- DAY

SUPER: *40 miles outside of Seattle, WA. 10:13AM PST.*

An artist's haven. Great views. Earthy. Wooden everything. Paint supplies and easels surround our PAINTER. She's recreating the endless landscape outside a bay window.

Dips her brush into the oil paint, and moves it to the canvas:

PAINTER
One. Last. Touch...

WA-BOOOM. THE EARTH SHAKES. WINDOWS SHATTER. HER BRUSH STABS HER CANVAS. PAINTINGS FALL. DISHES BREAK.

SO FUCKING LOUD.

And then quiet. Filled only with the RINGING in our Painter's ears. Wipes paint from her eyes. Moves junk from her torso.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. U.S. AIR FLIGHT 1024 (AT LAX)

The RINGING continues over: As the Painter stands, Doyle (in HAZMAT gear) enters the dark jet. Holds back the nausea.

THE PAINTER

Walks to her front door. Well, what's left of it.

DOYLE

Looks down the rows. The plane is at capacity. Everyone in their seat. Everyone -- every single life aboard --

Dead.

But, the most horrible part: ALL THE BLOOD. Leaking from their eyes. Draining from their mouths and ears.

Fear and pain. Frozen on their faces.

THE PAINTER

Kicks out her front door. Covers her mouth in shock. Outside, where the barn, driveway, and gardens used to be:

A HUGE FIERY CRATER. An airplane's wheel lies a few feet away. Stenciled on the part are the words: ALASKAN AIRWAYS.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DESERT

SUPER: *56 miles north of Las Vegas, NV. 10:17AM PST.*

A convoy of OFF-ROADERS driving their muddy trucks through the open range. Good ole boys havin' a good ole time.

FLASH. Over their heads. The WAIL of JET ENGINES. Brakes slam. Trucks skid out.

They look up to see a purple and orange SOUTHWEST AIRLINES plane dive into the desert floor. 500 mph. Straight down.

We see the explosion. A SECOND LATER, SOUND ARRIVES, BRINGING THE TERRIBLE DESTRUCTION.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S. AIR FLIGHT 1024 (AT LAX)

Behind Doyle, medical investigators comb the scene. He notices a LITTLE GIRL in the arms of her MOTHER. Both wear DISNEYLAND sweatshirts. Little girl clutches a PINK BARBIE.

Doyle can't stay here. He steps--

OUTSIDE

Removes his mask. A commotion brews below. Doyle finds SWAT Leader. Off the panic in his eyes, we CUT TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 (DENVER TO BOSTON)

First class lav clicks open. Lisa eye to eye with Frantic.

FRANTIC

Sorry about that.

LISA

Please return to your seat.

All eyes on Frantic. Gavin steps aside. Watches him--

Row 28, Frantic sits next to a lovely young WOMAN, 32. They know each other. An argument begins. Embarrassed by the scene he just caused.

The only person not staring at Frantic is the Gym Teacher in Row 23. On his TV screen: "**FAA GROUNDING ALL FLIGHTS.**"

Another passenger notices. Then another. Murmurs and rumors:

VOICES

What crashed? / Turn it on. / 19
planes just fell out of the sky. No
warning. Nothing. / I can't hear.
/ It's 24 now. 24 confirmed down.

Row 3, Rupert turns on his Direct TV. CNN has a live feed to a SMOKING CRASH SITE already.

DING. The "fasten seat belt" sign illuminates.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the
captain speaking. I need everyone
to take their seat.

Lisa, from the galley between first class and coach, steps around to see Gavin's TV. The plane utterly silent now:

GAVIN

I think we're under attack.

CUT TO:

THE MOST HORRIBLE AIR DISASTER POSSIBLE (MONTAGE)

All around the country, just outside of --

Portland, Oregon -- Cleveland, Ohio -- Reno, Nevada -- Tulsa, Oklahoma -- Kansas City, Missouri -- Flagstaff, Arizona -- Des Moines, Iowa --

--The sky opens up. A rain falls. One of jet fuel. Wings.
And souls.

CUT TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 (DENVER TO BOSTON) - COACH

Scan the passengers. Quiet. Afraid. Whispers. Row 28,
Frantic has his head down. Face white. Breathing heavy.
The Woman next to him tries to talk to him.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL (O.S.)
...We'll be landing shortly. Please
remain calm, and in your seats.

Lisa belts into a flight attendant jumper seat. Gavin reaches
his hand over to her arm. Human touch comforts.

FRANTIC (O.S.)
CAPTAIN!

All heads turn. Frantic stands. The electronic device in
hand. One step forward, then another. He's running.

FRANTIC
Wait. You can't land the plane!

Charge up the aisle. Gavin trips him, but Frantic bounds to
his feet. He bangs into the cockpit door.

FRANTIC
Captain. Captain, please. You have
to listen to me. You mustn't --

POW. Gavin slams into Frantic. Hauls him to the floor.
The electronic device flies through the air. CRUNCH.

The MOB wakes. Other passengers to their feet, including
Rupert. They pile on Frantic. Punching. Kicking.

Other Flight Attendants are up. On the plane's phone system.

Gavin and Rupert drag Frantic from the group. Down the aisle,
away from the cockpit. Frantic's bloody, pretty messed up.
A SCREAM from the back of the plane. Frantic's Woman.

The rest of the plane fills with CLAPS and CHEERS. Gavin
and Rupert shake hands. Heroes. And then we hear the COUGH.
Frantic slowly wipes the blood from his mouth.

FRANTIC
You don't un--

GAVIN
Shut up.

Frantic's bloody hand grabs Gavin's collar. Pulls him in.
Face to face. Frantic's eyes teem with truth:

FRANTIC

No. Listen to me. Tell the captain.
Tell him if he lands this plane,
we're all going to die.

SMASH TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD: **ALTITUDE**

INT. A MORGUE -- LAST NIGHT

An intense man, call him NORMAN, looks into a microscope.
Behind him, in the dark room, you can just make out FIVE
BODIES on cold metal slabs.

SUPER: *Jackson, Wyoming. Last night. 8:39PM MST*

Next to the microscope, a VIDEO CAMERA -- it's the 'electronic
device' we saw in FRANTIC'S HANDS.

NORMAN

(eyes up, puzzled)
This can't be right.

BUZZ. The intercom.

HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Norman mid talk with two IMPOSING SUITS (TALL & SHORT):

TALL SUIT

You're investigating the deaths of
five persons discovered yesterday in
the mountains?

NORMAN

Yes.

SHORT SUIT

The Sheriff told us there was a video
camera. Have you seen it?

Something wrong here. Their tone. The quiet hallway, and
then Norman glances between the Suits:

OH FUCK -- Down the hall you can just make out a SHOE sticking
out behind a desk, next to a billowing pool of BLOOD.

NORMAN

Yeah, I think I may have. Let me go
look in the back with their personals.

Norman leaves. The Suits wait for a moment, till Tall turns
and sees the blood behind them. *Shit.*

Guns appear, and they KICK in the door to the--

MORGUE

But Norman's long gong. They note the broken window in the back, and we note that the CAMERA'S MIA.

CUT TO:

FRANTIC'S EYES

SUPER: *Denver, Colorado. 8:42PM MST.*

Sweating. Concentrated. Our view partially obscured by his thick magnifying glasses (think those of a jeweler).

He has WIRE CUTTERS. Strip the plastic off a YELLOW WIRE.

Sets the exposed end into place. A screw tightens. Notice a maze of other wires and circuits.

Close the lid of a BLACK BOX. Frantic removes his glasses.

FRANTIC

It's ready. Do you want to test it?

REVEAL OUR LOCATION:

INT. THE NEHRU LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

The most adorable Indian boy in history, OJAS, 7. His eyes big, excited, turns to his father, VIDUR NEHRU. We're in a middle class, suburban home, holiday decorations everywhere.

VIDUR

What do we say, Ojas?

Ojas jumps into Frantic's arms; **only his real name is JOHN FERGUSON**. He's 32, slender, handsome. A mind that never stops; an unquenchable need for knowledge and analysis.

OJAS

Thank you, Uncle John'o!

JOHN

You're very welcome.

With that, Ojas presses a button on the black box. A (steam engine) TOY TRAIN SET whirs to life around the room.

John packs his tool bag. Follows Vidur into the--

NEHRU KITCHEN

Find Vidur's wife, KALA, working on a CROSS WORD PUZZLE.

VIDUR

John saved my ass again, K.

In the other room, Ojas giggles wildly:

OJAS (O.S.)	KALA
Bad word, bad word,	Ojas!
bad word--	

Hear the train turn back on. Vidur starts to chuckle, but Kala shoots a cold glare his way.

KALA

Thirteen Down. Ten letters.
"Interstate Builder."

JOHN

Eisenhower.
(remembers)
Oh, I brought you guys something.

He hands Vidur a Christmas ornament. It's an INDIAN SANTA CLAUS, in his sleigh, being pulled by COWS (w/ antlers).

VIDUR

This is the most offensive thing
anyone's ever given to me.
(beat)
I love it.

EXT. NEHRU HOME

John walks out. Clear sky. Starry winter night. We're in a large neighborhood. Surrounded by the ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

VIDUR

Wait, my friend.

Vidur digs into a snow pile next to the door. Brings up two frosty COORS LIGHTS.

VIDUR

Just one?

John sighs. Shrugs.

JOHN

One.

LATER

Off a pile of 6 empties. Vidur and John sit in the snow on folding beach chairs, laughing like hell. They toss two more to the ground. Pop open fresh cans.

VIDUR

It is good to see you like this.
Like your old self.

(Burps. Laughs.)

It's not the same at the university anymore. It seems like they hand out grants to teenagers. They're kids, man, kids. I should have Ojas apply; he'd probably qualify. *John--*

JOHN

Don't; it only hurts you when you--

VIDUR / JOHN

When did we get so old, man?

Laughter. Arm punching. John chugs the Coors. Lobs the can over his head. Gazes up into the stars.

JOHN

I know the exact moment. The exact date, hour, minute, second...

John doesn't finish. His mood darkens. Vidur moves on:

VIDUR

John. We need you back. Work for me. Your mind is--

John cuts him off. A clear NO. Both stumble to their feet.

JOHN

I should pack. Off to the in-laws tomorrow. I hope the snow holds t'il we leave. I hate flying.

VIDUR

Fear not, my friend. The most dangerous part of your day tomorrow will be the drive.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN & EVE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

A fire smolders. John in a recliner. Stares at his reflection in a nearby window. Clicks the LIGHTS of a small, ceramic Christmas Tree ON. Then OFF. ON. Then OFF.

This house is the opposite of the Nehru's. Except for this one tree, there are no decorations.

A hand on John's shoulder. It's EVE, 32, the woman he will be with on the plane. A closer look shows us her poise, her beauty. But it's a mask, hiding a deep sadness.

EVE

We should go to bed. We're getting up early.

She treads lightly. Trying to avoid the tension. He doesn't answer. Simply clicks OFF the Christmas Tree.

JOHN & EVE'S BEDROOM

A bag zips closed. John's packed. He and Eve dress for bed in silence. Opposite sides of the room. Until--

JOHN

Vidur wants me to work with him again.
(before she can ask)
I can't go back there. Ever.

EVE

Thank you. For agreeing to come.

JOHN

I'm a sucker for steamers.

EVE

You know tomorrow's--?

JOHN

--Six months, yes.

EVE

Have you decided?

JOHN

No.

He sits on the queen sized bed. Removes his socks. Eve's on the opposite side. She moves towards him. Takes a hug.

EVE

We don't have to stay with my parents the entire time. We could drive up to Maine. Find a quiet town.

She kisses the back of his neck. His ears. She turns his face to hers. Lips to lips. John doesn't resist, but after a few moments, she realizes he's not going to engage.

JOHN

Good night, Eve.

A kiss on her forehead. He takes his pillow, a blanket, and sets up a make-shift bed on THE FLOOR.

Eve doesn't move at first. Then, using her left hand (wedding ring prominently featured), she reaches to the bedside table on John's side (where we see HIS ring). Turns off the light.

EVE

I forgot. Norman called when you were out. He said it was important.

JOHN
I'll call him in the morning.

EVE
I should have told you
sooner, I--

JOHN
It's fine.

EVE
I'm sorry, John'o.

A simple statement, but we get the feeling that it's trying to stand in for much more than a forgotten phone message.

LATER

Eve wakes. 2:00AM. *Where's John?*

INT. THE SPARE BEDROOM -- NIGHT

John sits in front of an antique NIGHTSTAND.

Puts on his jeweler-looking glasses. Takes out a paint brush. Works on something we CANNOT see. He is precise. Methodical. A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

EVE (O.S.)
John? John what are you doing?

John covers the nightstand. Opens the door to Eve.

JOHN
Hi. Nothing. Looking for my iPhone charger. Not in here, though.

John closes the door behind him, but we linger for a moment:

Under the sheet, next to his dry paint brush, there is a name written in the nightstand's DUST:

MARION.

CUT TO:

EXT. DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (DIA) -- MORNING

SUPER: 5:14AM MST.

Establish. Cars. People. Buses. The sun tries to peak over the eastern horizon. To the west, STORM CLOUDS.

EXT. DELTA 1784 - CONCOURSE C - GATE 42

Captain ROGER THORNHILL, a day short of 65, black, deep voiced wisdom in a bottle, walks around the plane. Pre-flight check. The CO-PILOT (37, jovial) is outside as well. To himself:

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Same as any other day.

Thornhill looks over his plane. His charge. Excitement tempered with sadness.

INT. AIRPORT SECURITY

Jammed with the last wave of swarming HOLIDAY TRAVELERS. Eve grabs her boots, jacket, and carry-on bag from the conveyer belt. Walks past--

The corpulent TSA AGENT who is harassing John. She pulls a cup of JELL-O from John's rucksack:

TSA AGENT

Federal guidelines mandate that Jell-O be transported in containers 3 ounces, or less.

JOHN

Would you like me to take a bite?

From outside the area, Eve snorts. TSA does not. John looks at the line. Goes on forever.

JOHN

Merry Christmas. Jell-O's all yours.

John takes his bag. Grabs his wallet and iPhone. Notices the phone is OFF. Powers it on. "New Voice Messages." John hits the voicemail button. Listens.

NORMAN'S VOICE (on the phone)

John. It's Norman. I know you're busy, but I'm in over my head on this one. I'll try the house.

'BEEP' TO:

INT. CONCOURSE C - DELTA, GATE 42 -- LATER

Eve and John sitting at the full gate. Cinnabuns and coffee in hand. More messages play in John's ear:

NORMAN'S VOICE (on the phone)

Fuck, your phone's off. I'm taking the first puddle jumper to DIA. I'll find you at your gate. You have to see this. It's Norman.

BEEP.

NORMAN'S VOICE

John. I'll be there in 45 minutes.

BEEP.

NORMAN'S VOICE

(raspy)

Jesus, John. I was right--

Click.

EVE

Everything all right?

JOHN

Norman's flying here to show me some data. He sounded weird.

EVE

I saved you the center.

Hands him the Cinnabun box.

JOHN

Thanks. My favorite.

A gooey bite. Covers his chin with frosting. He wipes, but misses some. She cleans it with her finger. Eyes lock.

EVE

Hey.

JOHN

Hey.

As if they were two strangers. He looks away. She turns him back to her. Whispers:

EVE

I can see you. In there. You're not as far away as you think you are, John'o. Come home.

JOHN

I want to. But I--

A SHRIEKING SCREAM interrupts. A few gates away, as a small plane de-boards, a PASSENGER collapses to the ground.

Convulsing. Howling in pain. John looks closer. Eyes wide:

JOHN

Jesus Christ. It's Norman.

He's up. Sprints to his friend. Slides to his knees. Seizing, Norman bleeds from the ears and mouth -- he tries to speak, but only coughs up more blood.

JOHN

Shhh, Norman's it's okay. Lie still. Breathe. Can you breathe?

Behind John, *CHRIST*, it's the *TWO SUITS* from last night dressed as airport *MEDICS*. Tall and Short, with a cart.

Norman's shaking hand grabs John. He garbles out:

NORMAN

...own eye...own eye on...OWN EYE...

TALL SUIT

Step aside, sir. SIR. STEP ASIDE.

John slumps back. Away. Blood on his hands.

As Tall & Short check Norman's vitals, no one sees Norman slip the VIDEO CAMERA into John's bag.

Tall & Short load Norman onto their cart. John and Norman's eyes meet a last time. Fear on both sides. John follows.

SHORT SUIT

Are you family?

JOHN

No, but I know him. I worked--

TALL SUIT

I'm sorry, sir. You can't come with us. Stay here. Get on your flight.

And they're gone. Norman's fading voice:

NORMAN

...own eye on...own eye...

John is all alone in the terminal. Every person at every gate in the concourse stares at him.

LATER

John exits a bathroom. Hands clean. Heads back towards his gate. He passes a boarding flight:

U.S. AIRWAYS 1024 to LOS ANGELES.

A PINK BARBIE falls before John's feet. Turns to find:

The MOTHER and LITTLE GIRL in matching DISNEYLAND SWEATSHIRTS. So alive and unaware that they'll be dead in a few hours.

CUT TO:

EXT. DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT -- CONTINUOUS

The storm clouds arrive. A SQUALL settles in over the airport. Dumping heavy, wet snow. White out conditions.

INT. CONCOURSE C - DELTA, GATE 42 -- MOMENTS LATER

People stand by the windows. They look from the heavy snow to the DELAYED notices popping up on information boards.

John and Eve sit in silence. She puts her arm around him. He lets her. Beat. He sneezes.

MRS. DRAYTON (O.S.)

Bless you.

JOHN

Thanks.

John and Eve note the blesser, a grandmotherly woman in her holiday best. Call her MRS. DRAYTON; she holds a beautifully wrapped GIFT delicately on her lap.

We're surrounded by the PEOPLE of flight 1784. There's an old man with thick COKE BOTTLE glasses and his wife. COLLEGE STUDENTS. Families. Businessmen. Reading. Gabbing on cell phones. Holiday spirit buzzing loudly.

From them all, move up to the concourse's ceiling. Into--

THE AIRPORT'S VENTILATION SYSTEM

Water leaks. Drips down onto a circulation fan. A quick SPARK. A small puff of smoke.

And the FAN dies. Shorted out.

ALL AROUND CONCOURSE C

Thousands wait for the storm to pass in the stagnant air.

Notice coughing. Sneezing. Kids playing with their toys on the ground. Then wiping their noses.

A germ breeding ground if there ever was one.

CUT TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 (DENVER TO BOSTON) -- LATER

Boarding. We're in first class, which is already full.

Bump. John accidentally knocks Gavin's arm as he and Eve pass. Gavin shoots back with a dirty look.

LISA (O.S.)

Sir, please.

Rupert, the pinstriped suit, argues with Lisa, the sexy Flight Attendant, over his ticketed seating assignment.

RUPERT

Do you know who I work for? My company spends millions of dollars a year on your airline. I won't be treated this way. This is my seat.

GAVIN

Hey.

RUPERT

"Hey" what, slick?

Rupert and Gavin at opposite ends of first class, like gunslingers. A line forms, stranded, behind Rupert.

GAVIN

Take mine. Let's just chill. Enjoy our flight home for the holidays, okay pal? No big deal. Enjoy it. Where's your seat?

RUPERT

10C.

Gavin takes three steps backwards into coach.

GAVIN

Oh look, found it.

Rupert huffs, sits in Gavin's seat, glances back to Lisa.

RUPERT

Scotch rocks, Hun. Thanks.

MID FLIGHT - **LATER**

Lisa and the FLIGHT ATTENDANTS finish a beverage service. Gavin teases Lisa. Rupert drinks, has a Wall St. Journal.

Row 22. Mrs. Drayton, holds her gift. Across the aisle from her, meet a young college co-ed named MELANIE.

Melanie's nervous. She's rotating an ENVELOPE in her hands.

Row 21, meet ALIHENDRA (ALI) and DIEGO. They don't look it yet, but they're both 18. Ali leans against Diego, gazes at the sparkling engagement ring on her finger.

DIEGO

How you doing?

ALI

I'm fine, Diego, don't worry so much.

Many others: Sleep. Read. Watch Direct TV. Children hide under seats. A GRANDFATHER plays peek-a-boo with an infant.

On John and Eve, row 28. He roots through his rucksack. He's packed his wedding ring, but still isn't wearing it.

JOHN

Did I pack my headphones?

EVE

I think so.

John digs further. Creases his brow. Comes up with NORMAN'S VIDEO CAMERA. There's a piece of paper tucked into a strap:

-WATCH ME.

John opens the paper further. There's figures, some complex equations. Scribbles. And a question:

-WHAT IS LAB 121?

John looks around. Eve's reading now.

Watch me.

He finds the missing headphones. Plugs them into a jack on the camera. Powers it up. Hits play.

ON SCREEN:

Norman. In an airplane BATHROOM. He looks a little green, but isn't the convulsing, bleeding man we met earlier.

NORMAN

John. In case I'm not--
(throws up, then)

Two days ago, Rangers found five bodies in the mountains outside of Jackson, Wyoming. This is their camera. Rewind this tape. Watch them. Their symptoms. I loaded autopsy report pdf's onto the camera's SD card. I hope I'm crazy here, John, but it reminds me of Icarus.

JOHN, IN HIS SEAT.

Doesn't like the sound of that. Tape rewinds.

ON SCREEN:

WINTER HIKERS snowshoeing along a mountain ridge.

BOOM. Echoing off the peaks. The camera swivels to see a MUSHROOM CLOUD ripple skyward off a nearby ridge.

FAST FORWARD:

THE WOODS

The Hikers cut a barbwire fence. The sign says: **NO TRESPASSING, U.S. Department of Homeland Security.**

A CLEARING

They enter. To the right, a road down the mountain. To the left, a BUNKER carved into a cliff.

Black, cancerous smoke pours from it's entrance.

HIKER (O.S.)

Over here!

Pan. Find an unconscious MAN in a HAZMAT suit. A Hiker pulls his I.D. badge. Catch the words: **LAB 121**

FAST FORWARD:

THE MOUNTAIN TRAIL

They've built a stretcher for the Man, and are now descending.

HIKER (O.S.)

Anyone have any aspirin? Oh fuck.

Turn. Spot the HIKER, his nose bleeding. To camera:

HIKER

Hi, Mom.

FAST FORWARD:

A SNOWY PARKING LOT

The cameraman drops to the ground. The camera rolls, sees:

Hiker faints. Behind him, others fall too. Another Hiker reaches under his hat, comes back with a handful of blood.

ANOTHER HIKER

What the fuck's going--

ON JOHN & EVE, IN THEIR SEATS

John sweats. Mind races. Eve scans the camera's LCD screen.

EVE

What are you watching?

JOHN

Nothing.

EVE

Was that *blood*?

JOHN

It's nothing. It's fine. I'll be
right back.

John stands. The rear lavs are occupied. He hurries forward.
He bumps into Gavin and Lisa. Locks himself in--

THE FIRST CLASS LAVATORY

Lisa's knocking on the door from outside. Looks down at the
screen, Norman's getting to the end of his message.

ON SCREEN:

POP. The tape skips. Norman's very ill now. On the phone,
leaving a message we heard earlier, slurring his raspy words:

NORMAN

Jesus, John. I was right--

ANOTHER VOICE (O.S.)

Sir. You must return to your seat.

Hear continuous BANGING on Norman's bathroom door.

NORMAN

Icarus. I'm sure of it. It's a new
strain. Weaponized. Airborne. And
it doesn't die with the host. We're
descending into Denver and I'm
presenting symp--

(POP. Tape jumps.)

Reduced cellular wall strength causes
severe Barotrauma. Don't fly, John,
don't fly...

(less and less coherent)

..Don't fly, ohn, on't eye. Own
eye, ohn, own eye.

SMASH TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 (DENVER TO BOSTON) -- MOMENTS LATER

Back to where we first left him: John's bloody hand grabs
Gavin's collar. Face to face. John's eyes teem with truth:

JOHN

No. Listen to me. Tell the captain.
Tell him if he lands this plane,
we're all going to die.

Boom. Fear spreads like a fire. Lisa jumps onto the intercom
(with the pilots in the cockpit).

GAVIN

What have you done?

RUPERT

You're part of it, aren't you?
(to everyone)

He's supposed to crash our plane and
kill us all! Well fuck that and
fuck you.

Rupert rushes forward. The mob follows (they always do).
About to strike, to land deathblows, when:

EVE

WAIT!

She lobs something flat into the mob. Rupert catches a
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER I.D. badge:

-DR. JOHN FERGUSON. Pathology Department.

EVE

He's a virologist -- he'd never --
he cures people, he helps people.
Hear him: if he says we can't land,
there's a good reason. He's never--
He's a good man, please-- Please.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL (O.S.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, I need everyone
to take their seat immediately. No
exceptions. We'll be making the FAA
ordered, mandatory landing very
shortly in Pittsburgh.

People move back to their seats. Eve is reluctant at first,
but a Flight Attendant takes her. Lisa kneels next to John.

LISA

Put these on your wrists, and we'll
let you talk to the captain.

She has FLEX-CUFFS. John locks himself to the metal
undercarriage of a seat. Lisa secures his legs as well.
Completely immobilized. Lisa hands John an AIRPLANE PHONE.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED: Captain Thornhill in the COCKPIT, holding
John's U. Denver identification.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Dr. Ferguson. I can't come out of
the cockpit, do you understand?
(John sits. Silent.)

You told a flight attendant that you
have information regarding the safety
of this airplane. Is this correct?

John sees the in-seat TVs. The CNN footage of the carnage.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Dr. Ferguson?

JOHN

All of these other flights. They're from Denver aren't they?

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Yes.

JOHN

If we don't want to join them, you need to listen. We're infected with a very simple, very deadly virus named Icarus. If you try to land, you'll pass out, crash the plane, and kill every living soul aboard.

This doesn't go over well. RUMORS blow up and down the aisle.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

What are we dealing with here? Layman's.

JOHN

Our bodies rely on a delicate balance of atmospheric pressure to protect vital organs. The Icarus Virus short circuits the balance; essentially, we can go up, but we can't go back down. It'll start with headaches. Bloody noses. An overwhelming sense of panic. The last thing we ever feel is the agony of massive internal hemorrhaging.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

How did this--?

JOHN

--An infected man entered DIA this morning. And then we all sat there coughing and sneezing for two hours during a snow delay.

Thornhill glances to his Co-Pilot. CUT around the plane: 200 souls wait for an answer. A decision.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Dr. Ferguson, not landing places lives in danger, and no one here is presenting any symptoms.

JOHN

No one will, until it's too late.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
 You want to stay up in the air, Dr.
 Ferguson? I need proof. Fast.

JOHN
 There's a video tape. It's here.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
 The flight crew will assist you.

Thornhill hangs up. Stay in the cockpit:

CO-PILOT
 What's going on?

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
 We're either dealing with one very
 sick man, or an entire plane full of
 soon to be sick people. I desperately
 hope it's the former.

FIRST CLASS

Lisa crawls along the aisle. Looking under seats and legs.
 WHIRRRRRRR. A mechanical noise. John's face goes white.

JOHN
 What was that?

LISA
 It's normal. We're slowing to land.

John closes his eyes. Listening to the plane's noises.

LISA (O.S.)
 I've got it.

Lisa reaches under a seat across the aisle. Norman's camera.

JOHN
 Oh no.

But the LCD viewfinder has snapped off. Camera's BROKEN.

JOHN
I need to talk to the Captain.

Lisa picks up the phone. Exchanges a few words.

INTERCUT: Thornhill in the COCKPIT & John in FIRST CLASS.

JOHN
 I need more time.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
 We're landing, doctor.

JOHN

That's fine. You don't have to change a thing, but airplane cabins are pressurized, right? How much?

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Cabin Altitude's set to 8,000 feet during cruise.

JOHN

So that's what we're experiencing right now? 8,000 feet?

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Yes.

JOHN

Is it at all possible to land with a Cabin Altitude pressure of 8,000 feet? Is there a setting for that? A manual setting?

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Technically we can set it to any altitude we want, but when there's negative cabin pressure, the negative pressure relief valve automatically equalizes the system, and the fuselage isn't really made for--

JOHN

Can you override it?

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

I guess we could pull the fuse.

JOHN

Land, follow orders, but don't let us experience the descent. Please.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

I just had Delta run a background check on you, Doctor, so I'm going to give you a very short leash. As long as the airplane and my passengers remain safe, you have until we're told to turn off our engines.

The CABIN ALTITUDE (C.A.) GAUGE reads: **8,000 FEET**. Thornhill reaches to the CABIN ALTITUDE CONTROL. *Mode Select: MANUAL.*

INSERT: in the belly of the plane, the NEGATIVE PRESSURE RELEASE VALVE. Locks into place. Back to Thornhill.

PITTSBURGH ATC (on radio)

Delta 1784, this is Pittsburgh.

(MORE)

PITTSBURGH ATC (on radio) (CONT'D)
 Maintain your current heading.
 Descend below 5,000 feet, and reduce
 speed to 250 knots.

The altimeter: 8,000 feet and dropping. C.A. Gauge: 8,000.

COACH

We're roaming. Up the aisle from the back. Row 28. Eve
 feels useless. Wants to help in any way she can.

EVE

Does anyone have a video camera?
 Anyone?

Eyes avert. Afraid to engage. Row 21, Diego comforts Ali.

DIEGO

It's alright. You're fine. We're
 fine. No one's sick. It's just a
 crazy person.

From Row 22, Melanie taps Diego on the shoulder.

MELANIE

How do you know?

DIEGO

My mom's a nurse at St. Joseph's.
 (loudly)
Ain't no such virus.

Moving: A swell of speculation and information passing
 between people. "No such virus" is the key phrase.

Row 28. On Eve. The information reaches her. Utterly alone.

Row 22. Melanie exhales. Her ENVELOPE. From a MED SCHOOL.

MRS. DRAYTON

See, everything's going to be fine.

COCKPIT

The altimeter dips below 5,000 feet. The C.A. Gauge at 8,000.

FIRST CLASS

Lisa grabs the intercom.

LISA

Ladies and gentlemen, anyone with a
 video camera, please ring the call
 button immediately.

THE COCKPIT

We can see the landing strip out the windshield.

PITTSBURGH ATC (on radio)
Delta 1784. You are cleared for
landing on runway two-niner.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
Delta 1784. Roger Pittsburgh. Runway
two-niner.

The altimeter crosses 2,000 feet. The C.A. Gauge on 8,000.
Blip - *it hits 7,999*, but only for a second. Back to 8,000.

FIRST CLASS

Lisa looks down the length of the plane. Sees nothing.
Hears nothing. John's fully unnerved by the non-reaction.

EXT. PITTSBURGH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT -- DAY

Out of the sun, the gleaming Delta 1784 touches down. WHEELS
CHIRP. Behind it, we see a long line of jets coming to land.

As the airplane roars passed, braking, we turn and see the
full magnitude of today's ordeal:

Like the 405 freeway on a Friday afternoon, Pittsburgh's a
traffic jam of JETLINERS.

Every gate at every concourse is already full. Planes not
at gates are lined up like a row of waiting taxis.

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 (DENVER TO BOSTON)

Physical relief of being on the ground across many faces.
As the plane slows, EVERY CELL PHONE on the plane pops out.
Almost instantly, half of them RING.

VOICES

I'm fine, I'm fine. / We're in
Pittsburgh. / No, I don't know
anything. / Is anyone claiming
responsibility? / There's someone
ON our plane, we had to...

FIRST CLASS

John's eyes on Eve in coach. And then we hear it. The
AUDIBLE MOAN OF THE AIRCRAFT'S FUSELAGE, STRAINING.

Thousands of pounds of pressure push in. *Wanting. Needing.*
Trying to bend the metal. John swallows.

JOHN

Lisa. We need a camera.

Lisa's back on the intercom.

LISA
Ladies and Gentlemen. Please stay
in your seats. We still need that
video camera.

No response. CREEEEAK. The fuselage bends again. Shouting:

JOHN
Come on, people. Do you hear that?
That's the sound of the only thing
keeping us alive bending. Weakening.
We all need to find a camera. We
need to find it now.

John locks eyes with Gavin, in the first row of coach.

GAVIN
Jesus, man. Give it up. You've
lost. No one here is sick. You're
off your shitter.

JOHN
I wish I was wrong. Believe me.
(back to the plane)
WE ALL NEED THIS CAMERA. I KNOW YOU
HAVE THEM. THERE'S PROBABLY A HUNDRED
ON BOARD RIGHT NOW. AND WE'RE RUNNING
OUT OF FUCKING TIME.

COACH

EVE
Screw it.

Eve SNAPS. Stands. Cranks open overhead bins one by one.
Tearing bags down into the aisle, dumping contents.

FIRST CLASS - ON LISA

LISA
Oh no.

She's up. Charges to the stern of the plane. Past John.

JOHN
Eve, no! Eve!

COACH - ON EVE

Bag Owners are pissed. They're getting up. Flight Attendants
from the rear of the plane arrive.

FLIGHT ATTENDANTS
Everyone back in your seat!
(MORE)

FLIGHT ATTENDANTS (CONT'D)

(to Eve)

Ma'am.

Eve. Rips down another. Zips it open. Dumps the contents. Another. Zips. Dumps. Another. Zips. Dump.

And here it is. A small, high tech MiniDV camcorder.

Eve hands it to Lisa, then returns to her seat, amongst the angry stares.

EVE

You're mad? I just saved your lives.

COCKPIT -- MOMENTS LATER

Captain Thornhill has the phone to his ear, with John on the other end. As he watches the video, his eyes grow wide.

JOHN (V.O.)

That's a few hours after contact with patient zero. Notice the blood pouring from the ears, eyes, and nose. All caused by hemorrhages in the ear drums, sinuses, and retinas.

Thornhill sets down the camera. A moment to breathe.

FIRST CLASS

Thornhill emerges from the cockpit for the first time. A man who believes.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Okay, Dr. Ferguson. You've got my attention. How do I protect my passengers and crew?

COACH

Ali in Diego's arms. Sweating. Face clammy. Unable to take her eyes off 'the ground' outside her window. She breaks down. Crying spins into a PANIC ATTACK.

She can't breathe. Rips herself away from Diego, tries to clear her throat. No air. World closing in.

DIEGO

(a practiced routine)

It's okay, Mi Amore. You're fine.
You're fine. Breathe. Concentrate.
Your lungs are fine. Breathe.

Her hands pushing everything away. The buckle. The seats. Diego. She's literally drowning.

DIEGO
Help! Someone help me.

FIRST CLASS

Thornhill releases John from his bonds. They step around a corner into the first class GALLEY, for privacy.

JOHN
First. We can't open these doors.
We need to get in touch with whatever
authorities we can. FAA, CDC,
Homeland Security, whatever--

COACH - ON DIEGO & ALI (ROW 22)

Ali grabs Diego's arm. Gulping for air.

ALI
Outside. I--

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT arrives.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
What's wrong with her?

VOICES (O.S.)	DIEGO
What's happening?	NO. <u>It's a panic attack.</u>
She's sick? Is she	She gets them. All we
infected, like that	need to do is take her
man said?	outside.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Sir, we're not at a gate. We can't--

DIEGO
Let us out on the wing. Or we'll
use the slide in the door. I don't
care. She can't be in here.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
I'm sorry. Lie her down in the aisle.
I'll get some oxygen.

She hurries towards the back of the plane. Diego pulls Ali into the aisle. Quietly in her ear: He sings a Spanish love song to her. So private. Intimate.

Tears gush down her face, which is now blue. The flight attendant returns with the oxygen.

FIRST CLASS GALLEY

John and Thornhill. Lisa interrupts.

LISA
Sir. We have a medical situation.

COACH

Oxygen mask on Ali. Face an unearthly blue.

DIEGO

It's not helping. Look. She'll be fine. She just needs fresh air and an open space. Outside. PLEASE.

Captain Thornhill arrives. Diego grabs his shoulders.

DIEGO

Captain. We have to get her outside.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Heart rate's dropping. Jesus.

Ali goes limp. Eyes roll back in her head.

DIEGO

Captain!

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Sir. We can't open these doors.

DIEGO

Why? Because that crazy and his poota wife said so?

(to the plane)

Do you feel sick? Do you? Does anyone? My girl is dying because we're listening to a crazy.

Others are standing now. All around them. Gavin in row 10. Rupert behind him, in first class, ON HIS PHONE, yelling:

RUPERT

Captain, sir, this is bull-- Hello, I'm on Delta Flight 1784. We're on the ground in Pittsburgh. People are sick, there's a crazy man claiming to be a doctor talking about a virus. The pilot's crazy too. He's keeping us here against--

(turns)

I'll open the door.

Lisa tries to get in his way. He shoves her. Grabs the nearest door handle. Eve yells:

EVE

NO!

Rupert yanks the door handle. Tries to push, but it won't move. John's a few feet away.

JOHN

The pressure outside is greater than in here. You're not strong enough.

RUPERT

You're saying we're trapped?

That word does not help. Scared / angry passengers shout at the captain. We catch bits of arguments:

VOICES

She's sick, let her out. / What are we doing Captain? / Are you nuts? / Sit down. / Excuse me? / What about the virus? / There's no virus!

Eve's stuck in the back. Away from John. Captain Thornhill's surrounded. Diego holds an UNCONSCIOUS Ali in his arms:

DIEGO

What have you done?

Captain Thornhill tries to move, but the MOB blocks him. Their eyes are wicked. Hateful. Fight or flight.

SMASH TO:

EXT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 (DENVER TO BOSTON) -- DAY

We're on the tarmac. Our plane in a long line of waiting planes. Push in towards it. Up the front landing gear into--

THE BELLY OF THE PLANE

Where we find the lower edge of the fuselage. The mechanical device that's keeping everyone safe:

The NEGATIVE PRESSURE RELEASE VALVE... CRACKS. The HISS of air streaming INTO the plane.

INT. THE COCKPIT

Co-pilot and Navigator make small talk. Calm their nerves.

What they don't see is the Cabin Altitude Gauge: On 8,000, it blips to 7,999...7,996...7,992...

Cabin Altitude drops = DEADLY PRESSURE RISES.

BACK IN COACH

John tries to get to Eve, but Gavin stops him. Rupert heads back towards the surrounded Thornhill. A chant begins:

RUPERT

Let us out, let us out, let us out...

The mob joins in. Chanting, cheering, and jeering.

John about to confront Gavin when he hears something in the commotion. A BABY CRYING.

Then another.

And a few infants join in the chaotic symphony.

Ali WAKES. Cries to Diego about the pain in her head. John swallows, feels his cheeks above his sinuses.

JOHN

Captain?

Thornhill and Rupert face to face.

RUPERT

Don't listen to him. Listen to me,
Captain. Listen to...

Trail off. Unnerved by the horror on the surrounding faces. He wipes his nose, coming up with a handful of DEEP CRIMSON.

A PASSENGER faints. **FLY INTO:** *Another's EAR. Till we get to the EAR DRUMS. It pops, spewing blood. Back to --*

JOHN

Captain, there's a leak. We're dying.
We need to get back up in the air.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Everyone to their seats. Flight attendants prepare for takeoff.

The mob disbands. Rupert sits, still silent. Freaked out about the uncontrollable blood leaking from his face.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

(to John)
Come with me.

John follows. Stops. Looks to Eve further back in the plane. She's so fucking scared. John hesitates, but:

JOHN

I'll be right back.

He follows Thornhill into the--

COCKPIT

Where the Co-pilot stands over an unconscious Navigator. The C.A. Gauge down to **7,972** and dropping.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Dr. Ferguson, take him out of here.
(to Co-Pilot)
Rich, we need to go.
(to the Radio)
Pittsburgh ground, Delta 1784--

John drags the Navigator into the First Class galley.

JOHN

Lisa. Help.

They strap the Navigator into a jumpseat.

OUTSIDE

The long row of waiting airplanes. Delta 1784 pulls out. Crosses a grassy patch between the runways.

INT. PITTSBURGH TOWER - AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

A SUPERVISOR notices Delta 1784 on the grass.

SUPERVISOR

Who is that? What plane is that?

Other eyes turn. Binoculars come up. A CONTROLLER runs in.

CONTROLLER

Delta 1784 has requested an emergency... takeoff? Do we have those?

SUPERVISOR

Are they squawking 7500? What do we know?

CONTROLLER

There was a disturbance during the flight. A man was subdued. He's now in the cockpit talking about a virus.

SUPERVISOR

(into his radio)
Delta 1784, Pittsburgh ground, hold your position.

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COCKPIT

Captain Thornhill guides the plane onto pavement. One runway beyond them, JETS continue to land. WHOOSHING BY.

SUPERVISOR (on radio)

Delta 1784, you are not cleared to taxi. Respond.

Blood drains from Thornhill's nose. Wipes it on his shoulder.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

(into the radio)
Negative Pittsburgh. Request runway authorization for emergency takeoff.

The C.A. Gauge: sinks past **7,961**...

INT. PITTSBURGH TOWER - AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

The Supervisor throws his paper work to the ground.

SUPERVISOR

Get me the FAA.

(into the radio)

Delta 1784, no runways available.

Repeat, no runways available.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL (on radio)

Unacceptable, Pittsburgh.

SUPERVISOR

Goddammit, Delta 1784, we've got heavy winds out of the south, and both our south facing runways are handling the landing planes. There's no room for a take off.

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COCKPIT

John looks to his right. Spots an empty runway.

JOHN

There. What about that one?

CO-PILOT

That runway's east-west. We'd be taking off with a heavy cross wind.

JOHN

So?

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Makes for a hairy maneuver. I need you to buckle in now.

JOHN

I need to be with my wife.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Dr. Ferguson, wait.

JOHN

I can't do anything more until we're safe. Just get us back to 8,000 feet, Captain. No more, no less.

EXT. PITTSBURGH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Lights and sirens howling, AIRPORT POLICE UNITS blaze onto the tarmac. Gunning for Delta 1784.

Four of them skid to a stop in front of our plane.

COCKPIT

Captain Thornhill, swerves right.

OUTSIDE

Onto the grass Delta 1784 moves around the police vehicles. Hurries back onto the tarmac.

At the next intersection: they'll turn, then cross the two runways where the other planes are landing, and get to the east-west runway they want to use for take off.

Airport Police spin around. Follow them. Gaining.

COCKPIT

Thornhill stops Delta 1784 at the intersection, but we can't cross because there's a plane landing.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
Come on. Come on.

OUTSIDE

Airport Police close in. Move to surround Delta 1784.

COACH

John clears First Class. Rushing to Eve.

COCKPIT

WISH. A Blur streaks across the window. The other plane has landed. Co-Pilot grabs the throttle.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
Wait for the jet wash.

OUTSIDE

Delta 1784. About to be surrounded.

COCKPIT

The seconds ticking like gunshots.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
NOW.

Throttle up. ENGINES SURGE.

COACH

John stumbles as the plane turns. Row 11, Arms grab him. It's a MOM bleeding from the eyes.

MOM
HELP ME. PLEASE!

OUTSIDE

Delta 1784's engines sing - we cross the first runway.
Heading for number two, but to our left--

Another landing plane.

COCKPIT

Thornhill's bloody hand SLAMS the throttles forward.

CO-PILOT
Ca-cap-CAPTAIN!

OUTSIDE

Delta 1784 races to the second runway.

The other plane touches down. Tires smoking.

Delta 1784 in the way. 300 feet to COLLISION... 250... 200...

Delta 1784 moving clear.

The other plane aborts landing: THRUSTERS FULL. NOSE up.
Back wheels cling to the earth.

Delta 1784. Almost safe.

The other plane. Lifts off. *But is it high enough?*

Delta 1784's tail clears the runway. The other plane banks
up into the sky. So close.

Airport Police follow, but they drive into the other plane's
JET WASH. Like toy cars in a hurricane, they're FLIPPED and
HURLED end over end.

Delta 1784 turns onto THE EAST-WEST RUNWAY.

COCKPIT

White faced Co-Pilot and Captain Thornhill confront a new
challenge. Notice a WIND SOCK next to the tarmac.

Out straight, and perpendicular to the runway. CROSS WIND.

COACH

The chaos. The tears. John to his feet. Only a few more
rows back to his seat. Back to his wife.

The ENGINES SCREAM. We're moving. John rushes.

COCKPIT

Thornhill fights to keep her straight. The C.A. Gauge still dropping: **7,947 feet.**

Thornhill pulls back on the stick. The nose rises.

OUTSIDE

Delta 1784 reaches for the heavens. BUT A HUGE WIND BURST SLAMS HER FROM THE SIDE.

Delta 1784 SLIDES sideways at over 100 miles per hour.

The left rear landing gear STRIKES a light on the side of the runway. **The TIRE explodes.**

COACH

John, finally at his seat, but is violently thrown away. Overhead bins pop open. Coats and bags rain down.

COCKPIT

Thornhill holds on. Corrects.

OUTSIDE

Delta 1784's wing dips. Scrapes the runway. SPARKS FLY. But she straightens out--

And takes off. A steep angle. A race to 8,000 feet.

COACH

John heaves himself into his seat. Breathless:

JOHN

I made it.

Eve hugs him. Hard. John looks around. Everyone feels the pressure. Holding their heads. Each other. Bleeding. Crying into their phones. Saying goodbye. Dying.

FLY INTO: *The EYE of PORTLY MAN. To the VEINS in and around his brain... as they fucking burst.*

Row 14. Portly dies. There are three others who have died in their seats. Faces frozen, contorted in pain.

John looks at Eve. Her eyes closed, so beautiful. John closes his own eyes. And waits. And waits. And waits.

COCKPIT

Thornhill levels off the plane. The C.A. Gauge and the altimeter both return to 8,000 feet.

CO-PILOT
What are we doing, Roger?

CUT TO:

INT. ATCSCC -- DAY

SUPER: *FAA Air Traffic Control System Command Center.
Herndon, Virginia. 1:39PM EST / 10:39AM PST.*

Controlled chaos. CONSTANT PHONE RINGING. On monitors, CNN news footage of today's disaster.

A stocky, haggard FAA DIRECTOR leads. UPDATERS shout:

UPDATERS
We'll have US Airspace cleared within
the hour. / United 1950 out of
Orlando has responded. They are no
longer considered hostile.

A department MANAGER waves her phone at the director.

MANAGER
Pick up. It's Pittsburgh ATC.

CUT TO:

INT. NEADS COMMAND CENTER -- MOMENTS LATER

SUPER: *North East Air Defense Sector. Griffiss Air Force
Base. Rome, New York.*

Find COLONEL CLARK, NEADS Commander, on the phone. The air here is just as charged as the FAA, but much more structured.

COL. CLARK
...we have birds circling the Capital,
New York, Boston, Chicago, Seattle,
San Francisco, and Los Angeles.
(listens)
No, sir, emergency radio transmissions
were not made prior to the crashes,
but they're all out of Denver.

Across the bullpen, LT. COL. RAMIREZ is also on the phone. She points to a RADAR screen. A blip: DELTA 1784.

LT. COL. RAMIREZ
(signals to Col. Clark)
Sir! We have a bogey.

Col. Clark excuses himself from his call.

LT. COL. RAMIREZ
Delta 1784. Denver to Boston.
(MORE)

LT. COL. RAMIREZ (CONT'D)
 Pittsburgh ground, FAA, and Delta
 all confirm: disturbance on the plane
 about an hour ago, but the cockpit
 was not breached. The plane landed
 in Pittsburgh, but illegally took
 off. Pittsburgh ground said there's
 a possible hostile in the cockpit.

COL. CLARK
 Scramble jets out of Andrews. Orders
 are to intercept. Mach travel has
 been authorized.

SMASH TO:

EXT. ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE -- CONTINUOUS

SUPER: *Andrews Air Force Base. Camp Springs, Maryland.*

A pair of F-16s rocket into the sky. Afterburners IGNITE.
 KA-BOOM, sound barrier crossed. Disappear over the horizon.

CUT TO:

EXT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 (DENVER TO BOSTON) -- DAY

Emerging out of a cloud, here she comes.

COL. CLARK (V.O.)
 Where is it now?

LT. COL. RAMIREZ (V.O.)
 They're holing at 8,000 feet, heading
 east. They could target anywhere
 from Boston to the Capital.

COACH (ROAMING)

Row 21. Diego, bloody nose, holds Ali. All around, people
 calm as the barotrauma effects subside. Headaches ending.

FLY UP INTO: *Diego's nose. To his SINUS. As pressure drops,
 the strain dissipates. Holes plug up, bleeding stops.*

Meanwhile, Ali's color returns, she opens her eyes.

Row 12. Rupert is still quiet.

Row 22. Mrs. Drayton's cell phone signal DIES. She tries
 again. Nothing. Melanie leans over.

MELANIE
 We're probably too high now.

MRS. DRAYTON
 What about on 9/11?

MELANIE
All below 5,000 feet.

Note the people around them. NO CALLS GOING THROUGH. Row 10, Lisa and Gavin. Looks like he just met the devil.

LISA
Hey. I need your help. Can you come with me?

GAVIN
What?

LISA
I need strong arms to move bodies.

GAVIN
NO!

His volume surprises them both. Thornhill passes.

LISA
Gavin?

'Mr. GQ' turns to a Sky Mall magazine. Pretends to read. Back to Row 28. Thornhill at John and Eve's seats.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
Dr. Ferguson? Are you okay?

Eve looks at John when he doesn't reply.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
Dr. Ferguson?

But John isn't here anymore...

CUT TO:

EVE

Roots around inside a FRIDGE. Reach way into the back. Brings out a head of lettuce. Smells it. Fresh enough.

Closes the door. SCREAM. JUMP BACK. LETTUCE DROPS.

REVEAL: John. Standing with sad, vulnerable eyes. We are--

INT. JOHN & EVE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN -- NIGHT - **FLASHBACK**

But then he grins. His expression a total 180.

JOHN
Scott and I got it.

Into each other's arms. Fits of laughter.

EVE

You got it?

JOHN

GOT IT. NAILED IT. ROCKED IT. U.
Denver based. Grant money. Lab.

EVE

And a chance to change the world?

JOHN

(coy, charming)
Only if there's time.

A screen melting, heart stopping KISS. Mid-makeout:

JOHN

I'm hungry.

EVE

Dinner's in an hour.

JOHN

Fine. Dessert first.

They sink onto the kitchen floor, but land on the lettuce.

JOHN

Or maybe a salad.

Belts unbuckled. Buttons undone. But before parts appear--

A TINY VOICE

Daddy!

Record scratch. John and Eve's adorable, precocious DAUGHTER,
5, jumps onto the "pile."

JOHN

Bumble bee!

DAUGHTER

Why are you hugging on the lettuce?

EVE

Mommy and Daddy,
sweetheart, uh--

JOHN

Tripped.

DAUGHTER

You're silly, daddy.

John pretends to pick his nose.

JOHN

I'm sorry, did you say something?

Daughter rolls over in a giggle-fit.

INT. JOHN & EVE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT - **FLASHBACK**

John works. Calculations. Data sets. Frustration. Little feet pitter-patter behind him. Stress rolls off his back.

JOHN
Have you been practicing?

DAUGHTER
(duh)
Yes.

He can't help but match her million dollar smile.

JOHN
Well then, let's see your cards.

John and Daughter move next to the dusty ANTIQUE NIGHT STAND. He helps her trace. Forms her name: "**MARION.**"

JOHN
Very good, Marion. Any chance you can tell me how to increase the weight of a charged nucleopeptide?

Off her blank look, we CUT TO:

EXT. JOHN & EVE'S HOUSE -- ANOTHER NIGHT - **FLASHBACK**

The deafening ROAR of pouring rain. John stumbles up to his own front door, but doesn't go in. He knocks.

Eve opens the door. Her confusion melts into fear and concern when she sees the empty sadness on John's face.

EVE
What's wrong? What happened?

RETURN TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COACH -- DAY

John floats out of his daze at the sound of Eve's voice:

CO-PILOT (V.O.)
Captain please return
to the cockpit.
(beat)
Captain.

EVE
John. The Captain needs
you. We all need you.
And we need you now.

JOHN
Yeah, okay. I'm sorry, let's go.

COCKPIT

Co-pilot at the controls. As Thornhill and John enter:

CO-PILOT

The Air Force sent jets to intercept.
They'll be here in five minutes.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Pittsburgh Tower, Delta 1784. This
is Captain Roger Thornhill. We are
not 7500, repeat, we are NOT 7500.

PITTSBURGH ATC

Negative Delta 1784.
U.S. airspace is closed.

JOHN

(idea sparks)
Can we get calls up here?

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Through Delta dispatch.

JOHN

(hands them a card)
Have them find me Dr. Vidur Nehru.

EXT. THE SKY -- DAY

The F-16s scream by us. Closer every second.

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COACH -- DAY

John moves down the aisle. Mind races, but distracted by
quiet. No one even notices him. They're all watching TV:
CNN footage of their fucking plane taking off.

Row 13. Finds COKE BOTTLES, an old man with thick GLASSES.

JOHN

Sir.

Coke Bottles STARTLES.

COKE BOTTLES

Are they gonna shoot us down?

JOHN

No. Do you have an extra pair of
glasses with you?

Coke Bottles nods, yes, digs into his bag. John spots a
Japanese-American TEEN with an IPOD. Row 15.

JOHN

You have a laptop with you?

IPOD TEEN

No, but my Dad does.

Coke Bottles hands John his glasses. John nods, thank you.

JOHN
 (to IPOD'S DAD)
 Sir. Turn on your laptop. I need a white screen. All white. Set it to the brightest setting you can, okay?

IPOD'S DAD
 Sure, yeah.

John moves back to row 10, grabs the SKY MALL magazine out of Gavin's hands, and we CUT TO the --

REAR GALLEY

This is where we've put the 5 CORPSES of those who didn't make it from Pittsburgh, including the Navigator.

John lays out the Sky Mall magazine. Snaps the glasses frame. The intercom BUZZES.

LISA (O.S.)
 Pick it up, John.

JOHN
 Hello.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
 Delta has your friend.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

INT. NEHRU HOME / INT. REAR GALLEY

Vidur on the phone. John works with his hands (unseen).

VIDUR
 John, it's all over the news.

JOHN
 Vidur, contact your friend Rebecca at the CDC. Norman came to DIA this morning, infected. It's an outbreak, the CDC needs to quarantine Denver Airport, maybe the whole city, and find Norman so I can compare tissue samples.

(beat)
 Vidur, it's Icarus. It's out.

VIDUR
 (hushed whisper)
 Christ, John. It can't...

IPod's Dad sets his laptop down next to John. Can't look at the bodies. Vidur sends an instant message.

JOHN
 It's too late for "can't." It IS.
 (to Lisa)
 I need a Med kit, and does this plane
 have WiFi?

LISA
 Yes, I'll make sure it's on.

John plugs the SD CARD from Norman's camera into his iPhone.

VIDUR
 John, Rebecca's been sent to oversee
 the Los Angeles situation.

JOHN
 Wait. What's happening in Los
 Angeles?

CUT TO:

EXT. U.S. AIR FLIGHT 1024 (AT LAX) -- DAY

BANG. Doors fly open on a CDC truck (lab on wheels). It's:
 FBI Agent Thomas Doyle and a CDC INVESTIGATOR. A perimeter
 of men, vehicles, and barricades surround the 767. They
 pass a TV. Notice "Delta 1784" under a talking head.

DOYLE
 Radiation?

CDC INVESTIGATOR
 Negative.

HAZMAT suits on, they climb the stairs up into--

THE PLANE

DOYLE
 Neurotoxins?

CDC INVESTIGATOR
 Negative.

DOYLE
 Anthrax?

CDC INVESTIGATOR
 Negative.

DOYLE
 Poison?

CDC INVESTIGATOR

Agent Doyle, these people weren't shot, stabbed, or strangled. They didn't drink the Koolade, a dirty bomb was not present, and the only trauma the evidence even remotely resembles is... well, frankly it's too dumb to even mention.

DOYLE

Try me.

CDC INVESTIGATOR

We're going to have to follow up with autopsies, of course, but it looks like the passengers all have severe internal hemorrhaging, as seen in the rarest, most extreme forms of Barotrauma.

DOYLE

What makes that so rare?

CDC INVESTIGATOR

They don't get cases like this unless people are deep sea diving.

Doyle scans the plane. The dead. The big fucking mystery.

CUT TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - REAR GALLEY -- DAY

John opens the medical kit. He takes out a BLADE.

COACH

A shadow across Melanie's face. She looks out.

MELANIE

Oh my God.

Move up the aisle towards first class: row by row, our harried passengers stare out their windows.

And we see it as they do:

On either side of the plane, **the F-16s are here.**

COCKPIT

Captain Thornhill and Co-Pilot see the F-16s as well.

F-16 PILOT (on radio)

Delta 1784. You are in violation of FAA directives.

(MORE)

JOHN

Almost done.

John hangs up. Drops a TISSUE SAMPLE into a CLEAR GLASS.
Opens the laptop to the bright white screen.

Places the glass on the screen. Reaches for a rolled up Sky
Mall magazine, which has the EYE GLASSES taped to each end.

A MacGuyver'd MICROSCOPE.

John looks through it. It's not magnified enough to see a
virus, of course. You'd need something much more powerful,
but the Barotrauma evidence is visible.

The human tissue looks like SHREDDED GROUND BEEF.

He takes a couple pictures with his iPhone, then opens up
Norman's AUTOPSY files.

Compare John's and Norman's: **Tissue samples are the same.**

COCKPIT

F-16 PILOT (on radio)
Delta 1784. Turn two-zero-zero, and
descend to 5,000 feet.

Thornhill and Co-Pilot hold their breath.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
Delta 1784, turning two-zero-zero.

F-16 PILOT	DELTA DISPATCH
Delta 1784. Descend to 5,000 feet.	Delta 1784, we have Vidur Nehru for you.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
Put him through.

F-16 PILOT (on radio)
Delta 1784. Descend to 5,000 feet.

INT. F-16

A U.S. AIR FORCE PILOT in his lifeless, mirrored helmet. He
switches radio frequencies, then--

INT. NEADS COMMAND CENTER

Col. Clark on the line.

F-16 PILOT (on radio)
Sir. Delta 1784 won't descend.

COL. CLARK
Fire a warning shot. If that doesn't
work... Shoot it down.

F-16 PILOT (on radio)
Sir?

COL. CLARK
Lieutenant. Fire one warning shot,
and if the bogey does not comply,
shoot it down.

INT. F-16

Missile systems armed. Safeties off. A BUTTON PUSHED:

EXT. THE SKY

Off the wing of the F-16, a STINGER missile ignites.

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COCKPIT

The missile streaks over them.

WA-BOOM! A fireball erupts. Thornhill avoids it.

COACH

The sound wave shakes the plane. Everyone SCREAMS.

RUPERT
They're gonna shoot us down!

REAR GALLEY

John and his iPhone: *EMAIL SENT*. Then, on the plane's phone:

JOHN
Did you get it?

VIDUR (on the phone)
Not yet.

JOHN
Come on, come on.

VIDUR (on the phone)
I'll tell you as soon as-- hold on,
it's Rebecca.

COCKPIT

Thornhill and Co-pilot see the F-16s peel away.

OUTSIDE

The F-16s arrive behind Delta 1784.

INT. F-16

Missile targeting systems search. LOCK ON.

F-16 PILOT
Delta 1784--

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COACH

Down the aisle. Everyone holding their breath, each other.
Mrs. Drayton cradles her wrapped gift. Praying.

F-16 PILOT (V.O.)
--This is your final warning. Descend
now. Repeat, descend now. You have
30 seconds.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

REAR GALLEY / INT. VIDUR NEHRU'S HOUSE / EXT. LAX

John on his phone. Vidur on his. Doyle on his cell phone
at a laptop standing with Vidur's friend, REBECCA WINTER,
44, a classical beauty / operations director for the CDC.

JOHN
Hello, YES, who is this?

DOYLE
Special Agent in Charge, Thomas Doyle.

JOHN
Agent Doyle, listen to me, we're
about to get shot out of the air. I
need you to call a director, a
general, the FAA, Air Force, Pentagon.

COCKPIT

Thornhill. White knuckles and sweaty everything else.

F-16 PILOT (on radio)
20 seconds.

REAR GALLEY / INT. VIDUR NEHRU'S HOUSE / EXT. LAX

VIDUR
I forwarded the .pdfs and pictures
to you, Rebecca.

REBECCA
We're getting them now.

JOHN
The .pdf's are from the Jackson,
Wyoming coroner's office.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

They were taken two days ago. I just took the pictures on the plane. See the tissue samples, the blood leaking from the ears, eyes, and mouth. I'm told it's the same in Los Angeles. We have a virus on our hands, Agent Doyle. We're NOT TERRORISTS.

Doyle. Seeing is motherfucking believing.

DOYLE

Hold on, Ferguson.

JOHN

Shit, SHIT, SHIT!

VIDUR

It's okay, John, you're okay.

COCKPIT

F-16 PILOT (on radio)

10 seconds.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

We can't wait.

(to the plane)

Ladies and Gentlemen, I need you to brace for emergency maneuvers.

Reach for the throttle. Slam it forward. ENGINES WAIL.

OUTSIDE

Delta 1784 banks hard right, but the F-16s follow easily.

F-16 PILOT (V.O.)

Delta 1784. We are engaging.

INT. F-16

Missiles systems LOCKED. Safeties off. Button--

But Delta 1784 banks left and SLAMS on the brakes. Boeing 737 fuselage FILLS THE PILOT'S VIEW.

OUTSIDE

The F-16s scramble to avoid collision.

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COACH

Passengers tossed around like (buckled in) crash test dummies.

REAR GALLEY

John dodges falling coffee pots, food carts, and corpses.

COCKPIT

Thornhill levels the plane. We're still at 8,000 feet.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
Come on, Ferguson, where are you?

OUTSIDE

The F-16s swing around. Behind Delta 1784 once again.

EXT. U.S. AIR FLIGHT 1024 (AT LAX)

Doyle on the phone. Shouting:

DOYLE
It's a virus -- IF THEY LAND, THEY
DIE. I've seen evidence. GO!
(grabs the other line)
John, we've got the FAA. They're
calling the Air Force. Hold on.

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - REAR GALLEY

John drops the phone. The world SLOWS:

He looks up the aisle. To all the people. To his wife.

COCKPIT

Thornhill flying his ass off. Co-Pilot's life flashing.

INT. F-16

Safeties OFF. Thumb over the button.

INT. NEADS COMMAND CENTER

Col. Clark picks up the phone. Listens. Switches to a radio headset. And we're back to REAL TIME:

COL. CLARK
Abort, Lieutenant. ABORT. Do NOT
fire on Delta 1784.

Static on the radio. FIZZ-POP-SQUELCH.

COL. CLARK
Lieutenant.
(beat)
Lieutenant, please respond.

Radio silence. Empty. Endless. Unnerving...

EXT. U.S. AIR FLIGHT 1024 (AT LAX)

Doyle on his cell phone:

DOYLE
Ferguson? John Ferguson? Hello?

INT. NEADS COMMAND CENTER

The entire room on their feet. Watching the radar and TV news footage. Waiting for the radio response...

F-16 PILOT (on radio)
Roger, Colonel. Mission aborted.

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COACH -- DAY

Everyone opens their eyes. John stands in the back. A hero born on a terrible day. Thornhill on the intercom:

CAPTAIN THORNHILL (V.O.)
Ladies and Gentlemen, this is your captain speaking. The Air Force no longer considers us a hostile target.

Sighs of relief. A few meager cheers. Flight Attendants are up. Clear the aisle of trash and luggage.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. THE SCOPE (MONTAGE) -- DAY

As Captain Thornhill's words of hope continue over:

-The CRASH SITES. Rescue teams search for survivors, extinguish fires.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL (V.O.)
I wish I was sitting here telling you we're out of the storm completely, that you can forget the tragic nature of today's course of events.

-AIRPORTS. "CANCELED" on every arrival and departure monitor. STRANDED PASSENGERS on cell phones, trying to get home.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL (V.O.)
But know this, pray on this: we are not alone anymore. The ingenuity and sacrifices made aboard our plane thus far are nothing short of heroic, but the entire world seeks to aid us now. To bring us home safely.

-In HOMES, CHURCHES, MALLS, and BARBERSHOPS, an entire country glued to their TV sets.

-DONORS give blood at the AMERICAN RED CROSS.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - REAR GALLEY / EXT. LAX

CAPTAIN THORNHILL (V.O.)
Dr. Ferguson, please report to the
cockpit. Thank you.

John lifts the plane's phone receiver. Doyle, still on his.

JOHN
Agent Doyle?

DOYLE
Ferguson?

JOHN
We're here. We're okay. Thank you.
Thank you for everything.

Eve comes to the back of the plane. Sinks into John's arms.

DOYLE
I'm not done yet. I can help you.
But first I need to know what we're
up against here.

JOHN
Icarus is a genetically manipulated
version of the ISA Virus that causes
anemia in Salmon. Researchers tried
to find a way for divers and mountain
climbers to survive severe Barotrauma,
the bends, and altitude sickness...
but something went wrong.

DOYLE
Do you know who's responsible?

John has the NOTE from Norman's camera: *WHAT IS LAB 121?*

JOHN
Find out anything you can about a
"Lab 121."
(Doyle writing)
On government land outside of Jackson,
Wyoming.

DOYLE
Okay. I'll start there, and let you
know what I find.

He hangs up. John turns to Eve.

JOHN
Hey.

EVE
Hey.

JOHN
Are you okay?

EVE
All things considered.

John dumps water on a towel, and wipes the dirt, tears, and dried blood from her face.

JOHN
We're going to make it out of here alive, Eve. I promise.

EVE
And then?

JOHN
Maybe.

John turns.

EVE
There are two types of *maybe-people*, John'o, made up of either *maybe-yes's* or *maybe-no's*.

JOHN
Which one am I?

EVE
I know you as a *maybe-yes*.

John smiles. Goes.

EVE
But that was before.

COCKPIT

JOHN
Fancy flying back there, Captain.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
A little close back there, Dr. Ferguson.

JOHN
Call me John.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
Roger.

They shake hands. Bonded in battle.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL
What are we doing?

JOHN

Simple. We're going to land.

Thornhill gasps. John notes the ALTIMETER: **8,034 feet.**

JOHN

Call the FAA. We need a landing strip at or above 8,034 feet. Stay above our current altitude and we're fine, but remember, because of the leak, we must assume that we can't pressurize the plane. If we go up, we can't come back down.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Got it.

JOHN

Also. I need Delta Dispatch to call another number.

CUT TO:

INT. A LIVING ROOM -- DAY

SUPER: *Marblehead, Massachusetts. 2:48PM EST.*

Family photos. Entire lives on a wall that hasn't been decorated since 1982:

A little girl learns to walk. In grammar school. Graduations. We know her. It's EVE. There's her wedding to John. A recent picture with her PARENTS.

Who are here with RELATIVES and NEIGHBORS. Watching in horror, the updates of Delta 1784. Eve's MOM has aged 20 years today. Brittle. All her tears dried up, she just blankly stares at the TV.

Then the phone rings.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

REAR GALLEY / EVE'S PARENTS LIVING ROOM

John hands Eve the phone, and leaves.

EVE

Mom? Dad? I'm here. I'm okay.
We're okay. I can only talk for a
minute...

Eve's parents fight their tears.

EVE

John figured it out. He saved us.
He's going to get us down from here.

CUT TO:

EXT. U.S. AIR FLIGHT 1024 (AT LAX) -- DAY

Doyle flying through databases and phone calls:

DOYLE

...Fine. Call me if that changes...

(CUT TO:)

...This is S.A.C. Thomas Doyle. I'm
investigating today's events at LAX...

(CUT TO:)

...Lab 1-2-1, yes...

(CUT TO:)

...Nothing? You have my number if
something turns up.

(clicks off the phone)

Fuck.

Doyle stewes in frustration. Looks back up at the 767.

INT. U.S. AIR FLIGHT 1024 (AT LAX)

Doyle enters the giant metal tomb (in a HAZMAT suit). So
many bodies. CDC Investigators take samples.He walks to the cockpit. The pilots slump over the controls.
Their dried blood splattered everywhere.

Doyle's mind races. Something bugs him. Something's wrong.

DOYLE

Everyone's still in their seat. No
one had time...

OUTSIDE -- MOMENTS LATER

Doyle steps out of DECONTAMINATION. Flips open his cell.

CUT TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COCKPIT -- DAY

Thornhill, Co-Pilot and John. Maps strewn about.

FAA MANAGER (on radio)

Delta 1784, FAA. There are 20
airstrips over 8,000 feet, all of
them in Colorado and New Mexico.
But, 14 are dirt or gravel. Of the
6 remaining, 2 are too short. We're
sending you the remaining four now.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Thank you, Delta 1784.

4 AIRPORT NAMES scroll up on the cockpit's COMPUTER SCREEN.
GPS coordinates and distance number accompany these names.

JOHN

Let's see... Closest with the lowest possible altitude. Here.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

No. The approach will be too difficult. This one.

JOHN

Silver West Airport, Westcliff,
Colorado, elevation 8,290 feet.
Okay, let's go.

DELTA DISPATCH (on radio)

Delta 1784, Delta Dispatch. We have
FBI Agent Doyle for John Ferguson.

John looks up from his map when Thornhill remains silent.

JOHN

Roger?

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Dispatch. Have him hold, please,
just a moment.

(to the cockpit)

We have a problem.

JOHN

Okay?

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

A big fucking problem. An impossible
fucking problem.

JOHN

What is it?

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

We don't have enough fuel to get
back to Colorado.

JOHN

Wait, we--

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Two takeoffs, and we've already flown
the distance to Boston -- we only
had enough fuel for a one-way trip.
We're not going to make it.

JOHN

Okay. So we refuel. The Air Force flies in one of their tanker jets, and we do it mid air, right?

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

No, John. Commercial jets aren't built to be refueled mid-air. It's never been done. Ever.

Fuck. The bottom drops out.

CO-PILOT

How long do we have, Roger?

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Less than an hour.

JOHN

No. This is unacceptable. What about "we are not alone," Roger? Huh? Get us the Air Force, I'm going to take this call. Patch it back to the Rear Galley. We can do this. We can do the impossible.

FIRST CLASS GALLEY

Lisa's alone. Gavin appears around the corner. He's managed to find a couple little bottles of vodka.

GAVIN

Looks like you need this.

LISA

I can't. On duty.

GAVIN

Oh, come on, it's alright.

LISA

(cold, business-like)

Sir. Please return to your seat. Captain's orders.

Gavin knows when to fold 'em. Goes, but hears:

LISA

Coward.

John sees Lisa. She stops him:

LISA

Dr. Ferguson, are we going to be okay?

John looks down the aisle at all the passengers. To Lisa.
He can't let them down, so he belays his doubt. Reassuring:

JOHN
Of course.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

EXT. U.S. AIR FLIGHT 1024 (AT LAX) / INT. REAR GALLEY

Eve's gone. John and Doyle both on phones:

JOHN
Agent Doyle, what'd--?

DOYLE
I called everyone. Jackson, National
Park Service, Homeland Security,
USDA, Army, Navy, Air Force. No one
has any record of dead hikers, let
alone a "Lab 121."

JOHN
Impossible.

DOYLE
You're not telling me something, Dr.
Ferguson.

John clocks the formal name. Doyle's tonal shift.

JOHN
Obviously someone wants to cover
this up, but--

DOYLE
We're not living a Ludlam novel, Dr.
Ferguson. There is no conspiracy,
but something's been bothering me.
Of all the planes today. Of all the
people killed. How is it, exactly,
that you diagnosed a *rare virus with
no symptoms before* you crashed?

JOHN
I told you, a video
tape and--

DOYLE
You know this virus. You
know it by name.

DOYLE
I talked to the University -- You're
angry they pulled your grant--

JOHN
They didn't pull--
someone took my
research. Whoever's
behind Lab 121.

DOYLE
So what, you take your
revenge. Get to be the
hero. "I'll show *them*."

JOHN
I--
DOYLE
Tell me the truth, Doctor.
You know Icarus. How?

A deafening pause. A horrible revelation:

INT. LABORATORY -- DAY - **FLASHBACK**

JOHN (O.S.)
Scott.

SCOTT, a scientist, enters DATA into an "ICARUS" spreadsheet. He steps into a side lab to find, Norman, Vidur, and John.

VIDUR
The ISA Virus.

JOHN
It causes anemia in Salmon, but look at the samples. Look at the way it affects the red blood cells.

Scott looks in a magnifying glass.

SCOTT
There's no buildup of gases...

Everyone's grinning now.

NORMAN
Grant committee's going to flip.

Four friends. Jubilant. Excited. Must be exactly how Oppenheimer felt before he knew what the Atom Bomb could do.

INT. LABORATORY -- ANOTHER DAY - **FLASHBACK**

John dogs Scott into the lab. Mid-argument:

JOHN
I'm shutting Icarus down.

SCOTT
They'll pull our grant money.

JOHN
It's dangerous--
SCOTT
--Yeah, to fish.

JOHN
Dammit, Scottie, splice a few genes, it'll jump to humans and become a pressure-release time bomb. A weapon.

SCOTT
I'm not letting you tank my career.

JOHN
Dad always said you never knew when
to stop.

That's right. The BROTHERS Ferguson.

JOHN
We have to destroy it. Every sample.
Every file.

EXT. JOHN & EVE'S HOUSE -- ANOTHER NIGHT - **FLASHBACK**

That same RAINY night. Eve's fearful face. John's sadness.

EVE
What's wrong? What happened?

RETURN TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - FIRST CLASS -- DAY

Moving down the aisle. Towards the back of the plane.
Everyone sits in silence. Unaware of the fuel shortage.

Lisa checks on the injured. Rupert's drunk, grabs her arm.

RUPERT
Hey Hun, I could use another sniff.

Lisa seethes. Looks back to Gavin, who doesn't help.

LISA
Just a moment, sir.

She walks around the corner. Beat. Tight on Rupert.

LISA
I'm sorry, sir. We're out of scotch,
but we do have--
(**dumping booze**)
Vodka, bourbon and rum.
(quiet, close)
By the way. Name's not "Hun,"
"Sweetheart," or "Babe." And if you
ever touch me again, I'll have you
locked in the cargo hold.

She storms away. Gavin witnessed the whole conversation.

COACH

Diego and Ali kneel down next to an older woman with curly
blond hair. Call her JUDY.

DIEGO
Excuse me.
(MORE)

DIEGO (CONT'D)

My name is Diego and this is my Alihendra. I heard you tell someone that you were a Rabbi?

JUDY

Yes, how can I help you?

Row 22. Melanie. Fiddling once again with her ENVELOPE. She opens it. Pulls out the letter inside. We can't read it all, but catch: "**We regret to inform you...**"

MRS. DRAYTON

Important?

MELANIE

Not anymore.

(beat)

I've been wondering all day about your gift. What's in it?

MRS. DRAYTON

Everything.

Thornhill passes them. Follow him to the--

INT. REAR GALLEY / EXT. LAX

Where John's finishing his call with Doyle. He's also rewinding the tape from Norman's camera. Over and Over.

DOYLE

I guess we have to ask ourselves, what's the possibility that today's events are not an accident?

Rewind it again. Click. Press play. John's eyes open.

JOHN

I know where this is.

On the video, the Hikers pass a brown sign: BRIDGER-TETON NATIONAL FOREST.

JOHN

The Continental Divide Trail in Bridger-Teton National Forest.

DOYLE

If I can pinpoint out where they started, and how long they were hiking--

JOHN

You can find Lab 121.

DOYLE

I'll call the park service, check manifests. And then I'm getting on a plane. Good work, John.

Both hang up. John turns to Thornhill.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

I just spoke with the Air Force.

CUT TO:

INT. AIR FORCE HANGAR -- DAY

Gun metal grey, the four-engine Boeing KC-135R STRATOTANKER idles outside on the tarmac.

SUPER: *Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri. 4:02 PM CST*

A MAJOR passes a clock. T-minus: **20 MINUTES.**

MILITARY ENGINEERS surround a table littered with tools, gaskets, washers, nozzle components, hose pieces.

MAJOR

Gentlemen, our mission is to intercept civilian air craft Delta 1784, and refuel her, but first, we need to retrofit the flying boom of our KC-135R for the over-wing port of a 737-800. Gentlemen, if we don't leave in nineteen minutes, 37 seconds, we don't get to the plane before she drops out of the sky. Let's move.

A mad scramble. Pointing. Shouting. Grabbing. A BALD ENGINEER races in with BLUEPRINTS. Spreads them out.

BALD ENGINEER

Here: our standard field conversion kit to make a probe-and-drogue system. But we adapt the iron maiden and extend the hose with a commercial fuel nozzle.

MAJOR

So this is possible?

BALD ENGINEER

Definitely. Do we have enough time and is it going to work perfectly? Cross your fucking fingers, sir.

CUT TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - EMERGENCY EXIT ROW / COACH -- DAY

Thornhill and John stand. Passengers around them.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

--get the fuel we need, and we proceed to Colorado.

RUPERT

Captain, is this plane built to be refueled, mid air?

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

It was not designed that way, no.

The entire plane inhales.

JOHN

But the Air Force has a dedicated group of Engineers working on a solution as we speak.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

We have a plan. Slow the plane down to absolute minimum. Right outside these hatches, there are over-wing refueling ports--

IPOD'S DAD

Won't we get sucked out the door?

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

No, that's only during explosive decompression. Cabin pressure is equal to the atmospheric pressure, so we're fine.

JOHN

But we need two people to crawl out on the wings. We have to manually open the fuel port.

COKE BOTTLES

We can't go out there. Are you crazy?

JOHN

Clearly it won't be easy... think of it like moving in a Hurricane - insane, difficult, but doable. Who will join me?

Dread grows on Eve's face.

A VOICE

I'll go.

It's GAVIN. Wasn't expecting that. Eyes John and Lisa:

GAVIN

I can help.

CUT TO:

INT. AIR FORCE HANGER

A converted FUEL NOZZLE. Cobbled together, but looks solid.

MAJOR

Run the test, Captain.

The Engineers flip a switch. POP, SPRAY. The nozzle cracks in half as fuel's run through.

MAJOR

Try again!

T-Minus: **9 MINUTES.**

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. G-5 -- DAY

A government-owned G-5 takes off from LAX. Find Doyle with a laptop, on the plane's phone:

DOYLE

Karl, I need satellite imagery for two days ago over Wyoming.

CUT TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - EMERGENCY EXIT ROW / COACH -- DAY

Everyone listens to Thornhill and John.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

We need a few things. First, it's cold outside. We'll do this in sections, but when instructed, get out all of your winter clothes. We'll move injured and elderly forward to first class. We'll get you as many blankets or extra clothing as we can from the carry-on baggage.

JOHN

We also need a rope and a harness. Is anyone flying with climbing equipment?

Rabbi Judy, now sitting with Diego and Ali in row 26.

JUDY

We don't have a harness, but in our checked luggage, my husband has a few hundred feet of rope.

COLLEGE STUDENT

My buddies and I checked climbing packs -- we could convert those into harnesses.

JOHN

Lisa. Can you take them down to the luggage hold?

LISA

(off Thornhill's nod)

Come this way.

They go. Thornhill turns to John and Gavin.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

You're with me. Look outside. The first part will be getting you a safety line. Something to hold onto.

Hands them emergency procedure cards. See the SAFETY LINES.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

As you can see, they are built into the 737-800 emergency hatch door frames, but these wings are slick. Angled down towards the back. They're made to have air speed over them, not have feet walk on them.

John points forwards and backwards, to Gavin:

JOHN

We're gonna have men on ropes to hold onto us. We'll get that safety line in place, and then move onto refueling.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Okay, to undo the fuel port--

CUT TO:

INT. AIR FORCE HANGAR -- CONTINUOUS

Another converted fuel nozzle. Hooked up for a test. Yes, they're in an open hangar, but there's NO AIR in here.

Flip the switch. Fuel DUMPS into the nozzle. Engineers listen. Wait. Watch.

T-minus: **1 MINUTE**. The nozzle holds true.

MAJOR

Will it hold, Captain?

BALD ENGINEER

Yes, sir. We believe so, sir.

MAJOR

Move.

Test stopped. Engineers unhook the nozzle. Sprint to the Stratotanker. Hear her engines warming. Turbines spinning.

CUT TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - EMERGENCY EXIT ROW / COACH -- DAY

John, already in his harness, watches Gavin step into his. All around, work progresses:

A Banker, a Janitor, the College Student, and his BUDDIES run rope up and down the aisle.

A Housewife and a Gym Teacher help the last elderly person who wanted to move up to FIRST CLASS, where in the background:

Diego and Ali stand with Rabbi Judy. Diego "kisses the bride," then whispers something into her ear. Ali's laughing and crying at the same time.

Exit Row. John, anxious, looks at Thornhill.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

They'll be here.

COCKPIT

Co-pilot flies west. A BUZZER: fuel tanks almost EMPTY.

COACH - ON JOHN

Alone. Thinking. When he sees the TVs. Not on CNN anymore, it's the HIKER'S FOOTAGE (*the awful part where they ALL DIE*).

John bolts up the aisle, but stops. In the--

FIRST CLASS GALLEY

Rupert's hooked the camera up to the plane's video system. Eve rips it out. Furious:

EVE

Are you trying to start a riot?

RUPERT

You don't have the right to keep this from us.

EVE

There's already enough stress on board today, try not adding to it.

Rupert's sorry. Obviously didn't mean to get this response.

A FEW ROWS BACK - IN COACH

Melanie's now next to John, having just watched the video.

MELANIE

I'm pre-med. First year, we read this book... It was about secret germ warfare laboratories started after World War II because we couldn't drop The Bomb anymore. The thought was, *cripple human productivity to kill off enough food production, and then civilizations can't fight below the starvation level.* But here's the fucked up part: The USDA is supposed to protect our food sources, right?

(doesn't wait)

Lyme Disease, 1975. A mysterious tick-born illness appears in southern Connecticut, less than 10 miles away from Plum Island, home to the USDA-run Lab 257, where, since the '50s, they used the same tick species that carried Lyme Disease in Bovine-virus experiments. It *totally* freaked me out because they still exist, under funded and run down. One accident could release a...

(doesn't want to say)

Is that what happened, Dr. Ferguson? Did someone create this? On purpose? As a weapon? Who would do that?

John's face is green. A "what have I done" moment.

SMASH TO:

EXT. JOHN & EVE'S HOUSE -- LATER THAT NIGHT - **FLASHBACK**

The deafening ROAR of pouring rain. Eve's confusion melts into fear when she sees the empty sadness on John's face.

EVE

What's wrong? What happened?

JOHN

(destroyed)

She's dead, Eve. Marion's dead.

INT. JOHN & EVE'S HOUSE -- DAY - **FLASHBACK**

John ambles down a hallway. A vacant shell. Passes the door to his bedroom. We stop, look in:

Eve quietly cleans. DUSTS to be specific.

WOOSH - John reappears. Flies off the handle, and into--

THE BEDROOM

JOHN

STOP. What are you doing!?

SMACK. John bats the dust rag from her hand. She backs away. Is he going to hit her?

No. He kneels next to the nightstand. We see Eve was inches away from erasing the "MARION" written in the dust.

JOHN

So fucking careless.

He glares at her with hate in his eyes. Actual hate. He picks up the nightstand, and drags it away.

Down the hall. Into the--

SPARE BEDROOM

Where he cloaks it in a white sheet. Eve follows. Stands silent. His back to us, he stares out a window. Sees:

In their yard, an EMPTY SWING SET.

EVE

We can't keep doing this. We can't.

(no answer)

I need you back. It's too hard.

(still nothing)

I've been thinking... Of leaving.

(anger boils)

DAMMIT, JOHN, SAY SOMETHING, SAY--

When he turns, she stops. His face is PURE HEARTACHE:

JOHN

I didn't want to erase her.

She takes him. Hugs him. He crumples into her arms.

EVE

No, John'o, never. Never, you hear me, never.

JOHN

Tell me how to fix this.

EVE

I have to be what you want; not what you fear losing--

JOHN

Eve. Tell me.

EVE

Decide. Decide to come back. Decide to be the man that I love so very *much*. Decide to forgive yourself.

JOHN

I can do those things. I can fix it. I can fix us.

EVE

But can you fix yourself? Honestly? In your heart? Six more months are all I can bear. Tell me then if I can have you back. Because we need each other. I can't do this alone.

JOHN

Six months. I promise.

RETURN TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - REAR GALLEY -- DAY

A water bottle opens. John drinks, but A HAND ON HIS BACK MAKES HIM JUMP. It's Eve.

EVE

I'm about to sound like the most selfish person in the whole world. But please don't do this. It's suicide.

JOHN

It's not your decision.

EVE

Have you considered the consequences? You're the only person that knows about this virus? What are we supposed to do if you die?

JOHN

If we don't refuel, it won't matter what I know. Plus, I'm not the only one. Vidur knows the research. I'm just not that important.

He leaves, mind still flailing from his Melanie talk.

EVE

Killing yourself won't bring her
back.

EXT. U.S. AIR FORCE KC-135R STRATOTANKER -- DAY

Stratotanker descends and slows. Just ahead of Delta 1784.

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COACH

Everyone bundled up, and in position. LINES hold ropes. Those not helping are in empty seats. John, Gavin, and Thornhill by the starboard emergency exits.

CO-PILOT (V.O.)

Captain. They've arrived.

The hope on board is contagious.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

Lisa, go tell Rich to unlock the
overwing fuel port.

LISA

Yes, sir.

She moves. John and Gavin each stand by an exit. They remove the plastic safety guards, revealing RED HANDLES.

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

John, wait. I should go.

Find Eve, sitting with Mrs. Drayton. Row 22:

MRS. DRAYTON

--husband saved his whole life to
see the world, but passed before we
left our small town. For the last
two decades, I've taken him every
place he'd wanted to go. My penance.
I'm almost done.

(scoffs at the irony)

This was going to be the last.

(beat)

The point is. It is never too late.

On Thornhill, John, Gavin. At the Emergency Exit:

CAPTAIN THORNHILL

It's my responsibility. No one knows
how to refuel--

JOHN

You taught us. And it's not like
you or anyone has actually done this.
We can't lose you. We can't.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Fly true, Roger, keep us slow and level, and we'll do the rest. Remember: stay below 8,290 feet or we can't land in Westcliffe.

Thornhill leaves. John sees Eve. Her eyes plead. She mouths: *Please don't*. John's truly impossible decision:

JOHN

I have to.
(to Gavin)
Ready?

GAVIN

No. But let's get this done.

Their hands reach. Pull the red handles. POP - HISS. The emergency exits open. Tilt UP and OUT.

HURRICANE FORCE WINDS mix with the JET ENGINE'S THUNDER to create A ROARING TORRENT OF SOUND.

John pulls SKI GOGGLES over his eyes. Reaches for the EMERGENCY LINE - a wound strap in the exit's doorjamb.

COCKPIT

Thornhill and Co-Pilot at the controls.

CO-PILOT

Stratotanker. We're a go.

From the back of the Stratotanker, a fuel hose extends.

EXT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - STARBOARD WING

John CRAWLS out first. Holds the emergency line in his right hand. The doorjamb in the other.

Wind out here's off the charts.

He reaches for the O-RING on the wing's surface to clip in the emergency line. But he's a foot short.

JOHN

SLACK! SLACK!

Look down. Christ on the cross, John's arms stretched in both directions. 8,000 feet up.

Like a rock climber, he finds a crevasse behind the extended front SLAT of the wing's leading edge.

Both hands on it. He slides out another foot, now completely free of the emergency exit. Reaches...

CLIPS the emergency line into the O-RING.

JOHN

OKAY!

He motions to Gavin, who grabs the emergency line. Uses it to drag himself onto the wing.

John sees the refueling hose. Dangling 30 feet away. 25...

ZIP-ZIP-ZIP. At over a hundred knots, we RACE through a low level cloud system. Our speed only accentuated.

Gavin hauls himself to John, who is next to the OVERWING FUEL PORT. Which is so very stuck.

John tries again. Can't open it alone.

JOHN

I NEED YOUR HELP!

Gavin. He won't move. Two hands on the emergency line.

John reaches for him, but Gavin slips and SNAGS the crevasse John found earlier. Looks back.

GAVIN

I CAN'T!

WHIRRR. Gavin can't hear it, but the front SLAT is CLOSING. His hands in the narrowing crevasse.

John sees the crevasse. Almost shut.

JOHN

LOOK OUT!!!

Gavin doesn't comprehend. John can't let go to point.

GAVIN

NOT YET!

CRUNCH. The front slat clamps down Gavin's hands. SHRIEKS OF AGONY. Jerks his hands away, but they won't move. He tugs even harder. A flesh tearing, bone breaking RIP.

That motion coupled with the wind sends Gavin rearward and up onto his feet. HIS BACK against the emergency line. *Fingers diced and dangling from what used to be hands.*

John lunges for Gavin, to help push him to safety but--

Gavin tumbles backwards off the wing.

INSIDE

Gavin's rope goes taught. SKIMS AWAY. Burns skin from palms. Breaks arms and legs its wrapped around.

The brutal force insane. The rope simply GONE.

Eve rushes to the window. Sees John desperately hold on.

COCKPIT

A KNOCK. Lisa appears.

LISA

Captain. We have a problem.

ON THE WING

John. Alone. The blood trail streaking behind where Gavin's hands were crushed.

The fuel port still stuck. Refueling hose 10 feet away.

Look over to the cabin. A man in the emergency exit door. CAPTAIN THORNHILL, in his own harness.

He heaves himself along the wing. Emergency line his guide. Arrives at the sticking fuel port next to John.

Hand signal: "On three. One. Two."

They pull. Vein popping hard.

Success! The fuel port opens.

The refueling hose appears before them. They wrestle it over the port. A few more inches.

COACH - AT A WINDOW

Eve shuts her eyes.

COCKPIT

BUZZER: fuel tanks EMPTY. An ENGINE SPUTTERS - so thirsty, but only sucking fumes.

ON THE WING

Click. Lock the hose into the overwing port! If it weren't already so loud, you would hear THOUSANDS OF GALLONS FLOW.

John and Roger CHEER.

COCKPIT

Fuel gauges rise.

COACH

DIEGO
It's working. It's hooked up!

Ali kisses her new husband.

ON THE WING

The world A BLUR. John and Thornhill struggle to hold on.

CUT TO:

INT. G-5 (FLYING TO WYOMING)

Agent Doyle on his laptop. A GOOGLE MAPS type program runs. MOUNTAINS. Zoom in. Out. Scroll left and right.

Wait. What was that? In the right hand upper corner. Focus. Zoom in. BLACK SMOKE. Doyle's face lights up.

DOYLE (on the phone)
Holy shit. We've found it - we've
found Lab 121.

CUT TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COCKPIT - CO-PILOT & LISA

CO-PILOT
Push that.

On the fuel gauges: jet fuel flows from the starboard tank into the port tank, to even out the weight.

CO-PILOT (on radio)
Stratotanker, Delta 1784. We have enough fuel now. Let's go 30 more seconds and shut it down.

STRATOTANKER PILOT (on radio)
Take all that you need.

ON THE WING

John looks back to the emergency exit. Lisa's there. A universal CUT IT OFF sign.

John and Thornhill grab the fuel nozzle. BUMP. An air pocket. Hearts pound. We're fine.

They unlock the fuel nozzle, BUT IT SNAPS--

Shreds. FUEL BILLOWS OUT, MIXING WITH THE HIGH WINDS. John dives. Barely grasps the emergency line. Looks back:

The HOSE. COLLIDES with Thornhill's midsection. Knocks him loose, but Thornhill grabs it.

A bunking bronco on the giant snaking hose. Thornhill's heaved through the air. Knocks into John.

They slide closer to the emergency exit. John can't keep Thornhill steady.

The hose WHIPS around again. Hauls Roger forward. OFF THE WING. Fingers slip. Grip lost.

Thornhill drops. RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE ENGINE.

John turns - leaps for the emergency exit door.

Thornhill. SUCKED into the spinning JET ENGINE.

WHA-BOOM. A COLOSSAL EXPLOSION.

IN THE CABIN

Molten hot, spinning shrapnel, slices through the fuselage. Killing and maiming. The FIREBALL follows.

COCKPIT

Co-Pilot corrects. We hit an air pocket. DROP. Pull up. Throttle forward. Delta 1784 CLIMBS. But--

Crash into the METAL END of the fueling hose. SMASH.

Cockpit windows shatter. GLASS showers into Co-Pilot's EYES. **Blinded.** The airplane still climbing.

ON THE WING

John struggles to pull himself in. Slipping. Speed increasing. Energy evaporating.

About to fall. John's safety line tightens. Yanked back into--

COACH

Back into Eve's arms, who lead John's rescue. A disaster in here. Cries and screams.

The cockpit door blows open. See the bloody Co-Pilot flail at the controls.

John sprints. Wheezing. Coughing. Trying to find footing. Adrenaline and sheer will force him into the--

COCKPIT

ALARMS CLANG. Altimeter spins. John jumps into the empty seat. Grabs the stick. Tries to even us out. No luck.

CO-PILOT
(gurgling on his blood)
Auto-pilot.

Co-Pilot slumps over. John searches the instruments. Find--
AUTO-PILOT. Turns it on. The plane levels.

EXT. THE SKY

Stratotanker banks, reveals Delta 1784. F-16s by her side.

PUSH IN to see the damage: flames pour out of the starboard engine. The Emergency Exits are closed, but we enter--

COACH

Through the hole in the fuselage. Injured and dead are scattered about. You can smell the burnt flesh.

Up the aisle we end up back in the--

COCKPIT

John tries to stop the alarms. Lisa and Eve enter.

LISA
We're on fire. You need to kill the
starboard engine.

JOHN
Is he alive?

EVE
(checks his pulse)
Yes.

JOHN
(so many gauges)
How do I shut it down?

LISA
The Fire Handle.

Points. Above the center console. A RED HANDLE. Pull it.

OUTSIDE

The engine fire blows out.

COCKPIT

The last alarm quiets. An ashen glaze across John's eyes. Wind whistles in through the broken windshield.

LISA
Who's going to fly the plane?

A terrifyingly silent beat.

SMASH TO:

EXT. A MOUNTAIN FIELD -- DAY - **FLASHBACK**

A small, two-seater single-engine PROP plane lands lightly on dirt runway. Taxis. Cuts the engine.

Out of the pilot's seat steps... JOHN. He grabs Marion out of the passenger side as well as their bags.

Vidur is here. Waits for them in a JEEP WRANGLER. Marion screams and runs into Vidur's arms.

VIDUR
Princess Marion!

Vidur lifts Marion into the back seat. We see John's face for the first time. He is one unhappy camper:

JOHN
He's still here?

VIDUR
Yes, my friend.

JOHN
I'll drive.

John jumps behind the wheel. Before Vidur can get both legs in, he speeds away, spitting gravel behind the tires.

INT. SCOTT'S TENT - RESEARCH CAMPSITE -- DAY - **FLASHBACK**

Scott writes. The tarp opens. Reveals John in a blinding swath of light. Tosses down a BANK CHECK. From the USDA.

JOHN
What have you done, Scottie? What have you done?

SCOTT
You thought Icarus was a failure, you wanted to shut it down because it was too dangerous, but it's important. The government thinks so, too.

JOHN

To kill people.

SCOTT

To save American lives. What world do you live in, John? It's us or them. Look at what we've created: Odorless. Silent. Works every time. Infect an enemy and we destroy their ability to cross mountains. Their ability to have an air force. And because it kills the host if they do move, it can't become a pandemic.

JOHN

(horrified)

I have no choice. I have to go public with this.

About to leave, but Scott's fearful words stop him:

SCOTT

Jesus, John, you can't. These guys don't fuck around. Do you know what they'll do to us. To your family?

JOHN

You should have listened.

John charges out. Scott follows. Stops at the tent door. Watches John traipse across the camp to Marion, who he picks up over his head. She's giggling. Scott pulls out his cell:

SCOTT

We have a problem.

RETURN TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COCKPIT -- DAY

John in the pilot's chair. A little out of his league.

DENVER ATC (on radio)

Delta 1784, Denver tower. You're on our system now. Welcome home. We've got you until Westcliffe.

John, Lisa and Eve can't believe what they're hearing.

JOHN

I need you two to move him someplace out of the wind, and then check on the cabin.

Eve and Lisa move the Co-Pilot into a jumpseat in the first class galley.

JOHN

Denver tower, great to be home. But we have a problem.

DENVER ATC (on radio)

Delta 1784. We're aware of your situation. We've coordinated with Delta dispatch, and we've got a Delta 737 pilot here. He's going to assist you in getting over to Westcliffe.

JOHN

Thank you, Denver.

DELTA PILOT (on radio)

Delta 1784, my name is Kent.

JOHN

Hi Kent, my name is John.

DELTA PILOT (on radio)

Okay, John. Do you see the dial under the "Course Heading" gauge?

JOHN

Yes. I see it.

DELTA PILOT (on radio)

Go ahead and turn that to one-nine-two. We're going to take you around from the south.

JOHN

Around what?

(static)

Around what, Kent?

DENVER ATC (on radio)

Delta 1784, at your current altitude, there's a severe winter storm in your skypath. We're going to get you around the toughest section.

John squints. Sure enough. On the curved horizon. Mother nature at her worst. A predator waiting for them.

CUT TO:

INT. EVE'S PARENTS' LIVING ROOM -- DAY

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

We're getting spectacular footage of the plane now.

Eve's family, MOM at the center, crowd around the TV.

On the screen: *shaky zoomed-in video footage of Delta 1784*, taken from a Fire Tower in Colorado.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

It's flying west now. You can see the side of the fuselage there. A gaping hole in the side. Delta hasn't confirmed the situation aboard, if there are any injuries, or worse.--

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COCKPIT -- DAY

John talks on the radio. Makes more adjustments.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

--The whole world waits, anticipating.--

COACH

Everyone watches NEWS ANCHOR. Sees their beat up plane.

Eve and Lisa run a makeshift TRIAGE. Many familiar faces are burned, bleeding, or worse.

Coke Bottles lies unconscious, glasses cracked. College Student and Buddies bandage severe ROPE BURNS on their hands.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

--We'll lose sight of them soon, as they head into the mountains. But our hopes and prayers are with the brave passengers.

Gym Teacher passes out water. Cups to Mrs. Drayton, Melanie, Diego and Ali. Then he sees out the window: the STORM.

GYM TEACHER

Jesus. Look at that.

COCKPIT

John's front row seat to the storm, which is moving into his path. Only storm is too minor a term...

Swirling frozen inferno is more accurate. The clouds like blackened skyscrapers undulating in the sky.

JOHN

Kent. The storm's moving. We're flying right into it.

DELTA PILOT (on radio)

We're seeing it too, John.

BUMP. The plane shudders -- running into the outer winds of the storm front.

OUTSIDE

Delta 1784 and the F-16s are FLEA-sized next to the storm.

COCKPIT

DELTA PILOT (on radio)
Turn the auto-pilot a few degrees
south. One-seven-seven.

JOHN
Turning one-seven-seven.

The plane turns. Wind and snow pour in through the broken
window. John lowers his goggles once more.

JOHN
We're still flying into the storm.
(beat)
Kent?

DELTA PILOT (on radio)
We've charted the safest path to
Westcliffe through an outer edge of
the storm. Plane'll fly herself.

BUMP-BUMP-WHOOSH. White out conditions.

JOHN
I can't see.

DELTA PILOT (on radio)
That's all right, John. We've got
you on GPS and radar. Just keep
both hands on the stick.

JOHN
(he does)
Both hands, right.

DELTA PILOT (on radio)
It's about to get a little bumpy.

COACH

A Grandfather tries to get an infant to stop crying. Janitor
holds his wife and children. The Banker talks with Rupert -
both drunk. Ipod Dad and Ipod Teen converse in Japanese.

Ding. "Fasten Seatbelt" signs illuminate.

JOHN (V.O.)
Flight attendants... Please make
sure everyone's in their seats.
We're going to go through some
turbulence for the next couple--

WHAM. Like hitting a pothole at 200 miles per hour. The fuselage moans under the pressure. We all SCREAM.

COCKPIT

DELTA PILOT (on radio)
Throttle forward a little bit.

John does. We pick up speed. Outside's a blender of snow and ice. But we hold steady.

And then it hits.

A BURST OF WIND SHEER. Slams our plane straight down.

For John it's like being in the front car of a roller coaster as the nose tips and we fall.

He pulls back on the stick, but nothing happens.

Steeper and steeper we go. Accelerating. 300 knots. 400.

JOHN
Kent!

Altimeter dropping. John's nose bleeds.

DELTA PILOT (on radio)
Gently pull back. Watch the Attitude Indicator. That's your artificial horizon. Level it out. And point yourself back up into the blue.

John pulls with everything he can.

We level out. WIND HEAVES US TO THE SIDE. The HEADING INDICATOR spins as we go off course.

Airplane shakes violently. Engine wails.

But we rise. Back to around 8,100 feet.

DELTA PILOT (on radio)
That's good, John. Level her out.

The storm dissipates as we reveal the:

ROCKY MOUNTAINS. Magnificent granite stabbing the heavens.

OUTSIDE

Delta 1784, flanked by the F-16s, flies into a MOUNTAIN PASS (it's like the grand canyon, only the walls tower a few thousand feet OVER your head to the left and right).

The speed is blinding. Not much room to maneuver or navigate.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN CHALET -- DAY

Think of the resort in THE SHINING, but open year round. A large group of affluent GUESTS eat outside on a patio.

HEAR THE JET ENGINE FIRST. Then we see Delta 1784.

Banks around a bend and zooms passed. Only the odd part is that we're looking DOWN on the plane.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. U.S. AIR FLIGHT 1024 (AT LAX) / DECONTAMINATION

Everyone still in full HAZMAT gear. The CDC Investigator washing down HAZMAT suits. Then he freezes.

Reaches into the pile. One of the suits has a HOLE in it. He grabs it. Races across the tarmac. Spots CDC Director, Rebecca Winter.

CDC INVESTIGATOR

We have a possible breach.

REBECCA

Whose suit is that?

SMASH TO:

INT. G-5 (FLYING TO WYOMING) -- DAY

Agent Doyle changes into WINTER GEAR. He has a headset on:

DOYLE

John, it's Doyle.
We've got a location.

FBI PILOT (O.S.)

Agent Doyle, we're beginning
our descent.

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COCKPIT -- DAY

John. Getting the hang of this. Slowly turns the plane left and right as the mountain pass requires.

DOYLE (on radio)

We'll be landing in Jackson soon.

(beat)

John. I'm hearing you're doing an
amazing job. How you holding up?

JOHN

Um. Want to switch places?

INT. G-5 (FLYING TO WYOMING) -- DAY

Doyle smiles.

DOYLE

If I had been up there, the plane
would have crashed hours ago...

He drifts off. A knowing panic crosses his face...

As the blood starts to drain from his nose. The RIPPING
HEADACHE slams him like a punch to the skull.

And then the plane dives. Engines moan in free fall.

DOYLE

John, I'll call you back.

Doyle staggers to his feet. In excruciating pain, he stumbles
towards the cockpit. His ears bleeding too. Now his eyes.

But he heaves forward. Rips open the cockpit door.

Jesus. BOTH FBI PILOTS ARE UNCONSCIOUS. And we're hurtling
towards the SNOWY MOUNTAINS.

Doyle doesn't even have time to scream.

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COCKPIT -- DAY

DELTA PILOT (on radio)

Delta 1784, Denver.

JOHN

Kent?

DELTA PILOT (on radio)

You're 40 miles outside Westcliffe,
John, but there's a problem. The
storm pushed you off course. You
entered the wrong Mountain Pass.
John, this one doesn't--

But Kent doesn't need to say the rest. John's face drops.

OUTSIDE

Delta 1784 comes around a corner. The mountain pass we're
in DEAD ENDS into a rocky peak.

Can't go left. Can't go right. Can't even fucking turn
around. BOXED IN.

COCKPIT

Delta 1784's WARNING INSTRUMENTS beep and clang.

WARNING INSTRUMENTS (V.O.)

Pull up. Pull up. Pull up...

DELTA PILOT (on radio)

Pull back on the stick, John.

Delta 1784 starts to rise.

JOHN

What's the elevation of that peak?

DELTA PILOT (on radio)

10,000 feet.

JOHN

Do we have enough fuel to make it to the closest runway above 10,000 feet...? KENT. *Can we get to the closest runway above 10,000 feet.*

DELTA PILOT (on radio)

On this continent, there aren't any. I'm sorry.

JOHN

(to himself)

We're dead either way.

OUTSIDE

Delta 1784 races towards the DEAD END. The F-16s peel away. Up to safety.

F-16 PILOT (V.O.)

Pull up, Delta. PULL UP NOW.

Ten seconds to impact. Nine. Eight. Seven...

COCKPIT

John pulls all the way back. Throttle forward. Blue sky appears on our horizon (above the mountain peak).

OUTSIDE

Four seconds... Delta 1784 impossibly close.

COCKPIT

John. Complete and total focus.

JOHN

COME ON!

OUTSIDE

Two. One...

CLINK-SCREEECH. The broken starboard engine JUST nicks the peak as the plane reaches a "safe" altitude.

COCKPIT

Sweating. John engages the AUTOPILOT.

DELTA PILOT (on radio)
I'm sorry, John. We're still here
if you need anything. Anything.

John stands. Opens the cockpit door.

FIRST CLASS / COACH

The entire plane looks at him. Hope spews from their eyes. Diego leads a small group in clapping.

COKE BOTTLES
How much longer?

JOHN
We, um --

But he can't say. So he lies.

JOHN
We're almost home.

The plane ERUPTS in cheers and hugs, which only makes John feel extra shitty. Eve appears before him.

JOHN
We need to talk.

COCKPIT

Before the door is fully shut, she sees his face.

EVE
What's wrong?

John doesn't meet her eyes. She's about to speak again, when he looks up, his hard shell cracks:

JOHN
I've failed everyone--

EVE
No you haven't. You saved us.

JOHN
We've flown too high. There's no
place left for us to land.

Boom. And there it is.

JOHN

I'm going to have Delta arrange all the phone lines we can. Give everyone a chance to say goodbye.

EVE

We can't give up. I don't want to say goodbye.

His face an awful combination of heartbreak, shame, and loss.

JOHN

I still love you. I never stopped. But I can't give you what you want. I can't forgive myself. I'm sorry.

EVE

Don't give up. John? Don't give up.

JOHN

It's my fault. Marion's death.

EVE

You can't say that, it wasn't--

JOHN

--He said if I talked, they'd...
It was supposed to be me; I was supposed to die that night.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESEARCH CAMPSITE -- DUSK - **FLASHBACK**

Scott Ferguson's eyes ablaze. Reflecting a campfire. Through the dancing flames, watch his brother John eat with RESEARCHERS. Suddenly, a SCREAM in the dark. Marion's.

John grabs a flashlight, races towards the sound.

EXT. WOODS -- CONTINUOUS - **FLASHBACK**

John finds Marion. She's fallen into a gully. Her little leg bloody, and grotesquely broken. Vidur's right behind. Marion's in shock. Shaking. Sweating. Pale. Hollow eyes.

JOHN

How long to get a medevac up here?

VIDUR

30-40 minutes at least.

JOHN

If any marrow gets in her bloodstream, she could have a stroke or heart attack. We have to go now.

He grabs Marion and we CUT TO:

EXT. A MOUNTAIN FIELD -- NIGHT - **FLASHBACK**

Headlights pierce the black, illuminate John's small two-seater airplane. The Jeep skids to a stop.

John carries Marion to the plane. Belts her in. As he rushes around to the other side, a SECOND JEEP arrives. Scott.

SCOTT
What are you doing?

JOHN
'The fuck does it look like?

SCOTT
You can't--

Brothers. Face to face.

JOHN
Get out of my way.

SCOTT
You aren't rated for night flying.

Shoves Scott away.

JOHN
I don't care. There's no time.

SCOTT
I'll fly her back.
(John pauses.)
Forget today. Listen. I'm rated
for instrument flying. I can get
her to a hospital. I can save her.

JOHN
(Nods. Beat.)
Go. GO.

Scott moves. Jumps into the pilot's seat.

Across the field: in the dark, TALL & SHORT SUIT (Norman's mysterious captors) watch from an SUV. *Why are they here?*

The prop SPUTTERS to life. Catches. Scott taxis away.

What no one sees -- not John, Vidur, or Scott -- is the BLACK FLUID puddling on the ground, underneath the plane's engine.

Until it's too late.

Squash. John steps in the puddle. Puts his hand in it.

JOHN
Someone tampered with the plane.

Helpless. John and Vidur watch Scott and Marion take off in the small prop-plane. Into the black night.

RETURN TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COCKPIT -- DAY

John and Eve. Arms entwined.

JOHN
 I'm responsible. That day. This day. I'm responsible. I killed my brother, my daughter, and now thousands of innocent people traveling for Christmas.

Eve doesn't know what to say at first. Their eyes meet.

EVE
 I forgive you. John'o, I forgive you *for you*. But only if you get us down from here.
 (kisses him. crying.)
Save us.

JOHN
 I don't know how.

EVE
 Find the way. You always find the way. Remember when the Mustang broke down on our honeymoon. The desert heat fried the electrical starter, but you fixed it. Right there on the side of the interstate, you--

JOHN
 (light bulb moment)
Interstate builder.
 (picks up the radio)
 Delta 1784, Denver tower. Kent?

EVE
 What is it?

JOHN
 Eisenhower built our interstate system.

DELTA PILOT (on radio)
 Delta 1784, hello John.

JOHN
 Little known fact: Being a military man, he wanted to secure our country from invasion, so he put in a mandate:
 (MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

If you wanted federal tax dollars to build an interstate, one mile out of every five had to be straight.

EVE

Like a runway.

JOHN

(winks, "bingo")

Kent. The I-70 right here in Colorado goes over twelve-thousand feet. I need to you find a section just over ten-thousand. Chart us a way home.

(to Eve)

We're going to make it.

Behind them, Co-Pilot, confused and bloody, sits up.

CO-PILOT

Roger? Roger, where are we?

CUT TO:

INT. DENVER AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL -- DAY

A dark room lined with radar screens. A handsome DELTA PILOT, KENT, is with the CONTROLLERS. Works out some final figures.

DELTA PILOT

We can get them there in 15 minutes.

A SUPERVISOR hands a telephone to Kent.

SUPERVISOR

It's Delta.

Kent listens. With every second, his face dropping. We already know it's impossibly bad news.

CUT TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COCKPIT -- DAY

Just outside the door, Eve gives Co-Pilot a sip of water.

DELTA PILOT (on radio)

Delta 1784, John?

JOHN

What's the good word, Kent?

DELTA DISPATCH (on radio)

Turn a course two-nine-seven.

JOHN

Turning two-nine-seven.

DELTA DISPATCH (on radio)
 That'll take you to I-70, John.
 You're less than 15 minutes out.
 But Delta just called me, John. It
 seems that during the take off in
 Pittsburgh, the left rear landing
 gear sustained damage.

JOHN
 How much damage?

COACH

The familiar faces. Melanie. Mrs. Drayton. Diego & Ali.
 Rabbi Judy. Coke Bottles. College Student. iPod Teen &
 Dad. Rupert. Countless others. Bundled in. Hunkered down.

JOHN (V.O.)
 Can the Flight Attendants please
 come to the cockpit? Thank you.

EXT/INT. AROUND THE COUNTRY -- CONTINUOUS

In HOMES, CHURCHES, MALLS, and BARBERSHOPS. Everyone watches
 the NEWS. At the edge of their seats. Literally.

NEWS ANCHOR (on TV)
 We're getting word that Delta 1784
 was unable to land as planned in
 Westcliffe, Colorado. They have now
 turned towards Interstate 70 in the
 Rocky Mountains, where they'll be
 making an emergency landing--

ON TV: Someone SHOUTS off camera.

NEWS ANCHOR
 Do we-- Do we have it?

INT. EVE'S PARENTS' LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Also watching. A CATHOLIC PRIEST helps Eve's Mom pray.

NEWS ANCHOR (on TV)
 We have undoctored videotape of Delta
 1784 taking off from Pittsburgh
 earlier today.

SHAKY, LOW-RES, HAND-HELD VIDEO: *Delta 1784 SKIDS sideways
 on the runway. Her LEFT REAR TIRE clips a light, EXPLODES.*

NEWS ANCHOR
 Right there. The tire.
 (FREEZE VIDEO FRAME)
 It seems, Ladies and Gentlemen, Delta
 1784 has lost its landing gear--

Eve's Mom collapses.

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COACH -- CONTINUOUS

Silent. Everyone watches. News Anchor's voice haunts them:

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

--and will have only one chance,
attempting what's commonly referred
to as a "belly-landing."

Click. The TVs shut off. Lisa and the flight crew move
into the aisles.

LISA

It doesn't matter what they say.
Get it out of your heads. We're
going to survive. There's a brace
position I'm gonna need you to get
in when the time comes, but first,
everyone get out their cell phones.
We're closer to the ground than we've
ever been. Some of them may work.
For the rest of you, Delta's opening
up the phones in the galleys to anyone
who wants to talk to a loved one.

RUPERT

In case we don't make it?

He was quiet. But enough people heard. Cell phones are
back out. Turning on. The newer ones, the ones with the
most battery power pick up a signal.

COCKPIT

John at the controls. Eve buckles Co-Pilot into the jumpseat
behind him. His eyes are now bandaged.

DELTA PILOT (on radio)

--You're doing great, John. Right
on course. We've cleared the
Interstate of all traffic.

Eve lowers her goggles, and belts into the Co-Pilot's seat.
Out the window. We come around a corner, and there it is:

I-70. Twisting its way through the high peaks.

It's important to note that we're not descending down to it,
but rather its elevation is increasing, UP TO US.

DELTA PILOT (on radio)

We're 20 miles out, John. Reduce
airspeed to 125 knots.

JOHN

Reducing airspeed to one-two-five knots.

Outside. The road. Closer and closer. Still not straight.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FOREST -- DAY

The scorched, twisted remains of Doyle's G-5.

INSIDE THE WRECKAGE

Smoke and fire. Doyle opens his blackened, bloody eyes. Can't move at all. Tries to speak. To open his mouth.

And then we hear the APPROACHING SNOW MOBILE.

Just outside. It stops. Footsteps crunch on the snow. Doyle finds his voice. Weakly:

DOYLE

Here. In here.

A shadow appears. Menacing and imposing. It's TALL SUIT.

TALL SUIT

Agent Doyle?

DOYLE

Yes. That's me, thank god. You have to help me get--

TALL SUIT

You shouldn't have come here.

Tall has a GLOCK 9MM. Off Doyle's wide eyes, we CUT TO:

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COACH -- DAY

Camera roams. Those with cell phones are on them. Others are in the galleys. Cell phones are passed and shared.

VOICES

We're landing. / Put Mom on. / I need you to call Michael's parents. / I just wanted to say-- / It's very important, my papers are in the safe-- / Don't say that.

MELANIE

Hi Daddy. I'm okay. I'm not hurt.

LISA

Okay. I'm going to need everyone back in their seat.

MELANIE

I have to go. I love you, too.

COCKPIT

DELTA PILOT (on radio)

5 miles.

John looks at Eve. *Okay.* Eve picks up the MIC:

COACH

Melanie and Mrs. Drayton hold hands. Ali's grip is so tight, she bruises Diego's arm. He whispers into her ear.

EVE (V.O.)

Brace for landing. Brace for landing.

IPod Teen and his family listen to Rabbi Judy as she leads an old testament prayer. Coke Bottles mouths the words silently, holding his Wife's hand.

Lisa and the crew belt in. Hunch over grabbing their knees.

Rupert looks to Lisa; his eyes say "I'm sorry." Hers reply with understanding.

And the others? Most pray. A few stifle the stress-giggles. Hold children. Hold themselves. Lives flashing before eyes. Hopes in jeopardy. Regrets echoing through minds.

Imagine every emotion ever felt, EXPERIENCED ALL AT ONCE, trapped on a sinking piece of steal hurtling to Earth at over a hundred miles-per-hour. And you're not even close.

EXT. I-70 / A SMALL MOUNTAIN TOWN

A 4th of July PARADE in the winter. People line the side of the interstate. Held back by National Guard and State Police.

Children and Vets wave AMERICAN FLAGS. Students hold a candlelight vigil. The YouTube contingent records history.

Silence washes over the crowd as Delta 1784 appears. Flying slow and low, she passes directly overhead. Engine coughing.

DELTA PILOT (V.O.)

Level. LEVEL. LEVEL, JOHN.

INT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 - COCKPIT

John corrects. A ball of nerves. Tries not to shake.

The last twist in I-70 directly before them. Rising to 10,000 feet. The next mile is STRAIGHT.

JOHN

This is it.

CO-PILOT

Watch the wings. Don't
catch them on anything.

DELTA PILOT (on radio)

Throttle back, John. Nose
up. Right on the--

SCREECH.

JOHN

That wasn't so bad.

CO-PILOT

We're not down yet.

COACH

*(This crash feels horribly tense and claustrophobic because
we never cut out of it. We experience it ONLY from our
characters POV's. Trapped, inside.)*

BANG-SLAM-SCRAPE. Back of the plane grabs the ground.
Collective SCREAMS. See the fuselage buckle.

Out of the corner of Diego's eye. The port engine hits a
guard rail and EXPLODES IN A RAGING FIREBALL which--

Tears into the cabin. Diego and Ali try to turn away...

COCKPIT

The cockpit's horizon drops as the front plows into pavement.

ALARMS BLARE. "FIRE - FIRE - FIRE"

CO-PILOT

CUT ENGINE ONE!

John does. But we're still sliding. Impossibly fast. No
brakes. No reverse thrust. On WET ICY PAVEMENT.

Look out the front windows in complete shock. OUR "ONE MILE"
ENDING. Very soon:

A curve. A ROCK WALL. All we can do is hold the fuck on.

COACH

Grandfather opens his eyes. The right wing swings out over
a deadly cliff that plunges down thousands of feet. He holds
his infant Grandson tighter and tighter.

COCKPIT

Here it is. END OF THE ROAD. John and Eve's hands reach
out. Fingers almost touching, WE'RE GONNA HIT--

EXT. DELTA FLIGHT 1784 / I-70 -- LATER / SETTING SUN

Off the perfect orange sky and stunning mountains find the scorched and scarred shell of what used to be a Boeing 737:

Engines torched. A wing ripped off. *And where the cockpit should be?* Smashed-in rubble crunched against a rock wall.

Front and rear doors are open. People slide down the yellow emergency exit slides. Lisa leads them. Rupert helps her.

INSIDE

Diego and Ali are dead. Hit by the explosion. Rabbi Judy cries as she covers them. She stands. Looks up the aisle -- sees the crumpled remains of the cockpit.

OUTSIDE - ON THE HIGHWAY ASPHALT

Janitor kisses his wife and children. Then kisses the ground.

Melanie helps Mrs. Drayton walk to the edge of the guard rail. They look down on a mountain pass. She opens her gift, reveals a small baggie of GRAY DUST. Under her breath:

MRS. DRAYTON

Goodbye.

She dumps it into the air, her sins floating away. Melanie then throws away the envelope she's been carrying all day.

Two hundred yards UP and DOWN the highway: National Guard and State Police set up QUARANTINE BARRICADES. There's a one-way conveyer belt sending in supplies.

Eve's here too. Off alone. Crying into John's iPhone.

And finally, *thank God*, John, arm in a sling, emerges from the plane. Like Moses coming down from the mountain, everyone stops and turns towards him. Silently awaiting...

JOHN

The Center for Disease Control is on its way to our Quarantine zone; I understand Denver is also under lock down. We're going to build a vaccine.

CLAPS and CHEERS erupt. But his words stop them. Echoing, like a father chiding his children:

JOHN

NOT FOR ME. Remember the real heroes, the ones who didn't make it. The ones who gave their lives so we could have ours. We owe it to them.

Sobering thoughts. John steps down from the plane. He sits with Eve by a guardrail. Has his bag. Has his wedding ring. She grabs it, and slips it onto his finger. They kiss, *silhouettes in the crimson sky.*

VIDUR (O.S.)

John! Eve!

They turn. Vidur's here, in a HAZMAT suit. All three embrace. Off Eve's disquiet:

VIDUR

We're going to get you out of here
as soon as we can.

A U.S. Government Helicopter approaches on the horizon.

INT. GOVERNMENT HELICOPTER - LANDING -- CONTINUOUS

A MAN, face shielded by the reflection in his HAZMAT suit. He checks off notes as he yells into a cell phone:

THE MAN

...An investigation as already begun,
but the Department of Homeland
Security does not believe there to
be any terrorist involvement in...

The words continue, but the VOICE speaking them changes into:

EXT/INT. THE SCOPE (MONTAGE) -- DAY/NIGHT

-In **HOMES, CHURCHES, MALLS,** and **BARBERSHOPS,** an entire country swallows their only source of truth. CNN:

NEWS ANCHOR

...*Terrorist involvement* in today's
events, which mark the single greatest
tragedy in U.S. history with an
estimated death toll of over 10,000.

-Candlelight vigils at the **VARIOUS CRASH SITES** around the country. VOLUNTEERS distribute hot coffee to RESCUERS.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

The CDC announced that genetic
sequencing of viral RNA from samples
taken in Los Angeles indicate the
presence of a previously unknown
strain of the Infectious Salmon Anemia
Virus, or ISAV.

-**I-70.** Government AGENTS make Passengers sign NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS. We catch the word CLASSIFIED on those agreements.

John, Eve and Vidur watch: News Anchor on his iPhone. The Agents and Passengers talking. Suspicion on John's face.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

Thought only to affect Atlantic Salmon farms, this is the second virus in a decade, after the Avian Flu, to make a jump to humans. In a speech earlier today, the President increased funding for the study and research of viral pathogens.

THE PRESIDENT (V.O.)

Though we have yet to even begin the mourning process, the healing process. Out of today's tragedy, we find ourselves united. We find that there are still heroes among us.

-Doyle's G-5 Crash Site. Tall Suit IGNITES the wreckage. Poof. Burning the remains. The evidence. The witness.

Walking away. To his snow mobile. His phone rings.

TALL SUIT

We're all set. Are you at the site?

EXT. I-70 / DELTA 1784

THE MAN

Yes. I've just arrived.

Follow the faceless helicopter MAN. He quietly passes--

A PARAMEDIC (in a HAZMAT suit) approaches John, Eve and Vidur.

PARAMEDIC

Ma'am. We need to check you.

JOHN

(off her hesitation)

It's okay. I'll be right there.

Eve leaves. The two men stand silent for a moment. The beautiful landscape juxtaposed against the destroyed plane.

JOHN

I need you to hide something.

John walks back to the road's edge where he and Eve had been sitting. He picks up his bag. Thrusts his hand inside.

JOHN

It's a video tape of...

Something's wrong. John dumps the bag's loose contents.

VIDUR

What is it?

JOHN

Norman's tape. It was in-- I put it
in this bag just a few-- Someone's
been here. Someone took it.

Spinning wildly. John searches, but only sees a field of
passengers and people in MATCHING HAZMAT GEAR.

By the quarantine's exit, we pick up helicopter Man. But we
already know him. It's fucking SHORT SUIT. On his cell:

SHORT SUIT

I have it. I'm leaving now.

Back on John and Vidur. Fear and paranoia.

JOHN

How can they already be here?
(beat, truth settling)
This isn't going to stop. Ever. No
one's going to know what really
happened today. Vidur, we make sure
this never happens again. I'm coming
back to work.

FADE OUT:

A dandelion. Perfect. Yellow. It is picked...

EXT. JOHN & EVE'S HOUSE -- DAY

The world alive on a glorious Spring day. Eve has the
dandelion. Throws it in a pile with others. She's weeding.

JOHN (O.S.)

Eve. I need your help.

INSIDE - THE SPARE BEDROOM

The white sheet on the antique nightstand. John and Eve sit
behind. Rip it away: "MARION" written in the dust.

EVE

You don't have to do this.

He kisses her. Lightly. Loving. Turns back to the dust.

And blows it away.

BLACK:

TITLE CARD: *"To this day, both the CDC and Department of
Homeland security deny the existence of Lab 121 or any
governmental link to the events of December 24, 2008."*

THE END