

Tomorrow's Flight



"More Mysteries Than Stars"
(A limited TV-series pilot episode)

Written by
M.E. Ellington
and
Steven Stiefel

M.E. Ellington
Martyn@martynellington.com
+44 07942495300

Steven Stiefel
Steven.d.stiefel@gmail.com
(818)800-0358

COLD OPEN

INT. COMMERCIAL AIRPLANE - ECONOMY AISLE SEATS - NIGHT

The plane, shrouded in darkness, SHUDDERS as though it's encountering light turbulence.

SARAH—slim, mid-30s—sleeps awkwardly in her aisle seat. She holds a spiral notebook in one hand. She reposition, not fully awakening.

The notebook falls onto her lap before spilling onto the floor, revealing pages full of tidy handwritten entries.

The overhead bins rattle. Some are open. A dropped oxygen mask jiggles.

How can this be?

INT. OUTSIDE COCKPIT

LINDSEY—early-40s, Asian-American flight attendant—rushes down the aisle from the front galley. She looks unkempt with her uniform scruffy, and she wears no make-up.

The cluttered plane, with only about 12 passengers, SHUDDERS. SOUNDS of fear RISE from the group.

LINDSEY

We must be quiet until it's clear!

Sarah comes fully awake as Lindsey rushes past her seat. She turns to the man across the aisle.

WILLIAM—a man about her age, tall and likely athletic back in the day—looks terrified.

SARAH

William, what is it?

WILLIAM

I think it's Lord Almighty.

SARAH

Why won't he leave us alone?

WILLIAM

He's hard wired to hunt.

William raises his window blind.

WILLIAM'S POV:

A large full moon illuminates their surroundings.

The plane isn't in the air! The aircraft lies in a grassed area. In the distance, the moon reveals a mountain range.

Another SHUDDER, even more violent. GASPS from the other survivors.

A LARGE INDISTINGUISHABLE MASS OF GOLDEN FEATHERS passes by the window.

A teenage boy (**DALTON**) cowers, and a black man (**MARCUS**) pulls out his gun.

Not quite in view, the mass of feathers unleashes an unearthly guttural GROWL. The beast is not fully in view.

William moves across the aisle, holding Sarah close.

SARAH

We're going to die here, aren't we?

WILLIAM

(quietly)

Yes. But probably not now.

The plane shakes with each step as Lord Almighty approaches, a musical DRUMBEAT of terror...

END COLD OPEN

OPENING CREDITS**INT. ORB — DAY**

Light comes up until the inside of an orb with an arch similar to that of the plane's interior comes into view. Dimensions are unclear.

Credits crawl as QUIRKY MUSIC plays.

The camera STRIKES the wall of the orb, cracking it. A piece falls away, revealing blue sky.

Another strike causes a piece of the orb to crumble, hinting at an unfamiliar world, verdant and green, full of plants humans have never seen.

EXT. EGG

A PATHETIC CREATURE emerges from its egg. The being is the size of a large chicken, and it is covered in patches of down. Yet, it also looks like a lizard with its large jaw.

The young creature opens its maw and makes a NOISE, something between a SQUAWK and a ROAR that suits the MUSIC.

From the small creature's POV, the world is strange with vast grasslands. Thin forests of unusual trees are edged by hills and cliffs.

This world seems young and new, different... It's similar to what the COLD OPEN partially revealed.

The newborn chicken-ish thing trembles.

A shadow covers it as an extremely large nostril of another CREATURE, not fully visible, dips into frame.

The new life-form, just emerged from its egg, reaches with its scrawny arms toward the other being's enormous muzzle.

[NOTE: OPENING CREDIT sequence will change, a bit, with each episode. They'll be nature-oriented, addressing the theme of the episode.]

END OPENING CREDITS

EXT. CENTRAL NEVADA DESERT — DAY

IMPOSE ON SCREEN: CENTRAL NEVADA, JULY 16

The desert landscape contrasts with the previous world. Dusty sand and dried-out plants fight to survive in the foreground as barren mountains dot the horizon.

A HAZE OF HEAT rises from the ground.

A DIG SITE comes into view. YOUNG PALEONTOLOGISTS excavate a growing hole.

In the distance, a large COMMUNAL TENT shimmers in the heat as dust blows through it.

EXT. DIG SITE A

ANDREA comes into frame, lying on the ground. She's Hispanic, late 20s, wears baggy clothes and a plaid shirt that look so uncomfortable that they must be a defense mechanism.

Andrea works to uncover a very large fossilized bone. She reaches a joint that leads to another bone.

ANDREA

Jesus, this effing thing was huge.

CLAIRE is an early-20s peculiar beauty with a tattoo across her clavicles that reads "My future is in the past."

BLAKE, her affable boyfriend, is a couple years older and a bit pudgy.

Blake and Claire overhear Andrea.

CLAIRE

It's gonna take forever to dig this out.

BLAKE

I'm gonna need a bigger trowel...

Claire smirks.

Andrea stands, wiping sweat from her brow.

ANDREA

I need a break. Back in five.

Blake and Claire acknowledge as she walks away.

EXT. NEAR DIG SITE A

In a patch of shade, Andrea drinks from her canteen. Then she notices something in the recently disturbed earth.

It's a PARTIAL HUMAN SKULL! Andrea can see the forehead and a nostril.

Andrea crosses to the unusual formation. She bends and uses her brush to sweep away loose dirt.

The fossilized facial bones of a modern woman come into view.

Andrea takes a deep breath, stumbling in the heat. She fumbles for her walkie-talkie.

ANDREA

Dr. Lavey, are you there?

DR. LAVEY (O.S.)

What is it, Andrea?

ANDREA

Can you come to the dig site?

DR. LAVEY (O.S.)

What do you need?

ANDREA

I want you to see what I've found.

Dr. Lavey sounds hesitant, considering her responsibilities.

DR. LAVEY (O.S.)

I'll be there in a minute.

Andrea slips the device into her pocket, squatting next to the find. She puts a finger on the fossilized woman's face, caressing it.

ANDREA

Hey lady, how are you possible?

EXT. DIG SITE B

Andrea continues to sweep away Cretaceous dirt. She turns when she hears Dr. Lavey approaching.

DR. LAVEY is a petite Caucasian academic in her 60s who seems a bit self-effacing. But she knows how to use that affect to advantage. She approaches Andrea.

DR. LAVEY
What is it?

ANDREA
Take a look.

Dr. Lavey comes closer, studies the woman's remains. GASPS.

DR. LAVEY
This... I don't know what to make of it.

ANDREA
How can she be here?

DR. LAVEY
I have no idea.

As the two women look at the fossilized woman's skull, Dr. Iverson (**CRAIG**) trails behind. He's early 30s, handsome, arrogant, dramatic, and shifty.

Andrea notices Craig.

ANDREA
Craig has followed you.

Dr. Lavey takes a beat before turning toward Craig.

DR. LAVEY
Dr. Iverson. What do you make of this?

Craig approaches and looks at the fossilized woman that Andrea has partially excavated.

Shocked, he takes a moment to consider his response.

CRAIG
It appears to be the fossilized skull of a modern human in Cretaceous strata. Which is impossible.

ANDREA
And yet, here she is.

CRAIG
I can't explain it without context.

ANDREA

The context is that the oldest known *Homo Sapien* fossil is about 315,000 years old. But this one is entombed in stratum that's millions of years old.

CRAIG

I know that.

ANDREA

She's a contemporary woman, Craig. That's strange. And she appears to have been Caucasian.

CRAIG

A skull can fossilize in as little as ten-thousand years.

ANDREA

Yes, but Europeans first arrived here less than a thousand years ago.

CRAIG

I think you're leaping to conclusions.

Andrea turns to her boss. Before she can speak, Dr. Lavey grips Andrea's arm to stop her from responding.

DR. LAVEY

You're both partially correct. This appears to be a modern woman buried in ancient earth.

ANDREA

How did she come to be buried in the past?

CRAIG

Facts before conclusions... always.

ANDREA

I only stated facts, and I didn't draw any conclusions other than to say it was strange.

CRAIG

You're ABD, right? I mean, your written work has yet to be approved before you get your Ph.D.?

Craig types into his phone.

DR. LAVEY
I'm Andrea's committee chair...

CRAIG
Yes, I read that in my briefing.

Dr. Lavey stands, drawing herself to full height, such that it is.

DR. LAVEY
You received a "briefing," Dr. Iverson?

CRAIG
(fumbling a bit)
I was given a rundown on all the personnel.

DR. LAVEY
Odd that they didn't provide that to us, as well.

Craig backs down, walking away. Andrea stands as he does.

ANDREA
I really don't like that... dude.

DR. LAVEY
Let's make him our friend rather than an enemy.

Andrea considers this before turning her attention back to the remains still mostly buried in the ground.

ANDREA
What do we do with her?

Dr. Lavey takes a beat.

DR. LAVEY
We need to remove her and run carbon dating. I'll ask Blake and Claire to help.

Dr. Lavey and Andrea hear a HUBBUB coming from a few hundred yards away. Dr. Lavey's walkie-talkie CRACKLES to life.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
Dr. Lavey, you better get over here. We just found something... very unusual.

EXT. DIG SITE C

Dr. Lavey and Andrea arrive at a FUSS that will become Dig Site C.

Claire and Blake hunch over something. When they hear Dr. Lavey and Andrea approach, they turn their attention from their work.

CLAIRE

Check out this crazy shit!

A piece of metal has been exposed by the recent rain.

DR. LAVEY

What is it?

BLAKE

My best guess is that it's an embedded airplane tail.

EXT. NTSB PARKING LOT - DAY

IMPOSE ON SCREEN: National Transportation Safety Board - Washington, DC - July 18

BRUCE, a large surly Caucasian man in his early 60s with an unkempt beard, parks his battered Accord.

A sign on the wall reads: **RESERVED PARKING - BRUCE ACKLAND - SENIOR AIRCRASH INVESTIGATOR**

Bruce EXITS the vehicle, moving uncomfortably. He looks up at the large faceless building as he tries to negotiate his briefcase, a ream of loose papers, and his car keys.

He drops his coffee mug. It shatters against the asphalt, splashing coffee onto his rumpled khaki pants.

BRUCE

Fuck!

INT. BRUCE'S OFFICE

Bruce sits at the desk in his drab, cluttered office with decades-old blinds covering the window. He takes a swig of office coffee from a paper cup and looks at it with distaste.

SAMIR GLAVER, second-generation Indian-American and about 30, ENTERS Bruce's office.

Samir holds a folder, ready with anticipation.

SAMIR

Hey Bruce, you made it back!

Bruce pushes a finger under his glasses. He SIGHS.

BRUCE

One day I won't. Then it'll be up
to you to figure out how I died.

Samir sits in a chair opposite. Bruce ignores him, tapping
furiously at the keys on his ancient yellowing PC.

SAMIR

I'm surprised they let you use that
old thing.

BRUCE

This 'old thing' works fine. It
just needs time to get up to speed.

Samir shifts in his seat. Despite Bruce's tone, Bruce and
Samir are on good terms.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Do you need something?

SAMIR

I had a really interesting call
yesterday. You're not going to
believe this one.

BRUCE

Surprise me.

SAMIR

I can do that.

BRUCE

There isn't a disaster I haven't
seen before.

SAMIR

I wanted you to be the first to
hear.

BRUCE

I hope you didn't knock up your
girlfriend.

SAMIR

She broke up with me a couple
months ago. I told you that.

BRUCE

Doesn't mean she isn't pregnant.

SAMIR

A team of paleontologists working in central Nevada uncovered what seems to be part of a commercial airliner.

BRUCE

Okay, that's a good one. Did Westwood put you up to this?

SAMIR

No, they uncovered it while they were excavating a *T. rex* fossil exposed during a recent flood.

Bruce takes off his glasses, studying Samir.

BRUCE

Did they say which *part* of the plane?

SAMIR

They think it's the tail. They've dug down about four feet.

BRUCE

Do they know which airline?

SAMIR

They don't. The metal is bare.

BRUCE

Have we had any reported missing flights?

SAMIR

No, but they sent photos.

Samir places printed photos from his folder onto Bruce's desk. Bruce gives them a cursory glance.

BRUCE

These are fake. Someone is yanking your chain.

SAMIR

I did my homework. I wouldn't bring it to you otherwise.

Bruce studies the photos in more detail.

BRUCE

Assuming you're right, what does it mean that a piece of metal is close to these dinosaur bones?

SAMIR

Fossils, boss, not bones.

Bruce glares at Samir, sucks in air.

SAMIR (CONT'D)

The paleontologist I spoke to is convinced that it's in the same stratum of earth. I told her we'd come check it out.

BRUCE

Why both of us?

SAMIR

Because I don't have the experience to identify a piece of aircraft without identifying markings.

BRUCE

So, if you're of no value, why do you need to go?

SAMIR

Because you'll need me to run interference. You can be a bit... off-putting.

Bruce turns to the window. It's begun to rain.

BRUCE

Central Nevada? It's miserable there this time of year.

SAMIR

You'll hardly notice a difference.

BRUCE

Why?

SAMIR

You're miserable everywhere you go.

Bruce stifles a LAUGH. Takes a distasteful swig of coffee.

BRUCE

Okay, I'll get clearance from Westwood. You make the travel arrangements.

(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)
 (beat)
 Now, get out of my office.

Bruce waits for Samir to leave.

Then he picks up one of the photos Samir left behind. It shows the tip of an airplane tail, stripped to bare metal. The rest is still buried.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
 What the hell...?

EXT. PORTLAND - NIGHT

IMPOSE ON SCREEN: Portland, Oregon, AUGUST 19

It's a cloudless night. A full moon rises over the city.

INT. UPSCALE APARTMENT - OPEN KITCHEN

The apartment is neat, contemporary, and masculine. A large flatscreen TV plays *The Valley of Gwangi*. A Roomba sweeps.

William—from the Cold Open—checks his smart watch.

WILLIAM
 C'mon, where are you?

William empties the last of his coffee into a travel mug. He tops it off with a pour of vodka from a half-empty bottle.

William's watch BEEPS. He looks out the kitchen window and swigs from the bottle before reaching for his briefcase.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
 Alexa, I'm leaving. Do you know when I'll be back home?

ALEXA
 Your flight is scheduled to return tomorrow at 9 p.m. But there is a higher than likely chance you will not return, at all.

WILLIAM
 Alexa, can you explain how you came to your conclusion?

ALEXA
 No. I am only able to provide my conclusions.

WILLIAM

Alexa, why are you like my ex-wife?

ALEXA

Melissa is a skilled attorney known for her insights into human behavior. I am an artificial intelligence, and these algorithms are somewhat similar.

WILLIAM

Alexa, I want a divorce.

ANDREA

You are already divorced.

WILLIAM

From you, Alexa.

He shuts the door before Alexa formulates her AI response.

EXT. PORTLAND AIRPORT

A ride-share Prius pulls up at the American Cruise Airlines terminal. The full moon is large in the background.

INT. PRIUS - PORTLAND AIRPORT

William grabs his bag.

WILLIAM

Thanks, I'll tip you after I get through TSA.

PRIUS DRIVER

Thank you, much appreciated.

EXT. AIRPORT

William heads toward the airport entrance.

A dusty silver Toyota Land Cruiser with a yellow paint scratch and dent along its rear door hits the Prius.

William hears the CRASH, and he turns. TWO MEN and TWO WOMEN rush from the Land Cruiser. The older woman struggles to get out through the bashed door.

PRIUS DRIVER

Hey, get back here!

The four people charge, heading to the airport. William moves aside to avoid being knocked over by them.

WILLIAM

Watch it!

William flips them off as they sprint past him.

INT. AIRPORT COFFEE SHOP - NEAR TSA

DALTON—17 years old, nicely dressed, and athletic-but-thin for his age—sits with his MOM (Parker Posey-esque) and DAD (Jason Sudeikis-esque). Upper middle-class, helicopters.

MOM

Are you sure you don't want us to come with you, Dalton? We were invited.

DALTON

That's just for orientation. It's a waste of your time and money.

DAD

Hey champ, we just want to make sure you're okay.

MOM

Some people don't have your best interest at heart, dear.

Dalton flips through the archery camp brochure.

DALTON

Yeah, I know. You keep telling me.

In the distance, A HALF-DOZEN AIRPORT SECURITY GUARDS wrestle the four PEOPLE from the LAND CRUISER to the ground.

Indistinguishable SHOUTING echoes through the airport.

Dalton and his parents watch as the four people, still protesting, are handcuffed facedown by airport security.

MOM

You see what can happen...

Dad indicates the four people on the verge of arrest.

DALTON

I don't know what you could've done to prevent that.

Mom gets teary-eyed. Dad grabs her hand.

Dalton, now unsettled, looks to his parents.

DALTON (CONT'D)
I'll text you when I get there.

DAD
Okay, great. We appreciate that.

MOM
And please don't do any of those
Internet tik-taks while you're
there. They could negatively impact
your future.

INT. AMERICAN CRUISE AIRLINES (ACA) – TSA CHECKPOINT

Sarah, from the Cold Open, watches as security guards lead the four strangers away, the face of the PERPETRATORS still not visible.

The OLDER MALE argues with the guards.

OLDER MALE (BRUCE)
I'm with the NTSB! Check my I.D.,
fucknut. It's in my left pocket.

TSA AGENT
(To Sarah)
Did you pack this bag yourself?

Sarah, startled, turns back to the TSA agent checkpoint.

SARAH
Yes, of course.

TSA AGENT
Could anyone have tampered with it?

SARAH
I never let it out of my sight, but
you never know...

The TSA agent looks sharply at her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
No. No one tampered with it.

The TSA agent waves her through.

INT. AIRPORT STORE

Sarah holds a bottle of water, and she notices a small rack of diaries. One with a distinctive forest pattern on the cover catches her eye. She reaches for it.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL

As Sarah EXITS the store, William walks past, nearly bumping into her.

Dalton, a couple steps behind William, stops to allow Sarah to exit. Sarah acknowledges Dalton, but waves him on, stepping out behind him.

INT. GATE 22

Sarah stands in line at the gate. Both William and Dalton queue ahead of her.

The wall monitor registers: **FLIGHT 839 TO ATLANTA. DEPARTS AT 12:30 A.M. ON TIME**

It's ominously quiet in the airport. The short line moves forward.

Out the window, the ACA airplane sits on the tarmac at the gate, the NIGHT SKY clear.

Dalton scans the boarding code on his phone. THE GATE AGENT ushers him through to the ramp to the plane.

Sarah stares at the parked airplane, unaware that she's next.

MAN (JON)

You're up lady! I ain't got all night!

Sarah jumps, turning to see **JON** behind her. He's a muscular fire hydrant of a man with a Jersey accent and gruff demeanor, mid 30s.

SARAH

I'm sorry.

INT. AIRPLANE ENTRANCE

Sarah ENTERS the airplane, noticing the name on the badge as Lindsey checks Sarah's boarding pass.

The flight attendant has a quiet sense of authority. Her uniform is pristine, a contrast with the Cold Open.

LINDSEY
You're in the exit row on the left.

SARAH
Thank you.

INT. COCKPIT

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL—British, tall, early 50s, Ex-RAF—sits in the pilot seat checking the instruments.

The flightdeck door opens. The co-pilot, **STEPHEN**—mid 30s, handsome and thin—ENTERS. He's flustered.

STEPHEN
Sorry I'm late.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL
Just get ready for the flight.

STEPHEN
Yes, Captain.

Lindsey enters the cockpit.

LINDSEY
Good evening, gentlemen. Do you want anything?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL
I'll take a coffee when we're up.

Stephen looks from Campbell to Lindsey.

STEPHEN
Nothing for me.

INT. EXIT ROW

William sits in the window seat of Sarah's row. He types furiously into his computer, oblivious to Sarah as she struggles to heft her carry-on into the overhead bin.

William glances up just as she stores it.

WILLIAM
Sorry. I was in my own world. I should have helped you.

Sarah acknowledges his half-assed apology.

SARAH

All these empty seats and they bunch us up.

WILLIAM

Well, this is an exit row. We're the ones the airline has deemed capable enough in the event of impending tragedy.

SARAH

I wouldn't know what to do.

WILLIAM

Take it as a compliment. None of us know what to do when a plane goes south.

SARAH

Should I move?

WILLIAM

No. These are the best coach seats on this wretched plane, and we want to keep them.

(beat)

After the flight crew, we're next in charge.

SARAH

We are?

Sarah, unsure what to make of William, settles into her seat. She opens her diary, beginning her first entry.

INT. AIRPLANE ENTRANCE

MARCUS COLEMAN (well-built, Black, late-40s) rushes to ENTER before junior flight attendant **GABRIELA** (mid-20s, Hispanic, unassuming) closes the door. Marcus is a talker.

MARCUS

Luggage emergency! Had to check my golf clubs. They wouldn't let me bring 'em on the plane.

GABRIELA

Welcome aboard!

Marcus shows Gabriela his air marshal shield.

MARCUS

You can call me '*Marcus.*' You'll get to know me. I'm a *frequent flyer.* I'd like to talk to the pilot before we take off.

GABRIELA

Let me check with Captain Campbell.

INT. COCKPIT

Marcus follows Gabriela, even though she hasn't invited him.

GABRIELA

Captain, one of our air marshals wants to see you.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

Thanks, Gabriela. I know Marcus.

Captain Campbell turns to Gabriela as Marcus ENTERS.

MARCUS

I'm not here officially. I'm catching a lift. I wanted to see if you can get my clubs unloaded onto the tarmac when we arrive. I'm playing Augusta tomorrow at noon. A present from Gloriana, my wife. The fewer people that touch 'em, the better.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

It's good to have you on board, Marcus. I'll see what I can do.

INT. EXIT ROW

Lindsey approaches William and Sarah. Dalton is in the row ahead of them.

LINDSEY

Are you both comfortable performing the duties of the exit row?

WILLIAM

Yes, so long as we can buy a drink or two.

SARAH

I guess so...

LINDSEY

We have a few minutes before take off. What would you like?

WILLIAM

Two vodkas and a cup of ice, and whatever my seat companion wants. Her name is...

An awkward pause.

SARAH

Oh, Sarah. Nothing for me, thanks.

WILLIAM

Sarah is a nervous flyer. And I'm William. Bring me three vodkas and a white wine. I'll see if Sarah wants a sip before we go.

William hands Lindsey his credit card.

LINDSEY

I'll be back in a minute.

Marcus passes them, and Sarah notices that under his jacket he has a UNSECURED GUN within its holster.

Sarah stifles a GASP, looking away.

INT. DALTON'S ROW

Gabriela checks on Dalton.

GABRIELA

First time flying alone?

DALTON

Yeah. I'm kinda nervous.

GABRIELA

Don't worry, I'll look after you. Where are you going?

DALTON

Archery camp at the university.

GABRIELA

I have a brother about your age. You remind me of him.

Dalton smiles, a bit embarrassed.

DALTON

Do you know if the Wifi works during the flight?

GABRIELA

It does, but you have to pay. The details are in the pamphlet.

DALTON

Thank you.

INT. EXIT ROW

Sarah reaches for her new diary, hating that she finds William attractive. She sneaks another look at him.

Lindsey approaches from the back galley of the aircraft with the drinks William ordered.

WILLIAM

Thank you, Lindsey. I always get good service on empty flights.

LINDSEY

You're welcome, but you'll need to raise your tray table in a moment.

William opens the small white wine bottle and pours it into the plastic cup. Sarah takes it a bit reluctantly.

Then he cracks one of his vodka bottles as Lindsey heads to the back of the airplane.

WILLIAM

Now, why are you on this flight, Sarah?

SARAH

Well, William, I'm going to spend some time with my mother... and I'm going to be a bridesmaid.

(beat)

Why are you flying to Atlanta?

WILLIAM

I have a business meeting in the morning. I'm going to tell my boss that he can stick my job up his large saggy ass. And that he's paying for the privilege.

(beat)

Cheers to the bride!

SARAH
I don't usually drink.

WILLIAM
It will help you relax, and that
will be good for both of us.

SARAH
Do you always do that?

WILLIAM
Do what?

SARAH
Undercut an act of generosity with
an explanation of how it will
benefit you?

WILLIAM
That's a very good question.

SARAH
But that's not an answer.

WILLIAM
You're right. I have the sense that
nothing about this trip is going to
be ordinary. I thought it would be
nice to have a companion.

Sarah looks at William, still unsure. She sips her wine.

The airplane JERKS as it begins to move backward. Sarah
struggles to avoid spilling her wine.

EXT. AMERICAN CRUISE AIRLINE GATE

The airplane pushes farther away from the gate, the full moon
prominent. In the distance, lightning **FLASHES** through the
dark sky, despite the otherwise clear night.

INT. DIG SITE B - DAY

IMPOSE ON SCREEN: CENTRAL NEVADA, JULY 20

Andrea, Claire, and Blake work to excavate the fossilized
woman. The sun beats down. A blue EZ-up tent provides shade,
a modicum of relief from the intense heat.

Empty water bottles lay around them.

As Claire and Blake work on the woman's skull, Andrea eases her trowel into the earth, and it hits a hidden object. She stops digging.

ANDREA

I think I've found something else.

The three begin excavating the new find.

INT. LAND CRUISER

Samir drives and Bruce rides shotgun.

BRUCE

I can't believe you wasted so much money on a big dick SUV.

SAMIR

We're not paying, and we need something capable where we're going.

BRUCE

My car works.

SAMIR

Except for the AC, which you'll want here.

Samir blasts the AC, and Bruce sighs with relief.

SAMIR (CONT'D)

Also... we're about to reach the turn I warned you about.

BRUCE

Oh, more fun.

Samir takes a moment, summoning up some courage.

SAMIR

When we get there, let me run lead with the paleontologists, Bruce.

BRUCE

Why?

SAMIR

You're a great investigator, but you're not... good with people.

BRUCE

Okay. You can wear your big boy pants, but I'm in charge.

SAMIR

You're still the boss, boss.

EXT. DESOLATE DESERT ROAD

The Land Cruiser begins to navigate the barely maintained road, bumping and grinding. Desert dirt rises behind.

BRUCE (O.S.)

We've left the modern world.

INT. DIG SITE B

Andrea, Claire, and Blake have uncovered much of another fossilized skull.

ANDREA

She had a male friend.

CLAIRE

How can you tell this one is male?

ANDREA

By the thickness of the brow ridge, but I'm guessing, a bit.

BLAKE

What do you think happened?

Andrea sits back.

ANDREA

... maybe other people from the modern era interred them together?

CLAIRE

That's crazy! It's impossible.

As Claire bends over the new fossilized skull, Andrea notices a "Berkeley" tattoo on the back of her neck.

ANDREA

Of course, but that's the best I can do based on what we're seeing.

BLAKE

Spooky...

CLAIRE

No shit!

ANDREA

We should keep going. We need to dig out these remains and see if there's anything or anyone else.

The three return to digging.

EXT. EDGE OF CAMP

The Land Cruiser pulls into the camp's parking lot.

INT. LAND CRUISER

Bruce watches haze RISE from desert heat. He's not happy.

Samir parks the Land Cruiser near the communal tent close to the other vehicles, which include a beat-up Toyota pick-up and a new Ford Explorer.

BRUCE

It's going to be an oven, isn't it?

SAMIR

It's a dry heat.

Samir gives Bruce a look before he turns off the engine and opens his door.

BRUCE

Hot is hot.

Desert heat rushes in, attacking Bruce. He pulls on his Washington Wizards baseball cap.

Bruce EXITS the vehicle and SLAMS the door.

EXT. DESERT PARKING LOT

At the back of the vehicle, Samir unloads their bags. He closes the hatch.

BRUCE

You gonna lock the car?

SAMIR

Who'd steal it?

Bruce scowls. Samir CLICKS the lock. Bruce grabs his bags.

SAMIR (CONT'D)
 You gotta admit, boss, this one's
 different.

BRUCE
 In the way purgatory is different
 from hell. Just a waiting room for
 something worse to come.

SAMIR
 In your religion, doesn't purgatory
 lead to heaven?

BRUCE
 I don't remember. I gave that up
 after my altar-boy days.

Dr. Lavey approaches the Land Cruiser.

DR. LAVEY
 Hello, I'm Dr. Susan Lavey, and I'm
 in charge of this excavation.

BRUCE
 Hello, Susan. I'm Bruce Ackland,
 and my young companion tells me
 you've unearthed something unusual.

Bruce flashes his NTSB badge at Dr. Lavey.

DR. LAVEY
 I think we can assume your
 authority.

BRUCE
 You never know.

Dr. Lavey extends her hand and Samir shakes it.

SAMIR
 I'm Samir Glaver, assistant
 aircrash investigator. It's nice to
 meet you, Dr. Lavey.

Dr. Lavey looks between them, unsure of Bruce.

BRUCE
 It's been a long trip. I'm not good
 with heat.

SAMIR
 Or people.

Dr. Lavey forces a smile.

BRUCE

I'm also skeptical about this find.
 (awkward pause)
 I think we're wasting your time.

DR. LAVEY

It's incomprehensible from our
 perspective, as well.

BRUCE

Especially since we currently have
 no reported missing aircraft.

SAMIR

Planes rarely go missing. That's
 why when they do it makes the news.

DR. LAVEY

Regardless, we are not accustomed
 to finding parts of airplanes near
 prehistoric finds, whether or not
 the plane was reported missing.

Bruce fans his face with his cap. Dr. Lavey notices.

DR. LAVEY (CONT'D)

During the Cretaceous period, this
 area was lush with flora. It was
 humid, oxygen-rich, and teeming
 with life, most of it now extinct.

BRUCE

Well, they'd be dead either way.

Andrea approaches the group. She wipes away sweat, making no
 effort to seem cordial.

DR. LAVEY

This is Andrea Alejandro, my second
 in command. You'll be interfacing
 with her quite a bit.

They ad lib greetings.

BRUCE

So, now that we're here, who wants
 to show me this piece of debris?
 I'd like to confirm it's of no
 interest and go home.

DR. LAVEY

Andrea has far more insight into
 that than I do.

ANDREA

We established dig site C for the metal piece. We've excavated considerably more since we sent photos.

EXT. DIG SITE C

Bruce, Samir, Andrea, and Dr. Lavey arrive at Dig Site C.

As they approach the airplane tail, Craig approaches, running a bit to catch up, despite the heat.

BRUCE

Who's the asshole following us?

DR. LAVEY

That's Dr. Craig Iverson. In academia, he's what we call "checks and balances".

BRUCE

A pain in your ass? Every investigation has one.

Dr. Lavey doesn't react. Instead, she indicates the hole in the ground just before Craig catches up to them.

ANDREA

I'd like to turn your attention to what we've unearthed.

The tail section of an aircraft protrudes about ten feet from the freshly dug hole. Clearly, this shouldn't be where it is.

Bruce tries to hide that he's taken aback by what he can see.

DR. LAVEY

I sent the junior dig team on break so we can have some privacy while you get your first look.

BRUCE

The fewer people the better.

Bruce and Samir hunker next to the tail section.

SAMIR

I told you, boss. This one's different.

BRUCE

This appears to be a hunk of metal from the tail of a plane. But it can't have come from an aircraft that crashed.

SAMIR

Maybe it's a piece of military equipment that was blown to smithereens? And it embedded so deeply that it appears to be from the era you're excavating?

BRUCE

No, this is from a Skyliner Y120. It's very distinct and relatively new. They're built to survive almost anything, and none have crashed. At least none that we're aware of.

DR. LAVEY

So it is part of an airplane tail?

BRUCE

It is...

ANDREA

Can you explain how it came to be here?

CRAIG

Maybe someone took a piece from an airplane crash test and buried it as a hoax?

No one responds.

DR. LAVEY

We can tell that this piece of metal has been in this strata of ground for a very long time.

Bruce notices Craig taking notes.

BRUCE

It's clear from my perspective. There are no missing planes of this type. Even if it was a military secret, they would inform our department about a crash.

ANDREA

I don't think any of you understand what we're dealing with. While you "contemplate" this, I'm going back to work.

Andrea leaves the dig area.

Bruce kneels next to the tail, touching it. He becomes unsteady, and he tumbles to the ground.

Samir rushes to Bruce. He pours tepid water on Bruce's face, and the older man slowly comes around.

BRUCE

You're supposed to put fluids in me, not on me.

Samir hands Bruce the bottle. Bruce takes a large guzzle.

SAMIR

What do you think?

Bruce looks up at the blazing sun, and then back at the tail.

BRUCE

That you've dragged me to hell.

SAMIR

(to Dr. Lavey)
He's fine.

DR. LAVEY

Let's take a break. We'll have dinner and resume in the morning when it's cooler.

Samir helps Bruce, still a little unsteady, to his feet.

DR. LAVEY (CONT'D)

We've put up individual tents for each of you. You can relax before dinner.

SAMIR

Looks like we're staying.

BRUCE

Against my better judgment.

Bruce, Samir, and Dr. Lavey leave Dig Site C.

Craig, who has never fully joined the group, heads in the opposite direction, toward a rise in the distance.

EXT. ABOVE CAMPSITE

An aerial view shows the full scope and location of each dig site (A, B, and C), tracking the characters as they move in opposite directions.

INT. COMMUNAL KITCHEN TENT

The tent is large and open on three sides, and the group has finished dinner. Along the closed side is the kitchen area with serving tables and a bucket of iced beverages.

A couple rows of long tables with chairs run along each side.

Dr. Lavey brings over three cold beverages, handing one each to Bruce and Samir. Finished plates sit in front of them.

The sun begins to lower, and a YOUNG INTERN drops the side of the tent that shields them from the blinding light.

DR. LAVEY

Are you feeling better, Bruce?

BRUCE

That's relative.

DR. LAVEY

It'll cool down soon.

BRUCE

It better.

DR. LAVEY

What can you tell us?

BRUCE

Nothing right now. I want to be alone.

SAMIR

He's the Greta Garbo of crash investigations.

Dr. Lavey stifles a laugh.

BRUCE

I don't know what that means. And that's why I need to get away from other people.

Samir and Dr. Lavey watch Bruce leave.

Andrea approaches from the other side, but she doesn't sit.

ANDREA

I have confirmation that the excavator will arrive tomorrow morning. Because of the human remains they're sending additional personnel.

DR. LAVEY

Thanks, Andrea.

(aside to Samir)

By the way, I haven't mentioned the tail section in my report. Please let Bruce know that.

SAMIR

Why didn't you?

DR. LAVEY

It's not important to our research. And I didn't want to say that to either you or Bruce while Dr. Iverson was present. Just in case.

SAMIR

It's pretty clear Bruce hates him.

ANDREA

Bruce seems to hate everyone.

SAMIR

He's an acquired taste, but I think he likes Dr. Lavey.

DR. LAVEY

I guess I should feel honored.

INT. BRUCE'S TENT - NIGHT

Bruce sweats as he sits on his camp bed, which GROANS under his ample weight. He removes his Wizards cap.

Then Bruce clasps his chest, breathing rapidly. The computer slips off his lap. His eyes go wobbly.

Bruce passes out in his tent. His half-full water bottle falls to floor, spilling its contents.

EXT. CAMPFIRE

Large rocks have been placed around the firepit as makeshift chairs. On one side Craig talks to Blake while Claire slow dances to an '80s power ballad.

On the other side Andrea sits alone, setting up an impressive looking drone.

Samir ENTERS the communal area, holding two unopened cans of beer. He opens one, and takes a sip, trying to decide where to sit. Finally, he approaches Andrea.

SAMIR
Is this seat taken?

ANDREA
Help yourself.

Samir sits on the same large flat rock that Andrea's already seated on. He takes another swig of beer.

SAMIR
Do you want a beer?

ANDREA
I don't drink.

Samir watches her work on the drone, giving her a moment.

SAMIR
What's that for?

ANDREA
It can 'see' below the ground.

Andrea puts the drone to one side. She slides to the ground, leaning back against the rock. Samir copies her.

Long beat as Samir considers what to say.

SAMIR
My sister would really like you.

Andrea looks at him.

ANDREA
Why are you telling me this?

SAMIR
Because I'm nervous and I've had a drink, I guess.

ANDREA
I don't like your older friend very much. But maybe I like you.

Samir nods to the drone.

SAMIR
How does it work?

ANDREA
Ground Penetrating Radar. Tomorrow,
I'll have it pass over some areas
of interest to see what's hiding.

Samir finishes his beer. Music begins to PLAY. Claire dances provocatively to a power ballad. Blake and Craig take notice.

Samir cheers Claire's performance with his second beer.

SAMIR
She's putting on quite a show.

ANDREA
Another night with the local
wildlife.

Samir can't stop watching Claire.

SAMIR
Do you want to dance?

ANDREA
I have a long day tomorrow.

Andrea picks up her drone, heading toward her tent.

Samir continues to watch Claire dance as Blake joins her. Blake hands Claire a bottle of booze, and they trade swigs.

EXT. DIG SITE B - DAY

Just beyond the EZ-up covering, Claire and Blake carefully remove fossilized bones from the female skeleton. They seem unaffected by their previous night's drinking.

Andrea focuses solely on the male skeleton. She brushes away dirt just below the knee joint. Dust swirls behind her, blowing away in the breeze, rising to the sky.

The fossilized bones come into view, inch by inch, eventually revealing the severed portion.

Andrea traces her finger along the bones of the upper legs, feeling the gouges.

Andrea GASPS in horror and with the thrill of discovery.

Blake and Claire turn to look at Andrea. They rise and go see what Andrea has found.

CLAIRE
What happened?

ANDREA
Something with tremendous jaw force
bit off his legs.

BLAKE
How can you tell?

ANDREA
There's no tearing or shearing.

CLAIRE
What could have done that?

Before Andrea answers, the wind blows, creating a swirl of grit against the vast blue desert sky.

EXT. PORTLAND AIRPORT - NIGHT

The large ACA Skyliner Y120 sits ready on the runway.

The large full moon illuminates the aircraft.

INT. COCKPIT

Lindsey enters the cockpit.

LINDSEY
Gentleman, everything is ready in
the cabin.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL
We're good to go. Just waiting for
clearance. How's Gabriela?

LINDSEY
She doing well, and passengers like
her. This should be an easy first
flight for her.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL
Can you take care of Marcus? He
likes scotch.

LINDSEY
Of course.

Lindsey turns to leave.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL
 Hey, Lindsey. Perhaps we can get
 breakfast after we land?

LINDSEY
 That'd be nice.

Lindsey exits the cockpit. Captain Campbell turns his
 attention back to the console.

STEPHEN
 Smooth!

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL
 Just being friendly.

TOWER (O.S.)
 ACA 839 heavy, you have clearance
 to runway Alpha.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL
 Are you ready?

STEPHEN
 Yes, Captain.

Captain Campbell pushes the throttles forward and the
 airplane begins to head to the line of departing flights.

INT. EXIT ROW

Sarah feels the airplane move forward. She grasps her nearly
 full cup of wine tightly. She looks terrified.

SARAH
 Did you see that guy who walked
 past us? I think he had a gun.

WILLIAM
 Which one?

SARAH
 You know, the big one.

WILLIAM
 Which big one?

SARAH
 The one who was...
 (beat)
 Black.

WILLIAM
He was Black?

SARAH
I mean he still is, but he has a
gun.

WILLIAM
So, you're telling me this now? As
the plane is about to take off?

SARAH
I should have mentioned it
earlier... or not at all.

WILLIAM
I'm just giving you a hard time.
He's probably an air marshal.

William reaches out his hand.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
I don't bite.

Sarah waits a beat, but then takes his hand as the airplane
begins to accelerate.

The interior begins to SHAKE and RUMBLE.

With her other hand, Sarah holds on desperately to her cup.

SARAH
What should I do with my wine?

WILLIAM
You should drink it quickly. It
could spill.

SARAH
All of it?

WILLIAM
Just most of it. Our bodies are
designed to move naturally with
unusual forces.

Sarah gulps half of her wine. Then she takes a moment before
taking another swig, finishing it off.

EXT. AIRPORT RUNWAY

The airplane lifts into the darkness. The wheels retract, and
it begins to bank.

INT. EXIT ROW

Sarah still clutches William's hand.

SARAH
Why did you do that?

WILLIAM
Do what?

SARAH
Tease me about the air marshal.

WILLIAM
You seemed upset and worried about
takeoff. I wanted to distract you.
And look, we're up.

William indicates the window, and Sarah looks over and down
toward the ground as the city lights fall away.

SARAH
The earth is moving away from us so
fast!

WILLIAM
My friend tells me the chances of
crashing are one in 13 million.

SARAH
Does your friend work in the
aircrash industry?

William laughs.

WILLIAM
No, but she's very well informed.
And she *thinks* she can predict the
future.

SARAH
How do you know her?

WILLIAM
I bought her online. She came from
China.

SARAH
What!?

WILLIAM
Her name's Alexa. She's very user
friendly.

SARAH

Very funny.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL (O.S.)

Ladies and gentleman, this is your pilot, Captain David Campbell. Welcome to American Cruise Airlines Flight 839. We'll be cruising at 35,000 feet. Were scheduled for an on-time arrival in Atlanta. Sit back and relax. Our flight crew will be with you shortly.

WILLIAM

See, the pilot is British. Everything will be fine.

Sarah relaxes, still holding his hand. She looks down at their hands before looking back to see city lights disappear.

Now all they can see are stars and the full moon.

INT. COCKPIT

Captain Campbell throttles back and engages the autopilot. He unfastens his seatbelt. Stephen does the same.

STEPHEN

We're up. Nothing to do now but babysit.

The pilot looks over to Stephen with a disapproving look.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

Why were you late?

STEPHEN

I had a meeting with the Pilots' Association. They had some questions for me.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

Your only concern should be this flight.

STEPHEN

I have a duty to the association.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

Your first duty is to this flight, these passengers, and their safety. Nothing else matters.

STEPHEN

I understand my responsibilities to
the aircraft *and* the association.

Captain Campbell turns away, facing the control panel.

EXT. SKYLINER Y120

The airplane flies above a cloud bank. It's surrounded by far
distant stars, and the full moon illuminates the fuselage.

The navigation lights FLASH against the sparse clouds below.

INT. EXIT ROW

Sarah leans away from the window and settles into her seat.
On the screen in front of her the map tracks the flight.

SARAH

Flying frightens me. I can barely
breathe.

WILLIAM

Maybe it's because you're squeezing
everything so hard.

William nods to his squashed hand.

SARAH

Oh, sorry!

Sarah releases William's hand, and William shakes it.

SARAH (CONT'D)

So, why are you going to Atlanta in
person, rather than emailing your
resignation?

WILLIAM

After working my ass off for eight
years, they gave my promotion to a
young douchebag. Then they asked me
to train him. I want to quit in
person so I can see their faces.

SARAH

Did you see the commotion in the
airport? It was really scary!

WILLIAM

Their truck hit my UBER just after
I got out.

SARAH
I wonder who they were...

WILLIAM
At least they didn't delay us.

SARAH
The world is full of crazy people.

William raises his cup, finishes his first drink, and opens his laptop. Sarah reaches for her journal.

INT. COCKPIT

Lindsey enters the cockpit with Captain Campbell's coffee. She hands the cup to him.

LINDSEY
As requested, Captain.

STEPHEN
I need to stretch my legs.

Stephen squeezes past Lindsey, EXITING the cockpit.

LINDSEY
He's a piece of work.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL
You have no idea.

LINDSEY
He's gotten several of my friends
fired.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL
Then you know what I'm thinking.

Lindsey takes a BEAT to contemplate this. A light flashes on the instrument panel, followed by a WARNING SOUND.

LINDSEY
What do you want me to do?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL
Attend to the passengers.

As Lindsey EXITS, Captain Campbell studies the instrument panel, concerned.

INT. AISLE

Lindsey and Gabriela pull the drink cart toward William's and Sarah's seats. Sarah is asleep.

LINDSEY
Would you like another drink?

WILLIAM
Are you trying to get me drunk?

LINDSEY
No, sir. I'm asking if you want to get yourself drunk.

WILLIAM
Badly, but I have an early morning meeting. So just a coffee?

LINDSEY
And your companion?

WILLIAM
Well, she could have used something more than white wine earlier, but she's fine now.

Sarah rustles in her seat. Gabriela hands William a cup of coffee.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Thank you.

The plane SHAKES, and the seatbelt signs light up. Some passengers GRUMBLE.

William tightens his seatbelt. He checks Sarah's, which is fastened and visible.

INT. COCKPIT

A light flashes on the instrument panel, followed by a WARNING SOUND.

Stephen enters, fighting for balance. He sits, fastening his belt. The cockpit SHUDDERS.

STEPHEN
What is it?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL
I have no idea. It came out of nowhere.

INT. AISLE – BACK OF PLANE

Lindsey and Gabriela rush with the drink cart to the back galley.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL (O.S.)
Folks, we're going to experience a bit of turbulence for the next several minutes. I'm going to climb to a higher altitude to try to find a smoother ride.

INT. EXIT ROW

Sarah awakens. She lowers her eye mask and looks at William.

SARAH
What's happening?

The effort from the ENGINES grows LOUDER.

WILLIAM
We're climbing. Nothing to worry about.

Sarah closes her eyes and replaces the mask.

William looks out the window, very concerned...

INT. REAR GALLEY

Lindsey and Gabriela strap into their seats.

The plane begins to SHAKE more violently. The engines ROAR.

Gabriela notices the drink cart shifting in its space, and she unfastens her seatbelt.

LINDSEY
Wait!

GABRIELA
I forgot to lock the drink cart.

Another bout of turbulence hits the plane. It's violent enough to unseat the cart. Gabriela stands.

LINDSEY
It's not safe. Get back in your seat!

EXT. NIGHT SKY

The airplane drops thousands of feet in altitude as measured against the moon and clouds. It disappears out of frame.

INT. BACK GALLEY

The immediate plunge of the aircraft lifts Gabriela from the floor, slamming her into the ceiling.

The engines SHRIEK as the plane levels out.

Gabriela drops, landing upon her back on the dislodged cart. Her body twists unnaturally.

She bounces off the cart onto the floor, banging her face so violently that she's knocked unconscious. The cart topples, landing on top of her.

Lindsey releases her seatbelt and grabs the drink cart, lifting it off Gabriela before locking it into place.

As the plane continues to shake, Lindsey kneels beside Gabriela. She grasps the seat fixture with one hand to steady herself. She checks Gabriela with the other.

Blood runs from Gabriela's nose and ears.

LINDSEY
Gabriela... Gabriela?

EXT. SKYLINER Y120

An ENORMOUS WHITE LIGHT, akin to a wormhole, appears on the horizon. The bright whiteness and the plane RUSH toward one another at an impossible speed.

The airplane moves through tendrils until it penetrates a membrane that looks like a cosmic jellyfish.

In a BLINDING FLASH the plane disappears as does the wormhole. The night sky looks calm and still.

EXT. CENTRAL NEVADA DESERT - DAY

Awake before the others, Andrea flies her GPR drone, sweeping the flying object back and forth.

The control pad CHIMES. She pushes a button and the drone lowers—hovering. DUST SWIRLS from the wind the blades cause.

Andrea looks at her iPad, and she GASPS.

A BLARING horn interrupts her.

A large open-bed vehicle RUMBLES into camp with a large yellow excavator and drill attachment on its trailer.

Andrea's walkie-talkie CRACKLES.

DR. LAVEY (O.S.)
Andrea, can you come to the parking
lot? The excavator is here.

ANDREA
On my way.

Andrea lands the drone and pushes her iPad into her backpack. She looks at the ground where the drone landed. It's in the opposite direction of the parking lot.

EXT. PARKING LOT NEAR TENTS

The large truck and trailer stop near the other vehicles.

A CLOUD OF DIRT settles behind the truck.

INT. BRUCE'S TENT

Bruce lies on his bunk. Early morning sun bleeds through the tent's material. He's still dressed in yesterday's clothes.

He reaches for a packet of heart medication and pops two pills. Swallows them dry. The RUMBLING from the truck causes him to reach for his Wizards cap.

He makes his way out of his tent.

EXT. PARKING LOT NEAR TENTS

Samir and Dr. Lavey approach the driver, FRANK BIGELOW – an old-school trucker, about 70, as he descends from the cab.

Bruce heads toward them.

FRANK
Hot mornin' to y'all. I'm
delivering this excavator to who's
in charge.

DR. LAVEY
That would be me. I'm Dr. Susan
Lavey.

Frank looks at the group and then directly at Dr. Lavey.

FRANK
Frank Bigelow. I'm gonna need your
signature on these, ma'am.

Frank hands Dr. Lavey a thick batch of paperwork.

DR. LAVEY
When can you get started with the
excavation?

FRANK
I only deliver equipment. Don't
know much about how it works.

DR. LAVEY
I thought the equipment would come
with the crew we ordered.

FRANK
Well, you ordered a crew, but they
don't arrive till day after
tomorrow, according to my
requisition.

Andrea approaches during this uncomfortable beat.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I can't unload until I get your
signature, ma'am.

Dr. Lavey blushes and then signs the paperwork. She hands it
back to Frank.

Samir turns to Bruce as Frank heads back to his trailer.

SAMIR
Government planning, boss. You know
how it is.

BRUCE
What the fuck do we do with this
scrap metal until the crew arrives?

ANDREA
I've run excavators. I spent
several months at a dig site in
southern Siberia.

BRUCE
The same as this?

ANDREA
This one looks similar, I think.

BRUCE
You think?

DR. LAVEY
Maybe it's a good thing we have the equipment here without the crew, and we have someone who may know how to use it.

BRUCE
How so?

DR. LAVEY
It'll give us a couple days. Once the government arrives neither of us will be in charge of this site.

BRUCE
Whoever digs out the rest of that tail needs to make sure it isn't damaged.

DR. LAVEY
Of course. But first I'm directing Andrea to excavate the site near the human remains. I think that's more likely to yield the evidence we need sooner.

BRUCE
Why there?

DR. LAVEY
Digging near a burial site often reveals surprising results.
(to Andrea)
Explore the terrain near the dead woman and man.

Andrea seems distracted; she knows something more...

ANDREA
Okay, I'll get on that.

EXT. DESERT PARKING LOT

Frank and his truck leave in a CLOUD OF DUST.

Andrea, in the driver's seat of the excavator, starts the engine. It ROARS to life, belching black diesel smoke.

Then, with its metal tracks SCREECHING, it begins to turn.

As it does, the rear hook hits the back door of the Land Cruiser, leaving a long yellow scratch and dent. Without noticing, Andrea steers toward Dig Site B.

From this vantage, it's clear that the Land Cruiser is the one from the crash at the airport.

SAMIR

So much for getting the rental deposit back.

DR. LAVEY

Should I call her back?

BRUCE

Ask Samir. He rented the vehicle.

Samir makes eye contact with Dr. Lavey. Bruce catches him.

SAMIR

It's fine. The government will pay.

Bruce SCOFFS, looking to the hill above the camp.

BRUCE

What the hell is that asshole doing?

EXT. HILL ABOVE CAMP

Craig stands on the rise, 500 yards from the kitchen tent. He watches Andrea and the excavator approach Dig Site B.

The sun has climbed higher. Craig squints against it before turning his attention back to his phone.

INSERT: Craig's phone: UNKNOWN NUMBER. Craig's index finger presses the "text" button.

BACK TO SCENE: Craig watches as Andrea and the excavator park at the first place where she plans to drill. It's the place where she was FLYING THE DRONE the day before.

Craig's text messages type out in real time, appearing like subtitles at the bottom of the screen.

CRAIG (TEXT)
 * Heavy equipment & NTSB here
 * They're excavating before
 government arrives

In the background, Andrea works the excavator, beginning her first plunge.

UNKNOWN NUMBER (TEXT)
 * What does that mean re: airplane
 tail and fossils?

CRAIG (TEXT)
 * Groupthink is they're connected

UNKNOWN NUMBER (TEXT)
 * Is Ms. Alejandro of special
 interest?

CRAIG (TEXT)
 * Maybe. Will advise later
 * Phone battery dying gotta go

INSERT: Craig's phone: **77% CHARGED**

BACK TO SCENE: Craig powers off his phone, stuffing it into his cargo shorts.

In the distance, Andrea begins her work with the excavator.

INT. DR. LAVEY'S TENT – NIGHT

Dr. Lavey lies on her bed holding an old photograph of her husband, JAMES, a handsome man, several years older.

DR. LAVEY
 Dear James, what would you make of
 this? You'd be fascinated.

As Dr. Lavey places the photograph on her trunk, Andrea calls from outside her tent.

ANDREA (O.S.)
 (very quiet)
 Dr. Lavey? Are you awake?

DR. LAVEY
 I am.

ANDREA (O.S.)
 I need to tell you something.

Dr. Lavey unzips the opening to her tent.

DR. LAVEY
Let's go for a walk.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CAMPSITE

Dr. Lavey and Andrea walk slowly around the edge of the camp. The sky is crystal clear, and Dr. Lavey pulls her wrap close.

The deep-black background contrasts with the camp's lights. The stars are brilliant and visible.

DR. LAVEY
Back in the Cretaceous period these stars would have appeared much larger and brighter. The moon too.

ANDREA
And in different alignments.

Andrea stops, anxious.

DR. LAVEY
What is it?

ANDREA
You're my only shield in academia. And I'm worried that I'll disappoint you if I tell you what I've found... and what I think.

Andrea digs deep. Dr. Lavey doesn't answer; just listens.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
I believe the contemporary man was partially eaten, and that he and the woman were buried during the Cretaceous period.

Dr. Lavey pulls her wrap tighter against the desert cold.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
The marks on the remains of his femurs are deep. I've traced other indentations similar to these on the remains of his tibias.
(beat)
There are no contemporary or recent animals that can do that.

DR. LAVEY
So what do you think did this?

ANDREA

An adult *Tyrannosaurus rex*.

DR. LAVEY

Do you know how farfetched that sounds, Andrea?

ANDREA

Yes, I do. That's why I came to you. I wanted you to know what I think.

Dr. Lavey looks to the night sky.

DR. LAVEY

There are more mysteries than stars. And like so many before, it may never be fully answered.

(beat)

When did you formulate this idea?

ANDREA

Yesterday. But I was too scared to tell you.

DR. LAVEY

Why?

ANDREA

Sharing my thoughts hasn't worked well for me in the past.

DR. LAVEY

This is merely a theory. No one can rule it out.

ANDREA

That's not all...

Andrea shows Dr. Lavey her iPad.

INSERT: An IMAGE from the drone. It reveals the full image of a BURIED AIRPLANE that is missing its tail. That area has been circled in red by Andrea's virtual pen.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

I found the plane this morning. I began excavating it rather than following your orders.

DR. LAVEY

You found an airplane?

ANDREA

Well, I found an image of one that's buried.

(beat)

Here are the facts: a plane and two humans are interred in Cretaceous earth. One appears to have been partially eaten by a species that went extinct 66 million years ago. A large airplane that never took off—or was ever reported—is buried nearby.

DR. LAVEY

How is that possible?

ANDREA

I believe that time is different than we perceive it. We have no idea what's possible within the continuum.

DR. LAVEY

What do you think happened?

ANDREA

Based on the facts, I surmise that these people left our era and crashed in a previous period where they likely survived for some time.

DR. LAVEY

What makes you believe that they survived?

ANDREA

Because of how the male and female were buried together. Some other survivor must have buried them.

Andrea breathes heavily. She's now unburdened. Dr. Lavey takes a beat. The weight has passed to her.

DR. LAVEY

Why don't you head back to the campsite and try to sleep.

Andrea leaves Dr. Lavey alone, and the desert silence embraces the older woman. She watches Andrea walk back to the campsite, backlit by the remaining lights.

A gust of cold breeze passes through, and Dr. Lavey pulls her wrap more tightly. She looks up to the sky.

A blanket of billions of stars overhead. A shooting star
FLASHES across.

DR. LAVEY (CONT'D)
Oh, James, what would you say if
you could still speak?

EXT. SKY

Dr. Lavey's view of the stars begin to shift and grow. The
full moon changes, growing into a much larger crescent.

EXT. SKYLINER Y120

Off this moon shift, the plane comes into view, SCREAMING as
it fights through the light that fully envelops it.

SPARKS and FLAMES skip and bounce along the FUSELAGE, searing
off the PAINT.

INT. EXIT ROW

A more violent SHUDDER. Sarah looks to William, also
terrified. Oxygen masks drop, and luggage falls out of the
overhead bins.

SARAH
What's happening?

WILLIAM
I don't know.

A BLINDING light flashes outside the plane. The screen itself
seems to tremble as all goes white in a MECHANICAL ROAR that
sounds like the creature in the Cold Open.

INT. COCKPIT

Captain Campbell and Stephen fight the controls. Through the
cockpit window, they see the sparks and flames bounce off the
nose.

Another PULSE of BRIGHT LIGHT hits them. The aircraft
vibrates violently... and then nothing...

The sky is clear.

Captain Campbell throttles back and looks to Stephen. All
goes quiet in the cockpit.

INT. PASSENGER CABIN

Passengers are flustered and scared. Bags lay on the floor. Oxygen masks hang loose. LIGHTS FLICKER off and then come on as do the the small seat screens.

MONTAGE:

- * Dalton curls into his seat, trying to call his parents.
- * Jon (from boarding scene) has been hit in the head with a bag. He snorts a bump of coke to revive himself.
- * Marcus prays aloud, hands pressed together.
- * An older woman, **GRACE**, takes a pill from her bottle, swallowing it with water. She's calm, accepting her fate.
- * Other passengers try to calm themselves, including a young married German couple, **AIMEE** and **DIETER**.
- * Sarah holds onto William's hand, and William leans into her as though they're a married couple.

INT. BACK GALLEY

Lindsey kneels next to Gabriela, still unconscious. The younger flight attendant is gravely injured. Lindsey comforts her, and then she heads to the front of the plane.

INT. AIRPLANE AISLE

Lindsey passes Dalton. She notices how upset he is, and she stops next to his seat.

LINDSEY

Hey, it's okay. It seems we're out of it now.

DALTON

What happened? What could make the plane shake like that?

LINDSEY

Severe turbulence.

DALTON

What about the lights?

LINDSEY

I don't know. I'll ask the Captain.

Dalton forces a nod even though he's skeptical.

INT. COCKPIT

Captain Campbell looks out the window.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL
What the hell was that?

STEPHEN
I have no idea. How are we looking?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL
Okay, somehow...

Lindsey ENTERS the cockpit.

LINDSEY
The passengers are frightened. Are we good?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL
I think so, by some miracle.

LINDSEY
Gabriela is badly injured. She needs medical attention. We need to land ASAP. Wherever we can.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL
We're working on it.

Lindsey EXITS the cockpit.

Captain Campbell turns to the instruments. One by one the satellite-based guidance systems on the control panel fail.

The sat-nav systems all read: **NO SATELLITES FOUND** as the lights on the panel dim.

STEPHEN
How is that possible?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL
It's not.

INT. EXIT ROW

Sarah watches as Lindsey rushes to the back of the plane. She turns to William, who stares out the window.

SARAH
That was terrifying.

WILLIAM
That didn't seem like turbulence...

SARAH
What about that bright light?

WILLIAM
Not sure. Lightning strike, maybe?
Anyway, that's not what worries me.

SARAH
What could be worse?

William points toward the window.

WILLIAM
See anything strange?

SARAH
Not really.

WILLIAM
When we left Portland the moon was
full.

Sarah looks over William's shoulder.

The enormous crescent moon hovers at the horizon. The screens in front of them turn blue. **NO SATELLITES FOUND** scrolls in an endless loop.

Sarah and William don't notice as they stare out the window.

EXT. SKYLINER Y120

The plane's navigation LIGHTS BLINK against the dark sky.

Each FLASH reveals that the glossy paint and logo are gone, the exterior stripped to bare metal. The Skyliner Y120 flies through the night, a naked metal tube with wings.

The stars, closer than any human has ever seen them, beam beautiful and bright.

They are terrifyingly enormous...

END PILOT EPISODE