

TOMORROW'S FLIGHT

"More Mysteries Than Stars"

(A limited TV-series pilot episode)

Written by

M.E. Ellington

and

Steven Stiefel

@TomorrowsFlight

COLD OPEN

INT. COMMERCIAL AIRPLANE - ECONOMY AISLE SEAT - NIGHT

SARAH - a slim mid-30s brunette - sleeps awkwardly in her aisle seat. A mask covers her eyes, and she holds a spiral notebook in one hand.

Still asleep, she adjusts her blanket.

The plane SHUDDERS as if from light turbulence. Sarah moves in her seat, not fully awakening. The notebook falls from her hand, landing on her lap before spilling onto the floor.

INT. COMMERCIAL AIRPLANE - AISLE - FOLLOWING

LINDSEY - early-40s, Asian-American flight attendant - rushes down the aisle from the cockpit.

The plane SHUDDERS more violently. Lindsey grasps a hold of the back of a seat on the nearly empty aircraft.

LINDSEY

Everyone! Seatbelts on and tight!

Lindsey hurries past Sarah's seat, heading to the back of the plane.

INT. COMMERCIAL AIRPLANE - SARAH'S SEAT - FOLLOWING

A more violent SHUDDER: Sarah comes fully awake and removes her eye-mask. She looks to her seat companion, WILLIAM, a man about her age, who also looks scared. Oxygen masks drop, and luggage falls out of the overhead bins.

SARAH

What was that?

WILLIAM

I don't know.

Other PASSENGERS MUMBLE in fear. Everyone on the red-eye flight is now awake. Some begin to PANIC.

SARAH POV: William raises his window blind.

A BLINDING light flashes outside the plane, WHOOSHING past into the distance - as though the plane has crashed into light itself. The screen trembles as all goes white in a MECHANICAL ROAR that almost sounds like a creature.

Then everything goes quiet and dark...

INT. ORB - MORNING

Light comes up a bit until the inside of an orb with an arch similar to that of the plane's fuselage comes into view, lit from the other side.

THE CAMERA: strikes out at the wall of the orb, cracking it. The camera strikes the orb again. A piece falls away, revealing blue sky.

Another strike at the orb until it crumbles and a new world, verdant and green, reveals itself.

EXT. ORB - FOLLOWING

A pathetic creature emerges from the orb. The new-born being is the size of a large chicken, and it is covered in 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.

CREATURE POV: The world is strange and verdant with vast grasslands. Thin forests of unusual trees are edged by hills and cliffs. Everything seems young and new...

BACK ON CREATURE: The sound is returned by a gentle ROAR that sounds akin to the noise the plane made. The new-born chicken-ish thing trembles.

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 tiny arms toward the other being's enormous muzzle.

**OPENING CREDITS**

**ACT ONE**

EXT. CENTRAL NEVADA DESERT – AFTERNOON

IMPOSE ON SCREEN: CENTRAL NEVADA, JULY 16

CAMERA PANS: across the scorching desert landscape, revealing a dig site with individual tents, young paleontologists digging, and a large central communal tent.

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

EXT. CENTRAL NEVADA DESERT – DIG SITE – MEDIUM SHOT

Andrea works to remove something from the ground.

ANDREA  
(under her breath)  
I need a break...

Andrea sets down her small trowel.

EXT. CENTRAL NEVADA DESERT – SHADED AREA NEAR DIG SITE

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

INSERT: What looks like a partial human skull with the forehead and a nostril revealed.

EXT. CENTRAL NEVADA DESERT – NEAR MAIN DIG SITE

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

INSERT: The fossilized skeletal face of a woman comes into view.

BACK TO SCENE: Andrea takes a deep breath. She reaches for her walkie-talkie, activating it.

ANDREA  
Dr. Lavey are you there?

DR. LAVEY (SUSAN) (O.S.)  
Yes, Andrea. What is it?

ANDREA  
I found the skull of a woman.

DR. LAVEY (O.S.)  
Where?

ANDREA  
She's buried in the Cretaceous  
strata we're excavating.

DR. LAVEY (O.S.)  
You mean she's buried next to it?

ANDREA  
No. She's within it, but several  
yards away. And she's fossilized!

DR. LAVEY (O.S.)  
(beat)  
I'll be there in a minute.

EXT. NEAR MAIN DIG – MOMENTS LATER

DR. LAVEY (Susan) is a petite Caucasian academic in her 60s who seems a bit self-effacing, using that to her advantage. She approaches Andrea, who is busy sweeping away more dirt.

ANDREA  
Here she is.

Dr. Lavey studies the woman's remains.

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

Andrea notices him.

ANDREA (CONT'D)  
Craig's following you – like a cat  
waiting to pounce.

Dr. Lavey turns toward Craig.

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

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

ANDREA

It's strange. She's a contemporary woman.

CRAIG

Well, she's fossilized, which makes your conclusion impossible.

Andrea turns to her boss, Dr. Lavey, ignoring Craig who moves so that his shadow doesn't shield Andrea from the sun.

Before Andrea can speak, Dr. Lavey grips her arm to calm her.

DR. LAVEY

I'd say you're both partially correct. This appears to be a modern woman buried in ancient earth. And she appears to be fossilized. And, of course, these two things are mutually exclusive based on what we know.

ANDREA

Well, what do we do about that?

DR. LAVEY

We have to consider it.

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, you've finished your coursework but your written work has yet to be approved before you get your Ph.D.?

Dr. Lavey grips Andrea's arm tightly again.

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, to cordially confront Craig.

DR. LAVEY  
You received a "briefing?"

CRAIG  
(fumbling a bit)  
I was given a rundown on all the personnel because I'm from a different university.

DR. LAVEY  
Odd that they didn't provide that to us, as well, since you also come from a different university.

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

ANDREA  
I really don't like that *cabron*.

DR. LAVEY  
Others say the same. But it's important that we try not to isolate him. I'm not sure that he's here for the same reasons we are.

Andrea contemplates this and turns her attention back to the remains still mostly buried in the ground.

ANDREA  
What do we do with her?

DR. LAVEY  
Let's start a new dig. We'll call this site B. Claire and Blake can help you.

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... really unusual.

Dr. Lavey and Andrea look at one another.

EXT. DIG SITE - MOMENTS LATER

Dr. Lavey and Andrea arrive at a FUSS.

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.

Claire and Blake are bent over something. When they hear Dr. Lavey and Andrea approach, they turn their attention away from what they've found, looking up at Dr. Lavey and Andrea.

CLAIRE

Check this out!

INSERT: In the ground is the large scorched remains of an airplane's tail. It's all in one large piece but devoid of any airline markings.

EXT. PARKING LOT OUTSIDE THE NTSB HEAD OFFICE - WASHINGTON, DC - MORNING

IMPOSE ON SCREEN: NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD - WASHINGTON, DC - JULY 18

BRUCE ACKLAND, a large surly Caucasian man in his early 60s with an unkempt beard, parks his beaten-up Accord in his parking space. A sign on the wall reads: RESERVED PARKING - BRUCE ACKLAND - SENIOR AIRCRASH INVESTIGATOR.

Bruce EXITS the vehicle, stretches uncomfortably, and looks up at the large faceless building. He tries to negotiate his briefcase, a ream of paperwork, and his car keys.

He drops his large porcelain coffee mug. It shatters against the asphalt, spilling coffee on his rumpled khaki pants.

BRUCE

Fuck!

INT. NTSB OFFICES - BRUCE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Bruce sits at his 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.

SAMIR

Hi boss, you made it back!

Bruce pushes a finger under his glasses, nipping the bridge of his nose to wake himself fully. He SIGHS.



BRUCE

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

Samir sits in a chair on the opposite side of the desk. 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. Just because something's old that doesn't mean it needs to be replaced.

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

SAMIR

I had a really interesting call yesterday.

BRUCE

Surprise me.

SAMIR

I can do that.

BRUCE

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

SAMIR

I wanted you to be the first to hear.

BRUCE

Jesus Christ. I hope you didn't knock up your girlfriend.

SAMIR

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

BRUCE

Did you? Doesn't mean she isn't pregnant.

SAMIR

Anyway, a team of paleontologists working in central Nevada uncovered what seems to be a large tail section from a commercial airliner. It doesn't correspond to any missing flight, and it has no identifying markings.

BRUCE

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

SAMIR

(interrupting)

No, it's real, I swear. They uncovered it while they were digging up dinosaur fossils exposed during a recent flood. It's in the same ancient earth.

Bruce takes off his glasses and rubs his beard.

BRUCE

How is that possible? How can there be a section of an airliner in the same type of earth as a dinosaur?

SAMIR

I dunno boss, but they say there is, and paleontologists know about these things. They sent photos.

Samir tosses a couple printed photos from his folder onto Bruce's desk. Bruce ignores them.

BRUCE

What does it mean that a piece of metal is close to these old bones?

SAMIR

Fossils boss, not bones.

Bruce glares at Samir, sucks in air, and exhales.

SAMIR (CONT'D)

In Any Case, the paleontologist I spoke to is convinced that it's in the same strata 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 marks.

BRUCE

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

SAMIR

Because you're going to hate every minute of it, and you'll need me to run interference with the paleontologists.

(beat)

And I need to keep you away from them when you're in one of your "moods."

BRUCE

Central Nevada? Isn't it miserable there this time of year?

SAMIR

You'll hardly notice.

BRUCE

Why?

SAMIR

You're miserable everywhere you go.

Bruce stifles a LAUGH. He picks up a photo.

INSERT: The photo shows an airplane tail still half-buried in Cretaceous earth. Bruce takes a distasteful swig of coffee.

BRUCE

Okay, I'll speak to Westwood. You make the arrangements.

(beat)

Now get the fuck out of my office.

Bruce watches Samir leave.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Fuckin' first day back!

EXT. PORTLAND CITYSCAPE - NIGHT

IMPOSE ON SCREEN: PORTLAND, OREGON, AUGUST 19

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

INT. PORTLAND - UPSCALE APARTMENT - OPEN KITCHEN - NIGHT

The apartment is neat, contemporary, and masculine.

WILLIAM - mid-30s, tall, and attractive with a day's beard growth - checks his smart watch.

WILLIAM  
C'mon, where are you?

William empties the last of his coffee into a travel mug. Then he tops it off with a couple shots of vodka from a half-empty bottle.

He puts the empty pot into the dishwasher and turns it on.

William's watch BEEPS. He looks out the kitchen window. Then he takes a swig from the vodka bottle and reaches for his briefcase.

EXT. PORTLAND AIRPORT - A HALF-HOUR LATER

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

INT. PRIUS - PORTLAND AIRPORT

William hands the PRIUS DRIVER a twenty.

PRIUS DRIVER  
Sorry, I can't take cash, sir. You have to tip me on the app.

WILLIAM  
Will do, and thanks.

EXT. AIRPORT - FOLLOWING

William heads toward the airport entrance.

A dusty silver Toyota Land Cruiser with a yellow paint scratch along its rear door hits the Prius as it pulls away from the curb.

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

PRIUS DRIVER  
Hey, get back here!

The four people rush past William, heading into the airport.

INT. AIRPORT COFFEE SHOP - NEAR TSA - FOLLOWING

DALTON - 17 years old, thin for his age, but nicely dressed - sits with his MOM and DAD. Dalton's helicopter parents are typical upper middle-class.

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  
We just want to make sure you're okay with everyone at archery camp.

MOM  
Not everyone has your best interest at heart.

DALTON  
Yeah, I know.

INT. TSA CHECKPOINT

A HALF-DOZEN AIRPORT SECURITY GUARDS wrestle the four people from the Land Cruiser to the ground.

This is visible from the coffee shop.

INT. AIRPORT COFFEE SHOP

Dalton and his parents watch as the four people are handcuffed by airport security as they lie facedown.

MOM  
Are you sure you don't want us to come?

DAD  
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. Besides, what can they do now?

Mom gets a bit teary-eyed. Dad grabs her hand.

DAD

Just let us know if you need us.  
We'll be there ASAP!

INT. AMERICAN CRUISE AIRLINES TSA CHECKPOINT – FOLLOWING

Sarah, from the opener, watches as security guards lead the four strangers away, the faces 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 you fuckwit. It's in my left pocket.

TSA AGENT

Did you pack this bag yourself?

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

SARAH

Yes, of course.

TSA AGENT

Could anyone have tampered with it?

SARAH

I don't think so. I never let it out of my sight, but I guess you never know...

The TSA agent looks sharply at her.

SARAH (CONT'D)

No. No one has tampered with it.

The TSA agent waves her through.

INT. AIRPORT STORE – MOMENTS LATER

The shop sells books, snacks, and souvenir crap.

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 - FOLLOWING

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 and steps in front of him.

INT. AMERICAN CRUISE AIRLINES - GATE 22 - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Sarah stands in line at the gate. Both William and Dalton are now in front of her.

INSERT: The monitor registers: FLIGHT 839 TO ATLANTA. DEPARTS IN 30 MINUTES.

BACK TO SCENE: The short line moves forward. It's ominously quiet in the airport.

SARAH POV: The American Cruise Airline airplane sits on the tarmac at the gate, the night sky clear overhead.

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

Sarah continues to stare at the parked airplane, unaware that she's next.

MAN (JON)

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

Sarah jumps and turns to see JON behind her. He's a muscular spark-plug of a man with a Boston accent and gruff demeanor, mid 30s.

SARAH

I'm sorry.

INT. AIRPLANE ENTRANCE - RAMP - FOLLOWING

Sarah ENTERS the airplane.

She notices the flight attendant's name on her badge as Lindsey checks her boarding pass. Lindsey has a calming presence and quiet sense of authority.

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

SARAH  
Thank you.

INT. AIRPLANE - EXIT ROW - FOLLOWING

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  
There aren't many people on this flight.  
(beat)  
Isn't it odd that we're seated in the same row?

WILLIAM  
Not really. This is an exit row. We're the ones the airline has deemed able-bodied - capable enough in the event of impending tragedy.

SARAH  
I wouldn't know what to do.

WILLIAM  
Nor would I, but the flight crew will tell us. And we'll nod our heads and agree without bothering to listen to them.

SARAH  
We will? Why would we do that?

WILLIAM  
Because 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 opens her new diary, unsure what to make of William.

INT. AIRPLANE ENTRANCE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

MARCUS, a tall well-built African-American man in his late-40s, rushes to ENTER before the doors closes. He's a talker.

MARCUS

Luggage emergency! But I made it.  
Had to get my golf clubs checked at  
the last minute. They wouldn't let  
me bring 'em on board.

GABRIELA GOMEZ, mid-20s Hispanic, and unassuming, checks Marcus's boarding pass.

GABRIELA

Welcome aboard, Mr. Johnson.

MARCUS

You can call me Marcus.

INT. AIRPLANE - EXIT ROW

Lindsey approaches William and Sarah.

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 talk Sarah into having a nip before we go.

William hands Lindsey his credit card.

LINDSEY

I'll be back in a minute.

SARAH

Why did you do that?

WILLIAM

Do what?

SARAH

Buy me a drink.

WILLIAM

It'll help you. I promise, Sarah.

Sarah reaches for her new diary. She hates that she finds William attractive.

INT. AIRPLANE AISLE - A MOMENT LATER

Marcus walks past them.

SARAH POV: Under Marcus's jacket he has a gun that isn't fastened within its holster.

BACK TO SCENE: Lindsey approaches from the back galley of the aircraft with their drinks.

Sarah tries to interject her point about Marcus and his gun, but William over-talks her.

WILLIAM

Thank you, Lindsey. It's great to get good service on these empty flights.

LINDSEY

You're welcome. You can continue to enjoy them, 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. He hands it to Sarah, who 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 be a bridesmaid. And I'm going to spend some time with my mother.

(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 ass. And that he's paying for the privilege.

(beat)

Cheers to the bride!

SARAH

Why did you buy me a drink?

WILLIAM

Because I think 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

(beat)

That's a very good question.

SARAH

But that's not an answer.

WILLIAM

You're right.

(beat)

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.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Here we go.

EXT. AMERICAN CRUISE AIRLINE GATE - CONTINUOUS

The airplane pushes away from the gate, the full moon  
prominent.

In the distance, lightning FLASHES through the night sky  
despite the otherwise clear night.

**END OF ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO**

INT. CENTRAL NEVADA DESERT – DIG SITE B – LATE AFTERNOON

Andrea, Claire, and Blake excavate the fossilized woman. The sun beats down. A blue EZ-up tent provides shade.

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

ANDREA

I've found something else.

The three begin excavating the new find.

INT. DIG SITE B – AN HOUR LATER

Andrea, Claire, and Blake uncover another fossilized skull.

ANDREA

She wasn't alone. She had a male friend.

CLAIRE

How can you tell this is a male?

ANDREA

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

BLAKE

What do you think happened?

ANDREA

(unsure)

It appears they were buried together?

Andrea sits back.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

I would postulate that other people from the modern era interred them.

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 what I think happened based on the facts available at this time.

BLAKE

Spooky.

CLAIRE

No shit!

ANDREA

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

The three return to digging.

EXT. EDGE OF THE CAMP - MOMENTS LATER

A silver Toyota Land Cruiser pulls into the camp, bouncing over the rough ground.

INT. TOYOTA LAND CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Samir drives, and Bruce rides shotgun.

INSERT: The climate control is set at 'COLD'.

BACK TO SCENE: As cool air rushes over them, Bruce can see heat haze off the ground. He's not happy.

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

BRUCE

It's going to be like an oven when I open the door, isn't it?

Samir turns off the engine and opens his door. Desert heat rushes in, attacking Bruce.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Fuckin' knew it!

Bruce pulls on his Washington Wizards baseball cap, covering his bald spot. He EXITS the vehicle and SLAMS the door.

EXT. TOYOTA LAND CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Samir sets their bags on the ground. He closes the hatch.

BRUCE  
You going to lock it?

SAMIR  
Who'd steal it? Or any of our  
stuff?

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

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

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

Dr. Lavey approaches with a welcoming demeanor.

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. Then he pushes it  
back into his left pocket.

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  
Don't worry, we get along. But it's  
been a long trip. And I'm not good  
with social niceties.

SAMIR  
(under his breath)  
Or people.

BRUCE  
Especially in this heat.

Dr. Lavey forces a smile, unsure what to make of them.

BRUCE (CONT'D)  
I'm also skeptical about the obituary you're writing for this airplane or whatever you think you've found.

(beat)  
But my young colleague already seems to believe facts that are implausible.

SAMIR  
I don't 'believe' facts; I accept them.

DR. LAVEY  
I don't blame either of you for this difference in opinion. It's incomprehensible from our perspective, as well.

BRUCE  
You know that no plane of the type you're describing has gone missing? Ever?

SAMIR  
Planes rarely go missing, that's why the Malaysian Airlines flight received so much coverage in 2014.

DR. LAVEY  
I'm afraid I'm not aware of that fact. I don't follow recent events as closely as those that happened eons ago.

(beat)  
We aren't accustomed to finding parts of airplanes near dinosaurs, regardless of whether or not the plane was reported missing.

BRUCE  
I hate this heat. No wonder all the dinosaurs died.

DR. LAVEY  
The environment was different during the Cretaceous period. This area was lush with flora back then.

(MORE)



DR. LAVEY (CONT'D)

It was likely humid and teeming with life, most of it now extinct. We also believe we're standing right on top of a dormant volcano and fault line.

Bruce looks down.

SAMIR

Where is the airplane tail? Let's get to the main event.

Andrea approaches the group. She wipes away sweat, not even trying 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

What about the tail section?

DR. LAVEY

Andrea has far more insight into that than I do.

ANDREA

We established dig site C for the metal piece. It's nearly fully excavated.

DR. LAVEY

That is truly beyond our expertise.

EXT. DIG SITE C - MOMENTS LATER

Bruce, Samir, Andrea, and Dr. Lavey head toward Dig Site C.

As they get close, Craig approaches, running a bit to catch up despite the heat.

BRUCE

(to Dr. Lavey)

Who's the asshole following us?

DR. LAVEY

That's Dr. Craig Iverson. He's what we politely call the checks and balances in academia.

BRUCE

The pain in your ass? Every investigation has one.

Dr. Lavey smiles as she indicates the hole in the ground just as Craig catches up to them.

ANDREA

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

A hole has been dug around the now protruding tail section of an aircraft. Clearly, this shouldn't be here: It's stripped of all markings and battered from time in the ground.

DR. LAVEY

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

BRUCE

Thanks. The fewer people the better.

Bruce and Samir hunker down next to the tail section. They're unsure what to make of it. Bruce rubs his beard.

SAMIR

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

BRUCE

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

DR. LAVEY

Why are you so sure?

SAMIR

Could it be a piece of military equipment, blown to smithereens, embedding itself so deeply that it appears to be from the era you're excavating?

BRUCE

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

ANDREA

So what's your best guess?

BRUCE

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

ANDREA

You guys can't accept the possibility that this plane from our era may have crashed in the distant past, can you?

Bruce looks at Andrea and stands. He notices Craig taking notes.

BRUCE

It's fairly simple from my perspective. There are no missing planes of this type. It's not possible for an airplane to fall out of the sky before it takes off. Even if it were a secret military flight, our department would have been informed about the crash.

ANDREA

You're working within the box of what you understand. Maybe this airplane comes from beyond the parameters you believe to be so definitive.

DR. LAVEY

Such a tone isn't productive, Andrea. We're all seeking the truth.

BRUCE

And this isn't an airplane. It's a hunk of metal that's consistent with those found at the backend of a particular type of airplane.

ANDREA

I don't think any of you understand what we're dealing with.

Andrea leaves the dig area, heading back to camp.

Bruce kneels next to the piece of metal and touches it. Sweat pours from him, and he blinks against the heat. As he continues to make contact with the metal his eyes go wobbly.

INSERT: Bruce sees an airplane, stripped of markings, in a landscape similar to the shot in the COLD OPEN.

Bruce becomes unsteady, and then he passes out against the ground, his hand losing contact with the metal.

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

SAMIR

How are you, boss?

BRUCE

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

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

SAMIR

So, do you think I was right?

BRUCE

(embarrassed and annoyed)  
You really think that's what's important? That this trip isn't a complete waste of time? That you made the proper call in dragging me to this Godforsaken place?

SAMIR

(to Dr. Lavey)  
He's fine.

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

Bruce notices Craig typing into his phone.

DR. LAVEY

Let's head back. We've put up individual tents for each of you. You can unpack and relax before dinner.

BRUCE

Great. I'd like to get away from here.

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

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

INT. COMMUNAL KITCHEN TENT - AFTER DINNER - EVENING

The tent is large and open on three sides. Along the closed side is the kitchen area with serving tables and an iced bucket of beverages.

In the middle of the shelter are a couple rows of long tables with chairs running along each side.

Samir and Bruce sit at one table. Dr. Lavey brings over three cold beverages. In front of them are their used plates.

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

DR. LAVEY

Are you feeling better, Bruce?

BRUCE

That's relative. But, I suppose, better than I was.

DR. LAVEY

It will cool down after the sun lowers behind the rise.

(beat)

Can you tell us what you think about what you saw?

BRUCE

Maybe tomorrow. Now, I want to be alone.

SAMIR

He's the Greta Garbo of airplane crash investigations.

Dr. Lavey snickers a little.

BRUCE

I don't know what the fuck that means, which is why I need to get away from you people. At least for the rest of the evening.

SAMIR

Sure, boss.

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. In the meantime, Claire and Blake should have the man and woman excavated before they arrive.

DR. LAVEY

Thanks Andrea. The excavator will help us widen the dig site.

(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 paleontology research. And I didn't want to say that to either you or Bruce while Craig was present - just in case.

SAMIR

I won't discuss that in front of Craig, either. And it's pretty clear Bruce already hates him. He won't say anything in front of anyone he considers an enemy.

ANDREA

Bruce seems to hate almost everyone.

SAMIR

I know it seems that way, but I think he likes Dr. Lavey. It takes a while to learn how to read him. With Bruce it's all about respect, both ways.

DR. LAVEY

I guess I should feel honored.

INT. BRUCE'S TENT - SUNSET

Bruce enters his tent, sweating and out of breath. He sits on his camp bed, which GROANS under his weight. He removes his Wizards cap.

Scratching at his beard he lays back. He grabs a bottle of water and twists off the top.

BRUCE  
Fuck, I hate this place!

Bruce begins to sweat heavily, heaving for breath.

INSERT HALLUCINATION: Bruce lies on the floor of an aircraft. He looks toward his feet to see blood spilling from his body.

BACK TO SCENE: Bruce passes out in his tent. The half-full water bottle falls to floor, spilling its contents.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Large rocks have been placed around the fire as makeshift chairs. On one side of the fire pit Craig talks to Blake while Claire slow dances by herself 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 can't. I'm in recovery.

Samir watches her work on the drone.

SAMIR  
What's that for?

ANDREA  
It can help "see" below the ground.  
It helps us figure out the most  
efficient places to dig.

A beat.

SAMIR

My sister would like you.

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

SAMIR (CONT'D)

She's gay, but I'm not. It's funny.  
Everyone thinks I am, but no one  
thinks she is.

Andrea looks at him and takes a beat before she replies.

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

It uses Ground Penetrating Radar.  
I'm going to use it tomorrow. I'll  
pass over a couple of areas and see  
what it reveals.

Samir finishes his beer. Dance music begins to PLAY. Claire dances provocatively. 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 in the wilderness  
with the local wildlife.

SAMIR

Do you want to dance?

ANDREA

No. I need to go to bed. We have a  
long day tomorrow.

Samir watches Claire dance as Blake gets up and joins her. He hands her a bottle of booze, and each takes a swig.

Andrea picks up her drone, heading toward her tent.



SAMIR  
(to Andrea)  
Have a good night.

DIG SITE B - EARLY MORNING

Below the EZ-up covering, Claire and Blake carefully remove fossilized bones from the female skeleton. They seem impervious to their previous night's drinking.

Andrea focuses solely on the male skeleton. She brushes away dirt just below the knee joint, and she GASPS.

INSERT: A shot of a fossilized top bit of the tibia with what looks like gashes in it.

ANDREA  
What the...?

BACK TO SCENE: Blake and Claire turn to look at what Andrea has unearthed.

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

CLAIRE  
What is it?

Andrea looks between Claire and Blake and then back to the fossil.

ANDREA  
Something bit off this guy's lower legs.

**END OF ACT TWO**

ACT THREE

EXT. PORTLAND AIRPORT - NIGHT

The large commercial airplane - an American Cruise Airlines Skyliner Y120 - sits ready on the runway. Overhead the sky is clear and the plane is illuminated by the large full moon.

INT. SKYLINER Y120 - COCKPIT - JUST BEFORE TAKEOFF

Lindsey enters the cockpit to find CAPTAIN CAMPBELL - British, tall, early-50s, Ex-RAF - sitting in the pilot seat. He checks the airplane's settings just before they get clearance to taxi.

Next to him is STEPHEN STERNE the co-pilot - mid-30s, tall, pale, and thin with a receding hairline. He's flustered, ignoring the pilot, listening to his headset.

LINDSEY

Gentleman, everything is ready in the cabin.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

We're good to go here too. Just waiting for clearance.

LINDSEY

There are very few passengers - they'll be asleep in no time.

STEPHEN

Should be an easy flight tonight.

LINDSEY

I'm training Gabriela Gomez. She has a lot potential.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

Ah, the benefit of red-eyes.

LINDSEY

We do have an air marshal - Marcus... Johnson.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

I've flown with Marcus several times. He's a good one. Look after him for me.

Lindsey turns to leave.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL (CONT'D)  
Perhaps we can get a drink when we  
land?

LINDSEY  
In the morning?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL  
We can have coffee. That's a drink,  
isn't it?

LINDSEY  
Let me think about it.

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

STEPHEN  
You old dog!

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL  
Just being friendly, that's all.

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

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL  
You ready?

Stephen gives a thumbs-up. Captain Campbell pushes the  
throttles forward and the airplane begins to head to the line  
of departing flights.

INT. EXIT ROW ECONOMY SEATS - FOLLOWING

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

SARAH  
Oh dear, what should I do with my  
wine?

WILLIAM  
You should drink it quickly. It  
could spill when we take off.

SARAH  
All of it?

WILLIAM

No, just most of it. Our bodies are designed to move naturally with unusual forces. That'll help keep you from spilling.

Sarah gulps much of her wine.

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

(teasing)

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. I think he's our air marshal.

William reaches out his hand.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I don't bite. I promise.

Sarah waits a beat, but then takes his hand just as the airplane begins to accelerate, tires RUMBLING. With her other hand, Sarah holds on desperately to what's left of her wine.

INSERT SARAH POV: The airplane begins to rise. She looks out the window to see the lights of Portland fall away.

BACK TO SCENE: A minute or two later

SARAH

Why did you do that?

WILLIAM

Do what?

SARAH

Get me drunk and then confuse me.

WILLIAM

Because I can tell how unsettled you are about flying, and look, we're up.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL (O.S.)

Ladies and Gentleman, this is your pilot, Captain David Campbell. We'll be cruising at 35,000 feet in a few minutes. We're scheduled for an on-time arrival. Sit back and relax. Our flight crew will be with you shortly.

WILLIAM

See, the pilot is British; everything will be fine.

Sarah relaxes. William joins her watching the city lights disappear from view as the airplane travels through the clear night air. Now all they see are stars and the full moon.

INT. SKYLINER Y120 COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

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

STEPHEN

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

The pilot looks over to Stephen with a disapproving look.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

Why were you late? You could have caused us a delay.

STEPHEN

Sorry about that. The Pilots' Association had some questions for me about recent irregularities.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

That's not an acceptable reason. Your only concern right now should be this flight and the safety of those on board. Politics and brown nosing can wait.

STEPHEN

I have a duty to...

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

You have a duty to the flight, these passengers and their safety, and that's all!

Captain Campbell turns back to face the control panel.

STEPHEN

You're right. It won't happen again.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

(dismissive)  
Understood.

EXT. SKYLINER Y120

The airplane flies steadily until it's flying over a cloud base. It's surrounded by far distant stars and the full moon that illuminates the glossy fuselage and livery, as well as clouds below. The navigation lights FLASH against the clouds.

INT. SKYLINER Y120 - EXIT ROW - FOLLOWING

Sarah still holds William's hand. She 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, I'm sorry!

Sarah releases William's hand.

WILLIAM

We're halfway there. Virtually all mechanical airplane disasters occur during take-off or landing.

SARAH

I researched that, but that doesn't prevent terrorism mid-flight.

WILLIAM

I can assure you this flight has no terrorists on board. Unless our air marshal is as aggrieved with his job as I am with mine.

SARAH

That's why you're going personally, rather than emailing your resignation?

WILLIAM

I need to tell my boss face to face. A simple resignation letter wouldn't provide the catharsis I need.

(beat)

After working my ass off for eight years with countless promises, they gave my promotion to a young douchebag. And then they asked me to train him.

SARAH

That's how things are these days. People used to have jobs for life, but now we're all disposable. I blame it on technology.

WILLIAM

Crap!

William glances at his smart watch.

SARAH

What?

WILLIAM

I promised to tip my Lyft driver. I forgot with all the commotion in the airport.

SARAH

You saw that too?

WILLIAM

Their truck hit my driver's car just after I got out.

SARAH

I wonder who they were...

WILLIAM

At least they didn't stop our flight. I'll tip my driver when we land. He deserves it. Especially after they crashed into his car.

SARAH

The world is full of crazy people.

WILLIAM

Humans are like a bag of apples.

SARAH

What do you mean?

WILLIAM

Once one goes bad, the rest rot much more quickly.

William finishes his drink.

SARAH

(beat)

You don't get invited to a lot of parties, do you?

WILLIAM

Not anymore.

William opens his laptop, and Sarah reaches for her eye mask.

INT. SKYLINER Y120 COCKPIT - LATER

Lindsey enters the cockpit with two coffee cups. She hands one to Captain Campbell, who nods and takes it and one to Stephen who looks at it and then shakes his head.



STEPHEN

I don't drink coffee.

LINDSEY

I'm sorry. Before you were on board, Captain Campbell asked me to bring two coffees once we reached cruising altitude.

STEPHEN

I need to stretch my legs.

Stephen squeezes past Lindsey, EXITING the cockpit. David gives him a death stare as he exists. Stephen doesn't notice.

LINDSEY

He's a piece of work, isn't he?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

You have no idea.

LINDSEY

I do. He's no friend to the flight attendants. He's been instrumental in the abrupt termination of several of my friends.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

I don't like to spread gossip, so I guess it's good that you already know what I'm thinking.

Lindsey takes a BEAT to contemplate this.

LINDSEY

How are we looking, Captain?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

Everything seems on course, but I'm getting a few odd readings. Nothing to be concerned about.

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

LINDSEY

Should I be concerned now?

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL

You should stand by, I need to take a look.

LINDSEY  
I'll get back and check in with  
Gabriela.

(beat)  
Oh, and the answer to your question  
is, "yes." I'd like to have coffee  
with you when we land.

Captain Campbell studies the instrument panel, a bit  
concerned. He responds without looking up.

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL  
Coffee it is... in the morning.

INT. EXIT ROW - ECONOMY SEATS - A HALF-HOUR LATER

Lindsey and Gabriela pull the drink cart up to William 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  
business meeting, and I can't sleep  
on a plane. So maybe 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 as Gabriela hands William a cup of  
coffee.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
Thank you.

The plane SHAKES, and the seatbelt signs light up.

Lindsey and Gabriela begin to make their way back to the  
galley. William holds onto his laptop and coffee.

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.

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

SARAH  
What's happening?

The SOUND from the engines grow audible.

WILLIAM  
We're climbing; nothing to worry  
about.

Sarah closes her eyes, and replaces the mask.

INT. SKYLINER Y120 - BACK GALLEY - FOLLOWING

Lindsey and Gabriela strap into their seats.

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

GABRIELA POV: She notices the drink cart shifting in its  
space - she forgot to secure it.

BACK TO SCENE: Gabriela unfastens her seatbelt.

LINDSEY  
Maybe wait just a bit.

GABRIELA  
I'm sorry. I forgot to lock it in  
place.

LINDSEY  
It's not a big deal. I've done it  
myself.

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

LINDSEY (CONT'D)  
It's not safe. Get back in your  
seat!

A huge bout of turbulence lifts Gabriela off the floor. She  
slams into the ceiling as the drink cart moves out of its  
housing.

Gabriela drops, landing on the dislodged cart, back first. She SCREAMS in pain.

Then she tumbles onto the floor, banging her head so violently that she's knocked unconscious.

Lindsey releases her seatbelt and grabs the drink cart before it hits Gabriela. Lindsey locks it into place.

Lindsey kneels beside Gabriela as the plane continues to shake, grasping hold of the seat fixture with one hand to steady herself. She checks Gabriela with her other hand.

EXT. SKYLINER Y120

The airplane penetrates a cosmic membrane, something akin to the way the outer edges of a jellyfish look.

An enormous intense white light appears on the horizon.

The bright whiteness and the plane rush toward one another at an impossible speed until the light envelops the aircraft.

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**

EXT. CENTRAL NEVADA DESERT - DAWN

Awake before the others, Andrea flies her GPR drone. She sweeps the flying object back and forth. The control pad CHIMES. She pushes a button and the drone hovers.

Andrea looks down at her screen.

INSERT: The vague image of part of an aircraft with a severed wing begins to take shape.

BACK TO SCENE: Andrea looks shaken.

In the distance, a large open-bed truck rumbles into camp with a large yellow excavator 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.

INT. BRUCE'S TENT - EARLY MORNING

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

The RUMBLING from the truck awakens him.

BRUCE  
What the hell?

Bruce hears VOICES and COMMOTION outside his tent. He scratches at his bald spot and reaches for his Wizards cap.

EXT. BRUCE'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

Bruce EXITS his tent, adjusting his cap.

A few hundred feet away, the large truck with the excavator on its trailer parks near the other vehicles.

A cloud of dirt settles behind the truck.

EXT. DIG SITE – PARKING LOT

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.

LAVEY

That would be me. I'm Dr. Susan Lavey. I'm the lead on this site.

Frank looks at those in 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

Thank you, Mr. Bigelow. We're desperately in need of this excavator.

FRANK

I drove through the night to get here, as per the request.

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'm sorry to hear that. 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.

(beat)

Government likely wants to make certain equipment's in place before they send personnel.

DR. LAVEY

I suppose that makes sense.

Andrea approaches during this uncomfortable beat.

FRANK

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.

Bruce turns to Samir as Frank heads to the trailer.

BRUCE

That's a fuckload of nonsense since none of us know how to work the excavator.

In the background, Frank begins to unload the excavator.

SAMIR

Government planning, boss. You know how it is.

BRUCE

So what the fuck do we do with this scrap metal until the team arrives?

ANDREA

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

DR. LAVEY

Maybe it's a good thing we have the equipment here without the crew – and that we have someone competent to use it.

BRUCE

How so?

DR. LAVEY

It'll give us a couple days head start before the government officials arrive. Once they get here, neither of us will be in charge.

BRUCE

Well, 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 the site most likely to yield the evidence we need sooner.

BRUCE

Why there?

DR. LAVEY

Digging near a burial site often yields surprising results.

(to Andrea)

You should rather delicately begin exploring the terrain near the dead man and woman.

ANDREA

That seems right to me.

EXT. DIG SITE - PARKING LOT - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Frank and his truck and trailer 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 tow hook hits the back door of the Land Cruiser, leaving a long yellow scratch and dent.

Without noticing, Andrea sets off toward Dig Site B.

BRUCE

So much for getting the rental deposit back.

DR. LAVEY

Should I call Andrea back?



BRUCE

It's not rented under my name. Ask Samir.

Samir makes eye contact with Dr. Lavey. Bruce catches him and shakes his head.

SAMIR

It's fine. It'll polish out.

BRUCE

I'll be in my tent. Let me know when there's something useful for me to do.

EXT. A RISE - LATER

Craig stands on the rise, about 500 yards from the camp. He watches Andrea approach Dig Site B with the excavator.

Craig turns his attention back to his phone.

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

BACK TO SCENE: From Craig's POV, we see him watch as Andrea and the excavator park at the first place where she plans to drill - just about where she was flying the drone earlier.

Craig's text messages type out in real time, appearing like subtitles on a foreign film at the bottom of the screen as Andrea continues to work in the distance.

CRAIG (TEXT)

\* Heavy equipment is here  
\* They're excavating before govt arrives

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

UNKNOWN NUMBER (TEXT)

\* What does that mean re: airplane tail and dinos?

CRAIG (TEXT)

\* Groupthink among paleontologists and crash investigators is they're connected

UNKOWN NUMBER (TEXT)

\* Is Ms. Alejandro of special interest?

CRAIG (TEXT)

- \* Not sure will advise later
- \* Phone dying

INSERT: Craig's phone. 77% CHARGED

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

Craig looks around, making sure no one has seen him.

Andrea and the excavator begin their work in the distance.

INT. DR. LAVEY'S TENT - NIGHT

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

DR. LAVEY

James, my dear, what would you make of this? You'd be fascinated, I'm sure.

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

ANDREA (O.S.)

Dr. Lavey? Are you awake?

DR. LAVEY

I am.

Dr. Lavey unzips the opening to her tent.

ANDREA

I need to tell you something. Do you think anyone can hear us?

DR. LAVEY

Let's go for a walk.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CAMPSITE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

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.

DR. LAVEY

Yes, that as well.

Andrea stops. She's anxious, as though she's about to confess something to her mother.

DR. LAVEY (CONT'D)

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.

DR. LAVEY

Perhaps you don't know me as well as you think you do.

Andrea digs deep.

ANDREA

I believe the contemporary man was partially eaten, and that he and the woman were buried during the Cretaceous period.

Dr. Lavey chills against the cold desert air.

DR. LAVEY

Why do you think he was eaten?

ANDREA

The marks on the remains of his tibias are deep and enormous. I've traced other indentations similar to these.

(beat)

They are the teeth marks of an adult *Tyrannosaurus rex*.

DR. LAVEY

So far your conjecture isn't without consideration.

ANDREA

My question is how did a modern  
human encounter a T. rex?

Dr. Lavey looks up to the night sky.

DR. LAVEY

There are more mysteries than stars  
in the sky. This is just another  
one. 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  
out very well for me in the past. I  
needed to think about it.

DR. LAVEY

This is merely theory, an idea  
based on incomplete facts. No one  
can rule it out.

ANDREA

That's not all.

DR. LAVEY

I didn't think it was.

(beat)

Take your time.

ANDREA

Please don't hate me. I'm so  
worried about my academic career.

(beat)

And your perception of me.

DR. LAVEY

How long have we known each other?  
And in that time have I ever given  
you a reason to feel scared to  
share your thoughts?

ANDREA

No, you haven't. But these are  
extraordinary circumstances.

DR. LAVEY  
 Even so, you can tell me. And you  
 should tell me.

Andrea shows Dr. Lavey her iPad.

INSERT: The image from the drone. Now it reveals the full  
 image of a buried airplane.

ANDREA  
 I found the plane this morning with  
 the drone. I began excavating it  
 against your orders.

Dr. Lavey takes a beat. She's startled.

ANDREA (CONT'D)  
 I knew you'd be upset that I didn't  
 tell you sooner.

DR. LAVEY  
 No, it's not that. You did the  
 correct thing. It's important we  
 discuss this without the risk of it  
 being overheard.  
 (beat)  
 Tell me what you're thinking. I  
 promise you that it will just be  
 between us, for now.

ANDREA  
 Here are the facts: a plane and two  
 humans are interred in Cretaceous  
 earth. One appears to have been  
 partially eaten by an animal that  
 died out sixty-six million years  
 ago. A large airplane that never  
 took off - or at the very least was  
 never reported missing - is buried  
 nearby.

DR. LAVEY  
 I know you have an idea. You're  
 much better than most of us at  
 constructing a hypothesis. That's  
 why I champion you.

ANDREA  
 It's what I've been driving at in  
 my dissertation. I think that time  
 is different than we believe. We  
 have no idea what's possible over  
 the continuum, or even how that  
 continuum works.

(MORE)

ANDREA (CONT'D)

(beat)

We rely on anecdotal experiences of time marching forward – of time always being linear.

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? At least for some time?

ANDREA

Because of how the male and female were buried together. Some other survivor had to do it.

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

DR. LAVEY

Why don't you head back to the campsite and try to rest. We'll talk more about this tomorrow.

Andrea leaves Dr. Lavey alone, and the desert silence embraces her. She watches Andrea head back to camp, backlit by the remaining lights of the camp.

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

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

DR. LAVEY (CONT'D)

Where did you come from?

EXT. SKYLINER Y120 - NIGHT

The plane SCREAMS as it fights against impossible turbulence.

The pulses of BRIGHT LIGHTS now fully envelop the airplane. Sparks and flames skip and bounce along the fuselage, searing off the paint.

INT. SKYLINER Y120 - PASSENGER CABIN

IN A REPEAT OF THE COLD OPEN:

A more violent SHUDDER. Sarah comes fully awake and removes her mask. She looks to William, also terrified. Oxygen masks drop, and luggage falls out of the overhead bins.

SARAH

What was that?

WILLIAM

I don't know.

SARAH POV: William raises his window blind.

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

INT. SKYLINER Y120 - COCKPIT

Captain Campbell and Stephen fight the controls. Through the cockpit window, sparks and flames bounce off the nose. Another pulse of bright light hits them, and then nothing...

The sky is clear.

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

INT. SKYLINER Y120 - PASSENGER CABIN

Passengers are flustered and scared. Bags lay on the floor. Oxygen masks hang loose. Lights flicker off and then come on along with the small screens.

MONTAGE:

\* Dalton curls into his seat, terrified.

\* Jon, who has been hit in the head with a bag, snorts a bump of coke to calm himself.

\* Marcus sits praying.

\* Other passengers try to calm themselves.

INT. SKYLINER Y120 – BACK GALLEY

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

INT. SKYLINER Y120 – 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, but it almost never brings down an aircraft.

DALTON

What about the lights?

LINDSEY

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

Dalton forces a nod even though he remains skeptical.

INT. SKYLINER Y120 – 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

Yes, by some miracle.



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

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL  
We're working on it. Do what you  
can for Gabriela in the meantime.

Lindsey EXITS the cockpit.

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

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

STEPHEN  
How is that possible?

INT. SKYLINER Y120 - PASSENGER CABIN

Sarah watches as Lindsey rushes to the back of the plane.

Sarah turns to William, who stares out the window.

SARAH  
That was terrifying.

WILLIAM  
(full of doubt)  
I think it was turbulence...

SARAH  
And that bright light?

WILLIAM  
Not sure. Maybe some  
electromagnetic discharge? Anyway,  
that's not what worries me.

SARAH  
If that isn't something to worry  
about, then what is?

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.

INSERT: The screens in front of them go blank, but Sarah and William don't notice as they look out the window. The words NO SATELLITES FOUND scroll across the screens in a loop.

EXT. SKYLINER Y120

The plane's exterior navigation lights blink against the night. Each FLASH reveals that the glossy paint and livery have been stripped to bare metal. The Skyliner Y120 flies through the night - a naked tin tube with wings.

An unnaturally large crescent moon hovers at the horizon.

The stars, closer than any human has ever seen before, beam beautiful and bright: terrifyingly enormous...

**END OF PILOT EPISODE**