



A SINGLE POINT OF FAILURE

*inspired by actual events*

written by

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**OVER BLACK:**

The hum of a jet engine in full throttle. A slight rumbling that gives way to increasingly more violent shaking.

Automated system warnings beep throughout. On screen a timecode changes to indicate the time jumping forward.

[The voices are all slightly accented, but in English.]

**6:25:31 AM**

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Air control, we have some problem.

FIRST OFFICER (V.O.)  
We are flying manually due to  
flight control problem.

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL (V.O.)  
Please report altitude.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Air control, we cannot determine  
altitude due to instruments showing  
different readings.

**6:27:02 AM**

FIRST OFFICER (V.O.)  
Aircraft is flying down.

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL (V.O.)  
What altitude?

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Five thou.

**6:29:54 AM**

FIRST OFFICER (V.O.)  
Jet is descending.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
It's okay.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)  
Excess speed. Warning. Excess  
speed. Warning.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
Fly up.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)  
Warning. Terrain, terrain. Warning.  
Pull up, pull up. Terrain. Warning.

**6:30:54 AM**

CAPTAIN (V.O.)  
(long beat)  
Allahu akbar.

**6:31:45 AM ... OCTOBER 2018**

Silence. Then the sound of waves takes us --

**EXT. JAVA SEA - DAY**

The water at the surface undulates with a consistent rhythm.  
The clear blue-green surface gives way to white foam.  
Finally, something appears at the surface. A piece of metal.  
Then we realize ... there's debris everywhere.  
The remnants of a fuselage. Luggage. All eradicated to bits.  
It's a massive accident.

AIRPORT OFFICIAL (PRE-LAP)  
So renovations are --

**EXT. SEATTLE-TACOMA AIRPORT - DAY**

An **AIRPORT OFFICIAL** walks outside a hangar, escorting --

**DOMINIC GATES** (60s), reporter for the Seattle Times, a sober look about him, Irish accent muted by decades in the States.

AIRPORT OFFICIAL  
-- starting early 2020. Current  
plan is to expand and renovate the  
terminals, main concourse, parking  
structure.

DOMINIC  
When do you expect to be completed?

AIRPORT OFFICIAL  
Jeez, I mean, goal is five years,  
but you know how these things go.

DOMINIC

Sure do.

(takes note, then)

I'm also hearing some grumblings  
about union strikes --

AIRPORT OFFICIAL

Heard something I don't know?

DOMINIC

Hmm, so it's not true then?

AIRPORT OFFICIAL

Come on, Dom -- you know I'm not at  
liberty to comment on ongoing union  
discussions.

DOMINIC

(innocently)

Just thought I'd ask.

(onto)

All right, that's about all I've  
got -- thanks for your time.

AIRPORT OFFICIAL

(shaking)

Sure thing.

**EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY**

Dominic walks to his car. His phone rings, he picks up.

DOMINIC

Colleen, what's the word? How are  
the kids?

COLLEEN (V.O.)

Kids are good, Dom. Abby needs  
braces. The orthodontist says her  
teeth are beyond fucked.

DOMINIC

He said that?

COLLEEN (V.O.)

Not in so many words.

DOMINIC

How much is that gonna cost?

COLLEEN (V.O.)

Dunno, but it doesn't look like  
we're going to Orlando next spring.

DOMINIC  
 Disneyworld's overrated anyway --  
 overpriced bullshit, am I right?

COLLEEN (V.O.)  
 (laughs, then)  
 Look, I just got off the phone with  
 my point in Asia.

DOMINIC  
 Anything I should know about?

COLLEEN (V.O.)  
 Word is there was a commercial  
 airline crash. One of the regional  
 carriers.

DOMINIC  
 Any idea which one?

COLLEEN (V.O.)  
 Not yet, but I'm following up now.  
 I'll forward you whatever I get.

DOMINIC  
 Great, thanks, Coll.

**INT. FAST FOOD JOINT - DAY**

Dominic eats a burger and fries. His phone buzzes. He looks  
 at it -- starts to read something.

His eyes go wide. He quickly stuffs the last of his food in  
 his mouth, then rushes out the door.

**INT. BLOOMBERG OFFICES - DAY**

**PETER ROBISON** (40s), look of a former collegiate athlete --  
 but, you know, probably D3 tennis -- pours some coffee into  
 his mug.

**JOEL WEBER** (40s), monochromatic, British looking, well  
 groomed, walks up to him.

JOEL  
 Pete.

PETER  
 Hey, Joel. You want --

JOEL

No, I'm good. Already had three cups -- I'm wired.

(Peter laughs, beat)

By the way, how are your contacts at Boeing since the profile?

PETER

Good I guess. Why do you ask?

**INT. JOEL'S OFFICE - DAY**

Peter and Joel watch CNN on a television.

CNN REPORTER

(on TV)

-- reporting that all 189 passengers on the Lion Air flight are believed to be dead. Indonesian investigators are looking into the cause of the crash, but --

Joel mutes the TV.

PETER

Has Boeing made a press release yet?

JOEL

Not yet.

They both stare at the coverage for a moment.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Get in touch with them. See what you can find out.

PETER

Will do.

**INT. SEATTLE TIMES BULLPEN - DAY**

A logo on the wall. A typical bullpen with cubicles.

Dominic sits at his desk on the phone.

DOMINIC

I'm trying to get a hold of the maintenance logs for the plane ... for the Lion Air crash ... no I just talked to them, they're the ones who transferred me to --

Click. Hold music. He's getting the runaround. As he waits --

**MIKE BAKER** (30s), football player physique, ginger, less experienced reporter helping on the story, passes by.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)  
(flagging him down)  
Hey, Mike -- do me a favor.

MIKE  
What's up?

DOMINIC  
Get on the phone with the FAA -- see if you can find out any communications they're receiving out of Jakarta.

MIKE  
Yep, can do. Anything in particular?

DOMINIC  
See if they're mentioned the FDR at all.

MIKE  
Sure thing.

The music continues to play as Dominic scrolls through images of the crash on CNN.

#### **INT. BLOOMBERG CUBICLE - DAY**

Peter's on the phone. In front of him we see a copy of the February 2018 Bloomberg Businessweek. On it is --

**DENNIS MULLENBURG** (60s), Boeing CEO, balding Joe Biden type with piercing blue eyes, and the headline "UP. WAY UP. How Boeing seized the sky."

BOEING REP (V.O.)  
-- be dropping a formal press release in a few hours --

PETER  
If I could just have a word with Linda, we worked together on the Businessweek profile last --

BEOING REP (V.O.)  
 I'm sorry, that's all I can say  
 right now. You'll have to wait for  
 an official release.

PETER  
 But if I could just --

The phone line goes dead.

REPORTER (PRE-LAP)  
 Days after the crash, authorities  
 are still searching for answers to  
 what went wrong on Lion Air Flight  
 610 ...

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Images of the Lion Air crash on a television. Standing in  
 front of the screen is --

**MARK FORKNER** (50s), a bit soft around the edges, a very  
 formal guy, stands at the TV.

REPORTER  
 (on TV)  
 ... the remnants of the Lion Air  
 crash are now scattered across the  
 Java Sea. Indonesian authorities  
 are searching the debris for any  
 clues that might lead them to cause  
 of the crash ...

Mark's son **KYLE** (15) pops his head into the room --

KYLE  
 Dad, what's the hold up? We're all  
 waiting for you.

MARK  
 Sorry, I just -- you know what? You  
 all go ahead, I'll meet you at the  
 restaurant.

KYLE  
 You sure?

Mark smiles, nods. Kyle takes off. As Mark heads out of the  
 room we notice on the wall --

A framed photo of Mark in a pilot uniform.

**INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT**

A light switches on, revealing storage, boxes, etc. Mark walks down the stairs.

He starts looking through various old filing cabinets, searching for something.

Finally, he finds a folder and looks through the contents. Printouts.

We can't make out the contents but we catch the logo at the top: The Boeing Company.

Mark reads the contents, takes it in. Off his look --

**INT. BOEING 747 - DAY**

A rumbling of turbulence. Some verbal grumblings from other **PASSENGERS**. A ding of the seatbelt sign.

A **FLIGHT ATTENDANT** smiles reassuringly as she makes her way down the aisle. She passes --

**EDDY KNOWLES** (50s), seasoned traveler, lifelong mid-level salesman, from the heartland of America.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Sir, could you just put your tray table up for me? We're about to land.

Eddy smiles, obliges. He gathers a set of papers, puts them back in a folder.

On the folder is a logo for United Airlines.

**INT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT - DAY**

Outside, we see the 747 sits parked safely on the tarmac.

Passengers exit the jetway. Eddy rolls his suitcase into the terminal, his phone to his ear.

**SUPER: JUNE 2011**

EDDY

Hi, hun. Just wanted to let you know that I landed all right. Bit of turbulence but easy enough.

(beat)

(MORE)

EDDY (CONT'D)

Oh and forgot to mention that Brian asked about using the lake house with his friends next weekend. I told him he could have it, figured it was his turn to use it.

Eddy spots someone in the distance he knows.

EDDY (CONT'D)

Hot damn, I don't believe it -- hun, all right, I'll see you next week, 'kay? I'll get you some of those chocolates you like -- love you.

(hangs up)

Son of a -- Jeff Spalding, look who it is. I didn't know they were sending you back here.

**JEFF SPALDING** (50s), slick, wearing a suit, stands with his laptop case strapped to his shoulder. It has Delta logo.

JEFF

Eddy, nice to see you.

(they shake)

You gotta love trade shows -- only time I can get away from the fucking kids.

EDDY

Wait 'til they leave the house -- you'll never feel freer.

JEFF

(laughs, then)

What's the word over in Chicago?

EDDY

Best time of year. Except for the humidity.

JEFF

Think you've got it bad? Come to Atlanta -- walk outside and the air slaps you across the face.

Jeff and Eddy laugh, realize they're standing in front of an airport bar.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Wanna?

**INT. AIRPORT BAR - DAY**

Jeff and Eddy sit at the counter, drinking a beer.

JEFF

Gotta love Paris for the  
croissants, but goddam their  
service is slow.

Jeff waves to get some attention.

EDDY

We give Americans a bad name.

JEFF

What're you gonna do?

The drinks finally arrive.

EDDY

Well, cheers I guess -- to Europe.

JEFF

To Europe.

(clinking)

So what're y'all in the market for  
this year?

EDDY

Recession still has us squeezed  
pretty tight, but we're thinking of  
ramping up the fleet a bit. You?

JEFF

We're in the market for a couple  
new planes, but we're sticking to  
single aisle. Shifting focus away  
from long-haul flights.

EDDY

Gotta get those business travelers.  
Those shuttle flights.

JEFF

Oil prices are killing us.

EDDY

You're telling me. We can barely  
make up the difference -- between  
the unions, the cost of fuel,  
cleaning, repairs -- we gotta find  
an edge somewhere.

JEFF

Look over there.

Jeff eyes a group of **AMERICAN AIRLINES EXECS** rolling their suitcases through the airport.

EDDY

Fuckin' American. They roll in here like the goddam Yakuza.

They watch as they make their way toward the exit.

JEFF

(onto)

Wanna split a cab?

EDDY

Yeah, might as well save a buck.

**EXT. BLOOMBERG NYC OFFICES - DAY**

Various **EMPLOYEES** make their way in and out of the lobby.

PETER (PRE-LAP)

Boeing released a press statement, basically --

**INT. JOEL'S OFFICE - DAY**

Peter stands at the door, while Joel redlines a story.

PETER

-- absolving themselves of any responsibility. They're calling it a maintenance issue.

(reading from phone)

Customers quote have our assurance that the 737 MAX is as safe as any airplane that has ever flown the skies.

JOEL

What's the FAA saying?

PETER

Not hearing a peep out of the FAA. It's sort of outside their purview at this point.

JOEL

What do you mean "outside their purview"? They're the Federal Aviation Agency.

PETER

This is a foreign carrier flying out of Jakarta. There weren't any Americans on board. They have to defer to the local authorities in this situation.

JOEL

The FAA is responsible for any plane manufactured in the United States --

PETER

They're saying it's not a plane issue. It's a pilot issue. Lion Air has a shit record with its pilots, so it stands well within the realm of possibility that the fault is on them.

JOEL

What about you? You think it was pilot error?

PETER

Couldn't say at this point.

JOEL

You were inside Boeing -- what sort of confidence do you have in their operations?

Peter's face betrays his confidence in Boeing.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Grab Julie and some of the interns, see if you can dig into this some more.

PETER

(obligingly)  
All right.

**EXT. TORONTO OFFICE BUILDING - DAY**

Various **BUSINESS TYPES** enter the building. A typical workday.

As we make our way inside, we follow someone from behind.

**PAUL NJOROGE** (30s), dressed in a suit, clean cut, well educated, but deferential in the way immigrants often are in a new country.

**INT. TORONTO OFFICE BUILDING - DAY**

Paul badges into security system and heads into the elevator, allowing everyone to enter before him.

He finally steps inside, we get a clear look at his face as he turns around. The look of a kind and well-intentioned man.

**INT. INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT OFFICE - DAY**

Paul drops his bag down at his desk, grabs his laptop and takes a seat.

He finalizes some numbers on a spreadsheet.

PAUL (PRE-LAP)  
As you can see here --

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Paul sits at a conference table with **TWO INVESTORS** and another **INVESTMENT MANAGER**. He speaks with a measured cadence, making sure every word is chosen with care.

PAUL  
-- your portfolio has performed in line with expectations, slightly outpacing global markets. These charts show --

On the screen is a selection of well-known stocks like Apple, Microsoft, GM, Walmart, etc.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
-- U.S. blue chips have been performing at record rates with mega-cap stocks at historical highs. This is due to healthy balance sheets -- multinationals have been employing cost cutting measures since the recession and have benefitted from increased global expansion. Companies are more profitable than ever.

MANAGER

We're thinking of adding a few new mega-cap stocks into the mix, including aviation.

PAUL

Yes, as you can see by these charts Airbus and Boeing have been vying for market share for years. While Airbus continues to outpace Boeing in overall deliveries, Boeing outperforms in selling wide-body aircrafts. We recommend allocating a small portion of your overall portfolio to --

**INT. INVESTMENT OFFICE LOBBY - DAY**

The group chitchats as the team sees the investors out.

Paul, warm by nature, charms them easily.

**INT. BOEING CONFERENCE HALL - DAY**

A table set up with name tags. A **BOEING EMPLOYEE** helps a **DEUTSCHE BANK ANALYST** get a name tag.

BOEING EMPLOYEE

There you go. And a copy of the investor presentation.

Deutsche spots a **GOLDMAN SACHS ANALYST** nearby.

DEUTSCHE

What up, Goldman? You covering this?

GOLDMAN

Yeah, man. They took me off industrials and put me on aerospace.

DEUTSCHE

Aerospace is where it's at. It's where all the action is.

GOLDMAN

Doesn't fucking matter to me. It's all the same. Copper, hotels, airplanes, it's all just product on a shelf.

Goldman heads off toward the --

**INT. BOEING CONFERENCE HALL - DAY**

Deutsche and Goldman fill plates with breakfast spread from a buffet table.

GOLDMAN

Food's always shit at these things.  
Can't we get an omelette bar?

DEUTSCHE

How about a Belgian waffle?

GOLDMAN

Tired of bagels. Every day it's a  
goddam bagel. These quarterly  
investor presentations make me  
wanna jump out a window.

Goldman grabs extra lox. Deutsche follows his lead.

DEUTSCHE

So you boys gonna downgrade to a  
hold?

GOLDMAN

You kidding me? You seen their  
balance sheet. They're flush --  
they've already spent thirty  
billion on stock buybacks -- and  
oil prices -- I'm betting it goes  
over four hundred in a year.

DEUTSCHE

Four hundred? You can't be serious.

GOLDMAN

*Dead* serious.

Goldman smiles smugly, takes off toward the folding chairs.  
We see on the screen **Boeing Q3 Investor Presentation**.

**INT. CHEVY TAHOE - DAY**

Mark Forkner sits in the front seat of his car. He's parked  
outside a non-descript office building.

He's watching the front door, waiting for someone, when he  
spots someone, gets out of the car.

**EXT. SEATTLE STREET - DAY**

Mark runs across the street, catches up to --

**PATRIK GUSTAVSSON** (50s), too tall, looks like he's in IT.

MARK

Patrik!

PATRIK

Jesus, Mark, what are you doing --

MARK

I've been trying to get a hold of you. Why haven't you --

PATRIK

You can't be here.

Patrik approaches his car.

MARK

We need to talk.

PATRIK

There's nothing to talk about.

MARK

You saw the news, didn't you? The crash?

PATRIK

Yeah, I saw it. What do you --

MARK

I spoke to some friends I know from NTSB and they're saying the plane was experiencing throttling down on takeoff. The plane was --

PATRIK

Mark, we can't be talking about this, *all right?*

Patrik gets inside his car.

MARK

Patrik, I was in the sim. I --

PATRIK

Mark, stop it! Stop talking! Just go *home*.

Patrik reverses, drives off, leaving Mark standing there.

**INT. SEATTLE TIMES BULLPEN - DAY**

Mike sits at his desk on the phone.

MIKE

Thanks so much for the info, Colin.  
Appreciate it.

He hangs up, thinks for a moment.

DOMINIC (PRE-LAP)

A faulty sensor?

**INT. SEATTLE TIMES BREAK ROOM - DAY**

Dominic and Mike refill their coffees.

MIKE

That's what they're saying. The AOA sensor was replaced two days before the flight. They're saying the sensor was malfunctioning, giving the pilots bad readings.

DOMINIC

You get a hold of the design documents from Boeing yet?

MIKE

I have a request in, but I haven't heard back.

DOMINIC

We need to get a look at those documents so we can confirm what went wrong with the plane -- keep on them.

Dominic walks off.

**EXT. LE BOURGET AIRPORT - DAY**

Various commercial planes sit on the tarmac. A group of **WORKERS** puts up a sign that reads: PARIS AIR SHOW 2011.

Crowds of **AIRCRAFT SELLERS** and **AIRLINE BUYERS** mingle. This is the largest aviation market in the world.

It happens every other year and it's the chance for the airplane manufacturers to sell big.

**INT. AIRPLANE HANGAR - DAY**

Various booths setting up. Boeing raises its logo over its booth. Some of their **REPS** get organized.

And over on the other side is Airbus.

Eddy and Jeff filling up on coffee at the concession table. They eye the gathering at the Boeing station.

EDDY

Boeing's been losing market share to Airbus.

JEFF

They *hate* each other. I love it.

EDDY

You hearing anything about the Dreamliner?

JEFF

Yeah, the *Dreamliner*. More like a fucking nightmare from what I've heard.

EDDY

They're three years delayed on delivery.

JEFF

Saying there's some problems in assembly. How much have they spent on it?

EDDY

They're way over budget, *billions* over budget.

JEFF

Someone's gonna get fired for that.

EDDY

You kidding me? Who are they gonna fire? They barely got any engineers left. They've gutted the place. They've already subcontracted all the manufacturing -- they're ruthless motherfuckers.

Then over to the Airbus table.

JEFF

What do the Europeans got?

EDDY

Heard they're selling an update to the A320. They announced it last year.

JEFF

What kind of update?

EDDY

Nothing sexy. New engine, more fuel efficient, something like that. I dunno exactly.

JEFF

(intrigued)

Huh.

EDDY

(offering)

Biscuit?

JEFF

No sweets -- doctor's orders. I'm pre-diabetic.

EDDY

What the hell is *pre-diabetic*?

**EXT. JAKARTA STREET - NIGHT**

A candle flickers. There are hundreds more. Flowers too.

Printed photos of **VARIOUS LION AIR PASSENGERS** are placed together creating a makeshift memorial.

The sheer number of photos is overwhelming.

**INT. SEATTLE TIMES BULLPEN - NIGHT**

Dominic sits at his desk, poring over papers. As he flips through, up walks --

**NINA SHAPIRO** (50s), fellow reporter, also his wife. She's intense and smart.

NINA

We're late -- let's get a move on.

DOMINIC

Can we cancel?

NINA

No, I promised Kim we'd have dinner with them, it's been months -- come on, we gotta go.

DOMINIC

All right -- yeah, okay.

Dominic starts to gather his things. Nina notices a huge stack of papers on his desk.

NINA

Some light reading?

DOMINIC

Design documents submitted to the FAA for approval for the MAX.

NINA

Anything interesting?

DOMINIC

(takes a breath)  
Can't say for sure.

NINA

What *can* you say?

DOMINIC

Well ... I've been noticing some serious design flaws in the automated software system they installed on the plane -- the system they added when they updated the 737.

(beat)

The Indonesian authorities have reported that it was a faulty sensor on the nose that misread the angle on the incoming air flow. It *had* to have been a known issue.

NINA

You think Boeing knew about the problem?

DOMINIC

Don't know for sure -- but I just can't see how Boeing *didn't* know about it.

NINA

Well, if you're gonna publish that Boeing knew about the safety issue and didn't say anything, you better have sources to back it up.

DOMINIC

I know.

NINA

Come on, let's get dinner.

Dominic grabs his coat and they exit.

**EXT. BLOOMBERG OFFICES - NIGHT**

A **CLEANING CREW** mops the floors of the lobby.

**INT. BLOOMBERG OFFICES - NIGHT**

Peter walks into the doorway, stands at Joel's door as Joel finishes up some work.

PETER

Someone leaked the FDR from the crash.

JOEL

The FDR?

PETER

The Flight Data Recorder. It's basically the data recorder that --  
 (off confused look)  
 Better just come have a look --  
 it'll be easier to explain.

**INT. BLOOMBERG CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT**

Peter tapes a printout of a graph of the Flight Data Recorder (FDR) on the whiteboard as Joel and some **RESEARCH INTERNS** and **JULIE JOHNNSON** (30s), fellow reporter, sit at the table.

Peter begins to trace the line with a marker.

PETER

Okay, pretty simple. This line shows the altitude of the plane over time -- this one's the velocity of the aircraft.  
 (pointing)  
 (MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

Right here ... takeoff. Climbing,  
climbing, climbing ...

He starts to circle various points on the line graph.

PETER (CONT'D)

You can see here, here, here -- as  
the plane climbs, the MCAS system  
keeps forcing the nose down. The  
pilots are --

JOEL

Wait, what's MCAS?

JULIE

(reading)

MCAS. Maneuvering Characteristics  
Augmentation System.

PETER

It's the software Boeing installed  
on the plane when they upgraded the  
737 to the MAX. You can see the  
pilots keep trying to take manual  
control and to regain altitude, but  
MCAS keeps forcing the plane down  
and speed up -- the same thing  
happened the day before on another  
flight and the pilot managed to  
land safely. But not this time.  
*This* time, the pilots couldn't  
force the plane up -- the system  
made the plane nosedive until ...

Peter shows the final altitude descent on the line graph.

JOEL

Jesus, why the hell would it do a  
thing like that?

JULIE

It gets a bit technical, so just  
bear with us.

PETER

Okay, so MCAS was installed after  
Boeing retrofitted the old 737 with  
its new engines. The new engines  
were bigger than the old ones, so  
when they were installed --

(off to)

Julie, do you have a printout of  
the schematic?

Julie grabs pages, tapes them up to the board, showing the side view of the plane.

PETER (CONT'D)

Right, okay, so you can see here, that the new engine actually sits slightly above the wing and *this* changes the aerodynamics of the plane. Engineers found that because of the new design, the plane tended to pitch up during takeoff which could result in a stall. Are you still with me?

JOEL

Yeah, I think so.

JULIE

A stall is not good -- it's a really bad thing. Okay, so rather than completely re-engineering the plane, Boeing installed the new software system, MCAS, which would force the plane back down again -- to avoid the stall.

JOEL

So the software forces the plane to nose down when it's about to stall?

PETER

That's what it's *designed* to do, but only under extreme scenarios. It should rarely ever kick in and it shouldn't have been triggered this time, not in this scenario.

(beat)

But for some reason, it triggers anyway, and the pilots try to figure out how to override it, MCAS keeps pushing them down, over and over, and they're gaining speed and eventually, the software overtakes them completely.

JOEL

Shit ... did Boeing know about these problems?

PETER

It appears there had been reports of some issues with the AOA sensor, and it's looking like the sensor on this plane had just been replaced two days before.

JOEL

So is it a repair issue or is it a design problem?

PETER

I dunno. Maybe ... both? I can't say for sure.

JOEL

(thinking)

Okay.

PETER

We'd like to dig more on this -- we think it goes deeper than a maintenance issue -- I'm hearing some grumblings from pilots and airlines. We need to talk to the engineers and the FAA --

JOEL

All right. Keep at it. Seems like there's something to all this.

**BEGIN MONTAGE**

>> Paul works at his desk, plugging numbers into a spreadsheet. We see research he's doing on different stocks. He finally closes his laptop and packs up.

>> Paul walks along the street, makes his way toward the metro station. He carries some groceries in his hands.

>> Paul walks up the steps toward his house, makes his way inside.

**END MONTAGE**

**INT. TORONTO HOME - NIGHT**

**CAROLINE NJOROGE** (early 30s), intelligent, focused, sits at the dining table finishing some accounting work.

CAROLINE

(Swahili, subtitled)

Quiet, quiet. I just put them down.

PAUL  
Sorry, sorry.

Paul takes off his shoes, sets the grocery bags down, and tiptoes toward her. They kiss.

CAROLINE  
How was work?

PAUL  
Okay, yeah. Busy. How was your day?

CAROLINE  
Also busy, yeah.

PAUL  
Did you manage to file the residency paperwork yet?

CAROLINE  
Yes, I turned it in yesterday -- they said we had to wait a few weeks before we hear back.

PAUL  
Good. It's in their hands now.

CAROLINE  
Did you eat?

PAUL  
Yes, I had something earlier.

CAROLINE  
There are leftovers in the refrigerator.

PAUL  
Okay, maybe in a bit. I'm going to shower now.

Paul starts to creep up the stairs when --

CAROLINE  
Paul?

PAUL  
Yes?

CAROLINE  
I went to the doctor today.

PAUL  
Everything all right?

CAROLINE  
I thought I had the flu, but ...

PAUL  
What is it? Something the matter?

CAROLINE  
No, I'm fine ...  
(beat)  
Paul ... I'm pregnant.

PAUL  
Pregnant?

CAROLINE  
Yes.

Paul takes it in for a moment, then walks back toward her, stares at her for a beat.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)  
What is it?

PAUL  
I'm very happy.

Paul grabs hold of her and they hug.

**INT. BOEING CHICAGO HEADQUARTERS - DAY**

A group of **EXECUTIVES** sit around a table. There's a good deal of commotion. Finally, the room hushes as --

Dennis Muilenburg enters the room. He takes a seat at the head of the table. Everyone turns toward him in anticipation.

DENNIS  
All right, where are we on all this?

**KEVIN McALLISTER** (50s), everyone's dad, head of commercial airplanes division, leans in.

KEVIN  
We've already issued a press release extending our sincerest condolences to the families of those lost in the crash, but we haven't said anything about the crash beyond the sensor repair.  
(beat)  
(MORE)

KEVIN (CONT'D)

We need to get ahead of the publicity around this -- we already have the airlines and the pilots breathing down our necks.

DENNIS

What do you propose?

KEVIN

Start sending reps out to all the airlines and hold an official Q&A for the pilots. We need to reassure them that the plane is safe to fly.

DENNIS

It is safe to fly, *right?*

KEVIN

The plane is fine. It's as safe as anything.

DENNIS

You don't sound convinced.

KEVIN

We're gonna need to take a look at MCAS, work on some updates, and relay this information to customers. We can't avoid it anymore.

DENNIS

I've got Gary Kelly chasing me down -- I keep telling him the plane is safe. Southwest has thirty-four in its fleet. I told him it's business as usual -- keep flying the planes.

KEVIN

That's right -- that's what you should tell them.

DENNIS

What are we saying about the pilots?

KEVIN

Nothing, Lion Air's one of biggest customers, we're not going to shift blame to them.

(beat)

(MORE)

KEVIN (CONT'D)

That said, everyone knows Lion Air's reputation for overworking their pilots and their standards for training them speaks louder.

DENNIS

All right. Everyone, get ahead of this. There is no scenario under which we recall this plane. We need to continue delivering on our current orders and putting in new ones.

KEVIN

(to room)

Our official statement is that the plane is as safe as it ever was and this crash was tragic yet isolated accident.

Executives around the room eye each other, perhaps knowing more of the truth than they seem to admit.

**EXT. LAKE HOUSE - DAY**

Burgers on the grill. **KIDS** running around the yard. A group of Pacific Northwest **INTELLECTUALS**.

**STAN SORSCHER** (50s) weathered physics professor, very intelligent, stands at the grill. In the distance we see some of the crew playing with a new drone.

A phone rings in the background and we hear --

WOMAN'S VOICE

Stan, phone!

Stan looks off --

STAN (PRE-LAP)

Hello?

**INT. NYC APARTMENT - DAY**

Julie sits on her sofa, printed pages everywhere.

JULIE

Hi, is this Stan? Stan Sorscher?

**INT. LAKE HOUSE - DAY**

Stan hangs on the phone, while he stares out at the party near the lake.

STAN  
Speaking.

**INTERCUT NYC APARTMENT AND LAKE HOUSE**

JULIE  
Stan, this is Julie Johnson. I'm a reporter at Bloomberg.

STAN  
Hi.

JULIE  
I read your op-ed on Boeing corporate culture --

STAN  
Oh yeah?

JULIE  
Look, sorry to bother you on the weekend --

STAN  
It's fine.

JULIE  
I was hoping I could sit down with you -- we're working on a longer piece on what exactly went down inside the company that led to the approval of 737 MAX.

STAN  
Jeez, yeah?

JULIE  
(beat)  
Yeah.

STAN  
Okay, sure.

JULIE  
Look, I'll be in Seattle this week, you're in the area, right?

STAN  
Yeah, I'll be downtown this week.

JULIE

Great. Can we grab coffee? I'd like to hear about what you saw when you were inside the company.

STAN

All right, I mean, how much time do you have?

Off Julie's look --

**BEGIN MONTAGE**

>> A beeping dot. On a monitor. It's a plane.

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER

Delta 125, you're third in line, stand by.

>> An **AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER** sits at her station, overlooking the tarmac. An **FAA REGULATOR** stand behind her observing, holding a report checklist in her hand.

>> The Regulator sits in the passenger seat of an airport vehicle, observing the tarmac as they drive.

>> The Regulator stands under a plane as **MECHANICS** run through an inspection.

>> The Regulator finalizes her checklist, signs off.

**END MONTAGE**

EDDY (PRE-LAP)

Wanna know the most fucked up part of the whole thing?

**INT. PARIS HOTEL BAR - NIGHT**

Eddy sits at a table with Jeff sipping whiskey. A news program on the TV reminds us we're in 2011.

JEFF

What's that?

EDDY

The fucked up thing is it all came tumbling down because the system works too well. It did too good a job doing what it was designed for.

Various other **CONVENTION ATTENDEES** hang around the room in their own conversations.

JEFF

How do you mean by that?

EDDY

Okay, it's like -- here's an analogy -- in the 1950s, as part of the Great Leap Forward, Mao Zedong -- you know Mao Zedong, right?

JEFF

Sure. Chairman --

EDDY

Yeah, Chairman Mao -- well, he decides to implement what he calls the Four Pests Campaign --

JEFF

Four pests? What is --

EDDY

The four pests -- rats, flies, mosquitoes, and sparrows. It was a hygiene campaign to eradicate the country of pestilence and disease. So he, you know, creates this public campaign to kill all these animals, thinking, hey, these dirty rodents are disgusting, disease carrying -- they're gross, they make us look primitive -- so let's get rid of them.

JEFF

Okay --

EDDY

So that's what they do -- you know, they start destroying sparrow nests or shooting them out of the sky, they encourage everyone in the country to do this and it works.

JEFF

So it was a success?

EDDY

Massive fucking success, except ...

JEFF

What?

EDDY

These orders from high up, the system they built, didn't take into consideration the adverse effects. What the Chinese government didn't realize was that it was the sparrows who kept the insect populations in check. So when all the sparrows were gone, the locust population ballooned and ate all the crops.

JEFF

Fuck.

EDDY

It exacerbated the Great Chinese Famine which is estimated to have killed up to forty-five *million* people of starvation.

JEFF

Forty-five million, Jesus.

EDDY

It was misguided regulation. It gave too much authority with too little forethought and oversight.

(beat)

And that's what happened with the banks and the mortgages. They built the system and the let them use it for exactly what it was designed for, without anyone keeping them in check.

(beat)

Kill the sparrows and you get the locusts.

Eddy takes a final swing of his drink.

DOMINIC (PRE-LAP)

We need to get someone from the FAA on record.

**INT. SEATTLE HOME - NIGHT**

Nina chops vegetables. Dominic sits at his computer looking through documents, phone to his ear.

MIKE (V.O.)

I'm looking into it.

DOMINIC  
Did you speak to Ludtke?

**INT. SEATTLE APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Mike also pores over mounds of printed pages.

MIKE  
No, I'm supposed to get on the  
phone with him next week.

DOMINIC (V.O.)  
We need to know what was going on  
inside Boeing during the  
certification of the plane.

**INT. SEATTLE TIMES BULLPEN - DAY**

Dominic sits at his desk, scrolling through a massive  
document. He finally gets to the end.

He thinks for a second, then he does a keyword search on the  
PDF ... MCAS: 1 result. He scrolls, takes in what he reads.

Then, he leans back, shakes his head.

**INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

**DON SHELTON** (60s), current editor, nearing the end of his  
career, sits across from --

**MICHELE FLORES** (50s), cheery, has the energy of a younger  
reporter, you might not guess she has a Pulitzer. She's the  
new editor.

DON  
-- the number of staffers for the  
next fiscal year.

MICHELE  
All right. I think we can make it  
work.

DON  
(noticing)  
Dominic, come in.

Dominic stands at the door.

DOMINIC  
Sorry, got a second? Didn't mean to interrupt --

DON  
Yeah, no, close the door.

DOMINIC  
(enters)  
Michele, hi.

DON  
Good time to loop her in on the story, since she'll be taking over.

DOMINIC  
(taking a seat)  
Right.

DON  
So what do you got? You guys have been deep in the research.

DOMINIC  
It's overwhelming -- airplanes require a lot documentation.

DON  
I hear the Times is gonna drop a story soon. We better publish soon.

DOMINIC  
We're working -- just wanna get all the facts right.

DON  
So what's on your mind?

DOMINIC  
Okay, so still no word out of the FAA about the design flaws I flagged.

MICHELE  
So we're sure there's something wrong with the plane then?

DOMINIC  
The FAA won't say it, but between you and me ... yes, there's something wrong with the plane. The important question now is how much did Boeing know -- and what did it fail to disclose.

DON

Right.

DOMINIC

We've also gone through all the approval documents from the FAA.

MICHELE

And?

DOMINIC

Okay, so Boeing sent out a new manual when they delivered the MAX to airlines. That's obviously required by the FAA for any new model -- thing was like hundreds of pages -- it was a slog.

(beat)

Anyway, guess how many times the manual mentioned MCAS.

MICHELE

I dunno, how many?

DOMINIC

Once ... in the index.

MICHELE

So you're telling us that Boeing implemented a new software system which essentially took control of the plane, causing it to crash, and they didn't mention it to the airlines?

DOMINIC

That's exactly what I'm saying.

**INT. NYC CONFERENCE HALL - DAY**

A group of **PILOTS** and **AIRLINE REPS** sit in folding chairs.

As the commotion grows, we land back on --

Kevin McAllister who steps up to the podium.

KEVIN

Hello, everyone, thank you all for coming today.

(MORE)

KEVIN (CONT'D)

You've all been very patient with us for the last few weeks, and I know you've got questions and we've allocated time to answer all of them, but first I'd just like to say one thing.

(beat)

The plane is one-hundred percent safe. The AOA sensor error that caused the misreading in this incident was due to a maintenance issue. You all have my assurance that something like this will not happen again.

(beat)

All right, let's take some questions. Bill?

**ANGLE ON: BILL** (50s) training expert for a major airline.

BILL

Yeah, Kevin, why weren't we made aware of the MCAS system?

KEVIN

Thanks for the question, Bill. MCAS is only triggered in extreme circumstances. We didn't want to overwhelm pilots with unnecessary information. There is no reasonable belief that any pilot would ever encounter MCAS in ten million flights.

BILL

But these pilots did.

KEVIN

Because of the AOA sensor misreading, it activated MCAS. But the Lion Air pilots lacked the necessary training to handle it -- we all know where they get these guys. Going through the NNC checklist, any American pilot with any degree of airmanship would have been able to navigate the system without error.

BILL

But we heard you'd be pushing an update to the software?

KEVIN

Yes, we've reviewed the system and will implement further safeguards. Yeah, Robert?

**ANGLE ON: ROBERT** (50s), another airline manager.

ROBERT

Do you think the FAA is going to ground the plane?

KEVIN

No, there's no reason --

ROBERT

Because we've got a lot of this aircraft in our fleet. It would cost us a lot of money.

KEVIN

The FAA is not going to ground the plane, guys. We work closely with the regulators -- the plane is going to keep flying. I promise you.

**ANGLE ON:** Peter Tobin in the audience, looking incredulous.

**INT. TORONTO PARK - DAY**

Paul and Caroline watch as their two children **RYAN** (6) and **KELLI** (3) play on the swings nearby.

CAROLINE

Not too hard, Ryan! Be careful, she's still small!

Paul smiles to her, looks down at her already showing belly.

PAUL

(Swahili, subtitled)  
You like it here, right?

CAROLINE

Yes.

PAUL

Me too. I've never seen such a clean city.

CAROLINE

Not a piece of trash.

PAUL  
(laughing)  
Not one.

CAROLINE  
(beat)  
She'll be born here, which means  
she'll be a citizen automatically.

PAUL  
This is a good country to raise a  
family.

CAROLINE  
They like us here.

PAUL  
People here are kind to foreigners.

They share a smile.

CAROLINE  
What time is your flight tomorrow?

PAUL  
Early in the morning.

CAROLINE  
Do you want me to drive you?

PAUL  
No, I already called a car service.

Just then Ryan runs up with Kelli.

RYAN  
(back to English)  
Dad, did you bring the football?

PAUL  
It's in the car -- come, let's go  
get it.

Caroline picks Kelli up as Paul grabs Ryan and flips him  
upside down playfully.

**INT. SEATTLE STARBUCKS - DAY**

Julie sits at a table with her notepad out as she spots --  
Stan Sorscher walking through the door. She waves to him.

**INT. SEATTLE STARBUCKS - LATER**

Julie and Stan are mid conversation --

JULIE

-- and so did you ever work on the MAX certifications yourself?

STAN

No, but I worked on the 787. And it was a mess, let's just say that.

JULIE

So you think this is a broader issue than just one plane -- you think something's wrong inside the company?

STAN

I don't want to make broad generalizations, but --

JULIE

I guess -- maybe I'm just looking for some context to the whole thing.

STAN

If you want context to what was going on at Boeing, you have to go all the way back to the McDonnell acquisition.

JULIE

(flips through notes)  
That was -- wait, I think I remember --

STAN

In 1997 Boeing acquired McDonnell Douglas, another airplane manufacturer, but honestly, you could hardly call McDonnell that -- they didn't know how to build an aircraft or run a company -- and they especially hated engineers.

JULIE

An airplane manufacturer who hates engineers, how does that work?

STAN

Exactly. They considered airplanes to be like -- pants.

(MORE)

STAN (CONT'D)

They could pay as little as they wanted to have them made. After the acquisition, there was a change in the company culture. See, Boeing started as a leader in innovation - it had to employ the smartest engineers because it was difficult work they were doing. But -- and I can't take credit for this, because it was my uncle who put it this way -- once the jet engine came along, that was the last great piece of innovation. And so aircraft manufacturing became a commodities business, not an innovation business ... pants.

JULIE

So, what, there was pressure to cut costs?

STAN

You kidding? They cut everything -- they gutted entire departments. Half the engineers were gone. And they began outsourcing all manufacturing to outside vendors, to whoever could bid the lowest. You just have to look at the Dreamliner to understand the gross mismanagement at play.

JULIE

Wow, this is all great -- look I have to run, but can we keep talking?

STAN

Yeah, you have my number.

#### INT. INVESTMENT OFFICE - DAY

Goldman, our friendly stock analyst, does a presentation for his fellow **INVESTMENT TEAM**. But mostly for us. Maybe he even speaks directly into camera. Images whirl by us.

Graphs. Charts. Airplanes.

GOLDMAN

Let's take a look at The Boeing Company, shall we? Publicly traded. Market cap's somewhere north of \$200 billion. Healthy revenue.

(MORE)

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

Hefty profits. So how do we improve on an already mature stock? Well, let's take a look at how Boeing became one of the most profitable and important companies in the world.

An assembly line. Engines. Planes.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

First, you gotta be able to sell something for more than it costs you to make it. In this case it's aircrafts.

Businessmen shaking hands in front of model airplane.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

But can you make it for even less? Less money paid to suppliers means higher profit margins for the company. Boeing figured out how to build planes for cheap. In fact, over the last two decades they were the gold standard for cost cutting measures.

A bunch of **ENGINEERS** on strike.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

Unions are expensive, so why not outsource production to a state without union regulations where you can hire any schmuck off the street?

A group of **WORKERS** hanging outside a plant smoking.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

But you can't stop there. You gotta save more. A.B.S. Always. Be. Saving. How do you do that? Stop spending money on R&D. New planes cost a lot of money to design, engineer and test.

A room full of **ENGINEERS**. Time lapse as they all pack up their things and exit.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

Stick with your best sellers and only make changes when *absolutely* necessary.

An **AIRLINE PILOT** sits in the cockpit.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

And since it's expensive to train pilots and because the FAA requires all pilots to fly only one model of plane, never ever build a brand new model. Always always ALWAYS -- say it with me -- upgrade.

A plane schematic is only slightly altered. Meanwhile a stock ticker continues to climb.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

Once you've got your assembly as cheap as you can get it, why not get everyone else to manufacture the parts for you?

A bunch of **SUPPLIERS** bid in an auction, raising paddles.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

Need wheels? Go to market. Carpet, engines, landing gear? Let the suppliers bid each other down and take the lowest offer. Do this for every piece of the plane. It's all just parts anyway. All Boeing has to do is put them together. Like legos.

Pretty soon the lowest bidders are left, looking taken advantage of.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

And if that's not enough and you wanna make a bit more cash for your investors, you've always got one final tool in your pocket ... the stock buyback. What's a stock buyback, you ask.

A bank account full of money. It starts to grow.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

Instead of spending money paying engineers or reinvesting in new plants or covering pension and health plans, stash the money until you have enough to buy back stock from the market. It's simple supply and demand. The less supply of stock on the open market, the higher the price.

(MORE)

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

Buy back some stock and send your share price soaring. Ka-ching, that's how you make a lot of stockholders rich.

Goldman sits there looking smug as ever.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

Any questions?

**EXT. FAA HEADQUARTERS - DAY**

A really depressing government building.

**INT. FAA OFFICE - DAY**

The Regulator we saw earlier sits at her cubicle. Let's call her **GRACE** (40s). She's an engineer and she's trying her best.

She scrolls through an article that has photos of all the deceased on Lion Air Flight 610.

Her attention is broken, by --

COLLEAGUE

Grace, here are the notes on the new Airbus that you asked for.

Grace quickly closes the window and takes the pages.

**BEGIN MONTAGE**

>> **BOEING EXECUTIVES** wait in a lobby. Some **AIRLINE REPS** come out and they shake hands.

AIRLINE REP

Welcome to Alaska Air. You want a coffee or something?

>> More Boeing Executives sit around a conference table, discussing the plane with Delta Reps.

BOEING EXECUTIVE

The FAA is on board with us. The plane is safe and we stand by it.

>> Boeing Executives entertain a group of **COMMERCIAL PILOTS** at a restaurant.

BOEING EXECUTIVE (CONT'D)  
 You know how fucking stupid those  
 pilots are. You're American pilots,  
 you've got nothing to worry about.

>> Dennis Muilenburg plays golf with **GARY KELLY** (60s) CEO of  
 Southwest Airlines. They shake hands.

DENNIS  
 I can assure you that you have  
 nothing to worry about.

>> Over and over, Boeing Executives make deals, shake hands,  
 etc., with the Airline Reps.

**END MONTAGE**

**SMASH CUT TO BLACK:**

**SUPER: MARCH 2019**

LESTER HOLT (PRE-LAP)  
 Breaking news out of Addis Ababa, a  
 commercial airline crashed on  
 takeoff killing all 157 on board.

**INT. SEATTLE HOME - NIGHT**

Dominic and Nina stand watching the television. Their  
 daughter **BETH** (18), sits at the table doing homework,  
 watching the TV from a distance.

LESTER HOLT  
 The plane was en route to Nairobi,  
 Kenya. Authorities are raising  
 questions to Boeing over the plane  
 involved in the crash, their model  
 737 MAX. This marks a second Boeing  
 737 MAX to crash --

BETH  
 Dad, isn't that --

DOMINIC  
 Yeah, Beth. Same one.

Dominic's phone rings.

MIKE (V.O.)  
 Are you seeing this?

DOMINIC  
 Yeah, I'm watching it now.

MIKE (V.O.)

Fuck.

**INT. NURSING HOME REC ROOM - NIGHT**

Julie sits with her **GRANDMOTHER** (80s), a board game in front of them, and other **SENIOR CITIZENS** as they all watch the same news segment.

GRANDMOTHER

Your turn, Julie.

JULIE

Yeah, sorry.

**INT. BLOOMBERG OFFICES - DAY**

Julie rushes into the office holding coffees, takes off her parka. Shivers a bit.

She joins Peter and the rest of the team in the --

**INT. BLOOMBERG CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

They've got pages taped up to the wall, papers spread everywhere, laptops open. Julies doles out coffees as --

JULIE

Yikes, fucking cold out there.  
Isn't it spring yet?

A **RESEARCH ASSISTANT** brings a file box of papers in and set is it down on the table. Everyone is working furiously.

MICHELE (PRE-LAP)

You're telling me they're not  
pulling the plane?

**INT. SEATTLE TIMES CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Dominic's team has also grown. Both Michele and Don sit in the room too.

DOMINIC

That's right.

Images of the Ethiopia Air wreck on the TV, muted in the background.

DON  
This is unreal.

MIKE  
It's gotta be MCAS again. There's  
no other explanation.

MICHELE  
How is the FAA not grounding this  
aircraft?

DOMINIC  
Muilenburg already called Trump to  
ask him not to -- he said okay.

DON  
There were Americans on board,  
right?

MIKE  
Eight, yeah.

DON  
That's gonna make waves.

MIKE  
It's completely irresponsible to  
keep this plane in the air -- the  
MAX is dangerous.

DON  
(thinking, then)  
We're doubling down on this. Let's  
figure out what happened here -- if  
this is a repeat of Lion Air,  
Boeing better have some fucking  
great answers.

DOMINIC  
Okay, we need touch points at the  
FAA, at Boeing, and with the  
investigators on the ground in  
Ethiopia.  
(realizing)  
God ...

MIKE  
What?

DOMINIC  
I have to get comment from the  
families of the Americans on board.  
(onto)  
(MORE)

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

This whole thing keeps getting better and better, doesn't it?

**INT. BLOOMBERG NYC OFFICES - DAY**

Peter picks up the phone and dials.

**INT. WASHINGTON DC OFFICE - DAY**

**ALLAN LEVIN** (60s), a politics guy, covers D.C. for Bloomberg. He's a busy guy, constantly multi-tasking.

ALLAN

Allan Levin.

**INTERCUT NYC AND DC OFFICES**

PETER

Allan, hi. This is Peter Robison calling out of New York. I've been covering aviation.

ALLAN

I just heard about the crash. Terrible.

PETER

Yeah, it is.  
(no time, onto)  
You cover new legislation, right?

ALLAN

That's right, yep.

PETER

Have you heard anything about the FAA reauthorization bill that passed on ... October 4th?

ALLAN

Hmm -- lemme think -- no, sorry, Peter, doesn't ring a bell. There are hundreds of new bills passed every year, we try to stick to covering the most important ones.

PETER

For sure, I understand. Look, maybe you can help find someone who might know more about it.

ALLAN

I can ask someone in research to have a look -- they're on top of all the new bills.

PETER

That'd be great, thank you.

ALLAN

No problem.

(beat)

So what's this new bill do?

**INT. RESEARCH OFFICE - DAY**

An overworked research assistant **AMY** (20s) sits in a windowless room on the phone.

AMY

Right, so the bill is basically more of the same.

**INTERCUT NYC AND RESEARCH OFFICE**

PETER

More of the same?

AMY

The bill continues giving more authority to the manufacturers to regulate their own planes.

PETER

That sounds like a recipe for disaster.

AMY

Depends who you're asking. The manufacturers say that the FAA is too slow and stifles innovation. They can't compete with Airbus if they can't get a plane approved. So they need to let Boeing take more control of the approval process.

PETER

Well, maybe they shouldn't be in the air if they can't get approved by the FAA.

AMY

Sounds like a reasonable argument to me.

PETER

But why would the FAA be okay with this?

AMY

Besides the fact that Boeing has lobbyists forcing their hand?

PETER

Besides that.

AMY

Because they have to. The FAA estimates that if they were to take on the sole responsibility of running the regulation of all new planes, they would need an additional ten-thousand people, which would cost billions of dollars. You ever try to get to get *billions* of dollars out of Congress?

PETER

I see how that would be difficult.

AMY

So what they do is they delegate most of the actual certifications to Boeing.

PETER

Isn't that an inherent problem? A company regulating itself.

AMY

Sure, but the assumption is that Boeing is in the business of building safe aircrafts. They wouldn't want to approve a plane that would fall out of the sky because that would adversely affect the company's bottom line. So they trust Boeing to handle the day-to-day and the FAA swoops in, does one final once over, and signs the paperwork.

(onto)

Here, I'm gonna send you our dossier on the bill along with our commented version.

PETER

Thanks, Amy.

**INT. NEWSROOM - NIGHT**

A **NEWS ANCHOR** on screen.

NEWS ANCHOR

Word out of China, the country is officially grounding all 737 MAX planes. This marks the first country to ground the plane since yesterday's crash in Ethiopia. Investigators are still looking into the cause of the crash, but speculation among airlines suggest it may be related to the same faulty sensor --

**INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT**

Mark Forkner sits at the bar by himself. He waves the **BARTENDER** over for a refill, throws his drink back.

NEWS ANCHOR

(on nearby TV)

-- that took down Lion Air Flight 610 back in October.

(beat)

Boeing continues to stand by the plane, a spokesman saying the 737 is one of the safest aircrafts in the world.

(beat)

Boeing suggested that pilot error may have led to the fatal crash --

He's definitely drunk. He absent-mindedly folds a piece of paper on the counter in front of him, as the Bartender comes over with another drink.

After a beat he reveals a paper plane. He look at it for a moment, then mimes it flying across the sky, his mind wandering.

As he lets it hang in the air in front of him, the sound of a jet engine --

**MATCH CUT TO:**

**EXT. SEATTLE-TACOMA AIRPORT - NIGHT**

A plane takes off. Red flashing lights around the tarmac. A car is parked outside the fence of the airport.

MIKE (PRE-LAP)  
There's another one.

**INT. CAR - NIGHT**

Dominic and Mike sit on inside with drinks in hand.

DOMINIC  
We're just waiting for another one  
to fall out of the sky.

MIKE  
Nothing we can do right now.  
Cheers.

They clink, drink. Planes continue to take off and land in  
the distance.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
(beat)  
I've got a contact at Boeing who  
says he'll go on the record, a fuel  
engineer on the MAX.

DOMINIC  
Have you gotten any official word  
from the FAA?

MIKE  
No, they keep giving the same  
"ongoing investigation" line.

DOMINIC  
We need someone on the regulatory  
team to go on record.

MIKE  
We'll keep asking around.

Mike stares at him for a beat.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
How are you doing? You're looking  
tired.

DOMINIC  
Well, thanks.

MIKE  
Have you been sleeping enough?

Dominic takes another sip of his drink, consider something.

DOMINIC

I'm interviewing the mother of one of the Ethiopia victims tomorrow.

MIKE

Which one?

DOMINIC

Twenty-four year old girl working for the Gates Foundation in Uganda.

MIKE

Shit. That's -- that's rough.

DOMINIC

What do you say to a woman who's lost her daughter like that?

MIKE

You just gotta let her talk.

DOMINIC

(beat)

There's still something that I don't get.

MIKE

What's that?

DOMINIC

There were two sensors installed on the plane, but only one of them triggered MCAS. Why rely on a single sensor when you have two?

MIKE

I dunno.

DOMINIC

We need to talk to an engineer.

**INT. PRIVATE JET - DAY**

A **PRIVATE FLIGHT ATTENDANT** walks through the aisle, holding a glass of scotch. She presents it to --

Dennis, who sits there staring out the window.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Your drink, sir.

DENNIS

Thank you.

His **EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT** (40s) sits nearby.

ASSISTANT

A car is going to take you directly  
to the board meeting.

Dennis nods, turns his attention back to the ground, which is  
now close enough to make out.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

It's scheduled for 4PM and you have  
dinner reservations at that  
restaurant on --

**INT. SEATTLE TIMES OFFICE - DAY**

Dominic sits across from a phone. He stares at it for a beat.

A photo of him and his daughter Beth sits on the desk in  
front of him. It catches his eye.

Finally, he picks up the phone and dials.

**INT. SHEFFIELD MASSACHUSETTS HOME - DAY**

A quaint home. Several family photos of happy times. The  
phone rings.

**NADIA MILLERON** (50s), long gray hair, look of an artist,  
answers the phone.

NADIA

Hello?

**INTERCUT SEATTLE TIMES AND SHEFFIELD HOME**

DOMINIC

Hi, this is Dominic Gates called  
from the Seattle Times. Is this  
Miss Milleron?

NADIA

Hi, yes, this is Nadia. Call me  
Nadia.

DOMINIC

Nadia, hi. Is this still a good  
time to talk?

**INT. SHEFFIELD MASSACHUSETTS HOME - LATER**

Nadia sits at her kitchen counter.

NADIA

I keep thinking -- how did this happen? How did it happen *twice*?

DOMINIC

It shouldn't have happened, not to you, not to anyone.

NADIA

Still doesn't feel real.

DOMINIC

I can only imagine.

NADIA

Plane crashes. There's something about them that's so tragic because more often than not ... most of the time you're losing entire families. You know about the Riffels, right?

DOMINIC

Yeah, I heard.

NADIA

Lost both of their boys.

DOMINIC

Terrible.

NADIA

One was about to have a baby.

(beat)

We just want answers. We want to know why, you know?

DOMINIC

I know.

NADIA

They're not giving us anything. All it is to them is -- it's a public relations fiasco, something they have to manage. They don't actually care about anyone on board.

DOMINIC

You're probably right.

NADIA

I keep thinking -- imagining what it must've been like ... those final minutes. Knowing you're going to die.

DOMINIC

Can't imagine.

NADIA

How scared she must've been ... as it ... and all I keep thinking is how much I wish I could've been there for her.

**INT. BLOOMBERG OFFICES - DAY**

The team has ramped up its operations even further, rifling through documentation, typing on their laptops.

Julie finally walks in --

JULIE

Canada and Malaysia just grounded the plane. The FAA still isn't budging. That now makes Europe, Australia, and China too.

RESEARCH INTERN

(getting off phone)

I'm just got off the phone with a contact at the NTSB ...

Everyone turns to him.

RESEARCH INTERN (CONT'D)

They're saying that the FDR indicates the same MCAS issue as Lion Air.

**EXT. LE BOURGET AIRPORT - DAY**

We're in full swing as deals are being made. A **LOCAL REPORTER** stands in front of her **CREW** giving the rundown in French.

Eddy and Jeff stand under a new aircraft.

EDDY

These things are always so much bigger when you're standing under them.

JEFF

That's what she said.

EDDY

Shut up. I mean seriously, when was the last time you actually got excited about a new airplane?

JEFF

Airplanes shouldn't be exciting, they should be reliable.

EDDY

Building planes used to be cool. Now it's just ... run of the mill. Where's the inspiration?

Eddy looks over and sees **MATT** and **BEN** (50s), reps from regional airlines who always get the short stick.

JEFF

Ah jee, look who it is.

MATT

What's up, boys? See anything you like?

BEN

Enjoying the festivities?

EDDY

You know it. How's the regional airline world treating you?

MATT

Shit. Always shit. But what can I say? We're bottom feeders.

JEFF

You like it, don't you?

MATT

Love it.

EDDY

So what are your plans for tonight?

BEN

Gonna hit up le Eiffel Tower. Do a lover's stroll.

MATT

Shit, I didn't know you spoke French.

BEN

It's the language of love, isn't it? Ooh la la.

MATT

See the crap I have to deal with?

BEN

Nah, we fly out tonight. Gotta get back stateside. Besides all the big deals are way above our pay grade.

MATT

You wanna know where the big deals are at? Look over there.

They look in the distance to see --

**TOM ENDERS** (50s) very German, a little too tan, dressed in a very expensive suit. Airbus CEO. He's sidled by --

**GERARD ARPEY** (50s) very midwestern dad, sturdy. CEO of American Airlines.

JEFF

Airbus and American, what do you think those two have to talk about?

BEN

I don't know. But I can guarantee you whatever it is, there are a lot of zeros at the end of it.

The guys have a laugh as we FREEZE FRAME on them.

STAN (PRE-LAP)

Okay -- so if you really want to understand what happened with the MAX, you gotta go all the way back to back to ... 2011.

We REWIND quickly back through this entire 2011 timeline in a flash, barely keeping up as --

**INT. BLOOMBERG OFFICE - DAY**

Julie sits at her cubicle on the phone. She furiously scribbles in her notebook.

JULIE

What's happening in 2011?

**INT. SEATTLE HOME - DAY**

Stan stands at his coffee table, finishing a very large puzzle.

STAN

It's when things really ramp up between Boeing and Airbus. In late 2010 Airbus announces that they've made an improvement to the A320.

JULIE

That's their plane?

STAN

The A320 is the main competitor to the 737. These are single aisle planes, you know, the ones seats on either side -- they're extremely ubiquitous -- if you've flown, you've probably been in one.

JULIE

Got it. So they announce an upgrade? What do they --

STAN

In December they announce that they're adding a new engine to the A320, they're calling the new model the A320neo. It's basically the same plane except for the engine.

JULIE

What was the deal with the engine?

STAN

The new engine made the plane about six percent more fuel efficient, which for a major airline means millions a year in savings. It's a huge cost cutter.

JULIE

Wow, okay.

STAN

So obviously all the airlines are pining for it. At the Paris Air show in June --

**INT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT - DAY**

We revisit the same scene, only this time we're watching it through a new lens. We instead pivot to the American Airline Executives we saw in the periphery before.

STAN

-- all the plane manufacturers present their newest models and all the airline reps come to look to buy planes for their fleets. At the time --

**INT. PARIS HOTEL BAR - NIGHT**

Back at the same scene, only we're pivot again to the AA Execs sitting at a different table with some **AIRBUS EXECS**.

STAN

-- Airbus and Boeing are out vying for supremacy. Airbus has been gaining market share, and the rivalry is bitter --

**EXT. LE BOURGET AIRPORT - DAY**

Back at the same scene, pivoting again, now to the CEOs.

STAN

-- American Airlines announces they're going to purchase --

The CEOs shake hands cordially, walking right past the Boeing booth setup.

STAN (CONT'D)

-- two-hundred-thirty new A320neos. And it's like the floodgates. They sell more neos that week than Boeing sells 737s the entire previous year. I mean, everyone wants to buy this plane -- it's a cash cow. And the verdict is in ...

**INT. SEATTLE HOME - AS BEFORE**

STAN

Airbus *beats* Boeing. And so Boeing has to hit back.

(MORE)

STAN (CONT'D)

The following year, Boeing promises that it can deliver a new model 737 with a new engine that will deliver even more fuel efficiency than the neo and it says it can build and approve it in six years.

JULIE

Is that a long time?

STAN

That's probably half a normal development time for a new plane. You know how many people have built a safe plane in six years?

JULIE

How many?

STAN

None.

Off Julie's look --

**EXT. MOJAVE DESERT AIR FIELD - DAY**

The heat of the air warps our view. We see the wheel of a plane. It belongs to a 737 MAX.

Then we realize ... there's a whole fleet of 737 MAXes parked on the airfield, just sitting there.

REPORTER (V.O.)

After intense scrutiny from Federal regulators, the FAA has officially grounded Boeing's 737 MAX jet. This comes after the second deadly plane crash in less than five months.

**INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM - DAY**

A fancy country club. Reeks of Texas wealth. Dennis and Gary are sitting across from each other. Gary is displeased.

GARY

Be straight with me, Dennis. How long's this gonna last?

DENNIS

Honestly?

GARY

No, lie to me, Dennis. Yes,  
honestly.

DENNIS

I don't know, Gary. I wish I did.

**SUPER: APRIL 2019**

GARY

This is bad for Southwest business.  
You know how many of your planes we  
have in our fleet?

DENNIS

I know, I know.

GARY

It's screwing us over. We're losing  
millions a day because of these  
grounded aircrafts. How the heck  
did you let this happen?

DENNIS

We're working on fixing it. I  
promise, we're going to fix this.  
We're pushing new updates to MCAS.

GARY

Shit, if I have to hear MCAS one  
more time, I'm gonna blow my brains  
out. Or maybe I'll just get on  
board one of your planes.

DENNIS

(takes the punch, then)  
Look, Gary.

GARY

Stop saying my name like that.

DENNIS

Gary. We're working on a  
resolution. You have my word.

GARY

Come on, Dennis. You have to see.

DENNIS

What?

GARY

That you're in deep shit. You managed to skate by after Lion Air because -- well -- because in truth nobody seems to care about a bunch of Indonesians smashing head first into the ocean. But you let it happen again -- and this time there were Americans on board, so now it's a big deal. They've mounted a federal investigation into this. You're gonna have to answer some questions. They'll bring you before congress. And even if there are no criminal charges, you gotta deal with the public relations fallout. Your stock is gonna plummet, because who in their right mind would ever step on board one of your planes ever again?

DENNIS

The plane is safe ... it's safe.

GARY

(smiles, then)

Dennis, if that were true, it wouldn't have crashed. Twice.

Gary goes back to his steak.

**INT. SEATTLE TIMES OFFICE - DAY**

Mike sits at his desk, reading through a document. Finally he comes across a page with various signatures on it.

He pops up from his desk.

MIKE

Dom, come over here for a second.

Dominic walks over behind his computer.

DOMINIC

What's that?

MIKE

These are the certification docs for the MAX. Something strange.

DOMINIC

What is it?

MIKE

Right here, these are all the approval signatures.

DOMINIC

Okay?

MIKE

Only one of them is an FAA regulator. Every other person who signed off on this is a Boeing employee.

Mike finally turns to look Dominic in the eyes.

MIKE (CONT'D)

It's like no one at the FAA even knew what was going on. Boeing basically certified its own plane.

**INT. NYC APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Peter sits on his couch looking over pages of documents. After a beat he turns to see --

**TERI** (40s), his fiancée, coming in with a glass of water, a lot of sleep in her eyes. Teri is hearing impaired and wears a hearing implant.

She uses a mix of sign language and speech. He responds with a similar mix, but it's clear he's learned for her.

TERI

When are you coming to bed?

PETER

Soon.

Teri sits down on the couch next to him.

TERI

We still have to make a decision about the venue. The minister is asking.

PETER

Okay, I'll take a look later.

TERI

Any updates?

(off shrug)

Explain where you're at to me.

(MORE)

TERI (CONT'D)

I might be able to give you an outside perspective.

PETER

Okay ... so where I'm at right now ... the FAA delegated way too much control to Boeing to self-regulate because they were short on man power. So there are clear design flaws, and here --

(pulls pages)

-- right here in the safety documentation, it calls MCAS a hazardous failure.

TERI

What does that mean?

PETER

The FAA has all these different classifications for if a part fails, how much of an impact it would have. A hazardous failure classification means it would be catastrophic if it fails, so it requires that it would fail no more than once in every ten million times. Otherwise, they need backups. That's why these systems rely so heavily on redundancy.

TERI

Which means?

PETER

It just means that there's another check in place so if a part fails, there's a backup. So if MCAS was a hazardous failure classification, where was the redundancy?

TERI

(thinks then)

I dunno. I don't know much about engineering, but normally, I mean, what I'd suggest is ... follow the money. If there's a reason, it's probably because someone somewhere decided it would be cheaper.

Peter takes this in.

**INT. SEATTLE HOME - DAY**

Mark Forkner, walks in from a barbecue happening in the backyard. He grabs a bottle of vodka from his freezer, pours himself a glass.

After a beat his son Kyle walks in from outside, goes to grab himself a refill of a soda and some ice.

He looks to Mark --

KYLE  
You all right, dad?

MARK  
Hmm? Yeah.

KYLE  
Sure?

Kyle starts to head back as --

MARK  
Kyle?

KYLE  
Yeah, dad?

**EXT. SEATTLE HOME - DAY**

A cruiser sits parked outside. We see two **DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AGENTS** step out of the vehicle.

**INT. SEATTLE HOME - SAME**

MARK  
You know, I've always tried to do the right thing -- I mean, I've always tried to be an honest person.

KYLE  
I know that.

MARK  
I just want you to know that sometimes in life, even good people can get caught up in a lie.

KYLE  
What are you talking about?

Mark notices the two Agents pass the front door.

MARK

Nothing.

KYLE

Dad, are you sure you're all right?

The doorbell rings.

MARK

I'm fine. Head outside, I'm gonna get the door.

Kyle heads back outside.

**INT. JETWAY - DAY**

Paul walks through the entrance of the jetway onto the plane, passing a **FLIGHT ATTENDANT**.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Welcome aboard, sir.

PAUL

Morning, how are you?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Very well, thank you.

**INT. BOEING 737 - DAY**

Paul puts his carry on in the overhead storage, then takes a seat and buckles up.

For a moment he stares out the window. Then he grabs his phone and dials. It rings until --

PAUL

(Swahili, subtitled)

Sweetheart, I forgot to mention. The doctor called and asked if we could move our appointment next week to Thursday. I told him okay. I'll be back by then, so I can come with you. All right, we're taking off shortly. I will call you when I arrive.

Paul hangs up and turns his phone off.

## FLIGHT ATTENDANT

(over PA system)

Welcome aboard Flight 2710, service to Bermuda. Our flight time will be approximately two hours and forty minutes. We have now closed --

**INT. HOTEL LOBBY RESTAURANT - DAY**

Julie makes her way inside toward the host station, on her phone.

JULIE

No, grandma, I'll be back on Wednesday ... Wednesday --

**RICK LUDTKE** (50s) sits in the waiting area. Julie turns --

JULIE (CONT'D)

Rick? Hi.

(shakes, then into phone)

Grandma, I'm gonna have to call you back ... no, Grandma -- no, I'll see you on Wednesday, Grams. I have to go now, talk to you soon.

(hangs up)

Sorry, my grandma. She lives in a home -- she worries when I'm gone. She has trouble remembering things now, so --

RICK

I'm sure she just misses you.

JULIE

(smiles, then)

Shall we?

**INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY**

The **WAITER** finishes taking their orders.

JULIE

(handing menu)

Just a coffee for me.

RICK

I'll have the club sandwich. And a diet coke.

As the Waiter takes off --

RICK (CONT'D)

So you're doing a piece about the crashes?

JULIE

That's right. I mean, who isn't, you know?

RICK

I've already spoken to the Seattle Times.

JULIE

Sure, they're the vets on this. They know Boeing better than anyone.

RICK

(smiles politely, then)

So what can I help you with?

JULIE

I'm sure you've gone over this for everyone else, but I'm just trying to get a bit more information on exactly what Boeing and the FAA knew and didn't know about the potential safety issues before they approved the plane?

RICK

You mean did they know it could crash?

JULIE

Yeah, I guess that's what I want to know.

RICK

Of course they knew. They knew and they purposely hid MCAS from their customers.

JULIE

Really? You were an engineer on the MAX certification, right?

RICK

Yes ... look, to understand the way Boeing acts when it makes any changes to a plane, you have to understand how the FAA regulates new planes.

JULIE

How's that?

RICK

By law commercial pilots are only allowed to fly one type of plane. The 737, for instance. Southwest Airlines' entire fleet is 737s, their pilots *only* fly 737s. Okay? So any meaningful changes to the design of the plane means you have to retrain all the pilots and retraining is expensive. You have to get pilots into simulators, certify them, airlines don't want to do it. So to ensure there's minimal retraining they have to keep any changes within Level-D simulator training.

JULIE

Level D?

RICK

There are a number of levels -- level A being the most exhaustive.

JULIE

But the MAX only required Level-D training, right?

RICK

By design. We were under extreme pressure by Boeing to keep any changes within Level D. Muilenburg made a deal with Southwest ...

#### **INT. SOUTHWEST OFFICES - DAY**

Muilenburg sits across from Kelly in his corner office. They shake hands.

RICK (V.O.)

Muilenburg guaranteed that if the new 737s required anything above Level-D training, he would refund them \$1 million per aircraft they purchased.

**INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - AS BEFORE**

JULIE

Whoa.

RICK

So you can see Boeing had a huge incentive to keep it changes minimal enough to require only Level-D training, which also means they had a huge incentive to bury any changes that would require more rigorous training.

JULIE

They purposely hid information about the changes?

**INT. BEOING OFFICE - DAY**

A **PILOT** sits at his desk on the phone.

RICK (V.O.)

One of the technical pilots went as far as to ask the FAA to remove any reference of the new software system from the pilot manual.

**INT. FAA OFFICES - DAY**

An **FAA AGENT** begins striking through any mention of MCAS.

JULIE (V.O.)

That's completely unethical.

**INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - AS BEFORE**

RICK

Look, I would never go to bat for Boeing, but you have to understand something. This is the way the system was built. Sure, we could demonize everyone involved, but all of them, everyone from the engineers to the FAA regulators up to the CEO -- they were just making decisions within the framework of this system. They were doing what the system told them they should be doing.

(MORE)

RICK (CONT'D)

But the system isn't built to look out for the customer or the passenger or the employee. It's all built to look out for one person.

JULIE

Who?

RICK

The investor.

**EXT. BISHOFTU, ETHIOPIA, CRASH SITE - DAY**

Debris is spread across a wide swath of dirt. We follow a --

**U.S. NTSB INVESTIGATOR** as he walks through the aftermath of the plane crash. It's long after the dust has settled, but they're still searching for answers. He looks around.

**SUPER: APRIL 2019**

For the first time, we get a sense of the magnitude of the horror. The Investigator notices something in the distance.

He walks over, bends down to pick it up. In his hands is a small stuffed animal, dirt and, singed, but still in tact.

He contemplates the implication of this.

**INT. TORONTO HOSPITAL - DAY**

The maternity ward. Various **PATIENTS** wait their turn.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

Paul stands by as Caroline pushes. Caroline's a pro, having done this twice before.

The **DOCTOR** finally looks to them, holding a **NEWBORN** in her arms. Paul and Caroline smile at each other.

**INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY**

Paul stands staring through the window of the newborn nursery. He just watches in admiration, as we reverse on --

**RUBI**, his newborn daughter. She has that newborn glow that's partially from just being born, partially because she's his.

**INT. SEATTLE TIMES CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Dominic sits around the table, now their makeshift research center, with Mike Baker and two other reporters including **STEVE MILETICH**.

DOMINIC

I've got a Ludtke on record talking about how managers pressed regulators to suppress information on MCAS. Do we have any more clarity on what happened with the sensor?

STEVE

We've gone through the documentation that Boeing submitted to the FAA before approval.

DOMINIC

And?

Mike starts rifling through pages, finally gets to --

MIKE

The original Boeing document included a description specifying a limit to how much MCAS could move the horizontal tail?

STEVE

Zero point six degrees.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Except ... after initial flight tests they found that they needed to move the tail more to avert a high-speed stall.

STEVE (CONT'D)

They increased it to two point five degrees.

MIKE

That's five times the limit they told the FAA.

STEVE

The FAA had no idea they had increased the limit. No one did.

MIKE

The first time Boeing made any mention of this to anyone was after the Lion Air crash, when they had to come clean about the software.

STEVE

So the plane forced them down at a steeper angle with more speed and none of the pilots even knew the software existed.

MIKE

They also failed to disclose that MCAS would repeatedly trigger over and over even after the pilots took control. That's why you keep seeing the system forcing them down, every five seconds -- on Lion Air it did it twenty-one times.

STEVE

Dom, these pilots never stood a chance. They were set up to fail.

Dominic shakes his head, fully upset by the revelation.

**EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

Dominic walks to his car as his phone rings.

DOMINIC

Hello?

**INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Grace, the woman from the FAA we met earlier, stands in her kitchen, visibly preoccupied.

GRACE

Hi, Dominic?

**INTERCUT PARKING LOT AND APARTMENT**

DOMINIC

Yes.

GRACE

Dominic Gates? You've been investigating the 737 crashes for the Seattle Times, right?

DOMINIC  
That's right -- who is this?

GRACE  
(beat)  
Would you be able to promise not to  
publish my name?

DOMINIC  
What is this about?

GRACE  
I would only be able to talk to you  
if you could promise anonymity.

DOMINIC  
I can do that.

GRACE  
I heard you need someone from  
within the FAA to confirm details  
of the regulation process.

DOMINIC  
You heard right.

GRACE  
Well ... I was an engineer on the  
FAA team that was responsible for  
approving the MAX.

Dominic finally reaches his car, pauses to consider what this means.

**BEGIN MONTAGE (INTERCUTTING)**

>> The Seattle Times team goes through various documents,  
hundreds of pages of documentation.

>> Peter and the team start to create a timeline of the  
sequence of events that led to the FAA certifying the MAX.

>> Julie interviews several **PEOPLE** in various spots all over  
Seattle.

>> Boeing Executives continue to do damage control with the  
airlines. They have internal meetings about what to do.

>> Financial Analysts continue to monitor Boeing stock.

**END MONTAGE**

NGO PRESIDENT (PRE-LAP)  
Eliminating poverty throughout the  
world is not just a developing  
world problem --

**INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL BALLROOM - DAY**

The **NGO PRESIDENT** stands up at a podium, reading from a teleprompter.

NGO PRESIDENT  
-- it's our problem too. We all  
have to work to recognize the  
common humanity we all share  
regardless of where we live. We  
want to thank our corporate  
sponsors Boeing --

**ANGLE ON:** Dennis sitting at a table in the audience. He smiles acknowledging the words.

NGO PRESIDENT (CONT'D)  
-- and JP Morgan who have both  
committed to improving the lives of  
so many of the needy children  
across the world.

The crowd applauds.

REBECCA (PRE-LAP)  
Hun, get off your phone please.

**INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL BALLROOM - DAY**

Dennis and his wife **REBECCA** wade through the crowd.

DENNIS  
(putting it away)  
Sorry.

Up walks a hedge fund manager **SEAMUS** (60s), old, white.

SEAMUS  
Dennis, good to see you.

DENNIS  
You too.

SEAMUS  
Rebecca, you look lovely.

REBECCA  
Thank you, Seamus.

SEAMUS  
(to Dennis)  
Been meaning to get in touch with  
you. Can I have a word?  
(to Rebecca)  
You don't mind, do you?

**INT. FOUR SEASONS HALLWAY - DAY**

Seamus and Dennis find a corner where they can talk.

**ATTENDEES** periodically pass by requiring them to hush their  
voices.

SEAMUS  
My office has been trying to reach  
you --

DENNIS  
Sorry, you know, things have been  
busy --

SEAMUS  
I'm getting pressure from my LPs  
about our position -- we're looking  
at a double-digit loss for the  
quarter. They're getting nervous. I  
want to assuage their fears.

DENNIS  
No reason to worry. We have it  
under control.

SEAMUS  
Dennis, look, I have no official  
authority to ask you to do  
anything, but as a major  
stakeholder in the company, our  
fund would like our concerns  
addressed.

DENNIS  
Absolutely -- we're happy to  
oblige.

SEAMUS  
These crashes -- they stand to do  
long-term damage to company's  
reputation, which are --

DENNIS

The crashes, they're --

SEAMUS

Let me finish.

(beat)

We still stand by Boeing. No one wants to see Boeing go out of business. Boeing represents everything that's great about America. Hard work. Innovation. Craftsmanship.

DENNIS

We stand by our values.

SEAMUS

But ... we're not going to go down with a sinking ship ... we will pull our position if we think things are going south. I owe it to my LPs to protect their money.

DENNIS

I promise you that our company is healthy and poised to outperform the market.

SEAMUS

I hope you're right. But I need you to manage this ... situation.

Seamus spots someone in the distance, waves.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

You're the CEO. You run this company. But also don't forget, the investors own it.

Seamus excuses himself and leaves Dennis standing there.

**INT. TORONTO HOME - NIGHT**

Steam wafts up from a pan. Caroline cooks at the stove.

Ryan runs through the kitchen into the --

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

-- where Paul sits on his laptop.

PAUL  
Eh, slow down!

A crib is set up where Rubi hangs out.

**INTERCUT LIVING ROOM AND KITCHEN**

PAUL (CONT'D)  
(in Swahili, subtitled)  
You want to leave on a Thursday?

CAROLINE  
I prefer to leave on the weekend.

PAUL  
Yeah, okay. I'm going to book it  
for you.

CAROLINE  
Don't forget about my mother.

PAUL  
I remember. Don't worry.

Kelli walks through the room, tugs at Paul.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Yes, sweetheart, what is it?

Kelli shows him a drawing she's done.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Oh, wow. I love it. Is it for me?

She nods proudly.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Thank you, baby girl. It's  
beautiful.

Paul grabs her, props her up on the sofa.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Shall we watch something?

KELLI  
Dora!

PAUL  
(laughing)  
Always Dora. All right.

**INT. BLOOMBERG OFFICES - DAY**

Peter sits at his desk. His phone rings.

PETER  
This is Peter.

**INT. SEATTLE OFFICE - DAY**

**ADAM DICKSON** (60s), tough spirit, formidable type.

ADAM  
Peter, hi. This is Adam Dickson.

**INTERCUT OFFICES**

PETER  
Adam, thank you for calling me back.

ADAM  
No problem. Can you talk now?

PETER  
Yes, I'm free. Actually, I'm gonna put you on speaker and have a colleague join, is that all right?

ADAM  
Sure, do what you gotta do.

Peter puts Adam on hold, runs off, passes Julie.

PETER  
Come on, I got the fuel engineer from Boeing on the line.

Julie grabs a notepad and pen and follows Peter into --

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

They take seats at the conference table.

Peter taps the conference telephone.

PETER  
Adam, can you hear me?

ADAM  
Yep, I'm here.

PETER

I've got my colleague Julie Johnson with me. We're working on the Boeing stories together.

ADAM

Hi, there.

JULIE

Hi, Adam. Thanks for speaking with us.

ADAM

Not a problem.

JULIE

(flipping through notes)  
Adam, you were the manager of fuel systems engineering for the 737 Max, is that correct?

ADAM

That's correct, yes.

JULIE

We've already spoken to Rick Ludtke about his experience but we wanted to get a broader picture of Boeing during the FAA certification process.

ADAM

Sure, yeah, I can speak to that. If you want a general characterization about Boeing's approval process, I'll say up front that all the managers -- and this came from the very top -- the managers put massive pressure on our team to deprioritize safety to ensure profits. They saw engineering as a necessary obstacle to their financial success.

#### **INT. DEUTSCHE BANK OFFICES - DAY**

Deutsche sits in front of a group of his **ASSOCIATES**, just as Goldman did. More images whirl by once again.

Boeing factories. Planes in the sky. Military aircraft.

DEUTSCHE

You wanna make an indictment of Boeing? Sure, go ahead. But you have to understand if you're going to call Boeing out for how they made their money, you're gonna have to take a hard look at everyone else. And I mean everyone else.

Wall Street. Stock tickers. Banks.

DEUTSCHE (CONT'D)

What is it they say? Point one finger and you'll have a bunch of fucking fingers point back at you. Something like that.

Factories in China. Industrial farms. Amazon warehouse.

DEUTSCHE (CONT'D)

The way it's designed, the system works how it's supposed to -- it lets individuals make a buck wherever they can.

Industrialists. Farmers. Insurance agents. Stockbrokers.

DEUTSCHE (CONT'D)

Ultimately though, whoever holds the purse strings dictates the terms of business. This happens with banks, farms, pillows, computers, even apple pies.

Famous company logos. Brands we know and love. Amazon. Google. Apple. H&M.

DEUTSCHE (CONT'D)

The system was designed so well we hardly even know it's there. That's why economists call it the *invisible hand*. But that invisible hand can slap you right across the face if you're not careful. Because we've seen what can happen when no one's paying attention.

BP oil spill. A kid vaping. Flint, Michigan. Fracking.

DEUTSCHE (CONT'D)

At the end of the day, the system doesn't care about you -- it only cares about how much you're willing to buy.

(MORE)

DEUTSCHE (CONT'D)

That's what Boeing understood.  
That's what every company  
understands. And that's why there's  
one person who matters more than  
anyone else, more than the  
customer, more than the banker,  
more than the employee.

A **NAMELESS SCHMUCK** representative of everyone other schmuck.

DEUTSCHE (CONT'D)

It's the shareholder.

**INT. BOEING CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

A team of **LAWYERS** sits around a conference table. Dennis sits  
at the head.

LEAD COUNSEL

So what we're recommending is that  
you set aside a slush fund for the  
victims of the crash.

SECONDARY LAWYER

We've already got families of the  
victims coming after us for  
restitutions --

LEAD COUNSEL

-- but our main concern is not to  
set precedent to let these trials  
stand in U.S. courts.

DENNIS

What's our liability here?

LEAD COUNSEL

We're recommending you set aside  
\$100 million.

DENNIS

I don't want this to draw out. I  
want to handle this quickly and  
quietly. Any press around this is  
bad for us.

LEAD COUNSEL

We know.

DENNIS

I don't want an extended legal  
battle.

## LEAD COUNSEL

We're gonna do our best to stop it before it even starts. But if this opens up in the U.S. courts, we could be looking at tens of billions in settlements.

Off Dennis's look --

**INT. SEATTLE STARBUCKS - DAY**

Julie and Rick wait in line for their drinks.

RICK

Can we walk and talk?

JULIE

Sure.

**EXT. SEATTLE PARK - DAY**

Julie and Rick walk coffees in hand.

RICK

How long are you back in town for?

JULIE

I fly back tomorrow night.

RICK

Quick.

JULIE

Thanks again for all the follow up, I really appreciate all the guidance on this.

RICK

It's no problem. It's nice out today.

JULIE

Finally a little bit of sun.

RICK

Some days the air actually feels lighter, easier to take in.

They grab a seat at a bench. A beat.

JULIE

So one thing I've really been struggling with is ... why the plane wasn't grounded after the Lion Air crash. Why wasn't there more of an uproar at the FAA to step in at that point?

RICK

You're still thinking about this all wrong. You keep thinking in terms of how you think things should be handled, not how things are actually built to work.

JULIE

All right. Explain it.

RICK

The FAA and Boeing are so intertwined with each other. Remember that Boeing is one of the largest exporters the U.S. has. Every president, Democrat, Republican, has made it his priority to see that Boeing continues to remain dominant in the global market. There's a lot of economic pressure to keep them competitive. Boeing pressured Washington state to give them billions in rebates just to keep its factory inside the state. It was a shitty deal, but the Inslee had no choice. Obama touted the Dreamliner as a huge win for American prowess, but that aircraft was a mess from the start. Muilenburg got on the phone the day after the Ethiopia Air crash to ask Trump not to ground the plane. Boeing isn't just in bed with the FAA, they're in bed with everyone. How can there ever be accountability with something like this?

JULIE

Three hundred and forty six people are dead because of a system they installed that they knew was dangerous! And they never mentioned it once!

(MORE)

JULIE (CONT'D)

And after the first crash they blamed the pilots and the airlines and they called it freak accident, but they knew it could happen again. And it did.

RICK

You're right.

JULIE

(beat)

Someone has to hold them accountable.

**INT. SEATTLE TIMES CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Dominic brings in a cup of coffee, places it in front of -- Grace, the former FAA agent.

GRACE

Thank you.

DOMINIC

Thanks for coming in.

Dominic takes out his notepad and pen.

GRACE

I need all of this to remain completely anonymous. I could get in a lot of trouble if someone found out.

DOMINIC

You don't have to worry. No one has to know you came forward.

GRACE

(beat)

Okay.

DOMINIC

Where do you want to start?

**INT. FLIGHT SIMULATOR - DAY**

Mark Forkner sits in a very expensive simulator. He's guiding the plane through a routine takeoff.

The screens in front of him display terrain, then open sky.

Things seem to be going normally at first.

Then, something clicks in the control.

Mark looks down confused. He hits a few buttons, reads a few meters, then grabs manual control.

An error reading beeps loudly.

Auto-pilot kicks in forcing the plane down.

Mark regains control again. Fumbles to do so.

Then MCAS grabs hold one more time.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)  
Warning, warning. Excess speed.  
Warning, warning.

Mark grabs hold again tries to yank the plane back up. But it's getting harder.

Another few seconds pass. MCAS kicks back in.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Warning, warning. Excess speed.

Mark tries to grab hold again.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Don't sink. Don't sink.

Mark helplessly tries to regain control.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Terrain, terrain. Warning. Terrain.  
Pull up. Pull up.

Mark is getting more and more concerned. Things keep getting worse and worse until --

The simulator crashes. Mark moves back, totally dumbfounded.

#### **INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Mark sits alone on his bed, staring out into space. He grabs his phone and starts texting.

He pours vodka from the mini fridge into a glass, downs the whole thing.

**INT. SEATTLE TIMES OFFICE - DAY**

Mike and Don sit in front of a television as --  
Dominic walks up.

DOMINIC  
What's going on?

We hear the CNN reporter in the background --

MIKE  
Feds leaked a text chain between  
two of the MAX test pilots from  
back in 2016.

DON  
Looks like the pilots had known  
about the MCAS problems back then.  
Basically admitted to lying to the  
FAA about the system. Said the  
system was running rampant.

DOMINIC  
Wow, that's a smoking gun.

MIKE  
They're saying he raised these  
concerns to Boeing, even to  
Muilenburg.

DON  
Everyone at Boeing knew about the  
problem. But they didn't want to  
risk exposing it.

MIKE  
This shows a concerted effort to  
hide serious flaws.

DOMINIC  
I just interviewed the FAA  
engineer. I think she's the last  
piece of the puzzle.

Off Mike and Don's look --

**INT. JFK BOARDING AREA - DAY**

Peter stands watching the same news footage of Mark Fornker  
on a screen at the gate, his phone to his ear.

PETER

Yeah, I'm seeing it now.

(beat)

I've gotta board, but I'll call you  
back when I land in Boston.

**INT. BOEING 747 - DAY**

Peter gets in his seat. He stares ahead at the screen in front of him as the safety video plays.

The **FLIGHT ATTENDANT** demonstrates the safety features alongside the video. Peter looks down at his phone screensaver which has a picture of Teri on it.

Slowly, every potential hazard starts moving through his mind: sounds of the landing gear, the window, the seatbelt, the wings, building in intensity until --

**EXT. ADDIS ABABA STREET - DAY**

The sound of a gatherers. Footsteps. We catch up to a --

**PROCESSION OF MOURNERS** walking through the street toward Holy Trinity Cathedral in the distance.

A somber mood follows the procession.

ETHIOPIA AIR ATTENDANT (PRE-LAP)

We are now prepared to board  
Ethiopia Air Flight 302 --

**INT. ADDIS ABABA BOLE AIRPORT - DAY**

Crowds of **PASSENGERS** wait at the gate.

ETHIOPIA AIR ATTENDANT

(over PA)

-- with service to Nairobi.

We move around through the crowd, seeing the faces of those who are about to board the fateful flight.

**INT. TORONTO HOME - DAY**

Paul sits at the dining table next to Rubi, feeding her baby food, simultaneously playing peekaboo with her.

The rest of the family sits around the table.

CAROLINE  
You'll make her spit up.

PAUL  
She's fine.

KELLI  
Papa, I don't like my vegetables.

CAROLINE  
Come on, eat your vegetables. They  
are good for you.

RYAN  
I don't like my vegetables either.  
I don't want to eat them.

PAUL  
Everybody, eat your vegetables  
please. See, your little sister is  
eating her vegetables.

RYAN  
Those aren't vegetables. That's  
mashed up food.

PAUL  
These are carrots.

KELLI  
Carrots?

PAUL  
You kids are driving me crazy. If  
you eat your vegetables, we'll have  
ice cream afterward.

CAROLINE  
Hey, don't promise that.

PAUL  
Come on.

RYAN  
Yeah, come on!

PAUL  
Ice cream! Ice cream!

RYAN  
(joining)  
Ice cream! Ice cream!

CAROLINE  
 Okay, fine! If you eat your  
 vegetables, you can have ice cream.

KELLI  
 Ice cream!

RYAN  
 Will there be ice cream in Kenya?

CAROLINE  
 Of course, there's ice cream there.

RYAN  
 Good, because I like ice cream.

Paul laughs heartily, looks around at his entire family at  
 the table, and we're back --

**INT. ADDIS ABABA BOLE AIRPORT - DAY**

We're making our way through the crowd boarding. Passengers  
 queue up at the gate.

ETHIOPIA AIR ATTENDANT  
 (through PA)  
 We invite those traveling with  
 small children and anyone with  
 disabilities to board at this time.

There's nothing in the air to give these travelers the sense  
 that anything could be wrong. This is another normal day.

We pass the several faces, and finally, we hear a familiar  
 voice, and we see --

CAROLINE  
 Come on now. We have to board.

Caroline stands there with Rubi in her arms. Her mother **ANN  
 KARANJA** grabs hold of Kelli's hand, pulling her alongside.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)  
 Ryan, come on! Hurry up.

Caroline turns to see Ryan rushing toward the seats.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)  
 Where are you going now?

Ryan comes running back as the family is about to walk out to  
 the tarmac.

RYAN

She left it on the seat.

Ryan is holding onto a stuffed animal. The same stuffed animal the NTSC Investigator picked up from the crash site.

The entire family exits through the door and out of our view, disappearing from the world, and we --

**CUT TO:**

**INT. TORONTO HOME - NIGHT**

A phone rings. Someone stumbles out of bed. It's Paul.

He goes to pick up the phone.

PAUL

Hello?

And we now know that we've been following him back in time, and we know what he's about to hear.

**SUPER: MARCH 2019**

**EXT. ADDIS ABABA STREET - DAY**

As we move through the crowd, we realize several of them are holding onto caskets.

And finally we see Paul among the mourners, holding photos of his entire family.

He solemnly continues alongside the rest of the family members.

**EXT. SEATTLE HOME BACKYARD (VARIOUS) - AFTERNOON**

>> A party in full effect. A sign reads HAPPY GRADUATION!

>> Dominic and Beth squeeze into a photo. Dominic holds a Stanford sweater in front of Beth.

>> **PARTY GUESTS** mingle. Dominic watches Beth from a distance, with the sort of admiration a father has for his only daughter.

>> Beth and her **FRIENDS** all huddle together to take a selfie.

**INT. SEATTLE HOME - NIGHT**

Dominic and Nina clean up from the party. Dominic finds a seat at the dining table, stares off into space as --

Nina walks in and stands by the doorway, noticing his preoccupation.

NINA

What's the matter?

Dominic gives a non-committal shrug. He looks toward a photo of Beth as a young girl.

DOMINIC

How'd she grow up so fast?

NINA

It's like we just blinked.

DOMINIC

Yeah.

Something in Dominic's expressions prods at Nina. She stares at him for a beat.

NINA

It's something else though, isn't it?

DOMINIC

It's just ... it's all of this.

NINA

What?

DOMINIC

I keep thinking about them -- about the families.

NINA

It's terrible what happened.

DOMINIC

None of this is gonna make a difference.

NINA

What do you mean?

DOMINIC

We've seen this happen over and over again, and they always come out of this all right.

NINA

Who does?

DOMINIC

Them. The executives, the politicians, the guys on Wall Street. All of them. They get to go around ruining people's lives and they walk away unscathed. All this work. All the lies and what they did. It doesn't matter if we write about it. They're gonna get away with all of it.

NINA

That's not true.

DOMINIC

Face it, Nina. That's the world we live in -- and it's *made for them*.

Nina doesn't know what to say.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Three-hundred-forty-six people died. All those families -- all the people on that plane -- I talked to them, had to look them in the eyes. They're all broken now. They're barely even people anymore. It's *destroyed* their lives. Mothers, daughters, brothers, entire families, killed. They're empty now. And the people who could've stopped it, they people who knew better, who decided it that their lives weren't cost effective -- they're sitting rich in their offices. And in all likelihood nothing will happen to them. They'll get a slap on the wrist. *Maybe*.

(beat)

That's how the system works. Maybe they lose their jobs. Even if they do, they'll walk away with severance packages, millions of dollars, and those people, their lives are ruined forever!

Nina takes this in for a moment.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

I'm just not sure I can take it anymore.

NINA

(beat)

You can. You can take it and you will. You'll do it because it's inside of you, because it's a part of who you are. You're the one who has to fight for them. Because you're strong and because that's how you'll get through it.

Nina puts her hand on Dominic's, reassures him.

**BEGIN MONTAGE**

- >> Julie works late at her desk, downs coffee.
- >> Peter hails a cab, dials on his phone.
- >> Dominic continues to talk to Grace, the FAA agent.
- >> Mike goes into the fact checking department with notes.
- >> The Seattle Times editors review the story.

**END MONTAGE**

**INT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT - DAY**

A suitcase is rolled through the terminal. We catch up to --

Eddy and Jeff who make their way toward their respective gates. As they reach a turnoff --

EDDY

This is me.

JEFF

See you around.

They shake as they notice --

EDDY

Check it out.

A group of **BOEING EXECUTIVES** walk through the concourse.

JEFF

That's what butt hurt looks like.

EDDY

Sure does.

After the group passes --

JEFF

Give my best to the misses.

EDDY

Same to you.

JEFF

All right. Safe flight.

EDDY

Yeah, safe flight to you too.

The two of them wave goodbye and are off toward their respective gates. Out of sight. And as we're left in the middle of the airport.

Travelers going all sorts of places, getting ready to board planes. Planes they assume are safe and certified.

But who's to say really?

**INT. NURSING HOME BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Julie sits as her Grandmother watches television.

JULIE

You okay, Grams?

GRANDMOTHER

Hmm, what's that?

JULIE

I'll be right back, Grams, okay?

GRANDMOTHER

Okay, hun.

**INT. NURSING HOME HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Julie stands there for a beat, staring at her phone. Finally, she dials --

**INT. SEATTLE OFFICE - NIGHT**

Rick Ludtke answers as he sits at his desk.

RICK

Hello?

**INTERCUT OFFICE AND NURSING HOME**

JULIE

Rick, it's Julie.

RICK

Hey, Julie. How are you?

JULIE

Good, you?

RICK

Good, yeah.

JULIE

Story's gonna be published any day now.

RICK

Good timing.

JULIE

Yeah.

RICK

(beat)

Was there something you needed?

JULIE

Yeah. One thing I still don't completely understand.

RICK

Yeah, what's up?

JULIE

Can you explain to me why MCAS relied on a single AOA sensor to activate? There were two installed.

RICK

It's a great question.

JULIE

I mean, I'm not engineer, but doesn't it seem like really bad design to allow one sensor to be the single point of failure?

(MORE)

JULIE (CONT'D)

If one sensor malfunctions or misreads or breaks down, then -- I mean, we know it ending up misreading and activating MCAS erroneously, so why not rely on the second sensor to verify the reading?

RICK

You're right. It's bad engineering.

(beat)

I can't say for certain, but here's the explanation I can think of.

(beat)

Any program coded to take data from both sensors would've needed to account for the possibility the sensors might *disagree* with each other.

JULIE

Okay.

RICK

The program would need to devise a contingency for reconciling the mixed signals. Whatever the contingency, it would've involved some sort of cockpit alert. Are you with me?

JULIE

Yeah.

RICK

An alert in the cockpit would've required additional training -- probably not Level-D training, but I doubt anyone wanted to risk that.

JULIE

(getting agitated)

So they relied on a single sensor because they didn't want to have to retrain pilots? And the sensor was faulty? And that faulty sensor activated a system that was way more powerful than Boeing ever told anyone? And then that system crashed two planes?

RICK

That pretty much sums it up.

JULIE

(beat)

Wow. I just -- it all seems so stupid, doesn't it?

RICK

It does.

Julie peeks back inside to see her Grandmother nodding off in front of the television.

JULIE

It's like we all assume -- all of us are under this assumption that we're being looked after, that there are people out there trying to keep us safe, when in reality ... that's not the case at all.

**INT. SEATTLE TIMES CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Dominic and team sits with the **EDITORIAL STAFF**, including Michele.

DOMINIC

We have confirmation from the FAA engineer of the events that went down during certification. Boeing buried any mention of MCAS and hid information from the FAA regulators. They pressured the FAA engineers to approve without oversight. They increased the degree of the tail adjustment without any word to anyone. And after the Lion Air crash, it's clear they mounted a campaign to continue to hide information from the pilots and the airlines.

MICHELE

This is solid reporting, guys.

DOMINIC

Thanks. We're already doing follow up pieces.

MIKE

We got a copy of the letter Forkner sent to Muilenburg about how bad the system was.

MICHELE

Let's hope the people in Washington  
pay attention.

**INT. BLOOMBERG OFFICES - NIGHT**

Peter and Julie sit across from Joel as he puts the piece  
down, having just finished.

JOEL

How are you guys feeling about it?

PETER

Yeah, we're ready to go.

JOEL

We're gonna publish tomorrow.

Julie and Peter don't exactly seem reassured by what they've  
gone through.

JOEL (CONT'D)

What is it?

PETER

Nothing. I just can't believe it  
got this far.

JOEL

You and all of us.

**INT. / EXT. JFK AIRPORT (VARIOUS) - DAY**

Planes takeoff and land at the airport. **MAINTENANCE WORKERS**  
drive on the tarmac. **FAA AGENTS** get people through security.

Just more of the same.

REPORTERS (VARIOUS)

(intercutting)

Damning revelations from  
journalists about the two Boeing  
plane crashes --

(another)

-- Boeing was delegated too much  
authority in the approval of its  
own --

(another)

-- shows a concerted effort to  
cover up the system that led to the  
crashes --

(another)

(MORE)

## REPORTERS (VARIOUS) (CONT'D)

-- the Seattle Times is reporting  
that engineers knew --  
    (another)  
-- Boeing executives placed  
pressure on regulators --  
    (another)  
-- has several U.S. Representatives  
asking questions about how Boeing  
failed to disclose information  
about the dangers of plane.

**EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. STREET - DAY**

Monuments. The White House. K Street.

**INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY**

We see a pair of hands clutching a few printed out pieces of  
paper. The hands belong to --

Paul as he waits on a bench in the hallway. Various  
**GOVERNMENT PEOPLE** walk past and finally --

A **CONGRESSIONAL AIDE** approaches.

                  AIDE  
Mr. Njoroge.

                  PAUL  
Hello.

                  AIDE  
They're almost ready for you.

Paul stands up and prepares to enter Congress.

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Goldman and Deutsche are back in front of a presentation.  
They're looking a bit more subdued.

They begin to walk and we follow them as --

                  GOLDMAN  
I guess we'd just like to mention  
one more thing before we go.

                  DEUTSCHE  
And we know what you're thinking  
and we get it, we do.

GOLDMAN  
We're not the good guys here.

They exit into the --

**INT. FAA HALLWAY - DAY**

Where **WORKERS** go about their day. We pass by several FAA Regulators that we've seen already.

DEUTSCHE  
Yeah, you have every right to think we're what's wrong with society.

GOLDMAN  
I mean, what do we really do, right? We sit around and we read balance sheets and quarterly earnings reports --

DEUTSCHE  
-- and we help really rich people get even fucking richer. That's how we make our living.

They turn a corner and now they're --

**INT. BOEING FACTORY - DAY**

A plane is being assembled by **WORKERS**. Standing there are Rick Ludtke and Adam Dickson, former Boeing engineers.

GOLDMAN  
But at the end of the day, we're just bottom feeders.

DEUTSCHE  
Yeah, all the real sharks are way up at the surface.

GOLDMAN  
The real sharks --

As they enter through a new door, they're in --

**INT. BOEING EXECUTIVES SUITE - DAY**

All the Boeing Executives stand around sipping alcohol.

DEUTSCHE  
-- swim up at the top.

GOLDMAN

We're just here to collect whatever  
they drop below.

They pass Dennis Muilenburg who stands unapologetic.

DEUTSCHE

And who knows? Maybe that's worse.

GOLDMAN

But we all gotta eek out a living  
somehow, right?

As they exit the room, they're --

**INT. SEATTLE TIMES OFFICE - DAY**

-- where they pass each of the reporters we've met: Dominic,  
Julie, Peter, and the rest.

DEUTSCHE

What we wanna say is --

GOLDMAN

-- we're just a reflection of the  
value system that we've all  
created.

As they turn they make their way onto a --

**INT. BOEING 737 MAX - DAY**

A **FLIGHT ATTENDANT** readies the cabin. The two of them make  
their way through the cabin toward the back.

DEUTSCHE

We wouldn't exist if society said  
enough is enough.

GOLDMAN

If you all said, we're done with  
the capitalists --

DEUTSCHE

-- and the greedy corporate heads  
and --

They pass Eddy and Jeff, the airline buyers, whom we know.

GOLDMAN

-- all the amoral assholes who run  
this world --

DEUTSCHE

-- who take as much as they can --

GOLDMAN

-- without any regard to everyone else.

They exit through the emergency exit and now they're --

**INT. THE CAPITOL - DAY**

A session full of **REPORTERS, CONGRESSIONAL AIDES,** and **GOVERNMENT PEOPLE.** They stand in the aisle.

DEUTSCHE

We could all finally just say that's not the world we want to live in.

GOLDMAN

That's not why we're here on this earth.

As they reach the front, we find Paul taking a seat, about to testify before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Aviation.

DEUTSCHE

But here we are, still kicking, still loading the cash in by the barrel.

GOLDMAN

We didn't make the rules.

DEUTSCHE

They did.

And with that Goldman and Deutsche exit frame, and we're just left with Paul.

CONGRESSMAN (O.C.)

We're now going to hear from Paul Njoroge, who lost his wife, three children, and mother-in-law in Ethiopia Air Flight 302.

PAUL

Thank you for allowing me to testify before you today. My name is Paul Njoroge and I come before you with a broken heart.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

It is not something that this Committee or that Congress can fix, but I push myself every day to try to do something in the memory of my family, my entire family that was killed in the second Boeing crash in Ethiopia. My wife, Caroline, a wonderful mother to our children, and who we talked about getting old together. Our three children, Ryan, six years old with the whole world ahead of him as he dreamed of being an astronaut one day. Kelli, just four years old, and the light of everyone's eye. And little nine-month-old Rubi, a baby who sat on her mommy's lap who I wish I could hold just one more time.

(beat)

I have nightmares about how they must have clung to their mother, crying, seeing the fright in her eyes as they sat there helplessly. And there was nothing I could do to save them.

(beat)

My mom in law sat beside them with tickets I had purchased for them that was to be a trip of a lifetime. I paid for plane tickets that was to be a safe flight. I did not know all of the information of which Boeing knew about how dangerous that plane was, yet the corporation allowed 157 people to board that dangerous plane that could not land safely. I never knew it would be the last time I would ever see them.

(beat)

But I speak for more than myself who are trying to cope with this insufferable loss. I speak for all of the families who lost loved ones whom they will never see again and who were tragically torn from their lives because of reckless conduct on the part of so many, particularly Boeing, a company who became steadfast in its single-minded quest to place blame on so-called "foreign pilots."

(beat)

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

Since the first Max8 crash in October, Boeing began a pattern of behavior blaming innocent pilots who had no knowledge and were given no information of the new and flawed MCAS system that could overpower pilots. No manual, no training, no information was provided to pilots on how that new MCAS system worked, yet they were put in those cockpits and expected to know what to do. Instead of accepting responsibility and informing pilots around the world, Boeing continued its blame game on pilots, to shift focus from its own responsibilities until the second plane crashed. Then the world turned its focus on those who were really culpable.

(beat)

It could no longer be denied by Boeing.

Paul takes a deep breath. We're left here, with this sobering and heartbreaking picture of one man, who lost everything, his entire family.

And we have to ask ourselves, will it just be this man who has to pay the price for the negligence and malfeasance of others? Or will we hold them accountable for their actions?

As we consider that, we --

**CUT TO BLACK.**

**SUPER OVER BLACK:**

*Boeing has stated that it plans to get the 737 MAX back in the air in the next few months.*

*CEO Dennis Muilenburg continues to state that Boeing abided by all FAA regulations and denies that it was at fault for the crashes.*

*The Boeing legal team plans to deny any lawsuits in U.S. courts.*

*Recent legislation has handed even more authority from the FAA to Boeing to self-regulate the safety of their own planes.*