

039685

# AIRFRAME

By  
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based upon the  
novel by

Michael  
Crichton

Second Draft  
September 21,  
1998

FADE IN:

1 TITLE DESIGN: 0'S AND 1'S -- 1

000010110000101010001011100001...

STREAM ACROSS A BLACK SCREEN.

AS A SEQUENCE: 00011010 COMES, IT HESITATES - THE  
PROGRESSION OF DIGITS SEEMS TO HICCUP... AND A RED LIGHT  
SUFFUSES FROM A CORNER OF THE SCREEN... TRANSFORMING INTO

A RED ALARM LIGHT, REVEALED TO BE IN AN ARRAY OF COCKPIT  
INSTRUMENTS IN THE CEILING ABOVE THE PILOTS...

HIGH ANGLE WIDE ANGLE FROM ABOVE: IN THE DARKENED  
COCKPIT, THE FACE OF A PILOT LOOKS UP INTO CAMERA,  
LIGHTED BY THE FLASHING RED LIGHT...

HE REACHES UP AND...

THE ALARM LIGHT: HIS HAND COMES INTO FRAME AND RAPS THE  
LAMP SHARPLY... IT DOESN'T GO OUT...

00011010 - REPEATS ON A BLACK SCREEN.

2 INSERT: A HAND FILLS A BABY BOTTLE WITH WARM MILK (IN THE 2  
STEWARD'S REAR KITCHEN AREA) BATHED IN A RED GLOW FROM  
NIGHT LAMPS.

3 A SHADOWY FIGURE WEARING A PILOT'S UNIFORM AND CAP STANDS 3  
HALF SEEN IN THE BACKGROUND. THE STEWARDESS MOVES OFF  
WITH THE BABY BOTTLE... WE GET THE FIRST FEELING WE ARE  
ON A NIGHT FLIGHT...

4 COCKPIT HIGH ANGLE: TWO FACES PEER UP INTO THE RED GLOW 4  
OF THE ALARM LIGHT THAT WON'T GO OUT...

A HAND GRABS A FLIGHT MANUAL; PAGES ARE FLIPPED...

PAN WITH THE BABY BOTTLE MOVING THROUGH THE CABIN;  
READING LIGHTS ARE ON, OVERHEADS DIMMED BUT THERE IS  
LIGHT...

00011010 00011010 00011010 REPEATS ON SCREEN, LIKE A  
SILENT KNOCK ON AN UNSEEN DOOR...

(CONTINUED)

THE BABY BOTTLE IS HANDED TO EMILY JANSEN; HER HUSBAND IS WAITING WITH A HANDICAM... HE MAKES THE STEWARDESS GO BACK AND REPEAT THE LAST STEPS TO HAND THE BOTTLE TO EMILY; A DIRECTOR IN THE MAKING!

The baby is chewing its' foot. Jansens are laughing...

JANSEN (O.S.)  
Taste good?

EMILY  
We've been away from home too long -  
what I have dreamed about for months -  
is a cheeseburger.

In the background we SEE a Chinese passenger with a camera, amused by the scene, stand and begin to film Jansen filming his kid. Jansen swings to catch him and for a second they smilingly record each other, then Jansen swings back to his shot of the kid, the dialogue continuous...

JANSEN (O.S.)  
With Xu-xiang hot bean sauce?

EMILY  
God no! A cheeseburger, with onions  
and tomatoes and lettuce and pickles  
and mayonnaise, and a little American  
flag on the toothpick.

JANSEN (O.S.)  
Is that breakfast for you, Sarah? Not  
waiting for the stewardess on this  
flight?

A GROANING SOUND IS HEARD. Emily jerks her head round.

EMILY  
What was that?

DAD IS SHOOTING THE BABY ACTION... THE PLANE MOVES SLIGHTLY; DAD BRACES HIMSELF TO COMPENSATE AND REFRAME THE SHOT...

THE STEWARDESS SLIDES OUT OF THE SHOT; ABRUPTLY THE WHOLE CABIN TILTS WILDLY UP...

EMILY HOLDS HER CHILD...

MALE VOICES IN CHINESE SHOUT, FULL OF FEAR AND CONFUSION.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE (O.S.)  
(over and over)  
STALL, STALL, STALL...

5 THE PILOT IN THE BACK; REACTS TO THE PLANE'S MOTION, 5  
BEGINS TO RUN TOWARD THE FRONT OF THE PLANE... HE'S  
RUNNING UP A STEEPER AND STEEPER HILL; A BODY COMES  
FLYING BACK - THE STEWARDESS - AND TAKES

HIM RIGHT OUT OF THE SHOT...

JANSEN DROPS THE CAMERA TO GRAB FOR SUPPORT; SCREAMING  
EVERYWHERE...

EMILY HOLDS HER BABY

THE PLANE VIOLENTLY TILTS INTO A DIVE, REVERSING ITSELF.  
EMILY HAS TO PULL HER BABY BACK OUT OF THE AIR. JANSEN  
GOES FLYING AWAY FROM EMILY... DROPPING THE CAMERA...

6 THE CAMERA TUMBLES WILDLY THROUGH THE AIR: WE PAN WITH 6  
IT...

THE CABIN IS FULL OF SCREAMING PEOPLE, FLYING BODIES, ALL  
AT ONCE ALL THE OXYGEN MASKS DROP DOWN; OVERHEAD LUGGAGE  
BINS POP OPEN AND LUGGAGE RAINS DOWN...

7 A HUGE WIDE HIGH NIGHT SHOT OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN UNDER 7  
CLEAR SKIES AND A FULL MOON. IT TAKES US A SECOND TO SEE  
A TINY COMMERCIAL JET FAR BELOW US BUT STILL 37,000 FEET  
ABOVE THE OCEAN -- CAREENING WILDLY OUT OF CONTROL...

IN THE HUGE SILENCE OF THE NIGHT AND SEA...

SUPERIMPOSE: MAIN TITLE:

AIRFRAME

VOICE OVER - STRANGELY CALM...

PILOT (V.O.)  
Social Approach, this is TransPacific  
545, en route Hong Kong to Denver. We  
request an emergency landing in Los  
Angeles...

8 A BLOCK ON A RADAR SCREEN: IT SAYS TPA545... IT IS 8  
APPROACHING THE SHORELINE INDICATED BY GLOWING MAP LINES  
ON THE RADAR.

CONTROLLER (V.O.)  
Okay, 545, understand you request  
priority clearance to land. Say the  
nature of your emergency.

PILOT (V.O.)  
We have a passenger emergency, we  
need ambulances on the ground.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: 8

PILOT (cont'd)  
I would say thirty or forty  
ambulances. Maybe more.

9 CONTROLLER MARSHALL 9

LEANS OVER HIS SCREEN, STUNNED...

MARSHALL  
TPA 545, say again. You are asking for  
forty ambulances? Four. Zero.

PILOT (V.O.)  
That is affirmative. We had severe  
clear air turbulence. Very severe.

MARSHALL  
TPA 545, what is the condition of your  
aircraft?

PILOT (V.O.)  
Flight deck is operational. FDAU is  
nominal.

MARSHALL  
I copy that, 545. Can you specify the  
nature of the injuries?

PILOT (V.O.)  
We have two dead, many unconscious...  
we need forty ambulances...

Marshall has pressed a button; a Supervisor is standing  
up looking over to him; other controllers, sensing  
emergency are peering round...the Supervisor is listening  
in on a headset...

SUPERVISOR  
What's his ETA?

10 SEE HIS RADAR SCREEN: HE TOUCHES A BUTTON: THE TPA545 10  
BLOCK OPENS UP: INFORMATION ON THE FLIGHT: CAPTAIN JOHN  
CHANG.

MARSHALL  
An hour...  
(into his mouthpiece)  
TPA 545 maintain speed and  
vector, 25,000 feet.  
Captain Chang you are  
cleared for straight in  
approach on bearing two  
eight seven...

SUPERVISOR  
(overlapping)  
Put a fire crew on level  
one alert. Get the  
ambulances. Order neuro and  
ortho teams to meet the  
plane and have Medical  
notify the Westside  
hospitals...

11 EXT. LAX - NIGHT A MONTAGE OF RESPONDING EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT: AMBULANCES SCREAMING INTO THE AIRPORT; COPS FRANTICALLY WAVING THEM THROUGH; SHOOING LIMOUSINES OUT OF THE FUCKING WAY; HELICOPTERS GATHERING IN FROM THE NIGHT SKIES BEARING TV STATION LOGOS; NEWS CREWS ARRIVING, SQUADS OF MEDIA RUNNING TO VANTAGE POINTS; THE CONTROLLERS GOING ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS, SILENT, TENSE. SUPERVISOR LOOKING OUT HER WALL OF GLASS AT THE FLASHING EMERGENCY VEHICLES, THE HELICOPTERS. OVERALL: 11

SUPERIMPOSE MAIN TITLES

IMAGES UNDER TITLES BECOME:

THE FOLLOWING LEGEND STREAMS ON SCREEN IN THE SAME STYLE AS THE OPENING STREAMS OF DATA DIGITS --

05:26:03 AM - GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA

12 INT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 12  
CASEY SINGLETON, about thirty, wakes to an insistent telephone. Sleepily...

CASEY  
(into phone)  
What time is it?  
(snaps awake)  
Oh, God - no!

JUMP CUT TO:

13 INT - ALLISON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 13  
ALLISON SINGLETON, eight years old, is lifted still asleep and protesting from her bed by Casey, now dressed for work.

CASEY  
Shush, honey, it's okay, I've got an emergency, I have to get you to your Dad early, shush, babe, you're just dreaming...

14 INT. CASEY'S SPORTS UTILITY - NIGHT 14  
Casey talks on her car phone while she drives, fast, Allison fully awake now... She's using the loudspeaker so we hear JIM SINGLETON'S voice...

CASEY  
...well, I'm sorry, Jim, I've got a real emergency at the airport, you have to take Allison early.

(CONTINUED)

JIM (ON SPEAKER)  
Early. For Christ's sake, you know  
what time it is?

Casey picks up the handset...

CASEY  
What is it - is somebody there?  
(listens)  
You've got ten minutes to do something  
about it.

She punches the end button, silencing the speaker. Looks  
at Allison. Allison knows...

CASEY (cont'd)  
What's she like? I mean, do you like  
her?

ALLISON  
She's okay.

Casey's anger gives way to infinite sadness for her  
daughter, caught in the web of adult error...

CASEY  
Oh, Allison...

ALLISON  
It's okay, Mom.

The car phone rings. Casey punches the send button.

JIM (V.O.)  
All clear. Hey Skeeze, how you doin'?

ALLISON  
I'm okay. Mom's in trouble.

Casey glares at Allison...

CASEY  
I'll pick her up on Sunday, the same  
as always.

JIM  
As always.

CASEY  
Sunday at six.

JIM (V.O.)  
(all joviality gone)  
Oh, for God's sake...

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

I'm just trying to be clear, Jim.

JIM (V.O.)

No you're not. You're controlling,  
like always.

CASEY

Jim - let's not.

JIM (V.O.)

Fine by me.

JIM (V.O.)

(cheerily)

Hey, Skee-zix, what do you want for  
breakfast?

CASEY

I'm sorry - everybody - I have to call  
the airport..

She stabs the END button on the carphone...

15 EXT. AIRPORT - STILL DARK 15

FIRE EQUIPMENT ROARS down an access road parallel to a  
runway. Panning with it brings us to a Gulfstream, with  
NORTON AIRCRAFT painted the length of the fuselage, and a  
distinctive logo on the tail. It starts to turn onto the  
runway.

16 INT. - TOWER - CONTINUOUS 16

We can see the sea of emergency lights flashing beside  
the runway, and the Gulfstream turning... the controllers  
stand at the window watching; the chatter of pilots and  
controllers on the loudspeakers. Chief Controller is  
looking at the Gulfstream through binoculars.

CONTROLLER

Norton Gulfstream, hold where you are  
until advised.

17 INT. GULFSTREAM - CONTINUOUS 17

Elegantly appointed business suite. EDGARTON, a tall  
50ish man, with a commanding presence sits at a desk  
covered with papers. The plane abruptly turns. Edgerton  
looks up, annoyed. Speaks to an assistant - BOB RICHMAN,  
26, a scion of the Norton family, with an unshakable  
sense of entitlement, who stoops to peer out a window...  
window...

EDGARTON

What's this? I thought we were  
cleared for takeoff...

(CONTINUED)

RICHMAN

So did I. I'll find out what's going on, sir.

EDGARTON

(looking at watch)  
Son of a bitch!

He leans to look out the window; RED AND BLUE FLASHES light his face...

PILOT (V.O.)

Mister Edgerton, they got an emergency landing, we're on hold - they're not giving a time estimate.

The pilot himself appears in the doorway...

PILOT

It's one of ours, sir - a Norton N-22 widebody.

Edgerton visibly reacts; controls his reaction... Richman has already got on a phone...

EDGARTON

(to Pilot)  
Okay, thanks...  
(to Richman)  
Bob, where is John Marder?

RICHMAN

I'm calling him, sir.

EDGARTON

If you can't find John, find out if we've got anybody from Norton Aircraft in charge here, I want to talk to him...

He peers out the window, the lights flashing blue and red on his face. Chews his fingernail... on the words 'in charge here...'

CUT TO:

18 EXT. AIRPORT ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

18

CASEY SINGLETON, IS PASSED THROUGH SECURITY. A mob of media milling about spot her, and charge, all haircuts and smiles and a mass of microphones pushed in her face...

(CONTINUED)

MEDIA (VARIOUS)  
 Hey, Singleton!  
 Casey!  
 Get us on the runaway for  
 shots coming in.  
 Any leads on the bombers?  
 How many dead did they say?  
 How much longer? (etc.)

CASEY  
 Who the hell tipped you  
 guys?  
 I just got here myself.  
 Where'd you hear bombs?  
 Do not know the cause.  
 We'll keep you informed as  
 soon as we know anything.  
 Listen, let me through...

She steps past security into...

19 EXT. OUTSIDE TERMINAL SIDE GATE (CONTINUOUS)

19

Casey walks fast toward a waiting Norton Van. It has the Norton logo and I.R.T. (Incident Review Team) prominently displayed. We are now outside the terminal in the secure area.

They are:

DOUG DOHERTY, in charge of structure and mechanical, Forty-five, with a potbelly, bad complexion, and thick glasses, lives in perpetual gloom, speaks in a mournful monotone.

NGUYEN VAN TRUNG, avionics . . .thirty, trim and quiet, self-contained.

KEN BURNE, powerplant . . .red haired and freckled; his chin thrust forward, ready to fight, profane and abusive...

RON SMITH, electrical. . . Bald and timid, nervously fingering pens in his pocket.

They are loading tools into the van, everyone turning to look into the night where the crippled plane will come...

CASEY  
 Hey, Don, Ken... anybody seen Mike Lee?

KEN BURNE  
 Whaddayou heard?

CASEY  
 They said turbulence...

KEN BURNE  
 Turbulence! What a crock of shit...

Casey is on her phone...

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

CASEY

Tell Mister Marder Casey Singleton  
here, LAX, with IRT.

(punches end)

Yeah, well, everybody got everything  
they need? I'm not waiting, let's get  
down there...

They pile into the van...

20 INT. VAN - NIGHT (MOVING SHOT)

20

CASEY

The controllers said the pilot was  
real cool, the airplane is okay, but  
they got two dead or maybe three, and  
a dozen unconscious; I'm gonna let the  
paramedics and Immigration in first  
before we go to work.

DOUG DOHERTY

You got a tough one for your first  
time in charge.

KEN BURNE

We'll make her look good.  
(looking out window)  
Here he comes...

21 EXT. LAX RUNWAY - NIGHT.

21

The plane sweeps over the van, the waiting Gulfstream,  
and touches down with a burst of tire smoke...

22 EXT. RUNWAY - NIGHT

22

The plane slows to a stop, is circled by emergency  
vehicles, fire engines, ambulances, various police,  
Immigration, paramedic and DEA teams, all rushing up the  
stairs to the plane. They pop the doors, front and  
rear...

SHOUTS AND EXCLAMATIONS AS THE PLANE DOOR IS OPENED...

CASEY stops at the foot of the stairs; her team stop on  
their way to their various tasks (Ken Burne to the  
engines, Doherty walking around the wing, etc.). ALL  
REACTING TO:

A STEWARDESS COVERED WITH BLOOD stands screaming for help  
in the door. Casey steps back to let paramedics charge up  
the stairs...

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

(to her team)

Guys - go ahead, I'm gonna let them do their work before I try to get in the cockpit...

They start off with their people toward their various zones of expertise (Doherty to the wing; Burnes to the engines, etc.) Paramedics are bringing down people on stretchers; two apparent cockpit crew stand in the door, one with a bloody face; another is helped out, protesting but is made to allow paramedics assist him... as this plays out, Casey grabs DAN GREENE, The Operations Inspector for FAA Flight Standards District Office, on his way up the stairs to mediate between law enforcement and others...

CASEY (cont'd)

Dan...see the crew don't leave before we get a chance to talk...

GREENE

They're all going to the hospital, Casey. Is John Marder coming?

CASEY

Marder appointed me to run the IRT, Dan...

GREENE

Oh, yeah, that's right. If John shows tell him I want to talk...

And he's gone up the stairs to the door...

RICHMAN (V.O.)

Is there a Casey Singleton here?

CASEY

Yeah, yeah, yeah, right here...

Richman has been looking at the men; has to look round - confused - to a woman named Casey. Casey mistakes him for a superaggressive Reporter...

RICHMAN

(measuring her)

You're the senior Norton rep?

CASEY

Yeah yeah yeah. I run the Norton Incident Review Team investigating this ac- ... incident... The press room is back at the Terminal, you don't have credentials to be here, you have to get back...

(CONTINUED)

RICHMAN

Bob Richman? I work for Norton -  
assistant to Mister Edgerton? He  
wants to talk to you.

(shows credentials)

CASEY

Edgerton? Well, okay, yeah, yeah,  
not now, maybe tomorrow...

RICHMAN

(into phone)

Hello sir, it's a Miss Casey  
Singleton.

(hands phone to her)

CASEY

Hello, sir?

(beat)

John Marder is not here, sir. I'm in  
charge...

(beat)

Sure. I'll be here...

She hands the phone back to Richman... SEES something out  
of frame... too much is happening too fast for her to be  
polite to Richman...

CASEY (cont'd)

Mike Lee! Hey!

23 MIKE LEE...

23

a well dressed Chinese man of fifty, gray hair cropped  
short, in a blue blazer with a striped tie weaves his way  
through the carnage to Casey.

MIKE LEE

Yes, Casey?

CASEY

How's your flight crew?

MIKE LEE

Not well. I've got Dan Greene's  
permission to move them to hospital.  
You can talk to them there. This is  
very bad... an uncommanded slats  
deployment, we thought you...

CASEY

(interrupting)

You interviewed them?! Nobody is  
supposed to talk to the crew, except  
NTSB investigators, you know that!

(CONTINUED)

MIKE LEE

We are a foreign carrier, and the incident occurred in international airspace. I'm not sure your NTSB has jurisdiction.

RICHMAN

(oh so smooth, ignoring her)  
Bob Richman, I work with Mister Edgerton.

CASEY

(to Richman)  
This is Mike Lee, he's liaison between Norton and TransPacific Air...

MIKE LEE

(to Richman)  
Ah... Mister Edgerton is here?

CASEY

(getting back on track)  
You've been talkin to the pilots.

EDGARTON WITH THE GULFSTREAM PILOT

amid the medical teams, approaching...

RICHMAN

Mister Edgerton, this is Mister Lee, he represents the airline. Harold Edgerton CEO, Norton Aviation...

EDGARTON

I'm sorry to meet you under these circumstances.  
(to her)  
You're Miz Singleton.

CASEY

Yeahyeahyeah. He's been talkin to the pilot!

MIKE LEE

Captain Chang. Forty-five years old, resident of Hong Kong, six thousand hours' experience. He's TransPacific's senior pilot for the N-22. Very skilled.

CASEY

Yeah, when was he last recertified?

MIKE LEE

Three months ago. On Norton flight simulators, by Norton instructors.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

How did we rate him?

MIKE LEE

(addressing Edgarton, not  
her)

Outstanding. I did not prompt him, he  
said these words to me, "I thought  
they fixed the damn slats on this  
airplane."

CASEY

He's the only one having trouble with  
them...

MIKE LEE

(continuing to talk past  
Casey to Edgarton)

I think it would be most unfortunate  
to begin pointing fingers while we  
have so little information. If you  
would excuse me, I would like to get  
medical attention for my crew.

The crew has been loaded into a TransPacific van and Mike  
slips in with them. They drive away with Mike Lee looking  
back at them; something obdurate and implacable about his  
unfailing courtesy.

EDGARTON TURNS HIS FULL ATTENTION ON CASEY.

He looks her up and down.

CASEY

He's not supposed to do talk to the  
flight crew! I like things done right.

EDGARTON

You run our damage control...

CASEY

Incident Review Team.

EDGARTON

John Marder must think very highly of  
you to delegate such an important job  
to... such a young woman. I'm just on  
my way to China, to sign a deal -  
fifty of these planes, with an option  
for another thirty. That's four years  
of full-capacity production. It's full  
employment in the richest blue collar  
jobs in the world for 25,000 people.  
Now - Casey, is it? I'm meeting  
tomorrow...

(CONTINUED)

RICHMAN

That's day after tomorrow...

EDGARTON

...with the Chinese Minister of Transport. He's going to want to know what happened here.

CASEY

I don't know what happened here.

EDGARTON

I don't want to hear that. Airbus and Boeing are so tight in line on this deal, if I stop short they're three feet up my ass. Excuse me. So I don't want to hear anything but answers. And I want them inside a week.

CASEY

We can try.

EDGARTON

Eight billion dollars, 12,000 stockholders, 25,000 working people, we're all in your hands, Casey. I want to help you any way I can. I'm going to leave Bob here as my personal liaison; he will always know how to reach me day or night; he'll give you every support this company can command, and he has my authority to act. He's yours - use him any way you can.

He turns and walks away. He can't hear:

CASEY

Thanks. Thanks a fucking bunch!

RICHMAN

I'm here to help.

CASEY

Just stay outa the way...

She's already heading for the stairs into the first class section, where other members of the IRT are brushing past paramedics and emergency crews still moving in and out. Richman follows...

24 I/E CABIN - CONTINUOUS

24

As they step through...Richman swears; they both quail at the stench of vomit... Seat backs are broken, armrests torn free, overhead luggage bins hang open.

(CONTINUED)

Oxygen masks dangle from the ceiling. There is blood on the carpet, blood on the ceiling.

RICHMAN

My God, this happened because of slats  
- what are slats?

CASEY

No, not because of slats. Slats make  
the wing bigger for landing and  
takeoff.

She's turned into the cockpit. Kenny Burne is looking  
around there...

KEN BURNE

The logs and paperwork are gone. But  
it looks pretty okay up here...

He picks up a baby's shoe. Casey looks down and finds a  
mass of crumpled black metal wedged beneath the cockpit  
door. A video camera. As she pulls it out it falls apart;  
the cassette spilling tape. She hands it to Richman.  
Burne begins to wedge himself into the pilot's seat;  
Casey leads toward the back of the plane...

RICHMAN

What do I do with this?

CASEY

Hang on to it.

They enter the mid cabin: damage is even worse; seats  
completely broken, a big swathe of blood on the ceiling.  
Oxygen masks ripped down and lying tangled under foot.

CASEY (cont'd)

Look at that - they grabbed all the  
oxygen masks when they fell.  
(touching a broken seat)  
You know how much force it takes to  
break an airplane seat? Over a ton...  
a 150 pound passenger getting thrown  
around would weigh more than 2,500  
pounds to break a seat... This wasn't  
just a turbulence bounce... They  
porpoised. Up and down, real  
violent...

RICHMAN

How do you know that?

CASEY

That's what makes them vomit.  
They can take yaw and roll.

(CONTINUED)

She demonstrates yaw and roll with her hands... then pitching, her hands porpoising in the air...

CASEY (cont'd)

But pitching makes them puke.

They pass another divider and enter the aft cabin, near the tail. Richman gasps... It looks as if a giant hand had smashed the interior. Seats crushed flat. Overhead bins hung down, almost touching the floor; ceiling panels split apart, exposing wiring and silver insulation. Blood everywhere. The aft lavs ripped apart, mirrors shattered.

Six paramedics struggle to hold a heavy shape, wrapped in white nylon mesh, hanging near a ceiling bin. A man's head flops out of the mesh-the face gray, mouth open, eyes sightless, wisps of hair dangling. DOUG DOHERTY, one of the IRT, is working with them...

DOUG DOHERTY

Okay. He missed the A59 cable run. He missed the A47 cable run. He's left of the hydraulic lines, left of the avionics pack ... Okay, I can't see he hurt the plane in any way.

RICHMAN

Oh God.

He starts to leave...

CASEY

(grim joke)

Hey we're just getting started...  
Weren't you supposed to oversee me?

PARAMEDIC

Can we cut him out, sir?

DOUG DOHERTY

What? Oh yeah sure. Cut him out.

The paramedics stick the jaws of life up into the ceiling. Sounds of cracking and ripping...

DOUG DOHERTY

I can't watch this...

We don't know if it's the macabre sight of the body dropping down into the arms of the waiting paramedics or that they're torturing his airplane, but he leaves...

She turns and starts forward and sees something on the floor she picks up, from inside the aft galley.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (cont'd)  
How'd this get way back here?

It's a blue pilot's cap, with a bloody footprint on the top. Silver wings on the front, the yellow TransPacific medallion in the center.

WING SLAT - CONTINUOUS

The front edge of the N-22 wing suddenly moves straight out, then tilts down. To the uninitiated it might look like something has gone wrong... TILT UP: IRT men stand along the edge of the wing, hands in pockets looking at the slat. One looks toward the cockpit, where...

THEIR P.O.V.:

KEN BURNE peers out of the cockpit side window he has popped open to look back...

KEN BURNE  
Okay, cycle back...

INSERT: HAND ON CONTROL PEDESTAL

It is Burne's; he lifts a metal cover that clears a handle labelled SLATS, which he pulls up with a complicated pattern; like a stick shift on a sports car.

WING SLAT

With a groaning noise it retracts into the wing. The men watch it with no special reaction.

25 COCKPIT

25

KEN BURNE  
Well, fuck, try it again...

Casey and Richman arrive and the men move to let them see... Burne raises the metal cover at the back of the console between the pilot's seats, pushes the lever down. A faint hum can be heard.

KEN BURNE (cont'd)  
There they go. Nothin wrong there...

CASEY  
(to Richman)  
Checking the slats. Look out the side...

Richman, standing at the cockpit door can see out the First Class cabin door.

(CONTINUED)

RICHMAN

Why are you checking the slats?

CASEY

You use them to increase the wing area in landing at slow speeds so you get more lift. If they deploy at high speeds, five hundred miles an hour, they can throw a plane out of control. We had a problem with uncommanded slats extensions early in the history of the N-22, all fixed, but leave no stone...

KEN BURNE (V.O.)

Okay, one more time...

RICHMAN

Why would that happen?

Burne looks back...

KEN BURNE

Who the fuck is that?

CASEY

Bob Richman, works for our President Mister Edgarton.

For a moment all work comes to a halt. They all look at Richman, measuring him...

CASEY (cont'd)

Detailed to me...

KEN BURNE

You an engineer, a pilot?

RICHMAN

Sorry, guys, I went to law school. But if it's not possible, then why are you checking?

KEN BURNE

(busy at controls)

Excellent, the legal mind at work.

CASEY

Because it might have happened, and our job is to check everything. Maybe there's a problem with this particular aircraft. Maybe the control cables aren't properly rigged. Maybe there's an electrical fault in the hydraulics actuators. Maybe the proximity sensors failed.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (cont'd)  
 Maybe the avionics code is buggy.  
 Right now, we haven't got a clue.

RICHMAN  
 What if it was turbulence? What if the  
 pilot hit the wrong thingy?

KEN BURNE  
 Clarence - Mister Darrow, sit in my  
 place.

He stands out of the pilot's seat; they move Richman into  
 the seat. Trung, meantime, has been cycling all the  
 various flight controls, checking instrumentation...

RICHMAN  
 I've been on planes where turbulence  
 got pretty rough.

KEN BURNE  
 Ever see anybody get killed on your  
 flight? People thrown out of their  
 seats?

RICHMAN  
 Well, no, but it's possible...

KEN BURNE  
 Possible? You mean like in court,  
 where anything is possible? This is an  
 aircraft. It's a machine. Either  
 something happened to this machine, or  
 it didn't. It's not a matter of  
 opinion. Here - that's the slats  
 control. Try to fuck it up. Lift the  
 cover...

During the following Burne takes Richman through the  
 routine. No matter what, he can't "accidentally" trigger  
 the slats.

KEN BURNE (cont'd)  
 There. Bang the lever there. See,  
 it's like shifting gears - you can't  
 knock it in place. Try it. Here use  
 my clipboard... That's it. Not a  
 matter of opinion. So why don't you  
 shut the fuck up and let us work?

Richman has extricated himself from the seat by now,  
 trying to restrain his anger.

NOTE: DURING ALL THIS THE OTHER IRT MEN HAVE BEEN WORKING  
 WITH ELECTRIC SCREWDRIVERS, PULLING OUT PANELS, LIFTING  
 OUT VARIOUS BOXES FROM THE MAZE OF CABLES UNDER AND OVER  
 THE COCKPIT. THIS ACTION IS MORE OR LESS BACKGROUND TO  
 THE ACTION ABOVE;

(CONTINUED)

FOR EASE OF READING IN SCRIPT FORM I HAVE NOT TRIED TO INTERCUT IT: THIS TEAM IS LED BY RON SMITH running his hand over his bald head nervously.

SMITH

That's fine, now get the panel to the left.

DOUG DOHERTY

How many boxes we got on this bird, Ron?

SMITH

A hundred and fifty-two. For now we're pulling the CVR, the DFDR, the NVMs that count.

He puts a heavy box about the size of shoe box on the deck and lifts a replacement into place. Richman, moving back from the action above has to step over it; he reaches down to lift it aside to make room...

RICHMAN

Heavy!

CASEY

That's the DFDR, the media call it the black box.

RICHMAN

That's the black box, why's it orange?

CASEY

So they can see it in the wreckage. Ron, no QAR?

(for Richman)

Quick Access Recorder. Maintenance item; it records what's going on in flight. Maintenance grabs it out when the plane lands, downloads it into a computer: any problems read right out, they fix it on the spot and the plane's on its' way.

SMITH

Usually the carrier sticks it in the tail - I couldn't find it.

Casey and Richman are edging their way out. Dan Greene pokes his head in the door...

GREENE

Casey - I got your certificate to ferry the plane to Burbank. I figured you want to take the bird to the plant.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Thanks, Dan. Ken, I gotta go muzzle the media. I'll take the van.

KEN BURNE

Take fucking Clarence Darrow with you.

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 0703 AM

26 I/E NORTON VAN - DAWN (TRAVELLING SHOT)

26

Casey drives; Richman is steaming...

RICHMAN

For God's sake, are they always so friendly...

CASEY

Yeahyeah. They're engineers, emotionally, they're all stuck at thirteen years old, just before boys discover girls. They have poor social skills, but they're extremely intelligent and well trained, and outsiders are definitely not allowed to play.

RICHMAN

You're not an engineer?

CASEY

Me? No. I'm a woman. And I'm from management. Three reasons why I don't count. I'm also IRT liaison to the press, which is another strike. The engineers all hate the press.

They have to wait as the GULFSTREAM with NORTON logo taxis into position to take off...

CASEY

How'd you get the job with Edgarton? That's a good job.

RICHMAN

Your mother never taught you not to ask personal questions?

CASEY

No, so how'd you get the job?

Richman has thought about this and prepared for the question...

(CONTINUED)

RICHMAN

My mother was Amanda Norton, of Norton Aviation, cousin of the wife of John Marder, your boss.

CASEY

(beat)

I wouldn't spread that around.

RICHMAN

Why? I can't hide it, can I? And no matter what I say everybody will always think it's the reason I got the job. But I had three choices; on Wall Street, at three times the pay; clerking for a Supreme Court justice, but I don't like his politics; or following the family tradition, the third generation of Nortons at Norton Aircraft. Making something that flies, something useful, something beautiful. Like a bird. There was something so sad about that plane, all torn apart.

CASEY

You could of started in the mail room.

RICHMAN

Why, Casey? I already know how to sort mail.

Casey has been stealing looks at him, trying to figure out whether this is bullshit or for real. Jury's still out.

The Gulfstream accelerates off toward China, and Casey puts the van in gear...

CASEY

Yeahyeah, well... Let's go feed the haircuts and smiles...

As she pulls up in front of

LAX PRESS ROOM, 0717 AM

27 INT - AIRPORT PRESS ROOM - DAWN

27

WIDE SHOT: THE MEDIA

They are all rising from sleep, liars' poker, watching a wall of TV, where every channel shows a cop chase on the freeway. They are gathering up their equipment, brushing back their haircuts and smiling, converging on Casey and Richman as they enter through security doors.

(CONTINUED)

MEDIA (VARIOUS)  
Hey, what's happening? (Etc.)

CASEY  
Yeahyeahyeah. Okay. You ready. Come  
on, long night, kids, let's get set?  
Romy? You got sound?

They are all ready, cameras rolling, microphones and tape  
recorders held out to her face...

CASEY (cont'd)  
(in a monotone)  
At approximately 4:30 this morning,  
West Coast time, a Trans Pacific  
Airlines Norton N-22 aircraft en route  
from Hong Kong with a Chinese crew and  
passengers experienced severe  
turbulence of unknown origin and  
requested an emergency landing at LAX.  
At 5:17 Flight TPA 545 executed an  
uneventful landing. Passengers and  
crew were evacuated to local hospitals  
where their injuries if any are being  
evaluated.

Hands are up questions being shouted: "Was there a fire?"  
"How many dead?" Etc.

CASEY  
(to each question)  
There was no fire.  
We have no indication of the cause of  
this incident at this time.  
There were three dead.  
Don't know that at this time.  
Passenger list indicates there were  
two Americans on board, both from  
Milwaukee. I believe they were unhurt.  
The rest of the passengers are Asian.  
The plane is structurally undamaged.  
In fact we will fly it to Burbank this  
afternoon or tomorrow.  
You could shoot visuals of the plane,  
but it looks just like any other  
plane.

By now the media are already bailing, on cel phones,  
checking the police pursuit... packing up their cameras..

CASEY (cont'd)  
(to her vanishing audience)  
We're ready to answer anything  
further...

(CONTINUED)

ROGERS

(the only one, the others are  
packing up)  
Hey, Casey. Well done... you think  
this could sour the China deal?

CASEY

I don't know why. This is a great  
airplane, you know it, they know it,  
and clear air turbulence is something  
every flight may encounter... Jack, no  
more tonight.

ROGERS

Talk to you tomorrow...

RICHMAN

I thought you said turbulence was...

CASEY

I'm talking to the media, I'm not  
talking the in the same language I  
talk to you or the guys. Turbulence  
means rough air to them; to us it's  
the flightdeck's first excuse for any  
fuckup. You got a ride home?

RICHMAN

Edgerton's limo is waiting... You want  
this?

He holds out the broken Camcorder, its' tape hanging out.

CASEY

Give it to Norma, in my office. You  
can find my office tomorrow?

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

MONDAY, MAY 11 - ... CHINESE AIRLINER LANDS SAFELY IN LOS  
ANGELES WITH TWO DEAD AND MANY INJURED. BELOVED CROONER  
SINATRA HOSPITALIZED IN LOS ANGELES. LAX, 02:31...

28 THE N-22 ROARS OFF THE RUNWAY DIRECTLY OVER CAMERA... 28

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

MONDAY, MAY 11... ANGRY CAB DRIVERS BLOCK INTERSECTIONS  
AND BRIDGES, SHUTTING DOWN CITY TRAFFIC...NEW YORK CITY,  
04:19 PM ...

29 INT.- NEWSLINE OFFICES (NYC) - DAY

29

In midtown Manhattan, in the twenty-third-floor offices of the weekly news show Newsline, JENNIFER MALONE, 29, is in the editing bay, reviewing tape of an interview with Charles Manson. Her assistant, DEBORAH, enters...

DEBORAH  
 Pacino dumped. Marty is on the video  
 downlink from the filmset...

JENNIFER  
 (punching controls on her  
 board)  
 What? When? Shit.

ON ONE OF HER MONITORS THE PICTURE OF MARTY REARDON  
 APPEARS,

Reardon is forty-five, handsome in a thin-lipped, sharp-eyed way. The air of a reluctant prosecutor, a seasoned man who's seen it all. Speaks slowly, often in short fragments, with the appearance of reasonableness. Giving the witness every possible break. His favorite tone: disappointment. Dark eyebrows up: How could this be?

On the Monitor we SEE him on a movie set, where his Newsline crew stands at a little distance; Marty has tissue tucked in his collar; the makeup woman stands by him, fussing at his hair... A P.A. hands him a phone handset...

MARTY  
 Jennifer? What the hell gives? He  
 won't come out of his trailer.

JENNIFER  
 He can't do that. His contract calls  
 for him to do publicity. This was set  
 up months ago.

MARTY  
 Well he won't. I'm here eggfaced.

JENNIFER  
 You could ask yourself, why, does he  
 give a reason?

MARTY  
 Why, because Marty Reardon asked him a  
 serious question. What did I ask?  
 'Why did he think he had not had a hit  
 in five years.' And we weren't even on  
 the air.

Marty stands up, rips the tissue out of his collar.

(CONTINUED)

MARTY (cont'd)

Who the hell does he think he is?  
Leonard de Caprio?

JENNIFER

'Leonardo.' We'll talk to Pacino's  
agent, and get back to you.

She punches buttons; Marty fades from the monitor screen.  
She addresses another functionary...

JENNIFER (cont'd)

Marty does it again. See if you can  
get Bregman on the horn. What have we  
got in the can?

DEBORAH

Nada. Viagra story went limp: side  
effects are just these guys see blue  
for a couple hours after intercourse.  
Newt Gingrich's marital problems are  
tied up in legal. All we have ready to  
go is that wheelchair Little League  
segment.

They are calling up stories in work... reading off the  
screen...

JENNIFER -

We got a twelve minute hole. Sinatra -  
if he dies, that could go in; update  
his obit just in case.

DEBORAH

Dick Shenk's airline revenge file -  
here's a Chinese airliner lands with  
three dead.

Jennifer looks over her shoulder. Hits a button; on a  
screen, CASEY'S VISAGE APPEARS...

JENNIFER

Where'd they get this one  
from? She's the talking  
dead...

CASEY (ON TV)

...Kong with a Chinese crew  
and passengers experienced  
severe turbulence of  
unknown origin and  
requested an emergency  
landing at LAX. At 5:17  
Flight TPA 545 executed an  
uneventful landing.  
Passengers and crew...

JUMP CUT TO:

30 REVERSE: JENNIFER, DEBORAH, OTHERS, INCLUDING 30

DICK SHENK, 45, looking at Casey's statement on a computer monitor, sound low in b.g. Shenk is a self-dramatizing lunch-time drinker.

SHENK

All Chinese, no Americans dead, no visuals, forget it, Jennifer.

JENNIFER

It's the same type plane that had some wing problem a couple years back...

SHENK

Defective parts, I won't want a defective parts story, I want a death trap in the sky, a flying coffin story.

Jennifer has switched to segments in various stages of production; the sound low, the light from the screen flickering on their faces (we don't have to see the screen, better not to, just their faces).

SHENK (cont'd)

What did Marty say to Pacino? I don't wanna know. Keep digging. Pathetic. What kind of a world is it where I'm reduced to hoping Frank Sinatra will die this week so we don't have twelve minutes of dead air?

He exits. As the door swings shut behind him, someone behind Jennifer speaks...

SOMEONE

That was a really good lunch.

ON JENNIFER'S DETERMINED FACE

JENNIFER

It was the same type of plane. "Mystery in the sky?" Debbie get the file on Norton Aircraft.

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

MONDAY, MAY 11, ...EL NINO SPINNING OFF LATE SPRING  
BLIZZARDS, TORNADOES...BABY FOUND BURIED ALIVE IN ANGELES  
NATIONAL FOREST... BURBANK, CALIFORNIA, NORTON AIRCRAFT,  
04:15 PM...

31 EXT. NORTON PLANT AIRFIELD - DAY 31

THE N-22 LANDS WITH A BURST OF SMOKE FROM THE TIRES...

32 INT. - WAR ROOM - DAY

32

JOHN MARDER, THE COO of Norton Aircraft, a driving, driven man stands WITH HIS BACK TO CAMERA, looking down through a wall of glass overlooking the assembly line.

This is an unimaginably vast space with cranes moving, a long row of unfinished jet transports stretching away below; the room is hung from the ceiling, almost two hundred feet above the factory floor - the view extends almost a mile, to the end wall of the building.

MARDER is looking at this scene, back to CAMERA...

MARDER

I'm sorry I wasn't able to get to the Airport yesterday, but from what I hear all went as well as could be expected... not a word in the media...

He dramatically turns to FACE CAMERA IN CLOSEUP...

MARDER (cont'd)

Casey, you were great. Talk jargon, talk in a monotone, bore them to death.

A NEW ANGLE, REVEALING THE ROOM...

A large conference room with gray indoor-outdoor carpeting, a round Formica table, tubular metal chairs. Bulletin boards, maps, and engineering charts. Present are Casey, Richman, Burne and the IRT team, Mike Lee.

CASEY

Yeahyeahyeah, there was the cop chase on the 405, they couldn't wait to get out of there. Sir...

Indicates Richman, who keeps a low profile, always...

MARDER

Oh, I know Bob, he's family, Bob Richman, everybody, Assistant to our President Hal Edgerton..

(to Richman)

Hal get off okay? Yeah? Enough bullshit. This was a brand-new aircraft, four thousand hours and nine hundred cycles. What happened? Let's run the fault tree... Did anything about this aircraft cause behavior that looks like turbulence? Structural?

(CONTINUED)

DOUG DOHERTY  
Oh sure, a slats deploy...

MARDER  
(interrupting)  
I don't want to hear slats deploy...

DOUG DOHERTY (cont'd)  
...would do it. Slats seem okay, but  
we got a week's work to rule them out.

MARDER  
Avionics?

TRUNG  
Right now I'm wondering why the  
autopilot didn't override the pilot.  
Soon as I get the Flight Data  
download, I'll know more.

MARDER  
Electrical?

SMITH  
It's possible we got a slats deploy  
from a sneak circuit. I'm setting up a  
CET.

MARDER  
How long?

SMITH  
A month, six weeks, easy.

MARDER  
You don't have a month, you got a  
week, max...

CASEY  
We normally...

MARDER  
This is not normal. You got anything  
at all?

CASEY  
The Pilot's statement...

RICHMAN  
Which is hearsay, inadmissible...

They stare at him a beat: another country heard from.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

He's the pilot, I think we have to listen to what he has to say, which is an uncommanded slats deployment.

KEN BURNE

We got that fixed.

MARDER

We thought so, didn't we?

(beat)

Edgerton's trying to sell the Chinese - if they get a hint this is the same old problem...

CASEY

Mike, can I talk to Captain Chang today?

MIKE LEE

Excuse me. I think I should tell you the cockpit crew and the cabin attendants were given medical attention and then caught a connecting flight back to Hong Kong.

Shock; they stare at him... Burne throws his pencil down and curses.

CASEY

They what? I told you keep them here... What the hell you afraid they're going to tell us?

MIKE LEE

That is exactly my point. On behalf of the carrier, I think we have to recognize the flight crew acted responsibly. They have no liability here; but they face possible litigation from the civil aviation authorities in Hong Kong, and they went home to deal with it.

Marder cuts in before Casey can vent her anger...

MARDER

Do you think we can get an interview with him, Mike? Will he talk to our service rep in Hong Kong?

MIKE LEE

I'm sure if you submit written questions... But John, Casey... I'm not sure what they have to say is to your advantage.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MIKE LEE (cont'd)

Given the history of this airplane and the sensitive position you are in with the Chinese sale, and the problem now of European resistance. Perhaps it would better to leave this alone to be forgotten.

CASEY

Mike, it might better if - having thrown your monkey wrench - you let us talk about this in confidence.

MIKE LEE

Whatever. What John wants...

MARDER

What Casey wants, Mike. She's in charge.

They wait in silence until Mike is gone, turning with a polite smile to all from the door.

CASEY

Something stinks here. He doesn't want us to hear what the pilots say.

RICHMAN

We have the cockpit voice recorder. That may help. Yes? No?

TRUNG

The incident occurred one hour prior to landing. The cockpit voice recorder stores only the last twenty-five minutes of conversation. So in this case the CVR is useless.

CASEY

Sir, in a week's time, no way can we give anything but a wild guess.

MARDER

Then you better all get to it...Casey?

They begin to gather papers and stand, scraping chairs... Marder draws Casey aside...

MARDER

You saying you can't do this job? I fought for you because I thought you were up to it...

CASEY

I am. Nobody...

MARDER

Then good.

(CONTINUED)

He's gone.

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

MONDAY, MAY 11, NORTON AIRCRAFT OUTSIDE BLDG 64, 07:15 PM

33 EXT.- NORTON PLANT BLDG 64 - CONTINUOUS

33

Casey and Richman exit into the parking area. Casey is checking her beeper.

CASEY

Shit - pardoh my French.

(pulls out her cel phone;  
she's got a message)

You see what they're doin to me? The China deal goes in the toilet, 25,000 people outa work, the Europeans go 'buy European' dump the N-22, it's all my...

(into cel phone)

Hey, darlin! You called me, wassup? No, honey, you tell your Dad, I said I wish he wouldn't. Because I don't think that's a picture I want...I want if you go to see that movie, you see it with me, not your Dad... Because I want to explain it to you, not him. Okay? Hey! Allkison... don't hang up. I can't... She hung up on me. She doesn't get that from me!

At some point in Casey's talk with her daughter, Richman got out keys, pressed the remote on them and they began to thread their way toward where they and we could HEAR a beeping sound, then SEE the headlights on his BMW convertible blinking on and off, then see the whole glorious vehicle...

SOMEBODY HAS BACKED INTO IT WITH FULL FORCE, and with a high bumper: it is a mess.

RICHMAN

My car! My car! Look what they did to my car! I can't even drive this! They didn't even leave a note.

CASEY

Boy, look at that...

RICHMAN

How could they drive away not knowing? They have to be drunk!

(CONTINUED)

CASEY  
Yeahyeah, Bob, you might want to trade  
this wreck in for an American car.

RICHMAN  
Why? It's made here.

CASEY  
It's assembled here, it's not made  
here. The value added's overseas. The  
mechanics in the plant know the  
difference; they're all UAW. Beamer in  
their parking lot? They just gave you  
a little hint.

RICHMAN  
You're saying they deliberately did  
this?

CASEY  
Call it a job action.

RICHMAN  
I'm calling security...

He starts to get into the car to make a phone call on the  
car phone, but stops...

RICHMAN (cont'd)  
Oh, my God!

She looks to see: there's a big pile of shit on his  
driver's seat.

CASEY  
Yeahyeahyeah. That's a job action.

RICHMAN  
What does that mean...

CASEY  
You don't know what you're getting  
into. You want a new car? Go to your  
insurance...

RICHMAN  
The insurance won't take another  
claim...

CASEY  
Then go to your mother and remind her  
Christmas is coming. Bob, don't fuck  
with it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (cont'd)  
Go buy yourself a nice Corvette, and  
let me talk to the Union.

## TIME AND DATE STAMP:

MONDAY, MAY 11, 07:45 PM, NORTON AIRCRAFT, BLDG 64.

34 INT. BLDG 64 - FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

34

Casey walks past the behemoths being assembled; this is the first time we get a real sense of the sheer size of the place. She is wearing her own hardhat. She is heading toward a little office in a portable unit, but is headed off by DON BRULL, the UAW President and shop steward in this assembly line. An ex-boxer with scars to show it. He speaks softly but with clarity to cut through the noise of the assembly line.

CASEY

Don, what's goin on?

BRULL

You see what they got us doin over there?

He indicates where an enormous contraption the size of an office building made of pipe and plates of steel is being disassembled: cranes are lifting parts of it into position where wood scaffolding is being built round its parts, and then plywood sheeting nailed all around: it's being crated for shipping. The men doing it are like ants swarming...

CASEY

Yeahyeahyeah. The wing tool going to Atlanta - for the China order.

BRULL

Not what the Teamsters on the loading dock tell us. They seen the bill of lading: going to Korea. From there to Shanghai.

CASEY

No, Atlanta.

BRULL

Why would they lie?

CASEY

Rumor. Jesus this plant is like a bunch of old women, especially the Teamsters, they got nothing else to do yada yada yada...

(CONTINUED)

BRULL

(interrupting)

Well, then tell the suits to get the word out, because these guys are steaming.

CASEY

Is that why somebody rammed the BMW in the lot?

BRULL

A German product self-destructed in the parking lot? Gosh. That's chicken-shit, Casey.

(beat)

They're givin the wing to China to build. The suits, a big order, they maybe sent part of the tail, maybe the nose, maybe some interior fab. Just parts. The wing, Casey, that's core technology. Nobody ever gives away the wing. Not Boeing, nobody. You give the Chinese the wing, you give away the store. They don't need us any more. They can build the next generation of planes on their own. Ten years from now, nobody here has a job.

CASEY

Neither do Edgarton and Marder...

BRULL

The suits will get rich off the deal, what do they care, they'll be in their Swiss chalets. The guys got their whole life invested here and they got no choices, no Swiss bank accounts, no golden parachutes.

CASEY

Don. I'll check for you. But right now I'm pretty busy with this 545 incident, and-

BRULL

Well - right there! If the 545 thing isn't cleared up fast, it could kill the China sale. Don't you think? Why don't you get sick? See what I mean?

CASEY

You're suggesting I sabotage the investigation to kill the China sale. Even if I thought you were right, Don, this was a big step for me;

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (cont'd)  
I got a kid to put through school and college all by myself. I can't throw that away. Because they will fire me.

BRULL  
Casey. I knew you when we called you 'Speedy.' Always running someplace. So I guess you finally got there. I guess you're a suit now.

He walks away... KLAXONS SOUND, STARTLING HER. A HUGE PIECE OF THE WING TOOL IS LIFTED UP AND BEGINS TRAVELLING OVER HEAD, MEN WALKING BENEATH IT...

Casey is walking parallel to them, working her cel phone..

CASEY  
(into phone)  
John Marder, Casey, it's urgent.  
(beat)  
Tell him to call me tonight, or first thing tomorrow. Yeahyeahyeah...

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

MONDAY, MAY 11, "NEWSBULLETINS STREAM" 07:59 PM,  
VANCOUVER, B.C.

35 I/E AIRCRAFT DOORWAY - DUSK

35

VIEW FROM INSIDE THE OPERATOR'S POST OF A TRAVELLING LOADING DOCK AS IT IS SWINGING UP AGAINST THE DOOR OF A PLANE. THROUGH THE PORTHOLE OF THE DOOR WE CAN SEE THE STEWARDESS LOOKING OUT, ANXIOUSLY. THEY HAMMER ON THE PORT, OPEN THE DOOR OF THE PLANE, REVEALING IN A WHEELCHAIR A

CHINESE MAN IN A PILOT'S UNIFORM BANDAGED AND BLOOD STAINED. HE IS UNCONSCIOUS. THE PLANE CREW FROM 545 STAND BEHIND HIM. PARAMEDICS RUSH HIM OFF THE PLANE AND UP THE RUNWAY, AND

MIKE LEE TALKING INTO A CEL PHONE IN CHINESE FOLLOWS...

THE DOOR OF THE PLANE IS CLOSED AGAIN, THE CREW STAYING ON BOARD...

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

MONDAY MAY 11, GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA 08:47 PM

36 INT - CASEY'S LIVING ROOM - ALMOST DARK

36

She enters, shedding shoulder bag, clothes as she walks through, casually snapping on the TV with the remote and dropping that;

(CONTINUED)

she's down to bra and unsnapping pants as she leaves the room... she's tired and she's heading straight for the shower... The TV comes up to the empty room...

TOM BROKAW (ON TV)

...questions in Congress about military secrets being exported to China and elsewhere as part of business deals in the growing global economy. Is our security being endangered by American firms trading abroad? From Washington, Leslie Stahl has the details.. etc., etc.

THE PHONE RINGS.

37 INT. CASEY'S SHOWER - CONTINUOUS

37

She is showering, swears, leans out of the shower to grab a wall phone...

CASEY

Hey, darlin...

(change in her voice)

Who's this? What? Whattayou mean look outside my...

A CRASH FROM SOMEWHERE IN THE HOUSE MAKES HER SQUEAK WITH SHOCK.

CASEY (cont'd)

What the hell is this? Hey!

Whoever it is has hung up. She gets out of the shower, wraps a towel around her...

LIVING ROOM

The TV runs on... glass lies on the floor; her window broken. She steps on a shard before realizing, swears - blood from a small cut.

THE WINDOW: A MAN'S SHAPE RACES PAST OUTSIDE AND IS GONE! WE HEAR (OVER THE TV) MEN'S SHOUTS. A CAR REVS UP AND BURNS RUBBER IN THE STREET...

Casey is on the phone...

CASEY (cont'd)

911, 911, answer, God damn, please,  
911 - Yeah! Guy just threw a brick or  
something through my window! He's  
here, I just saw him. Outside. For  
Christ... 3716 Orchard, North  
Orchard...Glendale. I'm stayin on, oh  
Jesus Mary Mother of...

(CONTINUED)

A man's figure appears at the door; the bell begins to ring.

CASEY (cont'd)  
 (yelling at the door)  
 I'm in here, and I'm armed! 911 is on  
 the way, get outa here, you fuckin  
 coward...

The men at the door shout something we can't hear over the TV and Casey's own shouting; they retreat.

CASEY (cont'd)  
 (into phone)  
 Okay, yeah, I'm locking myself in a  
 bedroom. Until they get  
 here...pleeeeeease!

ALLISON'S BEDROOM - DARKER NOW

Casey, still in the towel, lies on Allison's bed, amongst Allison's toys and dolls. A chair is wedged under the doorknob. She stares at the window, where the curtains are drawn. She has a cel phone in hand. We can HEAR the distant TV, but not what is being said. She has dialled the cel phone... it is answered.

JIM (V.O.)  
 Hello?

CASEY  
 You're home.

JIM  
 (instantly annoyed)  
 What is this now, Casey? If you're...

CASEY  
 (interrupting)  
 Is Allison okay? That's all...

JIM  
 She's fine, she's right here.

CASEY  
 Will you take her away, go to the San  
 Diego zoo, go tonight...

JIM (V.O.)  
 The zoo isn't open at night...

We HEAR a car, and flashing red and blue lights sweep across the thin curtains...

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (cont'd)  
...I've got to hang up now. The police  
are here

JIM  
Casey!...

She's hung up and is pulling the chair from under the  
doorknob...

AT FRONT DOOR

Casey opens it. Two cops stand at the door; two other  
men in casual clothes stand at a little distance behind  
them.

COP  
Casey Singleton?

CASEY  
Yeahyeah!

COP  
You work for Norton Aviation?

CASEY  
Yeahyeahyeah.

COP  
These gentlemen are Norton Security.  
They say they're guarding you.

CASEY  
(confused)  
They busted my window? They got  
credentials?

SECURITY  
(advancing)  
Sorry about that, we saw him just as  
we got here, but he saw us before we  
saw him and just took off.

He's shown credentials.

COP  
You want to take care of it from here?

SECURITY  
Yeah, we'll take care of it.

COP  
Okay then, Ma'am, you okay?

CASEY  
Yeahyeahyeah, thanks.

(CONTINUED)

The cops go.

SECURITY

You want us to help clean that up?

CASEY

(ushering them in)

I gotta get the glass outa my foot.  
What's goin on?

SECURITY

They told us to put a guard on you 24  
hours. You go put some clothes on,  
we'll take care of this.

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

TUESDAY, MAY 13, . HIGH 76 LOW 65, HUMIDITY 88 PERCENT,  
EARLY MORNING FOG AS THE MARINE LAYER SETTLES OVER THE  
BASIN, AIR QUALITY... GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA.. 06:37 AM

38 EXT. MAIN GATE NORTON AIRCRAFT - MORNING.

38

JACK ROGERS, a reporter we met at LAX, is leaning against  
his car, smoking, as

CASEY'S CAR ARRIVES AT THE GATE;

followed by the Norton Security guys in a plain blue car  
with telltale radio whips. Rogers flags her down.

CASEY

Hey, Jacko, whassup?

ROGERS

They clamped down security, they  
cancelled my press pass. What's goin  
on?

CASEY

Not my idea, Jack. Whattayou want?

ROGERS

Are you pleased with the way the  
investigation is going?

A HONK CALLS ATTENTION TO RICHMAN ARRIVING AT THE GATE,  
WAVING GAILY TO HER FROM A BRAND NEW PORSCHE CARRERA.  
The Guards flip gates up and he cruises inside...

CASEY

545 happened yesterday, it's too early  
to comment.

(CONTINUED)

ROGERS

Not too early for speculation to start. I just want to set the record straight; have you ruled out engines?

CASEY

No comment. Get your hand off my door..

ROGERS

(making a note)

Then you haven't ruled out engines. I suppose you're looking at the slats, too.

CASEY

Slats? Comeon, Jack, gimme a break. We licked that problem years ago.

ROGERS

Did you?

CASEY

I helped you break the story; you didn't forget that did you?

ROGERS

How could I? Newsline - the TV show - called me because I'm the expert on those wing slats. So now I'm wondering why they're so interested, maybe they know something I don't know.

CASEY

I trust you, I'm damned if I know why. 545 porpoised, very severe. We don't know why, but slats are the least of it so far. Newsline. What are they after mainly.

ROGERS

They're fishing. But this guy Shenk, the producer? You know the story? He got drunk on a United Flight one time and he got loud and when they tried to quiet him down he slugged a flight attendant and the girls tied him up in their panty hose and turned him over to the FBI. They never filed charges because of who he is, but he's still looking to get revenge. He's not gonna let go until he nails somebody. The plane he was on was a Norton 22.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

I suppose that's a flaw in our manufacturing too...

ROGERS

One for you, now for me. Background if you want: I hear Marder and Edgarton are at war.

CASEY

I haven't heard that.

This is news to her. Interesting. A GATE GUARD intrudes.

GATE GUARD

Sir, you'll have to move along here...

ROGERS

Hey, Kenny, give us just a sec...

GATE GUARD

I'm sorry sir, you'll have to move on.

ROGERS

That's cold! This is like the last round of union problems - What's goin on?

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

TUESDAY, MAY 13, NORTON ADMINISTRATION 06:48 AM,

39 EXT.- ADMINISTRATION BLDG. - DAY

39

Casey rounds a row of parked cars on an electric cart with a surrey type sun top and wheels to a stop by Richman, who is putting the top on his new Porsche.

CASEY

Get in...

(into her cel phone)

...Well, where is he? I know it's none of my God damn business, but I'd like to reach him.

(folds the phone)

Marder! He's never where you need him!

(to Richman)

Yeahyeahyeah, get in. I thought I told you get an American vehicle, things are very touchy around here right now...

RICHMAN

You're in a good mood!

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

The media are sniffing around this slats thing, the union thing, the China thing. Is your boss fighting with my boss?

RICHMAN

I don't think so, why?

CASEY

I'd like to know...

She's skidded to a stop by a low building with shade trees, different to the other buildings in the plant. A sign says "NORTON DIGITAL INFORMATION SERVICES."

40 INT. DIGITAL LAB - DAY

40

THE ORANGE BLACK BOX FROM THE N-22 IS PLUGGED INTO A COMPUTER.

SCREEN IS FILLED WITH WIRE-FRAME IMAGE OF AN N-22, THAT swiftly fills in to look like the aircraft in level flight against a black b.g.

WONG (V.O.)

The number-three bus blew about twenty hours before the incident, so the frame syncs are out on all the subsequent data. Here's Flight 545 flying - the parts of the plane here are out of sync - the computer keeps trying to draw the flight but it's got all the information in the wrong time sequence, it can't keep it together.

ON SCREEN THE IMAGE OF THE PLANE HAS SEEMED TO RIPPLE, THEN TEAR APART; A WING IS TWISTED NINETY DEGREES TO THE FUSELAGE, LIKE A SHARK'S FIN; THE PLANE DISAPPEARS, THEN REAPPEARS WITH THE TAIL SEPARATE AND AT AN ANGLE; THE PLANE SEEMS TO DISINTEGRATE THEN COME BACK TOGETHER WITH EVERYTHING IN THE WRONG PLACE...

WE NOW SEE CASEY, RICHMAN, ROB WONG, A YOUNG COMPUTER TECHNICIAN IN A ROOM FULL OF COMPUTERS AND MONITORS.

CASEY

What do we do?

WONG

Rebuild the synchronization. Got to do it by hand.

CASEY

How long?

(CONTINUED)

WONG  
Couple months if you give me maybe  
three more people...

They go on watching the bizarre plane wreck on the  
screen.

RICHMAN  
I thought...

CASEY  
Yeahyeahyeah, you thought, everybody  
thinks. These things work maybe one  
outa six times. The Government  
requires you put them in the planes,  
but it doesn't say you have to  
maintain them. So nobody does. Maybe  
once a year they check.

WONG  
So, Casey, you want to okay three more  
Level 8 computer technicians?

CASEY  
That's 3,700 hundred a week. Six  
weeks. What if I give you six bodies;  
you get it done in a week.

RICHMAN  
(Jesus!)  
\$132,000?

WONG  
Payroll tax, health and benefits.  
Union shop.

RICHMAN (cont'd)  
Another 26,000. I'll authorize that.  
On Edgerton's payroll account.

CASEY  
(surprised)  
You heard the man, Rob.

WONG  
I still can't do it in a week...

Casey and Richman are going...

CASEY  
You got the budget. Just do it.

RICHMAN  
I don't get it; don't they want to  
know what happens if there's a crash?

(CONTINUED)

As she exits, dialling her cel phone, Richman follows.

WALK AND TALK THROUGH THE LAB...

CASEY

Nah nah nah, in everybody's interest for these things to fail. You got new squads of rabid lawyers turned loose on the country every year, so why provide an objective, reliable record of what went wrong? Who knows who could turn out to be the bloodstained villain? Who could get sued? Better keep it vague.

(into cel phone)

Finally! Tell Mister Marder we're on our way.

(voice changes)

He what? Yeah. No!

(to Richman)

Message from Mike Lee - The First Officer, Lu Zhan Ping, they took him off his flight in Vancouver, unconscious. He's in a coma.

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

41 INT - MARDER'S OFFICE - DAY

41

A huge, rather old fashioned office, a Wall of Respect, heavy leather furniture, the walls papered with sepia murals of old time aviation; huge flying boats, pilots in leather helmets, etc., models of World Wars One and Two fighter planes. Walls of glass overlooking the plant and the airfield. Their meeting has been in progress...

MARDER

You said you put that fire out.

RICHMAN

She did. She really did, the local media all went away, but then Newsline picked up on it...

Casey looks round at him; he keeps surprising her.

MARDER

Newsline! You know who Dick Shenk is? The producer of Newsline, he got blasted on an American flight...

CASEY

United...

(CONTINUED)

MARDER

Who gives a damn what airline, he's throwing himself around First Class, and the copilot cold cocked him...

CASEY

...the stews tied him up in their panty hose...

MARDER

I'm not married to you, yet, let me tell this story. They did him a favor, turned him over to airport security instead of calling the FBI. So it was all hushed over, no charges. The lucky son of bitch never forgave the industry. You believe that!?

CASEY

Yeahyeahyeah.

MARDER

He never lets go, this guy. Don't talk to them.

CASEY

Yeahyeah. What am I suppose to do about Mike Lee? I'm workin in the dark - I need to talk to that cockpit crew.

MARDER

Mike Lee is protecting the interests of TransPacific Air. That's what he's paid to do. I called his CEO, that's all I can do. Just get on with the IRT. Get it done.

CASEY

Sir, can I talk to you? Bob, would you mind?

A brief glance between Marder and Richman.

RICHMAN

You want me to wait?

CASEY

Only be a minute.

Richman exits, the door closes. Casey starts the second it closes...

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (cont'd)

I didn't want to get into this in front of the kid, but you oughta know, one of the reporters, an old time guy, he's not like the haircuts and smiles, he knows what he's talking about. This morning he asked me if there was a bad blood between you and Edgerton?

MARDER

Jack Rogers.

CASEY

Yeahyeah!

MARDER

Called me about it. He ask you about giving the wing to China?

CASEY

Yeahyeah.

MARDER

My dead body. Not the China deal. That's great. But giving away the wing; that's the end of the American airplane business.

(he seems suddenly tired)

I don't know, Casey. I try to hold the line. But sooner or later somebody is gonna do it. Someday, somebody is going to look at the economics and face the facts: this kind of heavy manufacturing in America is over; it's all going to be done in countries where the work force is glad to get jobs at thirty bucks a month - they'll fight and die for thirty bucks a month. All we have to do is sell them the technology, and if the stock market goes up as a result, nobody can stop it.

CASEY

Boeing doesn't think so; Airbus doesn't... Are you saying that's what Edgerton's doing?

MARDER

Jesus, you'll ask anybody anything. We discussed it. I told him I and the Norton family would go to Washington, we'd sell the company to the union, we'd do anything to stop that.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

So the subject came up...

MARDER

He seemed satisfied. You know, this used to be fun. Build a bird, and everybody would go out to the desert and watch it take off on its' first flight. Always a little doubt. Will the damn thing fly? Half a million pounds of metal and plastic, what keeps it up in the air, when every physical law is trying to bring it down? Now it's all computer science; design a flying sardine can for the number of passengers you can jam in without breaking off legs and arms to get them in the seats. Fun was when you took off and flew every moment with fear; landing safe was a feat, an accomplishment. Now all the planes are the same really, some burn a little more gas, some are easier to maintain, the only difference is public image; perception, what you seem to be, not what you are. Look at us sweating what the press will say about this deal. How will it look? For God's sake find out something, anything we can fix, something we can say, so we can nail down this China deal. Buy us a few more years.

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

TUESDAY, MAY 13, NORTON 10:47 AM AVIATION, HANGAR 5

42 INT - HANGAR 5 - DAY

42

HUGE ESTABLISHING SHOT

The N-22 fills the huge hangar; scaffolding is still being wheeled around it; the IRT mechanics and technicians swarm all over it. Armed security stand at key points...

43 INSERT: THROUGH A MAGNIFYING GLASS: HAND INSIDE THE LEADING EDGE OF THE WING; SLATS REMOVED. THE FINGERS FLICK A TINY PIECE OF METAL, A ROCKER PIN, NO BIGGER THAN THE THUMB OF THE HAND, BACK AND FORTH FROM ONE POSITION TO ANOTHER. THE INSIDE OF THE WING IS A MAZE OF INTRICATE PIPES, HYDRAULIC LINES, WIRES, MOTORS, ASTOUNDING COMPLEXITY.

43

DOUG DOHERTY (V.O.)

Look at it. It's bent.

(CONTINUED)

## WIDER ANGLE

Doherty and Casey kneel at the edge of the wing, looking at this tiny mechanism...

DOUG DOHERTY (cont'd)  
(using magnifying glass)  
Look at the action surface of the hinge. It's been worn. See it?

CASEY  
I think so.

DOUG DOHERTY  
This holds the slats in place. It fails, they pop right out... that ain't all. See this?

He shows us what we have to see through a magnifying glass: a tiny little H inside a triangle, embossed into the side of the part.

DOUG DOHERTY (cont'd)  
The mark of the manufacturer, only the triangle is upside down. It's a fake part. They make these things cheap in the back of garages and blacksmith shops in Thailand and Indonesia. The carrier did some cheap maintenance.

CASEY  
Have you photographed it?

DOUG DOHERTY  
All documented.

CASEY  
Then pull it; I'll get it down to metals.  
(to Richman)  
Let's expedite the maintenance records from TransPacific Now you wonder why Mike Lee is playing hide and seek?

DOUG DOHERTY  
He's got a lot to explain, look down there...

He points down to where they can see below one of the engine pods under the wing, the reverser cowls have been pulled off, laid open for a photographer who is taking carefully calibrated pictures.

(CONTINUED)

DOUG DOHERTY (cont'd)  
The reverser cowls are phony parts,  
they were cheating on maintenance all  
over the lot.

RICHMAN  
Would that do it?

DOUG DOHERTY  
It could, but it didn't reverse in  
flight - we'd have had all kinds of  
metal damage. You can see that right  
away. My guess is...  
(indicating the locking pin)  
..this little bugger opened up. You  
got a nonstandard part, Casey, and it  
failed the aircraft.

She catches Richman's eye.

CASEY  
Not just this. It's not enough for  
the slats to deploy, something else  
had to happen... a cascade of little  
failures, no one thing fatal in itself  
until they all build up into an  
avalanche.  
(into phone)  
Mike Lee. Michael Lee?

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

TUESDAY MAY 13, ... INDIA EXPLODES THREE NUCLEAR DEVICES  
UNDER GROUND DESPITE U.S. PROTEST... "CHAINSAW AL" DUNLAP  
FIRES 6500 MORE WORKERS AT SUNBEAM... VANCOUVER HOSPITAL,  
11:07 AM

44 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

44

FIRST OFFICER LU ZHAN PING: OPEN ON ECU OF HIS EYE. IT  
OPENS. The eye seems staring into infinity, then focusses,  
turns, and SHOT WIDENS TO REVEAL: Nurse. He is hooked to  
all kinds of medical monitoring apparatus. The Nurse  
looks around, sees his eyes are open.

NURSE  
Well, it's about time! Hello, you.

He stares at her, we don't know how alert he is.

NURSE (cont'd)  
I'll get a Doctor in here, and Mister  
Lee, he's been so good, he's going to  
be so glad to see you awake!

(CONTINUED)

She exits; but she doesn't see what we do: his eyes remain fixed on where she was - not following her out the door. He lies still, with that 1,000 yard stare.

## TIME AND DATE STAMP:

TUESDAY MAY 13 NEW YORK, OFFICES OF NEWSLINE... 2:53 PM EST ...MAYOR GIULANI ORDERS PUSHCART VENDORS OFF MANHATTAN SKYWALKS... OFF DUTY COP SHOTS TWO IN BARROOM BRAWL...

45 INT.- NEWSLINE OFFICES - DAY

45

Jennifer Malone wears a headset with radio phone on her waist band so she can move around as she talks on the phone. She punches in a number...

## JENNIFER

Jennifer Malone, Newsline. Can I talk to somebody in management, not PR? Okay, so he's in Shanghai, who's next? John Marder, who's he? The COO? Let me talk to him.

She moves to her desk and punches buttons on a device attached to her telephone that begins to show a string of lights, ranging from red to blue. It lights up, then settles to a steady blue...

46 INT. CASEY'S OFFICE - DAY

46

Her secretary, NORMA a big blue rinsed woman about fifty sits at a cluttered desk, visible in an anteroom; people move about, phones ring. Casey is going through faxes and dispatches, phone cradled in her neck. We SEE Norma speak out there as Casey hears her on her phone...

## NORMA

Marder's office transferred this to you? A Jennifer Malone from Newsline?

## CASEY

(steeling herself)  
This is Casey Singleton, how can I help you Miss Malone?

## INTERCUT

## JENNIFER

I was calling a John Marder? Who're you?

## CASEY

Mister Marder is in a meeting. Maybe I can help.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

What's your job? I don't want a secretary.

CASEY

Yeahyeah, you know in your line of work you can find out more from secretaries, sometimes they know more than the bosses. All it takes is just a little courtesy, the poor things thrive on respect, getting so little on the job. I don't want to tell you how to do your work, but...

Jennifer stares at the light on her voice stress indicator: Casey's voice registers an irritated reddish yellow.

JENNIFER

Okay. No offense! Ms. ...

CASEY

Casey Singleton.

JENNIFER

Okay...The Norton 22 is still uncertified in Europe: What's the trouble with the plane?

CASEY

No trouble at all, we've been flying the N-22 in this country for five years.

JENNIFER

But if it's true your plane has no problems, why are the Europeans withholding certification?

Norma brings a messenger with a dolly load of record books. Richman enters Norma's office and stands over her desk reading what's on it, upside down.

NORMA

Maintenance records on Flight 545.

CASEY

(into phone)

There is no problem with the aircraft. The problem is the powerplant.

JENNIFER

Oh!

(CONTINUED)

On her deskpad, under a list of "SLATS," "EUROPE SAYS UNSAFE," "CHINA SALE," she writes in big letters "ENGINES!"

JENNIFER (cont'd)

So, it's not just the slats, it's the engines, too!

The device on Jennifer's desk phone briefly sequences from blue to yellow as Casey speaks..

CASEY

(irritated)

Okay. Yeah. Malone. In this country the airlines use Pratt and Whitney engines. But the new European airline safety authority is telling us that if we want to sell the plane in Europe, we're going to have to equip it with European engines.

Jennifer keeps trying to interrupt; Casey doggedly finishes...

CASEY (cont'd)

Listen - We're happy to put on European engines, if Lufthansa or Sabena tells us that's what they want.

JENNIFER

This is some regulatory dispute? That's not a story.

CASEY

Oh that's a big story, you ought to be all over that... Ask if they want to sell European engines why they don't force the European airlines to buy them. Frankly, I imagine they've already tried, and been told to go to hell.

The lie detector on Jennifer's phone is back to a serene blue. She crosses "ENGINES" off her list.

JENNIFER

The slats on this airplane are prone to uncommanded deployment at high altitude and high speeds...

Just a flicker of orange, indicating stress, back to blue.

CASEY

There was a problem during the first year, but that has been resolved.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

This N-22 that landed in LA with two dead? What was the cause of that?

CASEY

That happened only yesterday; it is in our plant now, being studied to find out what happened.

JENNIFER

You don't know what happened?

NORMA

(urgent, sotto voce)  
Edgerton on the phone from Shanghai.

On Jennifer's end the light goes to red.

CASEY

(to Norma)

Aw, Jesus, tell him I'll be right there...

JENNIFER

Why do I think something is being left unsaid?

CASEY

(into phone)

We know what happened - severe turbulence that threw some passengers from their seats. We don't yet know why it happened. What else did you want to know?

Jennifer writes "MYSTERY FLIGHT?" "OUT OF CONTROL"

JENNIFER

So why is it - in spite of protests from Congress and your labor unions you're going to send the entire wing to be manufactured in China.

Richman has walked in:

RICHMAN

What do you want me to do now?

She waves him away, trying to focus and not say the wrong thing to Jennifer. Whose "lie detector" is flashing red!

CASEY

No no no. Nobody is gonna do that. That would be nuts. That would be Coca Cola giving away their syrup recipe.

(CONTINUED)

But Jennifer writes, anyway: "COMPANY IN TROUBLE?"

JENNIFER

You tell me - what's the story here?

CASEY

It's a business story. It's all about trading blocs and government regulation. It's about America maintaining its competitive position in a global marketplace as we move into the twenty-first century.

Jennifer's light is again a serene blue.

JENNIFER

Okay, Singleton, if I need anymore I'll get back.

She punches her phone to hang up.

JENNIFER (cont'd)

Oh my God.  
(to Deborah)  
Is Sinatra still breathing?

CASEY

(into phone)  
Mister Edgarton.

Richman reaches over her shoulder and punches the speaker button; Casey might object, but remembers Richman works directly with Edgarton.

RICHMAN

Bob Richman here, too, sir.

EDGARTON (V.O.)

Have you seen what's happening to Norton stock? We slipped 6 points on the London exchange. Is somebody back there leaking defamatory stories about the N-22?

CASEY

Nobody's talking here, sir. Nothing in the media...

EDGARTON (V.O.)

The Minister postponed our meeting until Thursday. What am I going to say?

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Call me Wednesday. We're still tearing the bird down, we have no idea what happened. Sir, the union believes we're giving the wing to China as part of this deal...

EDGARTON (V.O.)

Oh, for Christ's sake where did they get that idea? We told the Chinese, before we'd even discuss the sale they'd get a piece of tail, you'll excuse me, and interior fabrication, seats and luggage bins, that stuff, and nothing else. Bob, I've faxed you about three pages of calls and meetings that have to be rescheduled, do you have time to take care of it?

RICHMAN

It's done.

EDGARTON

Ms. Singleton - I want some good news.

Hangs up.

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

TUESDAY, MAY 13... BLDG 64, NORTON AVIATION... 16:23:09

47 INT. BLDG 64 - FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

47

Full of activity, men and women swarming over the fuselages and wings being built. The WING TOOL is still being crated up... Casey walks through with nobody looking at her, and enters a chain link enclosure (ceiling as well as sides) that is part of a long line of similar huts where various assembly tasks are headquartered. It is full of microfiche readers and computers.

The door is open, but nobody is here. She shrugs, sits down and calls up records on screen.

SCREEN: A BEWILDERING SUCCESSION OF RECORDS, SUGGESTING ONLY THE COMPLEXITY OF THIS TASK... STARTING WITH A SCREEN THAT MIGHT BE LIKE THIS:

MAINT REC N-22 / FUSE 271 / FR 098/443/HB09

DD 5/14 AS 6/19 MOD 8/12

RS KAITAK MAINT REC (A-C)

RS SNGPOR MAINT REC (B ONLY)

(CONTINUED)

RS MELB MAINT REC (A, B ONLY)

SHE HAS A TINY PEARLCORDER SHE TALKS INTO, AS INTO HER FIST...

CASEY  
Tuesday, May 13.

ESSENTIALLY A MONTAGE:

we see flashes of similar incomprehensible data on screen but her dictating tells us what it means to her... the important thing here is not what's on screen but the GROWING AWARENESS THAT AROUND HER, UNNOTICED BY CASEY IN HER CONCENTRATION, THE SOUND OF THE ASSEMBLY LINE IS GRADUALLY DYING AWAY; FULL OF MACHINES GRINDING, SAWING, RIVETTING, KLAXONS OF THE CRANES, ETC., WHEN SHE BEGAN, IT GROWS MORE AND MORE SILENT...

CASEY  
(speaking into Pearlcarder)  
Okay, what I'm seeing here is November  
10 97 Pilot loses radio communication;

48 EXT. JAVANESE AIRPORT - DAY 48

The N-22 lands past palm trees thrashing in violent wind and rain...

CASEY (V.O.)  
lands in Java. Blown circuit panel is pulled, he refuels. Okay, okay, yeahyeahyeah! The Javanese ground crew refueling...

49 EXT. JAVA AIRPORT - DAY (STORMY) 49

Javanese in shorts and Nor'westers brave the winds and rain to refuel; they blunder into the fuel coupling, sending fuel everywhere, douse themselves with fire extinguishers...

CASEY (V.O.)  
...ram a power lift into the fuel hose coupling; bent it and the coupler plate and the slats pin. Ah, Jesus. Okay...  
(the display is cycling rapidly as she's talking)  
They're lucky they didn't have a fire. Okay. Continues to Melbourne, Australia. Melbourne ground crew finds damage to right wing.

50 EXT. MELBOURNE AIRPORT - DAY 50

Sunny and bright; tall and tanned Aussies, in shorts and singlets work on damage to the wing...

CASEY (V.O.)

Melbourne says they don't have a slats locking pin in stock, so they take a chance and send the plane on to... Singapore! World Central for bootleg parts, mechanical and human no doubt.

51 EXT. SINGAPORE AIRPORT - NIGHT 51

The N-22 lands; the glittering lights of Singapore behind...

CASEY (V.O.)

But, but, but Singapore sends to the States for the real thing, Hoffman, H in a triangle, and they get one. Here's the paper work from Hoffman, in Glendale, California.

WE ARE BACK ON CASEY WITH THE RECORDS: SHE'S LOOKING AT THE SHIPPING RECORD.

CASEY (cont'd)

But it's a fake. Mechanic's report...  
(on screen we're seeing)

CHG RT LDLT FZ-7.

CASEY (cont'd)

Change right landing light fuse 7.

CHG RT SLTS LK PIN.

CASEY (cont'd)

Change the right slats locking pin.

CK ASS EQ PKG.

CASEY (cont'd)

Check the associated equipment package.

NRML.

CASEY (cont'd)

Okay, good, he's checking out everything connected to the damaged parts.

At this point the screen looks like this:

(CONTINUED)

RT SLATS DRV TRK (22/RW/2-5455/SLS)  
 RT SLATS LVR (22/RW/2-5769/SLS)  
 RT SLATS HYD ACT (22/RW/2-7334/SLS)  
 RT SLATS PSTN (22/RW/2-3444/SLS)  
 RT SLATS FD CPLNG (22/RW/2-3445/SLC)  
 RT PRX SNSR (22/RW/4-0212/PRC)  
 RT PRX SNSR CPLNG (22/RW/4-0445/PRC)  
 RT PRX SNSR PLT (22/RW/4-0343/PRC)  
 RT PRX SNSR WC (22/RW/4-0102/PRW)

CASEY (cont'd)

Slats drive track: the track, the lever, the hydraulic actuator, the piston, the forward coupling. Okay, and instructions: check proximity sensor, coupling and cover plate. He did everything right, but the part was a fake.

She reaches for a phone, punches numbers. For the first time she looks around her.

SILENCE. DEAD SILENCE. She stands up and looks out through the chain link; nothing and nobody. Nothing moves.

CASEY (cont'd)

(into phone)

Ron Smith. Ron... Casey - the right wing slats got mashed by a refueling crew in Java. Check the whole slats drive kit including the proximity sensor. Get back to me?

She hangs up. She walks out of the enclosure onto the floor. NOTHING AND NOBODY. She looks up.

P.O.V.: SOME DISTANCE DOWN THE BUILDING, UP UNDER THE RAFTERS TEN STORIES ABOVE HER, A TRAVELLING CRANE LOOMS MENACINGLY: SUSPENDED FROM IT NEAR THE FLOOR IS THE GIGANTIC BOXED WING TOOL PART; THE SIZE OF A BUNGALOW. IT GENTLY SWAYS. THE CAB OF THE CRANE SEEMS TO BE EMPTY, THOUGH A MOVEMENT SUGGESTS SOMEONE IS JUST DUCKING OUT OF IT.

SILENCE

(CONTINUED)

There is movement on the floor; a cleaning woman pushes a broom. She's a half mile away. Casey begins to walk toward the nearest door, also a couple of football fields distant.

STRANGE SOUNDS ECHO IN THIS GIGANTIC SPACE, LIKE ECHOES OF GIANTS WHISPERING.

SOMETHING WHIRS PAST HER; SHE SHRIEKS AND DUCKS. IT IS A FLOCK OF BIRDS THAT WHIPS AWAY INTO THE RAFTERS SOMEWHERE. A SOUND LIKE LAUGHING.

She walks under a huge half finished fuselage. She is in shadow stepping over loose cables and airhose...

SOUND: SOME HUGE MACHINE LIKE A DINOSAUR AWAKENING...

As she steps out from under the plane, she looks up. The crane is hoisting the boxed wing tool. She looks at the cab: sunlight through the clerestory windows high above reflects off the glass: she can't see if there's anybody in the cab or not. The box rises... Casey is arrested for a second. She's alone.

She begins to walk toward the exit. The box is now in mid-air. The crane begins to travel, moving toward her. A chase, with Casey, walking, trotting, then running in sheer terror as the crane and the gigantic box seem to pursue her, faster and faster. We can never see if there is someone in the cab or not, but the crane and box take on a malevolent purposefulness, tracking her down, wherever she moves, until she takes shelter under an almost completed fuselage.

The crane stops suddenly; the huge box swings out like a pendulum toward where Casey hides, then swings back, toward her, back again, beginning to slip out of its' harness, and then with a gigantic crash falls to the factory floor, splintering apart and crushing a half finished airplane...

Casey, where she lies, terrified. Parts come raining down all around her.

In the sudden silence, we HEAR a tinny little sound. Her cel phone is ringing. She gets it out. Almost can't speak...

CASEY

Yes?

JIM (V.O.)

Casey, what the hell did you mean calling last night, about the police were coming? Why did security from Norton show up at my place?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JIM (cont'd)  
They scared the hell out of Allison.  
God damn it to...

All the anger over a failed marriage bursts out,  
triggered by the adrenalin of this brush with death.

CASEY  
You useless piece of shit, don't talk  
to me like that. You ought to be God  
damn glad Norton is looking after your  
safety, since I'm paying your bills  
anyway. Get a job, get a life, and  
quit smoking! Around my child. I'll  
talk to you later.

And punches END. And bursts into tears.

People are now beginning to run back onto the floor,  
calling out, some in the sense "Yes! We did it." Others  
upset at the damage. Feet appear. Brull looks under the  
place where Casey lies helplessly weeping. She wipes tears  
and her hand comes away bloody from a bruise under her  
eye.

BRULL  
Casey! What are you doing here?

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

TUESDAY, MAY 13, ...WHITE HOUSE AIDE SAYS AMERICAN PEOPLE  
MORE FAIR-MINDED THAN MEDIA IN LATEST LEWINSKY FLAP...  
RARE SPECIES ENDANGERED IN ORANGE COUNTY SUBDIVISION  
PLAN... NORTON ADMINISTRATION 06:34 PM

52 INT. NORTON CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

52

A big room with an oval table. Facing each other across  
it are Marder, Casey, Richman, and various labor  
relations lawyers and minions. Across from them sit Brull  
and four or five Union reps. The contrast is vivid;  
corporate types in suits and ties, and forty dollar  
haircuts; Brull and his side in jackets, shirts open  
showing T-shirt, and with short cheap cuts.

SHOTS: AS THEY ALL SIT DOWN. BEAT. MARDER STARES AT  
BRULL.

MARDER  
(to Brull)  
How do you explain this incident?

BRULL  
The guys ast me to call a union  
meeting to discuss our situation, as  
is their right under the contract,  
Article eleven, paragraph 6 through 9.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BRULL (cont'd)

I gave notice - as is required in paragraph nine - to your office. They leave the floor to attend the meeting, and the crane operator forgets to set his brake. After he leaves his cab, in some unaccountable manner the switch mechanism activates. I dunno.

MARDER

You know how much this 'accident' is costing us, the tool wrecked, damage to the aircraft it hit, down time?

BRULL

(exactly!)

Yeah, I imagine you got to take that into account, when you consider your course of future conduct.

RICHMAN

This sounds like an open threat to me; I wonder how it's going to sound to a Judge?

BRULL

Who's this, a new lawyer? I don't give a shit. You got to arbitrate first, then go to the Labor Department, by the time you get this into court, if the wing is gone to China, then we're all out on the street anyway. You see how it looks to the guys? The trouble is, nobody here in this room can sign off on anything.

RICHMAN

Excuse me. Speaking for Mister Edgerton, if I get a signed affidavit from him that the wing will not be part of the deal, will that satisfy you?

BRULL

I want to sit here and see Edgerton himself sign the finished deal, all the 'i's dotted and 't's crossed, with the cameras rolling. In the old days we met with the old bastard Mister Norton himself. Now I'm facing you - you can't fly, and Marder here, he's not in the airplane business, he's in the son in law business.

RICHMAN

Wow!

(CONTINUED)

MARDER

(laughing with helpless  
outrage)

I don't know what to do, what to say?

BRULL

Just, now you know how strong the guys  
feel. And, Casey, how glad we all are  
you were not injured in the accident.  
From now on, let me know when you're  
going on the floor, will you?

The union men stand up. Meeting over.

53 EXT.- ADMINISTRATION BLDG. - DAY

53

Casey and Richman step out into the daylight, Richman  
begins to run to his Porsche. It's okay. He stands  
looking at it thankfully, thoughtfully.

RICHMAN

They hate us.

CASEY

Yeahyeah. You got to understand  
something: a lot of these guys went to  
war in Viet Nam, they believed they  
were defending their country, their  
way of life. They hear that big  
sucking sound of jobs going overseas,  
they see everything their friends died  
for, they see the whole idea of  
America being traded away so some  
Harvard Business school graduates can  
get richer.

(she's looking at his tie)  
What they see is treason. Their point  
of view.

RICHMAN

You don't think that.

CASEY

I'm one of them, Bob. My Pop and his  
Pop worked in this plant. Built the  
bombers and fighters that won World  
War II.

(beat)

If I thought that, I couldn't work  
here anymore. And I got a kid and an  
ex-husband to feed. I can't let myself  
think that, Bob.

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

(CONTINUED)

TUESDAY, MAY 13, ... RATTLER SEASON IS HERE, VETS ADVISE CAUTION IN WILDERNESS... EL NINO STORM ROLLS TOWARD L.A.... GLENDALE, CA, 10:36 PM.

54 INT. CASEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

54

CASEY: LOOKING AT HER HOUSE, SWITCHING OFF THE STEREO, THE TV

INSERT: HOT WATER POURED ON TEA

CASEY GETS IN BED WITH TEA; PULLS OUT RECORDS, BEGINS TO EXAMINE THEM...

INSERT: A PAGE LIKE THIS:

A/S PWR TEST	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	
AIL SERVO COMP	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	
AOA INV	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	
CFDS SENS FAIL	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	
CRZ CMD MON INV		1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
EL SERVO COMP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
EPR/N1 TRA-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	
OEFS SPEED INV	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
PRESS ALT INV	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
AUX 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AUX 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AUX COA	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A/S ROX-P	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
RDR PROX-1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
DEU FAULT REVIEW LEG 04										
FAULTS 01 R/L SIB PROX SENS MISCOMPARE										
APR 00:36										
FLT 180 FC052606H ALT 37000 A/S 320										

BEFORE THE AUDIENCE CAN NOD OFF, WE HEAR O.S. SOUND OF A PHONE BEING PUNCHED...

55 CASEY: STARING AT THE PAGE. PHONE TO HER EAR.

55

We hear the ringing tone. Casey is alert from what she has seen on the page, and exhausted by what she's been through...

THE RING TONE GRADUALLY SEGUES INTO A TELEPHONE RINGING.

JUMP CUT TO:

56 INT - BEDROOM - NEXT DAY

56

CASEY awakens. The phone is ringing. Shit! As she rolls to pick it up she crumples the pages lying on the bed...

CASEY

Yeah?

(CONTINUED)

ALLISON (V.O.)

Mom. Dad is making me wear the red dress, and I want to wear the blue one with the flowers.

CASEY

What did you wear yesterday?

ALLISON (V.O.)

The blue one. But it's not dirty or anything!

CASEY

Honey, you know I want you to wear clean clothes to school.

ALLISON (V.O.)

But it is clean, Mom. And I hate the red dress.

CASEY

Allison...

(asserting authority)

Allison. If your father says to wear the red dress, you do what he says. He's in charge now.

ALLISON (V.O.)

But Mom-

CASEY

That's it, Allison. No more discussion. The red dress.

ALLISON (V.O.)

(crying now)

I hate you.

Allison hangs up. Casey sits, pulling herself together. Suppressing her own tears...

CASEY

(singing)

Big girls don't cry,  
Big girls don't cry...  
Yeah, yeah, yeah!

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14 ... VIAGRA JOKES JAM STOCK EXCHANGE FAX  
LINES AS PFIZER STOCK SOARS... NORTON AVIATION SHARES  
TAKE NOSE DIVE AS RUMORS OF TROUBLE WITH POPULAR AIRLINER  
SURFACE... VANCOUVER, B.C. 12:03 PM

57 INT. - INTENSIVE CARE ROOM - DAY

57

The First Officer of 545 lies unconscious, hooked to various support systems. A monitor displays his heart and pulmonary functions on a wall above him. A CNN broadcast can be heard, an Anchor just concluding the weather - then...

CNN ANCHOR

Electrifying footage from a tourist camera aboard an airplane out of control! Viewers should be warned what you are about to see includes images of violence and injury you may wish to avoid...

By now our CAMERA has panned to show a TV playing to the unconscious officer. And on it we SEE CLIPS FROM A VIDEOCAM:

A BRIEF SHOT OF JANSEN SHOOTING INTO THIS LENS, THEN TURNING BACK TO HIS BABY. THEN THE FRAME TILTS; EMILY JANSEN LOSES THEN CATCHES HER BABY. THEN THE CABIN IS FULL OF SCREAMING PEOPLE, FLYING BODIES, ALL AT ONCE ALL THE OXYGEN MASKS DROP DOWN; OVERHEAD LUGGAGE BINS POP OPEN AND LUGGAGE RAINS DOWN...

FIRST OFFICER PING LIES UNAWARE...

CUT TO:

58 NEW YORK, NEWSLINE OFFICES, 03:04 PM

58

59 INT.- NEWSLINE OFFICES - DAY

59

Jennifer Malone races down a corridor into an office where we can HEAR:

DEBORAH (V.O.)

Jennifer! Get down here! For Christ's sake look at this!

She turns the corner into the office where on a big screen, more clips are running... NOW, AFTER THE INCIDENT ITSELF, THE PLANE IS STABLE BUT A STEWARDESS STAGGERS DOWN THE AISLE, COVERED IN BLOOD AND FALLS OUT OF FRAME TO THE FLOOR. A MALE STEWARD WAVES AT THE CAMERA TO STOP FILMING.

CNN ANCHOR

These shots from a passenger's camera on board TransPacific Air's Flight 545, a Norton 22 aircraft that apparently hit incredible turbulence over the Pacific Ocean...

60 INT. EL TORITO RESTAURANT, BURBANK, CALIF. - CONTINUOUS 60

The IRT is eating lunch at their usual table.

DOUG DOHERTY  
Oh Jesus! Look!

They all turn to face the TV over the bar: a big screen for the sports events. The CNN tape continues... PASSENGERS DIG THROUGH LUGGAGE AND DEBRIS TO PULL A BODY OUT FROM UNDER. THE CABIN IS A WRECK. A TODDLER WALKS ABOUT WAILING...

KEN BURNE  
Turn up the sound! Turn up the sound!

THE GROUP; STARJNG AT THE HORROR ON TV, FOOD ARRESTED IN MID-AIR.

CASEY: ENTERING; REACTING.

CNN ANCHOR (V.O.)  
This footage speaks for itself of the sheer terror airline passengers must endure when their airplane is crashing, on the long way down to the ground.

CASEY: SHE FLIPS OPEN HER CEL PHONE, STARING AT THE SCREEN.

CASEY  
(into her cel phone)  
Norma. Call CNN and get a copy of that tape...

MATCH CUT TO:

61 INT.- NEWSLINE OFFICES - DAY 61

They're watching the tape.

JENNIFER  
Deborah! Call CNN...

DEBORAH  
...I'm already on...

JENNIFER  
(on her cel phone)  
Dick Shenk.  
(listens)  
Out to lunch...

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

(CONTINUED)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14 ... BURBANK, CALIF. 1:13 PM, NORTON  
ADMINISTRATION - DAY

62 INT. OFFICE AREA OUTSIDE MARDER'S OFFICE - DAY 62

Casey strides past secretaries... in the door of Marder's  
office we SEE Marder and Richman who turn to face her...

CASEY

(to Marder)

Don't say anything. Words are no  
good...

(to Richman)

What happened to that camera I gave  
you?

RICHMAN

We sent it to Video Imaging Systems  
like you said. We haven't heard from  
them...

CASEY

You're a lawyer, I want you with me...

She's off at a near run...

63 INT.- NEWSLINE OFFICES - DAY 63

Dick Shenk listens to Jennifer, eyes heavy lidded,  
unblinking over fingers like a steeple.

JENNIFER

The way to frame the piece? Rot  
Beneath The Surface. This is a once  
great and proud company; that made the  
planes that pioneered the mail,  
transoceanic flight, made the bombers  
and fighters that won World War II.  
The old pilots and engineers retire or  
die; the new Wall Street slash and  
burn types exploit the company for  
profit. They forget how to make  
airplanes, or run the company; their  
product is shoddy. Whistle blowers  
complain; they're fired. FAA in bed  
with the managers. Fox in the  
henhouse, now the truth comes out. The  
Europeans balk at certification; the  
Chinese have cold feet; the plane  
continues to kill passengers, just as  
critics said it would. And there's  
tape, riveting tape, showing the  
agonies passengers went through as  
several died. At the close, it's  
obvious to all: the N-22 is a  
deathtrap. The flying coffin.

(CONTINUED)

SHENK

I like it. I like it a lot. It's not a parts story. It's compelling journalism. A deathtrap. Perfect! Scare the hell out of everybody. You got twelve minutes on air, you got Marty Reardon.

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

WEDNESDAY MAY 13... , BURBANK, CALIF. HARMON VIDEO  
IMAGING SYSTEMS 2:07 PM

64 INT. VIDEO MIXING ROOM - DAY

64

Casey, Richman, SCOTT HARMON, long rank hair, torn jeans, about 27 looks 34, his leg in a cast, sits at control console. A big video screen shows:

MOUNTAIN PEAKS SHROUDED IN FOG. Jansen carrying his baby.

HARMON (O.S.)

Where's this?

CASEY (O.S.)

Yeahyeahyeah, China. Fast forward...

HARMON

'kay. Here's where they're on the plane.

Emily Jansen, holding the baby, walks down the ramp to the aircraft.

CASEY

You already looked at this?

HARMON

I wish to hell I didn't.

CASEY

Who else saw it?

HARMON

People who work here saw it.

The tape has shown Emily getting the bottle; starting to feed to the baby and we HEAR their conversation (a sample here only, for clarity's sake.) The baby is chewing its' foot. Jansens are laughing... Pan briefly to show the Chinese passenger filming him.

JANSEN (O.S.)

Is that breakfast for you, Sarah? Not waiting for the stewardess on this flight?"

(CONTINUED)

Emily jerks ner head round.

EMILY  
What was that?

CASEY  
Stop the tape. What was that?

Harmon freezes frame, backs up, turns up the sound: the engines WHINE, odd thumps and bumps around the cabin, a distant conversation overheard, even fabric sounds as they move, the baby's slobbering sounds like a waterfall.

As they listen between the man's stentorian sentences they HEAR something else. A distinctive sound for about twelve seconds. Casey listens to it intently. Seems satisfied with something.

CASEY  
Run the rest of it.

(The best way to describe this action is to quote the book:)

Everything seemed to be crazy angles. The baby slid forward on the mother's lap; she grabbed at the kid, clutched it to her chest. The camera was shaking and twisting. Passengers in the background were yelling, grabbing the armrests, as the plane went into a steep descent. Then the camera twisted again, and everybody seemed to sink in the seats, the mother slumping down under the G-force, her cheeks sagging, shoulders falling, baby crying. Then the man shouted, "What the hell?" and the wife rose into the air, restrained only by the seat belt. Then the camera flew up in the air, and there was an abrupt, crunching sound, after which the image began to spiral rapidly. When the image became steady again, it showed something white, with lines. Before she could register what it was, the camera moved and she saw an armrest from below, fingers gripping the pad. The camera had fallen in the aisle and was shooting straight up. The screams continued. "My God," Harmon said again. The video image began to slide, gaining speed, moving past seat after seat. But it was going aft, she realized: the plane must be climbing again. Before she could get her bearings, the camera lifted into the air. Weightless, she thought. The plane must have reached the end of the climb, and now it was nosing over again, for a moment of weightlessness before- The image crashed down, twisting and tumbling rapidly. There was a thunk! and she glimpsed a blurred gaping mouth, teeth. Then it was moving again, and apparently landed on a seat. A large shoe swung toward the lens, kicked it. The image spun rapidly, settled again. It was back in the aisle, facing the rear of the plane. The briefly steady image was horrifying: arms and legs stuck out into the aisle from the rows of seats.

(CONTINUED)

People were screaming, clutching anything they could. The camera immediately began to slide again, this time forward. The plane was in a dive. The camera slid faster and faster, banging into a midships bulkhead, spinning so it was now facing forward. It raced toward a body lying in the aisle. An elderly Chinese woman looked up in time for the camera to strike her in the forehead, and then the camera flew into the air, tumbling crazily, and came down again. There was a close view of something shiny, like a belt buckle, and then it was sliding forward once more, into the forward compartment, still going, banging into a woman's shoe in the aisle, twisting, racing forward. It went into the forward galley, where it lodged for a moment. A wine bottle rolled across the floor, banged into it, and the camera spun several times, then began to fall end over end, the image flipping as the camera went all the way past the forward galley to the cockpit. The cockpit door was open; she had a brief glimpse of night sky through the flight deck windows, blue shoulders and a cap, and then with a crash the camera came to rest, giving a steady view of a uniform gray field it's face down on the carpet. The SOUND continues:

"Airspeed ... Airspeed," and "Stall ... Stall." More electronic warnings, excited voices shouting in Chinese.

CASEY: SHE TURNS TO LOOK AT RICHMAN. THEY SIT IN SHOCKED AND STUNNED SILENCE. THEN.

HARMON (V.O.)

I gotta tell you, the people who work here are pretty upset. They think we should turn the tape over to the authorities.

CASEY

This isn't what was on TV, this is a different tape...

RICHMAN

It sure as hell is...

CASEY

(to Richman)

Read him his rights.

RICHMAN

The tape is Norton property. It is not to be released to anyone without our authorization. And you have signed a non-disclosure agreement with us.

HARMON

Doesn't your conscience bother you?

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

No. It doesn't. Give us the original and any copies you made. If this gets leaked, I'll put you out of business.

CUT TO:

65 EXT. VIDEO SYSTEMS - DAY

65

Casey and Richman step from the dark interior into one of those blasting Burbank sunny days. They recoil from the sun; adjusting their eyes while they fumble for their sunglasses.

CASEY

He's made copies. I know he's made copies. What the hell is this?

She's half in the car before she realizes it's not the Porsche - it's an elegant Saturn EV1, the electric car. She jumps back out to look at it.

RICHMAN

It's electric. No engine, no gas. And it's made in America. You came all the way over in it, and you didn't notice?

CASEY

(getting in)

I got things on my mind. What happened to the Porsche?

RICHMAN

I did what you told me; left it home, drove American to work... I'll hand deliver a very legal letter to that guy, putting him on notice...

CASEY

You go do that...

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

THURSDAY, MAY 15 ... .NORTON AUDIO INTERPRETATION  
LAB.07:36 AM

66 INT.- NAIL - DAY

66

Totally sound-proof room, and very strange; the walls are lined with what look like giant egg boxes made of dark grey plastic foam. Huge loudspeakers; computer consoles, oscilloscopes, a mixing board.

JAY ZIEGLER, a paranoid engineer, works with the cassette Casey has brought. On displays colorful stuff is happening.

(CONTINUED)

ZIEGLER  
You cleared for the contents of this  
tape?

CASEY  
Yeahyeahyeah, it's my tape, Jay.

ZIEGLER  
Just asking. Hi-end Eight, Dolby D  
encoded, got to be a Hi-eight  
camcorder. Where do we start?

SCREEN: EMILY JANSEN TURNS HER HEAD...

EMILY (ON TV)  
What was that?

CLOSE: ZIEGLER AND CASEY

As Ziegler keeps changing audio filters, taking out the voices, bringing up the cabin sounds, then getting rid of them; the groaning sound Emily heard becomes ever more clear and loud; voices are broken into fragments... all very exotic and strange. Until.

ZIEGLER  
Slats extending.

CASEY  
How do you know?

ZIEGLER  
(offended)  
What do you think I'm paid for?

CASEY  
(really tired)  
You know, Jay, I'm about fed up with  
taking shit from male experts on every  
God damn thing in life. I'm not  
questioning your ability or authority,  
I got to answer some questions people  
are asking me, and I need information.

ZIEGLER  
You're right. I'm wrong, as usual.  
You're the front office. The sounds  
of systems, from engines to servos to  
cockpit alarms and controls are Norton  
proprietary systems. So we build this  
lab to identify them, so we can tell  
the difference between say - landing  
gear going down, toilets flushing, and  
slats deploying. This is slats  
deploying on an N-22, built after  
6/21/91. At altitude.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ZIEGLER (cont'd)  
At over Mach .8. They sound better at  
the correct speed and altitude.

CASEY  
Sorry, Jay.

ZIEGLER  
It's what the airplane is trying to  
tell the pilot. You hear the cockpit  
noise; the autopilot keeps trying to  
kick in, you can hear it. The pilot  
keeps overriding it. You ought to look  
at that autopilot. You want the tape  
back?

CASEY  
No, Jay. Work on it, see what else the  
airplane is trying to tell us.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, ... ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, NORTON  
AVIATION, BURBANK, CALIF. 3:14 PM

67 INT. LAX TERMINAL - DAY

67

Jennifer Malone strides off her red-eye flight, gulping a  
pill, drinking from her water bottle, wearing her jeans,  
a white Agnes B. T-shirt, and a navy Jil Sander jacket.

She's met by a crew, who gather round her on the move so  
she pulls the group with her through the airport crowd,  
talking on the fly.

JENNIFER  
(on the fly)  
We got the reporter Rogers to do now,  
the FAA at ten, I've got the Norton  
guy Marder, set for two. We got to get  
over the hill from Burbank to meet  
Marty Reardon, right in the rush hour.  
He's going to be having a hissy fit...

And she's gone on a rush of adrenaline.

CUT TO:

68 EXT. OUTSIDE NORTON AVIATION - DAY

68

Along a road where planes land in the background, and  
NORTON AVIATION'S sign can be seen. Jennifer is  
interviewing Jack Rogers, who is sweating, acutely  
uncomfortable. They are between shots... cameraman  
reloading; sound man fiddling, makeup girl touching him  
up.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

We won't be much longer, Jack, you're doing great. Ready? Are we rolling? Okay, this is...

CAMERAMAN

Roll two, take eight...

JENNIFER (cont'd)

Roll two, take eight, Jack Rogers, Orange County Register. Jack, you've given us great background on the troubles of the N-22, it's all perfect. Now we'll be coming to the conclusion of the piece. We need something punchy to close. So I'll ask you a series of questions, and you answer them with one punchy sentence.

ROGERS

When do I meet Marty Reardon?

JENNIFER

Later. These shots we'll cut into the show as background. Punchy? Mr. Rogers, could the N-22 cost Norton the China sale?

ROGERS

Given the frequency of incidents involving-

JENNIFER

I'm sorry, I just need a simple sentence. Could the N-22 cost Norton the China sale?

ROGERS

Well, yes, it could, under...

JENNIFER

I'm sorry, Jack, I need a sentence like, 'The N-22 might very well cost Norton the China sale.'

ROGERS

-oh. Okay.

JENNIFER

Could the N-22 cost Norton the China sale?

ROGERS

Yes, I'm afraid I have to say that it might cost the China sale.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

Jack, I need you to say 'Norton' in the sentence. So the audience knows what you're referring to.

ROGERS

Oh, I see. Okay. The N-22 might very well cost Norton their sale to China. In my opinion.

Jennifer stifles impatience.

JENNIFER

Excellent, Very good. Let's go on. Tell me: Is Norton a troubled company?

ROGERS

Oh, well, I...

JENNIFER

Wait a minute, put your weight on your forward foot. So you're leaning in toward the camera.

He shifts his body weight, turning slightly. It gives him a more forceful appearance and also changes the force of his breath... He has his jacket thrown over his shoulder, shirtsleeves rolled up... Norton Aviation behind him...

ROGERS

There's no doubt that Norton Aircraft is a company in serious trouble.

(beat)

How's that?

JENNIFER

You were great. Just great. Deborah has the standard waiver for you to sign.

Deborah appears with a legal form and a pen. Jennifer is already on her way to the next...

ROGERS

Who else are you seeing?

JENNIFER

The Norton COO, John Marder?

ROGERS

Tell you three things about John: he knows there's a problem because he's part of it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ROGERS (cont'd)  
He's a brilliant liar, brilliant. And  
he's got a real short fuse.

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

69 INT. CASEY'S OFFICE - DAY

69

INSERT: COLOR FAX MACHINE

It spits out a color picture of a Chinese about 45 in a Transpacific senior pilot's uniform, including his Captain's hat.

CASEY (O.S.)  
Who is that? The Captain of 545? John  
Chang. Who sent it?

THE PICTURE IS NOW ON HER DESK.. Norma stands by her  
looking at it.

NORMA  
I asked Transpacific for the records  
and flight log from 545, and they send  
over pictures of the flight crew, no  
flight log.

CASEY  
I don't suppose Mike Lee called?

NORMA  
No... The picture is from their in-  
flight magazine. You got a phone  
list...

CASEY  
(looking at the photograph)  
They're stonewalling us.

NORMA  
Damn right they are.

She pushes aside the picture of John Chang. Norma puts  
down a mug of coffee. Casey punches a tape recorder on  
her desk... we HEAR the 545 Captain and tower,  
interspersed with other traffic.....

TAPE RECORDER  
AALOOI fuel remaining four two zero  
one 0543:22 ATAC copy that two five  
eight five no problem we have you now  
0543:23 TPA545 this is transpacific  
five four five we have an emergency  
0543:26 ATAC affirmative zero zero  
one 0543:29 ATAC go ahead five four  
five 0543:31 TPA545 request priority  
clearance for emergency...

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

(to Richman who has just  
popped in)

What the hell is he waiting until 5:43  
when the plane went out of control  
three hours earlier - when he was  
passing Honolulu? Why is he saying  
turbulence, when we know damned well  
his slats extended? Why lie to ground  
control? Why say the flightdeck crew  
is okay, when his first officer is  
covered in blood?

She's pulled out another sheaf of computer printouts.

CASEY

Norma, try Mike Lee again...

RICHMAN

He's going to talk to Jennifer Malone.

CASEY

(preoccupied)

Who is, what?

RICHMAN

Jack Marder - he wants you there.

CASEY

John? Oh, Christ I have to put a stop  
on that, he'll just get pissed off and  
start yelling...

(stops, her finger on  
printout)

Yeahyeahyeah, look at that: staring me  
in the face. What I got is  
information overload...

THE PRINTOUT: ANOTHER BEWILDERING PAGE OF THIS:

GND SPD INV	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
OTAS INV	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
TAT INV	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
AUX 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AUX 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AUX 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AUX COA	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
A/S ROX-P	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
RDR PROX-1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
AOA BTA 1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FDS RG	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Casey's finger goes to the AUX COA and the first digit  
'1'

(CONTINUED)

RICHMAN  
What's that?

CASEY  
Auxiliary Customer Optional Additions.  
See, a 0 means nothing is operating on  
that line; a 1 means it's sending out  
a message of some kind. So something's  
there. Usually it's a QAR. Quick  
Access Recorder. That's what we need.

RICHMAN  
What does it do, again?

CASEY  
QAR? Maintenance grabs it out on the  
ground, downloads it into a computer:  
any problems read right out, they fix  
it on the spot.

RICHMAN  
Marder...

CASEY  
Okay, yeahyeah... They're starting the  
Cyclical Electrical Test tonight.  
Let's get this over with...

70 INT. MARDER'S OFFICE - DAY

70

Jennifer Malone strides into Marder's office, taking it  
in. Marder regards her with interest, in his best command  
mode.

MARDER  
Ms. Malone. Would you want some  
coffee, tea..?

JENNIFER  
Thanks, I'm fine. We can't work in  
here.

MARDER  
Pardon me? Oh, you mean photograph...  
I thought I was clear, this is for  
background only.  
(intercom)  
Millie, where is Casey Singleton?  
We're about to begin.

JENNIFER  
What I really want is Harold Edgerton,  
your President, on camera with Marty  
Reardon, overlooking the floor where  
these planes are made. That would be  
splendid...

(CONTINUED)

MARDER

That's not going to happen, Ms.....  
Jennifer is it? He's in Hong Kong,  
visiting the passengers who were  
injured.

JENNIFER

That's clever.

MARDER

Jennifer. What Hal Edgerton is doing  
is just common decency, no cameras no  
media. Here's Casey Singleton, you  
have to understand, she speaks for all  
of us, as the single person closest to  
the investigation...

Casey has arrived, out of breath...

CASEY

Hi, sorry, lost track, Ms. Malone?  
Casey Singleton.

JENNIFER

(ignoring her)

So you know: We know what happened on  
board 545. We know passengers have  
filed lawsuits against the company. We  
know the N-22 has a long history of  
slats problems, which neither the FAA  
nor the company has been willing to  
deal with. We know that the FAA is so  
lax in its regulatory policies that it  
allows you to keep their accident  
records on the N-22 here, in your  
files.

CASEY

First off...

JENNIFER

I want him...

MARDER

Okay, let me answer the last one. By  
law, the FAA doesn't have physical  
possession of certification documents  
from any manufacturer. Not Boeing, not  
Douglas, not Airbus, not us. If our  
records were in possession of the FAA,  
a government agency, our competitors  
would have access to them under the  
Freedom of Information Act.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER  
So you oppose the Freedom of  
Information Act?

Marder makes a visible effort to restrain himself.

CASEY  
Norton Aviation...

MARDER  
Not at all. I'm simply  
saying that it was never  
designed to let foreign  
countries pillage American  
technology. Now, you  
mentioned Flight 545. First  
of all, we don't agree that  
the accident was the result  
of slats deployment.

Casey makes a movement to get his attention: he's going  
out on what we know is dangerous ground. Marder doesn't  
seem to notice.

JENNIFER  
All right. How many design changes on  
the slats? Eight?

MARDER  
Eight incidents.

CASEY  
There were two corrections.

JENNIFER  
Two corrections of your original  
erroneous design. And that's just for  
slats. We haven't gotten to the flaps  
or the rudder or the fuel tanks and  
the rest of the airplane. Didn't you  
test this aircraft, before you sold it  
to unsuspecting customers?

Marder leaps from his seat. Stomps around the room.

MARDER  
I can't fucking believe this!

JENNIFER  
I know. That's why I should be talking  
to Edgarton.

MARDER  
Edgarton doesn't know anything about  
this technical - he wasn't here when  
we had the slats problem; he's a money  
man, he doesn't know...  
(bites his tongue)  
You explain it, Casey.

Jennifer is grinning at them....

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Ms. Malone, most of us have invested our working lives in the N-22. If it is faulty or unsafe it means we have failed in our lives, literally, and morally. You must understand why it means so much...

JENNIFER

...to cover up your miserable safety record. I understand. The slats...

MARDER

You know something? Enough of this bullshit. It wasn't the damn slats. We'll issue a preliminary report in 24 hours, that will conclusively show it was not slats. Contact Casey here. Good bye, Jennifer, thanks for coming by.

JENNIFER

(to Marder)

This is smart PR? You're sending in a bush league hitter against Marty Reardon?

MARDER

You struck me out, Jennifer. You take the next hitter in the lineup.

JENNIFER

(to Casey)

Watch Marty's eyebrows; and he's got the best change up in the game. Have fun.

Jennifer's out of there.

CASEY

Do men like women like that?

MARDER

Some do. What the fuck do we do to stop this hatchet job?

RICHMAN

Nothing.

MARDER

Can't we get an injunction?

(CONTINUED)

RICHMAN

No, that's prior restraint. That's from a strictly legal viewpoint, but if you don't mind my personal advice, I think an attempt by Norton Aviation to muzzle the press only looks like we have something to hide. Do we have something to hide?

(looking to Casey)

CASEY

I wish I did have something to hide.

MARDER

What about demanding equal time?

RICHMAN

The fairness doctrine - which you might have tried to invoke - was scrapped by a Republican congress under Reagan.

MARDER

We already lost three and half billion dollars in value on the stock market. What if what they say puts us out of business?

RICHMAN

If you could prove that it was only what they said that put you out of business you might have cause to file a suit. Try to prove their reckless disregard for truth, malice. And you have to wait until we're out of business. Otherwise, how have we been damaged?

MARDER

So what would you advise us to do, Bob?

RICHMAN

At Harvard Law they always told us to advise clients to tell the truth.

MARDER

That's fine, Bob, that's sound counsel. But what do we do?

RICHMAN

Explain what happened on 545.

Marder looks at Casey. Richman starts to talk: Marder stops him with a gesture.

(CONTINUED)

MARDER

(to Casey)

Don't say slats. Just announce we found a counterfeit cowl in the thrust reversers. That's true isn't it?

CASEY

Yeahyeahyeah. But it didn't cause this accident.

RICHMAN

You don't have to say that, just because you know it.

Casey gives him a murderous look.

CASEY

What do I say if they ask me if a fake reverser cowl caused the accident?

MARDER

How certain are you that it didn't?  
(beat)

Do I have to tell you how to handle this? You couldn't handle it any worse than I did, so why ask my advice?

CASEY

Yeahyeahyeah, that is true.

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

71 EXT. ADMINISTRATION BLDG. - LATE DAY

71

They come to collect the EV1. Pristine.

CASEY

You think I should lie? My Ex- always said I didn't have the face for it.

RICHMAN

You don't. That's why they'll believe you. Look, you're not saying a thrust reverser made the plane go out of control; you're making a progress report, investigation continuing, buying some time. Or, you going to let them put us out of business? Up to you. Nobody better, Casey.

Casey's been looking him straight in the eye; something bothers her here...

CASEY

Did you see that tape before I did?

(CONTINUED)

RICHMAN

Absolutely not. Why would you ask a thing like that?

Was there a telltale hesitation in his reply? Why did he say 'absolutely'? She stares at him a beat longer...

CASEY

(looking at the EV1)  
So, you like this thing? It looks good.

RICHMAN

Where are you off...

CASEY

Check out the Electrical tests Ron Smith is doing tonight - I'll see you tomorrow...

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

THURSDAY, MAY 13 NORTON HANGAR 5, 07:17 PM

71A EXT. HANGAR 5 - DAY

71A

An Electrician we recognize as one of Smith's assistants stands by the enormous doors, now closed. Sign tell us "NO ENTRY - SENSITIVE TESTS IN PROGRESS." Casey approaches...

ELECTRICIAN

Ron's not here, he went home to collapse.

CASEY

I left something inside... I'm not going to touch anything.

ELECTRICIAN

Don't put on any lights. It could effect the flux..

CASEY

Yeahyeahyeah. I know the drill. Gimme your flashlight.

ELECTRICIAN

Maybe I better call Ron and tell him...

CASEY

Yeah - go ahead, wake him up, he'll love you for it...

72 INT. HANGAR 3 - TOTAL DARKNESS

72

THE ENORMOUS BULK OF THE N-22, elevated above the floor on scaffolding, its' landing gear dangling, looms above us, cables snaking from every hatch, door and plug to a six foot high black box in the middle of the hangar floor, illuminated by a faint blue light. Various computer screens flicker with tiny lights as it cycles through systems on the plane. Under the plane is a web of safety netting. Ladders and movable steps provide access top various doors and hatches.

The COCKPIT LIGHTS GO ON, THEN OFF. THEN THE FORWARD CABIN LIGHTS, BRIGHTLY LIT, DARKNESS AGAIN. A moment later, the beacon lights on the wing tips and the tail came on, sending hot white strobe flashes through the room. Then darkness again.

SUDDENLY the landing gear begins to retract. A moment later, the insignia light flashes on up at the rudder, illuminating the tail. Then goes off again.

IT'S AS THOUGH THE PLANE HAS A LIFE OF ITS' OWN; it's huge and - as flats and slats and gear extend and retract, it's dangerous...

AS LANDING LIGHTS SEND A BLINDING SEARCHLIGHT GLARE, CASEY IS REVEALED CLIMBING STAIRS rolled up to the back of the plane, avoiding touching handrails.

73 INT. AIRCRAFT - NIGHT

73

She stands in the rear, shining her light up into compartments full of a maze of semicircular pipes, readout meters, rack slots, and black boxes.

She fishes in her bag and puts on a plastic visor connected to a CD-ROM player at her waist.

CLOSE: CASEY THROUGH VISOR

As she punches controls of the CD-ROM, a faint picture appears on the visor, a virtual display of the internal arrangement of the compartment she's looking at. An image appears of a

QAR as it would look installed in the compartment she's looking into. It is green, with a white stripe around the top. Stenciled lettering: MAIN QAR 041/13 MAINT. A metal box about eight inches square.

As she turns her head to match the display to what is actually there, we

SEE the display. There is a black empty hole where the bright green QAR should be.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY  
Shit. One down - twenty-six to go.

THE FUSELAGE OF THE PLANE: even more of a mess than before; panels and insulation pulled out, wires spilling everywhere. It suddenly comes alive as lights cycle again; shudders as the landing gear retracts. Full of NOISES, SERVOS HUMMING, SWITCHES OPERATING, ALARMS SCREAMING, THEN SILENCE...

CASEY STANDS ON A LOW PARALLEL PLATFORM, JUST behind the nose wheel well, where the gear slams up and down inches from her. She performs the same search in an access hatch over her head. No QAR.

ANOTHER ANGLE: as she climbs stairs forty feet up into the fuselage.

INSIDE: Behind her the cockpit suddenly glows, map lights illuminate the empty pilots' seats. A printer clacks out test lines, then goes silent.

The lights go out. Pitch black. Then galley lights come on. SHINING ON CASEY who intently peers into another overhead access; the Virtual Display shining in her visor. Avionics buzz click and hum all around her, when she HEARS

A metallic clang, not like anything else. She freezes... FOOTSTEPS... outside, in the hangar. Thinking it's Ron Smith, in charge of this test...

CASEY  
Ron? I'm back by the fore galley...

The footsteps continue, steadily. No answer. That's odd.  
No QAR here.

ALONGSIDE EXTERIOR OF THE PLANE: HER HEAD, WITH THE VISOR STILL SHOWING THE VIRTUAL DISPLAY.

CASEY (cont'd)  
Ron. I'm up here.

SHE'S FORTY FEET OFF THE GROUND.

The footsteps stop. The plane cycles, lights and hydraulics, mechanical voices: "Up, pull up!" from cockpit warning devices. The stick shaker rattles and echoes in the dark void. She ducks back in.

INSIDE THE PLANE. She is pulling open another panel, that reveals it is open through the skin; looking straight down forty feet to the floor.

(CONTINUED)

VIRTUAL DISPLAY: SHOWS more exotic looking devices, switches and valves. There is no QAR where it shows one, but below

The darkness is split by brilliant strobe lights of the wing tip. A shadow of a man is intermittently thrown across the floor. She gasps. Then sees it is cast by a chair with a jacket thrown across it: She stands back up to see

The cabin. Down the length of it a man is silhouetted against the cockpit lights as they cycle on.

She is seeing him through the virtual display: she pulls the visor down: the cockpit lights go off. Then the landing lights come on, a row of hot ovals appear on the ceiling, from the windows along both sides. And a shadow, blotting out the ovals, one after another. Someone walking down the aisle.

HER HAND GRIPS FLASHLIGHT. Her cel phone! She frantically gets it out, turns it off. Then her beeper.

THE MAN: we can make out his red-checked shirt, suspenders...

Casey cowers behind seats; he's almost to where she hides... the lights go out.

Something goes thunk up front. The man grunts, looks around. Moves forward stealthily. We HEAR footsteps on metal stairs...

THROUGH COCKPIT WINDOWS: WE SEE CASEY peering cautiously out into the intermittently lighted hangar, trying to see what's going on below. The footsteps are diminishing..

NOSE LIGHTS COME ON: a huge sixty foot shadow of a man walking away...

CASEY: ducking back out of sight. It brings her face to face with an open compartment full of electronics. She pulls down the visor: clicks the display to match.

There is the QAR! Bright green. She gently but firmly pulls it from its' socket. It is about eight inches square. She turns and starts toward the nearest exit...

IN THE DOOR: As she steps through hands reach her, she twists away, slips on the metal steps, manages to swing at the man attacking her, and falls...

FORTY FEET

INTO THE SAFETY NET. It is like a trampoline tossing her up and catching her... turning her...

(CONTINUED)

HER POINT OF VIEW: TWISTING THROUGH AIR, SEEING THE SILHOUETTE OF A MAN IN THE DOORWAY, when she comes full circle the silhouette is gone.

CASEY: lying still in the swaying webbing as it stabilizes. She checks the QAR. Still safe. Waits.

TAIL STROBE LIGHTS! She sits up, fighting for balance in the swaying webbing... In each flash she can SEE

RICHMAN. As he moves in jerky stop motion flashes, the lazy collegiate manner is gone.

LIGHTS GO OUT.

CASEY rolls to the edge, grips the thick rope that hems the webbing, and rolls over the edge once again in free fall.

SLAMS into the concrete floor. The QAR bounces from her grasp. She HEARS A SHOUT, scrambles to grab the QAR back. FOOTSTEPS RUNNING IN THE DARK

LANDING LIGHTS COME ON! She sees Richman holding up his hands in the blinding light.

Races toward the exit...

In the dark runs full force into the wall of the hangar. Shouts behind her. Footsteps running.

She crawls along the wall, sobbing with fear, until before her:

A DOOR OPENS FROM OUTSIDE. A man silhouetted against BLINDING BURBANK AFTERNOON SUN outside the hangar.

CASEY: SCREAMS.

SMITH  
What is going on here? Nobody is supposed to be in here...

THE HUGE ECHOES of two men running away.

SMITH (cont'd)  
Hey! Who's that?

They're gone, he turns to Casey. She holds up the QAR.

CASEY  
Got it. The QAR.

She has another bruise on her face from the fall...

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

74 INT. NORTON DDS - DAY

74

Rob Wong, Casey. The QAR, plugged in and connected to his desktop computer.

A WIRE-FRAME AIRCRAFT APPEARS AND RAPIDLY FILLS IN, BECOMING SOLID, THREE-DIMENSIONAL. A SKY-BLUE BACKGROUND APPEARS. A SILVER AIRCRAFT, SEEN HORIZONTALLY IN PROFILE. THE LANDING GEAR DOWN.

WONG (V.O.)

Looks good, Casey. You're taking off..

THE VIRTUAL PLANE BEGINS TO ROLL DOWN THE RUNWAY...

a window opens at the side of the screen and grids of numbers rapidly display...

WONG (cont'd)

It's not a DFDR, but it's good enough... All the major stuff is here. Altitude, airspeed, heading, fuel, deltas on control surfaces-flaps, slats, ailerons, elevators, rudder. Everything you need. And the data's stable, Casey.

He hits a key and white clouds appear, the plane climbing through the clouds.

CASEY

Yeahyeah, can we fast forward to where it happened - about nine forty into the flight...

He hits keys; the plane seems to make a JUMP CUT; now level, new digits display.

WONG

Okay, nine forty...

A red light flashes among the numbers.

CASEY

Hey!

WONG

Fault recording. A slats disagree, proximity sensor in the right wing.

Nothing happens to the plane.

WONG (cont'd)

The pilot gets an alarm in the cockpit telling him the slats are extending.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WONG (cont'd)  
The slats are not extending - it's  
just a fault.

Then: slats extend along the leading edge of the wing.  
The numbers flutter...

CASEY  
There they go.

WONG  
Commanded. Pilot extends the slats,  
trying to clear the fault. And there  
she goes nose up a little, as  
expected. The autopilot will correct  
that... oh, look at that...

On screen the plane noses up then goes into a steep dive,  
pulls up in an almost vertical climb, down again... red  
lights flash among the numbers...

WONG  
He's way past what the plane was  
designed for. Going up 21 degrees!  
Holy... Exceedences... he's close to  
breaking the airplane up... what the  
hell is he doing. There goes the  
autopilot trying to correct - he's  
punching back to manual and going into  
another dive. Jeez! There he goes  
again! What in the hell did he think  
he was doing?

The plane suddenly smooths out into level flight. The  
alarm lights stop.

CASEY  
The autopilot took over.

The slats retract.

WONG  
Yup. Now he retracts his slats. Well,  
now you know what happened, Casey, but  
I'm damned if I know why.

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

THURSDAY, MAY 14 GLENDALE, 11:07 PM

75 INT. CASEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

75

CASEY'S BED as she flops on it, exhausted. Her telephone  
answering machine is playing...

JIM (V.O.)  
...this is not working out. For  
Allison's sake.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JIM (cont'd)  
I listened to Dr. Laura Schlesinger,  
she had a case like yours today, and I  
think it would be a good idea...

She bangs the skip button.

ANSWER MACHINE  
(electronic voice)  
There are no more mess ag es.

CASEY: HER EYES CLOSE...

FLASHBACK

76 INT. HANGAR 5 - NIGHT

76

RICHMAN, HIS HANDS HELD UP BEFORE HIS FACE TO PROTECT HIM  
FROM THE LANDING LIGHTS, AS SHE SAW HIM IN THE CET TEST.

IT COULD BE HIM.

OUT OF THE CACOPHONY OF THE CET, A PHONE BEGINS TO  
RING...

BACK TO:

77 CASEY WAKING UP... PICKING UP PHONE... IT'S STILL NIGHT 77

CASEY  
Yeah.

ALLISON (V.O.)  
Mom? I'm lonely. Tell me a story.

Casey pulls her self together...

CASEY  
Oh, I miss you too. Yeahyeahyeah. I'm  
way out here, all alone. Where no man  
has been before. The stars are so big  
and bright and close they're scary.  
All the dogs have been eaten, the  
wolves have found my hiding place, the  
bears know where I am. Who will save  
me?

ALLISON (V.O.)  
I will. Tell me where you are.

CASEY  
In your heart. I love you.

ALLISON (V.O.)  
I know. Good night. Mom.

(CONTINUED)

Casey rolls over, fully awake now. Her clock projects date and time on her ceiling. MAY 14 11:17 PM. She knows she won't get back to sleep.

## TIME AND DATE STAMP:

FRIDAY, MAY 15... .RECORD RATINGS AS SEINFELD HAS LAST LAUGH... SINATRA KIN GATHER AT HOSPITAL VIGIL... NORTON AVIATION ADMINISTRATION, CASEY SINGLETON'S OFFICE, 11:48 AM

78 INT. CASEY'S OFFICE - DAY

78

NORMA

Mike Lee on one, from Vancouver...

Casey is looking at papers and reports, trying to figure out what to do: Captain Chang's picture is scotch taped to her wall. She lunges for the phone...

CASEY

Where is he, when do I talk to him?

## INTERCUT:

79 EXT. VANCOUVER AIRPORT - DAY

79

Mike Lee on cel phone walking beside a recognizable travel casket being pushed on a dolly, toward a TransPacific N-22.

MIKE LEE

I'm sorry to tell you this. Captain Chang passed away during the night, of cerebral hemorrhage. The doctors did everything possible...

CASEY

You said what?

MIKE LEE

Captain Chang, he has passed away. I'm...

CASEY

I thought it was First Officer Li... what's his name..Ping... who was in the hospital.

MIKE LEE

I am sorry. The hospital is unfamiliar with Chinese names... I do not know how that mistake could happen. It was the Captain in charge who has died.

(CONTINUED)

Casey stands and peers at the picture of Captain Chang. She at last realizes what happened on Flight 545! She is stunned.

MIKE LEE (cont'd)

Casey. Are you there? Did I lose you? Casey?

CASEY

What did he tell you about what happened?

MIKE LEE

Nothing. He was not able to remember. He could barely speak... I hear anger and rebuke in your voice, Casey. I remind you TransPacific is a small company, we have known each other for years, I personally know his family. He is a great loss.

CASEY

Yeahyeahyeah. I'm sorry Mike. Mike. I know what happened in that cockpit. More important; I know why.

MIKE LEE

You do?

CASEY

I think you do, too. I hoped Captain Chang could confirm it.

Richman appears.

MIKE LEE

(beat)

What do you propose to do?

CASEY

I don't know. Where are you going now?

MIKE LEE

I am taking his remains to his family in Hong Kong.

CASEY

I think you better fly back here, Mike, as soon as you can...

MIKE LEE

Casey - you do not want to do anything rash. Your airplane has an unfortunate history.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MIKE LEE (cont'd)

However it is to no one's advantage to get into a dispute as to who is at fault. We don't need any bad press at the moment. I think your interests and ours are the same - to avoid at any cost any further public disclosure.

CASEY

I'm sorry...  
(but Mike has already hung up  
- to Richman)  
Did I see you someplace?

RICHMAN

(cool, cool)  
You certainly did. That was extremely foolhardy to go down there alone; when I heard you did I got there as fast as I could.

CASEY

Who told you I was there?

RICHMAN

Everybody knew you were there. No secrets around this place.  
(beat)  
You ready for your date with Marty Reardon?

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

FRIDAY, MAY 15... ON THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE, MARKET SLIDES, TRADING SUSPENDED IN NORTON AVIATION AFTER 3 BILLION DOLLAR LOSS... PIAZZA TRADED TO MARLINS IN SEVEN PLAYER DEAL... BURBANK, CALIF. 2:00 PM...

80 INT. WAR ROOM - DAY

80

Newsline is set up so the factory assembly line can be seen behind Casey's chair, through the wall of glass. Four cameras, the works. Casey is being made up. Crazy in the chaos, all from CASEY'S P.O.V.

MAKEUP GIRL

Does that hurt.. under your eye? I can cover that right up...

JENNIFER

Is Singleton okay? We'll have water for her; coffee or...?

RICHMAN

(handing her a folder)  
John wanted you to have this for guidance...

MAKEUP GIRL

Look up, please...

MARTY (V.O.)

Is this Casey Singleton?

Marty makes his entrance..

(CONTINUED)

MARTY (cont'd)

Thanks for your help, I'll try to make it as painless as possible. I have a tendency to jump around in my questions. Don't let that bother you. We're really here to understand the situation as best we can. I'll see you later, then.

MAKEUP GIRL

He's very nice, underneath it all. Look up.

JENNIFER

Okay, let's get started...

CAMERAMAN

Ready, just give us the bodies...

MAKEUP GIRL

There, I got that bruise covered over. I can't tell you what I see, and the woman always denies it.

CASEY

What? Deny what?

MAKEUP GIRL

I know, I know, men-count on your silence. My own husband, Jeez, counselling, forget it! I finally left with the kids.

CASEY

Not me, that's not the...

MAKEUP GIRL

We only got a minute, I can give you a card for people you can call... the police are no fucking help.

JENNIFER

(interrupting)

Did Marty tell you? We're mostly doing the accident, and he'll probably start with that. And don't worry if he jumps around from one thing to another. He does that.

A cel phone rings.

SOUND MAN

Shut that damn thing off!

CASEY

I'm sorry, it's mine...

(CONTINUED)

The Makeup girl gets it out of her purse on the floor and hands it to her..

CASEY  
(into phone)  
Yes!

MARDER (ON PHONE)  
Did you get the folder from Richman?

JENNIFER  
Two minutes!

CASEY  
Yeahyeahyeah, what's in it?

MARDER (V.O.)  
What we talked about; all the details on the thrust reverser cowl. Counting on you.

CASEY  
Yeahyeah, I have to go.

The tissues are pulled from her neck, someone swivels her around. They take the phone away from her...

SOUND MAN  
Casey is it? Gimme a level.

CASEY  
One two three...

JENNIFER  
They're in their chairs, let's go it's hot in here.

LIGHTS BLAZE: MARTY MATERIALIZES OUT OF THE BLAZE OF LIGHTS BEFORE HER EYES...

MARTY  
Hal Edgerton, CEO of Norton Aviation, and John Marder, the man in charge of production of the troubled Norton 22, refused our requests to talk to them on camera. We talked with Casey Singleton, an official spokesperson...  
Ms. Singleton -

CASEY  
Mister Reardon...

MARTY  
...you here at Norton call this the war room. Maps, charts, battle plans, pressure. Tension under siege.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARTY (cont'd)  
Your company, Norton Aircraft, is  
under siege at the moment, isn't it?

CASEY  
I'm not sure what you're referring to.

Marty's eyebrows go up.

CASEY: STARING AT HIS EYEBROWS.

MARTY (V.O.)  
You have casualties of war. Broken  
necks. Broken limbs. Concussions.  
Brain damage. Two people paralyzed for  
life.

MARTY'S EYEBROWS: STILL UP.

CASEY: STARING AT THEM, PARALYZED. Marty goes on, she  
answers,

CASEY  
What do you mean?

MARTY  
What I mean, is that what happened to  
Flight 545 has happened before. Many  
times before. On other N-22s. Isn't  
that true?

But we HEAR IN AUDIO FOREGROUND HER UNSPOKEN THOUGHTS:

CASEY (V.O.)  
Those eyebrows, nobody can lie, I  
can't lie to his eyebrows. I know what  
happened, but how can I tell his  
eyebrows? How can I tell anybody?

She comes out of her dissociated state: everyone is  
silent, staring at her. (Time has passed).

CASEY  
No. This is the first time this has  
happened.

MARTY  
Then how do you explain this list of  
slats deployments going back to 1992.  
I believe this report was, in fact,  
signed by Casey Singleton, that is  
you?

CASEY  
Yeahyeahyeah, that's my  
signature.  
(his eyebrows go up)

CASEY (cont'd) (V.O.)  
Damn his eyebrows. What do  
I do if he asks if the  
slats deployed on 545?

(CONTINUED)

MARTY

The people who told us the slats  
deployed are wrong?

CASEY

(daringly)

Well, Marty, I don't know how they'd  
know. They are wrong to say the N-22  
is safe.

MARTY

Okay, keep it rolling, I'm not going  
to jump on that...

CASEY

What did I say..? Oh, shit! 'Unsafe,  
unsafe.'

(beat)

We're still rolling?

(beat)

I don't know how they'd know, Mister  
Reardon. And they are wrong to say the  
N-22 is unsafe.

MARTY

It's a well designed airplane.

CASEY

Yes.

MARTY

You'd fly in it.

CASEY

Whenever possible.

MARTY

Your family, friends.

CASEY

Absolutely.

MARTY

No hesitation whatsoever.

CASEY (V.O.)

Eyebrows! They're going up!

Again she comes alert to expectant silence, raised  
eyebrows. Marty has said something about the CNN tape...

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (V.O.)  
What did he say? Oh, God -  
say something even if it's  
wrong...

CASEY (cont'd)  
Forty-three thousand  
Americans died in  
automobile accidents last  
year. Four thousand and  
seventeen people drowned.  
Over two thousand people  
choked to death on food. Do  
you know how many died in  
airline accidents in the  
United States?

MARTY  
(glancing round at Jennifer,  
grinning)  
You stumped the panel.

CASEY  
One. You know how he died? He walked  
onto an aircraft being loaded with  
food and out the open cargo door on  
the other side and died from the fall  
to the pavement. Do you know how many  
died the year before that? Sixteen.  
Fewer than were killed by lightning.  
None of them died in an N-22.

MARTY  
So your point is...

CASEY  
They get into cars when they're drunk,  
when they're tired - without a second  
thought. But these same people panic  
at the thought of getting on an  
airplane. Because television  
consistently exaggerates the minimal  
danger involved. That tape will make  
people afraid to fly. And for no good  
reason.

MARTY  
So, you think CNN and other news  
programs should be forbidden to run  
tape showing accidents in mid-air?

CASEY  
Of course not.

MARTY  
Has Norton Aircraft ever suppressed  
any tapes?

Casey stares, afraid to answer too quickly...

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (V.O.)  
Who knows? Norma, the people at Video  
Imaging, Ziegler. Richman...

She has turned away to look at Richman who stands among  
the spectators returning her gaze with his own bland  
look. Another moment of silence here...

MARTY  
Ms. Singleton? Are you personally  
aware of any other tape of this  
accident?

CASEY (V.O.)  
Just lie.

CASEY (cont'd)  
Yes, there's another tape.

MARTY  
It's upsetting. Horrifying. Isn't it?

CASEY  
It's sickening. It's  
tragic.

CASEY (V.O.)  
It's irrelevant.

MARTY  
Did Norton Aircraft suppress this  
tape?

Casey realizes: they must have the Jansen tape. She  
looks round at Richman...

MARTY  
Miss Singleton? Did Norton...

CASEY  
No.

MARTY  
But you didn't release it, did you?  
For the very reasons you stated  
before: it would deter people from  
flying on the N-22.

CASEY  
No, damn it, that's not the  
reason!

CASEY (V.O.)  
Oh, shit, he got me.

MARTY  
Oh, well, and what is the reason?

CASEY  
That tape was found on the airplane,  
and is being studied as part of our  
ongoing investigation.

(CONTINUED)

MARTY

You weren't trying to cover up well known fatal defects in that airplane?

CASEY

Not at all.

MARTY

Not everyone agrees with you, Ms. Singleton.

He gives a signal: crewpeople hit switches; on a monitor placed so Casey can see, the Jansen tape begins to unspool. The baby gets its bottle... The CAMERA crews swivel to focus on Casey's reaction...

CASEY

Oh, mother of God...

Jennifer is watching a monitor where she and we can see Casey's on-air image as she says that... Jennifer goes "yesss!" in triumph.

MARTY

Because Newsline obtained a copy of that tape, from a conscience-stricken Norton employee who felt that the company was covering up. Who felt the tape should be made public. Who believed the public should be warned.

CASEY

Turn it off.

MARTY

Yes, it's difficult, painful to watch. It is a terrible, damning record of what happened on that N-22 aircraft. Ms. Singleton, was Norton ever planning to release this tape?

CAMERAMAN

Sorry, Marty, we gotta reload.

MARTY

I will be God damned!  
Jennifer, is this another non-union pickup crew? Because if you're trying to save a buck on my air-time...

CAMERAMAN

We were using short ends... that's company policy, I don't have to take the heat for that...

As Marty, Jennifer, the crew sail into their heated argument, Casey stands up and walks out...

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

Okay, take ten, lights, get the air  
back on...

Casey has signalled Richman, who follows her out...

81 INT HALL (OUTSIDE WAR-ROOM)

81

CASEY

What time is it in Hong Kong?

RICHMAN

9:15 tomorrow morning. You going to  
call Edgarton now? Tell him you just  
blew his China sale?

There are people near enough to hear. She pushes him  
through the first door she can which is a Ladies' Room.

82 INT. LADIES' ROOM - DAY

82

RICHMAN

Too late for Edgarton to do anything  
now. He's finished.

CASEY

What do you mean, he's finished?

RICHMAN

Casey... John and I have been working  
for three years on this: we have a  
deal for a hundred and ten aircraft -  
firm, and an option on thirty-five  
more. Sixteen billion dollars. Forget  
Edgarton's diddley-squat China deal.

CASEY

Why... I don't... With who?

RICHMAN

Korea. The unions got it half right -  
they saw the shipping orders for the  
wing tool - to go by barge to Seoul,  
Korea. They thought it was going from  
there to China.

CASEY

You gave Korea the wing?!

RICHMAN

The Koreans are happy to buy a hundred  
and ten N-22s, as long as they get the  
wing. And they don't give a damn about  
Newsline and media bullshit about the  
plane: they know the plane's safe.  
It's a killer deal.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RICHMAN (cont'd)  
John is very happy with your  
performance - you're welcome aboard...

CASEY  
What about Edgerton?

RICHMAN  
The minute the Board gets this news,  
he's out, John Marder's the new  
president.

CASEY  
Yeahyeah. President of what's left.

RICHMAN  
Who cares? Norton stock is in the  
toilet - I hope you've been buying it -  
when this hits Wall Street it's going  
through the roof. Everybody gets well  
- Edgerton included. Unless he sold  
his stock...

CASEY  
Except the guys.

RICHMAN  
All we needed was somebody to publicly  
trash the company, and you just did  
that.

Casey debates slugging him, turns and starts for the  
door.

RICHMAN  
Forget it, it's a done deal. Come  
on... wave of the future. How long  
you gonna shovel shit against the  
tide?

CASEY  
Richman - I know something you don't  
know: why 545 went out of control.

BACK TO:

83 INT. WAR ROOM - DAY

83

Casey strides back in...

CASEY  
Okay! There's just been a hell of a  
lot of speculation and rumor and  
general bullshit about this thing. I  
think it's important that Norton  
Aviation act responsibly.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (cont'd)

Before we make any further statements about the cause of this incident we have to confirm our findings by a test flight, using the same aircraft. We'll repeat the flight exactly as it happened.

JENNIFER

It's too late.

MARTY

No, listen, the story just gets better and better...

CASEY

Jennifer we'll give you all the footage of the test flight; we'll have better than twenty-five cameras running on everything, cockpit, from a chase plane...

A look between Jennifer and Marty...

RICHMAN

I believe Norton would have legal problems with letting you have...

CASEY

(interrupting)

I believe Norton has nothing left to hide.

MARTY

I've got to go back to New York, but what about getting Jennifer on board?

The Camera crew stifle sniggers at that.

CASEY

Yeahyeahyeah, if she can haul her ass out of bed that early.

CUT TO:

84 INT. CASEY'S OFFICE - DAY

84

John Marder brushes past Norma into Casey's office, and shuts the door behind him.

MARDER

What's the use of a test flight?

CASEY

I want to be sure. I want to be sure Newsline sees it, too.

(CONTINUED)

MARDER

It's not going to make a damn bit of difference. After all this publicity the Chinese are spooked; the only way this company is going to survive at all is the sale to Korea.

CASEY

God, you're really good. Anybody would swear you're telling the truth. I bet you could even lie to his eyebrows.

MARDER

Okay, I tried to be reasonable.

CASEY

You calling off the test? That's really going to look good. Even the Koreans might choke on that. What I don't understand is how you could kill off what you spent your life building up.

MARDER

You got to accept reality; these old companies are all gone, off the global map. My obligation is to protect the Norton family interests...

CASEY

Your own...

MARDER

We all need to think about how to take care of ourselves in later years, because sure as hell nobody else is thinking about us. The Nortons might not make airplanes anymore, but we'll be secure and comfortable.

CASEY

Yeahyeah, you gonna raid the employee pension fund when you shut this down?

MARDER

You know me better than that...

CASEY

I don't know you at all.

MARDER

Fly the test - it's just gonna put the nail in the coffin. Then clear out your desk.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARDER (cont'd)

And if you're thinking about a golden parachute get a good lawyer, a really good one.

CUT TO:

85 EXT. BLDG 64 - DAY

85

The Newsline film crew is set up again, with Marty on camera.

JENNIFER

How do you want to handle the wrap?

MARTY

(upbeat)

As the aircraft lands, the Norton team is jubilant. Happy faces all around. Norton has made its point. At least for now.

(takes a breath)

As the aircraft lands, the team is muted. Norton is devastated. The deadly controversy over the N-22 continues to rage. Will there be another harvest of death in the skies? Only time will tell. This is Martin Reardon, for Newsline, Burbank, California.

(to Jennifer)

Too corny? Too much on the money?

JENNIFER (V.O.)

Great, Marty. 'kay, you still need something for the transition.

MARTY

We still rolling? Where do they do the test?

JENNIFER

Yuma. Dawn.

MARTY

What time is dawn in Yuma?

JENNIFER

Beats me, fake it.

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

SATURDAY, MAY 16 ... A LEGENDARY VOICE IS SILENCED, AN ERA ENDS: FRANK SINATRA DIES AT 82... VW RECALLS NEW BEETLE TO EXTERMINATE SOME BUGS... YUMA, ARIZONA, NORTON TEST FACILITY, 4:26 AM

86 EXT. TEST FACILITY - PRE-DAWN

86

THE N-22 SILHOUETTED AGAINST THE FIRST RED STREAK OF DAWN

over the distant mountains. The desert is black; lights flicker all around as technicians swarm around, in and over the gigantic bulk of the plane, preparing it for the test flight. NEWSLINE'S CAMERA crew circle around shooting this activity.

MARTY (V.O.) CONT'D

(in a low confidential tone)

We are here, at the Norton test facility in Yuma, Arizona. In the early predawn, tension mounts. In the predawn darkness, tension mounts. As dawn breaks, tension mounts.

TED RAWLEY, Norton Chief Test Pilot, who cultivates an air of dangerous glamour - ostrich leather cowboy boots with his flight suit. White silk scarf. He is taking Casey and Jennifer on his pre-flight walk around... They wear flight suits and warm jackets but they shiver from the night chill. Rawley is upset. Jennifer is not immune to his sex appeal.

CASEY

Ted, this is Jennifer Malone, Newsline... Ted Rawley our Chief test Pilot...

TED RAWLEY

Hey, Jennifer. What do you want to risk that purty li'l neck for, flyin around in this old wreck? High journalistic standards? Showin off? Ask yourself - why don't we fly test flights over downtown L.A.? Why do we fly over large uninhabited spaces? Because who cares if we drill a hole in the desert.

CASEY

Let her do it, Teddy.

TED RAWLEY

I'm responsible for the welfare of my passengers. You saw the data. This plane went way beyond what it was designed for. He bent it out of shape.

CASEY

Ron and Ted checked it...

(CONTINUED)

TED RAWLEY

They did a quick visual on the main structural members - if it wasn't for this damn publicity stunt, we'd spend months doing x-ray studies on everything before we take it up. I'm going to do the same thing the pilot did, and there's a possibility - a real one - the airframe could fail.

JENNIFER

You're trying to scare me.

TED RAWLEY

Damn right. You don't look stupid, and you don't look crazy. If you're not stupid or crazy you'll be scared.

CASEY

Teddy! Are you scared?

Jennifer looks from one to the other; do we sense there has been a history between these two?

TED RAWLEY

It's my job! I know what I'm doing, I'm at the controls. If this thing starts to fall apart I'm going to pull way way back...

Ken and Ron appear in the door, looking down where Ted has been leading them as he inspects undercarriage, etc., his pre takeoff walk around. The ground crew are pulling back ladders and stairs...

KEN BURNE

Okay, Ted. 's'yours.

CASEY

Come on, Teddy, are you scared?

TED RAWLEY

If I wasn't scared, my advice, you ladies oughta go on back to bed. Jennifer - I warned you.

JENNIFER

You don't look suicidal to me. I'm going.

Richman has appeared with a document and a pen...

RICHMAN

Not before you sign a waiver...it says you have been warned, you know the dangers and you hold Norton Avia...

(CONTINUED)

CASEY  
(as Jennifer is signing)  
Yeahyeahyeah.

They start up the stair to the forward door...

87 INT. TEST FACILITY CONTROL - DAWN

87

A low Spanish style building near the N-22; inside are banks of monitors showing the view from the various cameras mounted in the aircraft; technicians checking them and various recording devices; intercoms and radio transmissions fill the air. Richman takes up a post before the bank of monitors.

On the monitors we SEE various views as the N-22 takes off:

VIEW FROM THE CHASF PLANE

JENNIFER AND CASEY TIGHTLY STRAPPED IN THEIR SEATS BEHIND THE COCKPIT

EXT. SHOTS OF PLANE, TAKING OFF

LANDING GEAR RETRACTING, FLAPS AND SLATS BOTH EXTERIOR AND ON CLOSEUP MONITORS.

KEN BURNE AND RON SMITH STANDING AMONG THE GROUND CREW WATCHING IT MAKING A LOW TURN AS IT CLEARS THE RUNWAY..

And OVER all of this we HEAR transmissions...

TED RAWLEY (V.O.)

We're at fifty-seven two seven GW and CG is thirty-two percent MAC. Tower zero one request clearance for takeoff.

TOWER

Cleared runway three contact ground point six three when off the runway.

TED RAWLEY

Roger. Beginning roll.

(pause)

160... 170... 180... rotate. Airborne. Damn thing creaks like bedsprings in a No-Tell Motel.

JENNIFER

Jesus! Why is he going up so fast? It's like an elevator.

THE FIRST WE REALIZE JENNIFER AND CASEY ARE ON THE NETWORK; EVERYTHING ANYONE SAYS IS BEING RECORDED.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER DOESN'T KNOW IT, YET. WE SEE THE REACTIONS OF THE TECHIES ON THE MONITORS; KEN BURNE ON THE GROUND (WEARING EARPHONES), ETC.

TED RAWLEY

Swallow, Jennifer, I bet you know how to swallow, to equalize your ears.

CASEY

We're going up a lot faster than you do on an airline flight...

JENNIFER

Christ!

TED RAWLEY

Oh-kay, ladies, we are going to proceed to flight level three seven zero, that's thirty-seven thousand feet, and we are going to circle there between Yuma station and Carstairs, Nevada, for the duration of this excursion. Everybody comfy? Look to your left...

They do: a CHASE PLANE, AN F-14 FLIES ALONGSIDE FEET OFF THE WING: THE PILOT THROWS A KISS TO THEM. (ALL THESE VIEWS CAN BE SEEN IN VARIOUS WAYS: DIRECT SHOTS, FROM CASEY AND JENNIFER'S POV, AND ON MONITORS, INCLUDING FROM CHASE PLANE TO THE N-22. FOR SAKE OF BREVITY I AM NOT ATTEMPTING TO SCRIPT EACH AND EVERY SHOT.)

CASEY

Who's that. Is that Baker? Hey, Baker!

BAKER (V.O.)

Hey, Casey. I'm not worried, but you got a fool for a pilot.

The chase plane suddenly slides backward out of their window, making a hotdog turn up and away...

CASEY

(to Jennifer)

He'll be staying high and behind us, out of our wake, the safest place to be.

THE GROUND CREW: STILL STAND AND WATCH, THOUGH THE PLANE IS OUT OF SIGHT, AND CAN'T EVEN BE HEARD ANYMORE. STILL THEY WATCH. THE SUN COMES FULL OVER THE MOUNTAINS...

(CONTINUED)

## CASEY AND JENNIFER

TED RAWLEY

Ah, okay, we are now at flight level three seven zero, Doppler clear, no turbulence, a beautiful day in the neighborhood. Mach point eight.

CASEY

(to Jennifer)

Eighty per cent of the speed of sound, same height and speed as Flight 545.

(looking up out of the window)

Up this high, you're above 90 per cent of the atmosphere - you have a night sky, at noon you can see the stars.

JENNIFER

(after a long look)

I hate stars.

CASEY

Jeez, why waste hate on stars?

JENNIFER

Lonely. They make me feel lonely. They're so far away, and they don't give a shit about the human race.

TED RAWLEY (V.O.)

(breaking in)

What do you say to that, Casey?

Jennifer now realizes everybody can hear. And see.

CASEY

Gives the human race all the advantage.

TED RAWLEY

Yeah! Sneak up on them som bitches before they even know we're there! Unbuckle and come on up here, ladies.

THEY APPEAR IN THE COCKPIT.

TED RAWLEY (cont'd)

Jennifer. Look back there, the front edge of the wing. We got one of your cameras right on that.

JENNIFER

What am I supposed to see?

(CONTINUED)

TED RAWLEY

Right down here, see.. lift up that metal cover...

He guides her hand to the Slats control. Something flirtatious here?

TED RAWLEY (cont'd)

Lift that... yeah, good. Okay, now push it down, right and down until you feel a little snap.

It takes a little fiddling to make it snap.

TED RAWLEY (cont'd)

There you go. Look back...

She looks back. The slats extend from the leading edge of the wing. She momentarily has to adjust her stance as the plane gently noses up.

TED RAWLEY (cont'd)

Look at me.

ON THE MONITORS WE SEE THE SCENE IN THE COCKPIT FROM VARIOUS VIEWPOINTS AND SIZES FROM WIDE FULLSHOT TO CLOSEUP OF THE VARIOUS PEOPLE THERE, TO INSERT OF JENNIFER'S HAND ON THE SLATS CONTROL.

TED RAWLEY (cont'd)

You have just extended the slats at cruise speed and altitude. And, you have lived to appear on Newslines, Saturday night at ten.

Jennifer looks up, sees cameras, red lights on.

JENNIFER

Well then, what hell is going on?

CASEY

Yeahyeahyeah. See if you can retract the slats.

JENNIFER

You've stacked this deck. Fuck you all.

(in another tone; to camera)

At altitude, the test crew lazed and joked about. The real test was still to come.

They applaud Jennifer's performance; including the ground crew, still standing on the runway, looking into the sky, the technicians at their monitors, the Control Crew in the tower.

(CONTINUED)

BAKER  
(in the F-14 chase plane)  
What did she do? Guys?

Jennifer senses they are ridiculing her; she stomps back to her seat. She looks up into a camera, its red light on, as she prepares to strap herself back in. She speaks as though she might use this bit on the show...

JENNIFER  
I return to my seat. I buckle myself in to a four point harness. I am ready.

Outside her window the slats retract. The plane gently levels off.

CASEY APPEARS

smiling at her, and sits down, starting to strap herself down.

KEN BURNE (V.O.)  
Teddy? You've been up long enough to cold soak. It can go anytime now.

JENNIFER  
The crew discuss... what?

Casey fastens her harness, checks Jennifer's and pulls it really tight... as...

CASEY  
The first event that preceded the plane going bananas. These things are built so well, and the pilots are so highly trained, nothing happens because just one thing went wrong; it's a chain of little things one after another that gradually get out of control.

JENNIFER  
Jesus, Singleton, that hurts...

CASEY  
Can't be too tight... You recognize the phrase out of control... in your life, Jen... 'Jennifer.' Your friends have a nickname for you? Jennifer sounds so...

Jennifer, without Casey noticing tries to loosen the harness a little; inadvertently she has unfastened part of it.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

The first event in the chain of things going wrong that led to...

(to Casey)

What is it we're waiting for?

CASEY

A fault signal from a malfunctioning proximity alarm, a part in the wing.

JENNIFER

A broken part? Oh...

Casey signals for silence. They wait. On the ground. In the cockpit. At the monitors. On the F-14. Maybe Baker does a barrel roll to amuse himself as he waits.

A PING!

SLATS DISAGREE begins flashing amber, then red on cockpit panel.

TED RAWLEY

There we go.

GROUND CONTROL (V.O.)

We see it. Slats disagree.

CASEY

The black boxes on board got a signal the slats are not where they're supposed to be. Look out the window...

Out the window the slats are okay, retracted.

JENNIFER

Why?

CASEY

There's a phony proximity sensor in the right wing of this aircraft. Somebody installed a bootleg part.

JENNIFER

'Part'

TED RAWLEY

Okay, we got the warning. Slats look okay, but we'll try to clear. Okay... Everybody ready?

Casey pulls out a vomit bag from before her and hands it to Jennifer.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

He... Ted? He wouldn't do this if he didn't think, you know...

CASEY

He's a test pilot. What can I say, Jennifer? They're all crazy.

She leans over and whispers directly into Jennifer's ear, so it can't go out on the network:

CASEY (cont'd)

You oughta try him in bed, he's truly out of control...

TED RAWLEY

Coming up on time of initiation...  
5...6...7...8...9 on your mark...  
Ladies, slats extending...

He extends the slats. WE HEAR "STALL..." repeated by that mechanical voice we heard on the Jansen tape.

TED RAWLEY (cont'd)

We've got a stall, nose up. Okay he kicked out the autopilot, I'm kicking it off. Bring the nose down...

The N-22 goes into a screaming dive. Jennifer leaps out her skin.

CLOSE: JENNIFER

As the plane noses down, she (and they) go into negative G-force: every pound of flesh weighs up to 16 times what it would normally - pressing upward! Her cheeks and forehead, her eyebrows, her hair all rise upward in a startled look. Her body gives a great involuntary groan. Her hands, not strapped down, and because she's not prepared, rise up straight, and she doesn't have the strength to pull them down...

TED RAWLEY (cont'd)

(voice distorted from the stress)

Gave the yoke a slight over-correction, airplane in steep dive, 16 degrees... Oh, shit. Auto-pilot is trying to kick in. Kicking Autopilot off. Pull back, nose up...

Slowly the plane levels off... the screaming alarms quieten, but then it starts to climb... the whole process reverses itself.

(CONTINUED)

Their facial features fall; they can't lift their arms, everything weighs 15 times what it normally weighs.

FOR THE NEXT SECONDS OF THE MOVIE, THE PLANE PORPOISES, WITH TED'S FLAT VOICE NARRATING THE SEQUENCES: OF AUTOPILOT TRYING TO KICK IN, ETC. CASEY HOLDS HER OWN, JENNIFER LOSES EVERYTHING, THROWING UP, SCREAMING, GROANING, SOBBING BESIDE HER.

LUGGAGE BINS POP OPEN; FOAM MOCKUPS OF LUGGAGE FLY ALL OVER.

INSERT: STRUCTURAL BEAMS MEET IN A COMPLEX PATTERN: THEY ARE TWISTING AND GRINDING AGAINST EACH OTHER!

INSERT: LUGGAGE COMPARTMENT: FROM INSIDE, IT IS SUDDENLY DAYLIGHT AS THE HATCH TWISTS LOOSE AND IS BLOWN OPEN, FLYING AWAY INTO THE SKY...

BAKER

(from chase plane)

Teddy, for Christ's sake, break it off! Break it off! You're losing something...

CHASE PLANE CAMERA

From behind the wildly careening N-22 the hatch door breaks away and comes straight back into CAMERA, slamming off the side of the F-14...

BAKER (cont'd)

Mayday! Mayday! Shit, he's going down...

As the N-22 seems to be diving straight down now.

One of the slats tears off and spirals down like its' own helicopter; black oil shoots out of a broken hydraulic line like black smoke from where the slat tore out of the wing...

The PLUME OF OIL FLARES WITH FIRE, but the plane is diving fast enough to leave the flame behind... NOTE: RAWLEY CANNOT SEE THIS EVENT FROM THE COCKPIT.

TED RAWLEY

Autopilot just tried again, kicked it off, pulling up...

TED PULLS THE YOKE BACK...

AGAIN THE TERRIBLE WEIGHT: JENNIFER AND CASEY EACH WEIGH ALMOST A TON AS THE PLANE BOTTOMS OUT AND BEGINS TO CLIMB...

(CONTINUED)

## MID-AIR SHOT

Baker is caught by surprise: he was following what he thought was the plane's final dive, when through clouds the N-22 bursts through, coming almost straight up;

The F-14 dodges, just missing a head-on collision, twists in an acrobatic maneuver to follow the N-22 up, up up through clouds to where

THE n-22 DOES A HAMMERHEAD TURN, ALMOST COMING TO A STOP STRAIGHT UP IN MID-AIR, before beginning to fall back on it's tail, sliding backward, everybody on the network screaming:

JENNIFER: in total panic, grasps at her midriff and her hand accidentally unlatches her four point harness where she partially loosened it before... it falls open, and as the plane twists, she flies out of her seat...

CASEY: SCREAMING... REACHING FOR HER...

THE PLANE IS SLIDING BACK DOWN, ESSENTIALLY WEIGHTLESS. CASEY RELEASES HER HARNESS AND SWIMS THROUGH THE AIR AFTER JENNIFER WHO SPIRALS TOTALLY OUT OF CONTROL THROUGH THE CABIN.

DOHERTY (WHO CAN SEE ALL THIS ON THE MONITORS - THAT RAWLEY CAN'T SEE)...

DOUG DOHERTY

Rawley - they're out of their seats.

RAWLEY: BUSY TRYING TO REGAIN CONTROL OF THE AIRCRAFT...

TED RAWLEY

(sure, just give me more to do)

Well, okay...

He looks back: the women are floating in mid - air. He flicks the cabin loudspeaker switch.

TED RAWLEY (INTERCOM)

Grab hold of anything you can... fast!  
Do it!

CASEY AND JENNIFER: A KIND OF MID-AIR BALLET AS CASEY TRIES TO GRAB THE PANIC STRICKEN JENNIFER AND GET THEM INTO A SEAT, PLAYED AGAINST

RAWLEY AT THE CONTROLS

THE N-22 SLIPPING AWAY IN FREE FALL, THREATENING TO GO INTO A FLAT SPIN (FATAL). BUT RAWLEY CAN'T RISK A BOLD MANEUVER LEST HE SLAM THEM INTO THE SIDE OF CABIN..

(CONTINUED)

MEANWHILE HE'S LOSING ALTITUDE! WE SEE THIS ON CHASE PLANE CAMERA, THE ALTIMETER, ON GROUND MONITORS WHERE HIS ALTITUDE RELATIVE TO MOUNTAINS IS SHOWN.

AND EVERYBODY AT THEIR VARIOUS POSTS SCREAMING ORDERS, RECOMMENDATIONS, PRAYERS AND CURSES...

TED RAWLEY (cont'd)  
It's gonna spin out. Hang on Case!

He kicks the rudder and turns the yoke to straighten out the fall..

Casey and Jennifer are pulled apart, slam into the overhead... they are, momentarily, eye to eye.

CASEY  
Jennifer! You have to do it! Can't help you... Get in a seat...

Jennifer makes an effort of will. She claws herself down the wall and grabs a seat, twists herself into it...

Rawley yells: he has to get the plane out of this attitude. Hang on!

Casey goes flying, as he kicks the rudder and controls to go into a sideslip... then into a dive...

Casey comes fast through the cabin flying and at the last moment, hands reach up and grab her...

Jennifer, belted into a seat has grabbed her; Casey and Jennifer hang on to each other, CASEY LOOSE IN THE AIR, as Rawley gently pulls up out of the dive; gravity is restored and Casey is jammed into Jennifer's lap...

They hang on for dear life as the plane straightens out.

JENNIFER  
For God's sake stop it stop stop it!

TED RAWLEY  
Hey, no problem.

He lifts his hands in the air, his ostrich leather boots raised so we see they're off the floor: "look ma no hands."

JENNIFER  
(screams)

Lights flick: it kicks in. THE YOKE: IT TURNS WITHOUT TEDDY'S HANDS ON IT.

FOOT PEDALS. LIKEWISE.

FROM OUTSIDE: THE N-22 GENTLY SETTLES INTO NORMAL FLIGHT.

The audio channel is jammed with people yelling...

TED RAWLEY

Awright, you'all quiet down now. I  
thank you for your concern. I'm  
bringing the ladies back home.

TOWER

Cleared for landing. You need  
emergency?

TED RAWLEY

Well it wouldn't hurt. Mostly a  
cleanup crew, with a bucket and a  
buncha wet towels?

He's getting out of his seat and heading for  
IN THE CABIN

JENNIFER

(she's a mess)  
Look at me!

CASEY

(as Ted arrives)  
Look at this airplane. This is  
terrific. This is a terrific  
airplane. Ted - you okay?

TED RAWLEY

I'm God damn mad; how did that son of  
a bitch pilot - what's his name,  
Chang? - come damn near wreckin it?

CASEY

I didn't know until yesterday. When I  
got confirmation the dead man was the  
pilot, and checked the passenger  
manifest, and saw the picture that  
didn't match what I saw on the tape.  
Chang wasn't at the controls - he was  
back drinking coffee - I found his hat  
way in the rear of the plane - I  
thought it got thrown back there with  
everything else... his son was in the  
Captain's seat. John Zhen Chang -  
another TranPacific pilot - was  
travelling as a passenger on this  
trip. They are a family of pilots.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CASEY (cont'd)

The son got a slats disagree, and not being trained and qualified on this aircraft - kicked out the autopilot. Over corrected and panicked and killed four people including his father. Captain Chang died in Vancouver yesterday.

JENNIFER

That's a great story! A counterfeit part that failed, a foolish father, an untrained pilot, a heart-break family tragedy. Why didn't you tell me?

CASEY

Because I don't want this story to run; I don't want that tape on television. You know what it'll do to a company that employs 25,000 people? Where did you get that tape?

JENNIFER

I don't...

CASEY

Cut the shit, you just saved my life, you owe me!

JENNIFER

Somebody left it with security at our LA office.

CASEY

That's our tape. You got no legal right to it. Use it and we send in kamikaze lawyers.

(beat)

You just take anything? Doesn't somebody log stuff in? What if somebody drops a bomb off?

JENNIFER

I checked with security - it was a guy didn't give a name, just get it to Jennifer Malone. How does he know who to send it to? Most everybody sends Newslite stuff to Marty Reardon, not Jennifer Malone. This guy specifies: Malone, her hands only. The security guys, they're pretty thorough, we got stalkers, show crashers, bomb threats, they take notes. But they said they wouldn't forget this guy: he was driving an electric car, the GM EV1. Ought to be easy to find him, there are only a couple hundred around and they only go 80 miles on a charge.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY  
(ready for revenge)  
Teddy! I want back on the ground so  
bad!

89 EXT. YUMA TEST STATION - DAY

89

The ground crew, everyone, watch as the N-22 comes in for a perfect landing.

CLOSE: TED RAWLEY.

He's smiling but he's making himself busy shutting down the plane. We SEE HIS HANDS hold the post flight checklist; his hands are shaking so he braces it on the pedestal so no one can see.

TED RAWLEY  
Cool! Cool! Cool! Goddamn, this is  
flying. I was born for this.

The two women appear in the cockpit behind him, but he senses they're there...

TED RAWLEY (cont'd)  
Jennifer, you ever surf? I'm gonna  
hit the beach, make peace with  
nature...

He turns to look at her for an answer. His face tells us his need to repair himself after this adventure. Casey leaves...

90 EXT. YUMA TEST STATION - DAY

90

Richman is standing a little aside from Doherty and the crowd of engineers and techies waiting... he starts to leave...

CASEY (V.O.)  
Hey!

He turns to face her...

RICHMAN  
Who cares - when they run that tape,  
it's all over anyway.

CASEY  
I always thought you were just a  
medium smart spoiled little rich boy -  
I never realized you were a conniving  
calculating first class son of a  
bitch.

(CONTINUED)

He blossoms with a smile at being recognized, at being strong.

RICHMAN  
I know!

CASEY  
Tune in at ten.

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

91 INT. SHENK'S OFFICE - DAY

91

Dick Shenk is on the phone.

SHENK  
You've got a bad parts story?  
Featuring Yellow Peril Pilots? Is that  
what you're telling me, Jennifer?  
Because I'm not going to run with  
that. I'll get murdered. I'm not going  
to be the Pat Buchanan of the  
airwaves. Fuck that noise.

JENNIFER  
It doesn't play that way. It's a  
family tragedy, the guy loves his son,  
and -

SHENK  
Oh, boo hoo, Jennifer, bring on about  
a hundred violins...

TIME AND DATE STAMP:

SATURDAY, MAY 16 ... GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA, 10:53 PM...

92 INT. CASEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

92

On her TV, Marty Reardon is wrapping up Sinatra's  
story... SINATRA SINGING "MY WAY," BEHIND HIM.

MARTY (ON TV)  
...his life traced the path of a  
nation from the dreamy romanticism and  
innocence of the war years to the  
darker colors of the bruised and tired  
veteran of love, licit and illicit. He  
was...the Chairman of the Board. He's  
gone, and taken a little of all of us  
with him. I'm Marty Reardon. Good-  
night from all of us at Newline.

SHOT HAS WIDENED TO SHOW CASEY AND ALLISON CURLED UP LIKE  
TWO CATS TOGETHER, WATCHING...

(CONTINUED)

CASEY  
That's it. Bed.

ALLISON  
Did you like him?

CASEY  
Marty Reardon? No.

ALLISON  
Sinatra!

CASEY  
Everybody loved Frankie, little  
crackerass and great big attitude.  
Nobody told him what to do...

PHONE RINGS...

CASEY  
(into phone)  
It's after midnight, you better have  
good news for once, or be really close  
to dying...

93 INT. HONG KONG HOTEL PENTHOUSE SUITE - NIGHT

93

Lights of Hong Kong glitter through walls of glass.

EDGARTON  
We get it by satellite, there was  
nothing about the N-22 on Newsline.  
What did you do?

CASEY  
Like your lawyers said: I told the  
truth. Once I found out what it was.

EDGARTON  
Well, congratulations anyway. The  
Chinese are ready to settle. We're  
keeping the wing in Burbank. Now  
Casey, Norton stock is at rock bottom,  
but Monday it's going to go through  
the roof. I want you to share our good  
fortune, because you helped bring it  
about. I've bought a few hundred  
shares in your name. Hang on to them,  
they're going to put Allison through  
college, maybe pay off your mortgage.

BACK TO:

94 CASEY.

94

CASEY  
Yeahyeahyeah. Good night. Thanks.

She hangs up. Allison is outside...

CASEY (cont'd)  
Allison! What are you doing out there?

ALLISON  
Looking at the stars... can I sleep out here tonight?

95 EXT. CASEY'S GARDEN - NIGHT

95

CASEY  
You sleep anywhere you want.

ALLISON  
Look at the stars, there are so many. Far way. They scare me sometimes, so far away, they don't even know we're alive.

CASEY  
That gives us all the advantage, doesn't it?

96 ON THE NIGHT SKY. FAR ABOVE, A JET TRACES A CONTRAIL ACROSS THE SKY.

96

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NORTON SCION BOB RICHMAN ARRESTED IN SINGAPORE FOR  
NARCOTICS; FACES DEATH

JENNIFER MALONE LEAVES NEWSLINE TO JOIN "HARD COPY"

THE PLANE IN THE NIGHT SKY IS AN N-22, FLYING AWAY AS  
SINATRA CONTINUES SINGING "MY WAY."

SUPER END CREDITS....