

A SINGLE POINT OF FAILURE

based on true events

written by

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OVER BLACK:

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

[The voices are all slightly accented, but in English. Images will flash in and out rapidly. Otherwise, we're in black.]

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

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

FLASH ON SCREEN: Lights flicker frantically on the cockpit dashboard. Warning noises overtake all sound.

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

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

FLASH ON SCREEN: A warning light flashes red. The altimeter is going nuts.

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

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

FLASH ON SCREEN: The entire cockpit shakes violently.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)
Five thou.

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

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

FLASH ON SCREEN: The entire cabin full of **PASSENGERS** screaming as the plane nosedives. They're yanked up, some out of their seats, violently thrown around. A **MOTHER** holds tight to her **BABY** as she cries.

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

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

Fly up.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)

Warning. Terrain, terrain. Warning.

Pull up, pull up. Terrain. Warning.

FLASH ON SCREEN: All out chaos in the cockpit. Only blue and white whirring past the window. Then --

SILENCE The sound of waves takes us --

EXT. JAVA SEA - DAY

The water at the surface undulates with a consistent rhythm.

The clear blue-green surface gives way to white foam.

Finally, something appears at the surface. A piece of metal.

Then another piece. We realize ... there's debris everywhere.

The remnants of a fuselage. Luggage. All eradicated to bits.

It's a massive accident.

AIRPORT OFFICIAL (PRE-LAP)

So renovations are --

EXT. SEATTLE-TACOMA AIRPORT - DAY

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

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

AIRPORT OFFICIAL

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

DOMINIC

When do you expect to be completed?

AIRPORT OFFICIAL

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

DOMINIC

Sure do. Well, that's all I got.
(closes notepad)

(MORE)

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
So how's the ol' tennis game? You
still owe me a rematch.

AIRPORT OFFICIAL
This shoulder isn't what it used to
be, trust me.

DOMINIC
Well, let me know when you're up to
lose a few sets.

AIRPORT OFFICIAL
All right, Dom! Make you feel good,
beating a cripple?

DOMINIC
It's the only way I win!

INT. FAST FOOD JOINT - DAY

Dominic eats a burger and fries. Across from him sits --

BETH (17), his daughter, dressed in a private girls school
uniform, also eating.

DOMINIC
Did you get your applications in?

BETH
Dad, I already told you,
applications aren't due for months.

DOMINIC
Still, it's better to get ahead of
it, don't you think?

BETH
Would you just lay off? All the
sudden you care about my education.

DOMINIC
All right, SORRY I asked. You know
I'm really gonna miss these talks
of ours when you go away to school.

His phone rings, he looks at it.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
It's your mother.
(picking up)
Nina. Hi, hun, I'm having lunch
with your daughter. And boy is she
in a mood.

INT. SEATTLE TIMES OFFICES - DAY

NINA SHAPIRO (50s), also a reporter, stands in the bullpen.

NINA

Oh she's MY daughter all the sudden? Ask her how her college applications are going.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

DOMINIC

Been down that road. I'm truly afraid she's going to murder me. Chop me up into little bits, feed me to the fishies.

NINA

She's a seventeen-year-old girl. You really shouldn't be this scared of her.

DOMINIC

You kidding? She's terrifying.

Beth smiles innocently.

NINA

(laughs, then)

Dom, you should probably get back here. There's something developing out of Indonesia.

DOMINIC

Indonesia?

NINA

Looks like a commercial airline crash.

DOMINIC

Shoot, all right, I'm on my way.

EXT. TORONTO OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

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

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

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

INT. TORONTO OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

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

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

INT. INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT OFFICE - DAY

Paul drops his bag down at his desk, grabs his laptop and takes a seat as he finalizes some numbers on a spreadsheet.

PAUL (PRE-LAP)

As you can see here --

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

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

PAUL

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

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

PAUL (CONT'D)

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

MANAGER

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

PAUL

Yes, as you can see by these charts Airbus and Boeing have been vying for market share for years.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

While Airbus continues to outpace Boeing in overall deliveries, Boeing outperforms in selling wide-body aircrafts. We recommend allocating a small portion of your overall portfolio to --

INT. INVESTMENT OFFICE LOBBY - DAY

The group chitchats as the team sees the Investors out.

Paul, warm by nature, charms them easily.

INVESTOR

All this money stuff can get so complicated. Hard to tell what's even in some of these funds.

PAUL

That's why we're here. We sort it all out for you.

INVESTOR

Do you think there are any potential issues with stocks in the portfolio? Any vulnerabilities?

PAUL

It's all very stable. I have my own family's money in these securities. Of course, we constantly monitor risk for all our clients.

INVESTOR

Well, thank you so much, Paul.

INT. BLOOMBERG OFFICES CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

PETER ROBISON (40s), look of a former collegiate athlete -- but, you know, probably D3 tennis -- sits at the conference table among other **REPORTING STAFF**.

JOEL WEBER (40s), monochromatic, British looking, well groomed, speaks up front.

JOEL

All right, folks, you heard it. Bloomberg is a business magazine. That's our brand. That's our mission. That's what corporate wants.

(MORE)

JOEL (CONT'D)
We're limiting staff time only to
stories relevant to stocks,
investments -- you know the drill
by now. So have at it.

The group sighs, back to the grind, gathers their things.

INT. BLOOMBERG OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY

Peter keeps pace with Joel down the hallway. We see various portraits of famous **CEOs** on the wall. A very sleek, modern building with TV monitors and stock ticker symbols.

PETER
Come on, Joel. I'm just asking for
a little latitude here.

JOEL
I gave you latitude, Peter. You
wrote me a piece about big milk in
school cafeterias.

PETER
That was a good piece.

JOEL
A good piece that no one wanted.
This is Bloomberg, not Costco
Connection.

Joel beelines it to his office, leaving Peter in his dust.

INT. SEATTLE TIMES BULLPEN - DAY

A logo on the wall. A typical bullpen with cubicles. A sign on the door reads EDITOR IN CHIEF DON SHELTON.

INT. SEATTLE TIMES EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Nina and Dominic watch CNN from a couch. At the desk is --

DON SHELTON (60s), nearing the end of his career.

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

Nina mutes the TV.

DON
Any word out of Indonesian Search
and Rescue?

DOMINIC
Nothing yet. But I have a call in.

They both stare at the coverage for a moment.

DON
Let me know what you find out.

Dominic gets up to leave, when --

DON (CONT'D)
Oh, and what sort of background do
we have on the situation? Wasn't
Mike already interviewing those two
airline execs?

INT. SUBURBAN LIVING ROOM - DAY

Through the lens of a camera, we adjust focus, eventually
find our way to --

EDDY KNOWLES (late 50s), lifelong mid-level salesman, from
the heartland of America. He looks into camera --

EDDY
So this is gonna be part of a
documentary or something, right?

INT. SEATTLE TIMES EDITING ROOM - DAY

MIKE BAKER (30s), football player physique, ginger, stands in
front of a series of monitors reviewing the footage, next to
a **VIDEO EDITOR**, who drives the edit.

Eddy's face is up on one screen.

MIKE (O.S.)
(via monitor)
That's right. Something like that.

EDDY
So what d'you want me to say?

MIKE (O.S.)
Could you start by stating your
name and what your role was?

EDDY

Ah yeah, sure thing. Eddy Knowles.
Worked for UA. United Airlines.

MIKE (O.S.)

And what exactly did you do there?

INT. BOEING 747 - DAY

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

EDDY (V.O.)

Yeah, I was a buyer. Worked with
the sales reps at the airplane
manufacturers. Made the deals.

A **FLIGHT ATTENDANT** smiles reassuringly as she makes her way down the aisle. She passes Eddy, taps on his seat.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

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

MIKE (V.O.)

And can you walk me through how
those deals went down?

FLASH: Eddy's interview as he considers where to start.

INT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIPORT - DAY

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

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

EDDY

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

(beat)

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

Eddy spots someone in the distance he knows.

EDDY (CONT'D)

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

(hangs up)

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

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

INT. SEATTLE TIMES EDITING ROOM - DAY

Additional footage is displayed on a secondary screen with
Jeff in a similar position.

JEFF

Yeah, name's Jeff Spalding. I
worked for Delta.

INT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIPORT - AS BEFORE

Jeff and Eddy shake hands.

JEFF

Eddy, nice to see you. You gotta
love trade shows -- only time I can
get away from the fucking kids.

EDDY

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

JEFF

(laughs, then)

What's the word over in Chicago?

EDDY

Best time of year. Except for the
humidity.

JEFF

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

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

JEFF (CONT'D)

Wanna?

They head straight for the bar.

MIKE (V.O.)

You bought planes for the airlines?

INT. SEATTLE TIMES EDITING ROOM - AS BEFORE

The dual monitors display them side by side.

JEFF

That's right.

EDDY

That was my job.

INT. AIRPORT BAR - DAY

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

JEFF

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

Jeff waves to get some attention.

EDDY

We give Americans a bad name.

JEFF

Eh, what're you gonna do?

The drinks finally arrive.

EDDY

Well, cheers I guess -- to Europe.

JEFF

To Europe.

(clinking)

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

EDDY

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

JEFF

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

EDDY

Gotta get those business travelers. Those shuttle flights.

JEFF

Oil prices are killing us.

EDDY

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

JEFF

Look over there.

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

EDDY

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

They watch as they make their way toward the exit.

JEFF

(onto)

Wanna split a cab?

EDDY

Yeah, might as well save a buck.

INT. SEATTLE TIMES EDITING ROOM - DAY

Click. The images of Eddy and Jeff are FREEZE FRAMED on the monitors. Mike stares at them for a second, then pats the Editor on the shoulder as --

MIKE

Thanks, man. It's looking good.

INT. SEATTLE TIMES BULLPEN - DAY

Dominic sits at his desk on the phone.

DOMINIC

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

Click. Hold music. He's getting the runaround.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Goddam blackballing mother --

He notices as Mike returns to the adjacent cubicle --

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Mike, thank god, do me a favor?

MIKE

What's up, Dom?

DOMINIC

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

MIKE

Yep, can do. Anything in
particular?

DOMINIC

See if you can find out the status
on the cockpit recording.

MIKE

Sure thing.

DOMINIC

Oh and any word on a press release
from Boeing?

INT. BLOOMBERG CUBICLE - DAY

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

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

BOEING REP (V.O.)

-- be issuing a formal press
release in a few hours --

PETER

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

BEOING REP (V.O.)

I'm sorry, that's all I can say
right now. You'll have to wait for
an official release.

PETER

But if I could just --

The phone line goes dead.

REPORTER (PRE-LAP)

Days after the crash, authorities
are still searching for answers to
what went wrong on Lion Air Flight
610 ...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

MARK FORKNER (50s), a bit soft around the edges, a very
formal guy, does everything by the book.

REPORTER

(on TV)

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

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

KYLE

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

MARK

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

KYLE

You sure?
(off nod)
(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)
Still on for our lesson this
weekend? Gotta get my hours in.

MARK
Sure thing.

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

A framed photo of Mark in a pilot uniform.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

EXT. BLOOMBERG NYC OFFICES - DAY

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

PETER (PRE-LAP)
Boeing released a press statement,
basically --

INT. JOEL'S OFFICE - DAY

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

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

JOEL
Peter, I'm kinda busy.

PETER
Come on, Joel, just listen to this.
(reading from phone)
(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

Customers quote have our assurance that the 737 MAX is as safe as any airplane that has ever flown the skies. It's a canned response.

JOEL

Okay, what's the FAA saying?

PETER

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

JOEL

(actually intrigued)

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

PETER

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

JOEL

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

PETER

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

JOEL

What about you? You think it was pilot error?

PETER

Couldn't say at this point.

JOEL

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

Peter's face betrays his confidence in Boeing.

PETER

Look, I know the people up top might object, but I'd like your approval to pursue this.

Joel has to make a quick decision.

JOEL

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

PETER

All right. Thank you, Joel.

JOEL

And Peter? Don't say I never gave you latitude.

I/E. TORONTO (VARIOUS SHOTS) - DAY

>> Paul works at his desk, plugging numbers into a spreadsheet. We see research he's doing on different stocks. He opens a balance sheet for Boeing.

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

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

INT. TORONTO HOME - NIGHT

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

CAROLINE

Quiet. I just put her down.

Caroline motions to a **BABY** asleep in a crib.

PAUL

Sorry, sorry.

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

CAROLINE

How was work?

PAUL

Okay, yeah. Busy. How was your day?

CAROLINE
Also busy, yeah.

PAUL
Did you manage to file the
residency paperwork yet?

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

PAUL
Good. It's in their hands now.

Paul looks down at the table at a crayon drawing, picks it
up. It's one of their kids' drawings of the whole family.

Caroline watches him as he takes it in.

CAROLINE
It's starting to feel like home
now. Starting to feel comfortable.
(beat)
I want to stay here.

PAUL
I know. So do I.

He sets the drawing down.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I'm going to finish up some work.

CAROLINE
Still more work?

PAUL
They want a full portfolio analysis
for tomorrow. Reviewing risk
profiles of every stock position.

CAROLINE
All right, but don't work too hard.

They kiss and he heads off into the other room.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE HALL - DAY

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

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

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

DEUTSCHE
What up, Goldman? You covering
this?

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

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

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

Goldman heads off toward the --

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE HALL - DAY

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

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

DEUTSCHE
How about a Belgian waffle?

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

Goldman grabs extra lox. Deutsche follows his lead.

DEUTSCHE
So you boys gonna downgrade to a
hold?

GOLDMAN

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

DEUTSCHE

Four hundred? You can't be serious.

GOLDMAN

Dead serious.

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

INT. CHEVY TAHOE - DAY

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

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

EXT. SEATTLE STREET - DAY

Mark runs across the street, catches up to --

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

MARK

Patrik!

PATRIK

Jesus, Mark, what are you doing --

MARK

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

PATRIK

You can't be here.

Patrik approaches his car.

MARK

We need to talk.

PATRIK

There's nothing to talk about.

MARK

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

PATRIK

Yeah, I saw it. What do you --

MARK

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

PATRIK

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

Patrik gets inside his car.

MARK

Pat, it's just like the sim, I --

PATRIK

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

Patrik reverses, drives off, leaving Mark standing there.

INT. SEATTLE TIMES BULLPEN - DAY

Mike sits at his desk on the phone.

MIKE

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

He hangs up, thinks for a moment.

DOMINIC (PRE-LAP)

A faulty sensor?

INT. SEATTLE TIMES BREAK ROOM - DAY

Dominic and Mike refill their coffees.

MIKE

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

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

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

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

Dominic walks off.

INT. SEATTLE TIMES EDITING ROOM - DAY

Mike sits with the Video Editor reviewing more footage.

MIKE (O.S.)
(via monitor)
Can you just give me a little more
context into how deals go down?

EXT. LE BOURGET AIRPORT - DAY

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

EDDY (V.O.)
Nothing to it really.

JEFF (V.O.)
Big event is the Paris Air Show.

EDDY (V.O.)
It's where all the airlines and
manufacturers shake hands.

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

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

INT. AIRPLANE HANGAR - DAY

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

And over on the other side is Airbus. The other elephant.

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

EDDY

Boeing's been losing market share
to Airbus.

JEFF

They *hate* each other. I love it.

EDDY

You hearing anything about the
Dreamliner?

JEFF

Dreamliner. More like a nightmare
from what I've heard.

EDDY

They're three years delayed on
delivery.

JEFF

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

EDDY

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

JEFF

Someone's gonna get fired for that.

EDDY

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

ANGLE OVER to the Airbus booth.

JEFF

What do the Europeans got?

EDDY

An update to the A320. They
announced it last year.

JEFF
What kind of update?

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

JEFF
(intrigued)
Huh.

EDDY
(offering)
Biscuit?

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

EDDY
What the hell is pre-diabetic?

EXT. JAKARTA STREET - NIGHT

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

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

The sheer number of photos is overwhelming.

INT. SEATTLE TIMES BULLPEN - NIGHT

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

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

DOMINIC
Can we cancel?

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

DOMINIC
All right -- yeah, okay.

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

NINA
Some light reading?

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

NINA
Anything interesting?

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

NINA
What *can* you say?

DOMINIC
(figuring it out)
I dunno -- I'm not an airplane
designer so it's hard to know, just
-- you know just some stuff that
doesn't exactly make sense.

NINA
Like what?

DOMINIC
The Indonesian authorities reported
a faulty sensor -- on the nose --
it's suppose to measure the angle
of ascent. They're saying that it
misread, gave the pilots a bad
reading. But the sensor was
repaired multiple times, on
multiple planes. Something like
that ... *had* to have been a known
issue.

NINA
So you think Boeing knew about the
problem?

DOMINIC
Dunno for sure -- but I just can't
see how they *didn't* know about it.

NINA

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

(as he considers this)

Come on, let's get dinner.

Dominic grabs his coat and they exit.

EXT. BLOOMBERG OFFICES - NIGHT

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

INT. BLOOMBERG OFFICES - NIGHT

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

PETER

Someone leaked the FDR from the crash.

JOEL

The FDR?

PETER

The Flight Data Recorder. It's basically the device that --

(off confused look)

Better just come have a look -- it'll be easier to explain.

INT. BLOOMBERG CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

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

Peter begins to trace the line with a marker.

PETER

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

(pointing)

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

He starts to circle various points on the line graph.

PETER (CONT'D)

You can see here -- the plane ascends then -- down hard. Pilots try to pull up, then down again.

JOEL

What?

PETER

Doesn't make sense, right? Then we did a little digging.

Peter sorts through papers, finds part of the design doc. Then he writes on the board: MCAS.

JOEL

What's MCAS?

JULIE

(reading)

MCAS. Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System.

PETER

Turns out Boeing installed it on the plane when they upgraded the 737 to the MAX.

JULIE

It's a software program.

PETER

You can see the pilots keep trying to take manual control and to regain altitude, but MCAS keeps forcing the plane down -- the same thing happened the day before on another flight and the pilot managed to land safely. But not this time. *This* time, the pilots couldn't force the plane up -- the plane nosedived until ...

Peter shows the final altitude descent on the line graph.

JOEL

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

INT. SEATTLE TIMES CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Dominic sits at a conference room table, one by one folding pieces of paper into paper airplanes.

JULIE (V.O.)
It gets a bit technical, so just
bear with us.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

PETER
Okay, so MCAS was installed after
Boeing retrofitted the old 737 with
its new engines.

Dominic starts tweaking the base model paper airplane by
adding a paper engine with scotch tape.

The new engines were bigger than
the old ones, so when they were
installed --
(off to)
Julie, do you have a printout of
the schematic?

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

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

Dominic begins a series of tests, throwing plane after plane
into the air.

JULIE (CONT'D)
Are you still with me?

JOEL
Yeah, I think so.

Dominic pieces together a new paper plane that closely
resembles the aerodynamics of the 737 MAX.

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

JOEL

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

Dominic thinks for a beat, finally adds a bit of weight to
the tip of the plane by attaching a paperclip to the nose.

PETER

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

Dominic finalizes his model paper plane, throws it over and
over again as a test.

JULIE

MCAS was trying to compensate for
engineering design problems. And
for whatever reason, it triggers
when it's not supposed to. The
pilots try to override it, but MCAS
keeps pushing them down --

Dominic's planes nosedive over and over again.

JULIE (CONT'D)

-- over and over, and they're
gaining speed and eventually, the
software overtakes them completely.

JOEL

Shit ... did Boeing know about
these problems?

PETER

There were reports of issues with
the AOA sensor, and it's looking
like the sensor on this plane had
just been replaced.

JOEL

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

All of Dominic's paper planes sit piled up in a garbage can.

PETER

We need to dig more on this -- we
think it goes deeper than
maintenance.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

I'm hearing some grumblings from pilots and airlines. We need to talk to the engineers and the FAA -
-

JOEL

All right. Keep going. Maybe I can spin this to corporate as an investor piece about Boeing's stock prospects.

INT. VARIOUS CABLE NEWS ROOMS - NIGHT

Various **FINANCIAL NEWS PUNDITS** sit at the desks of their opinion shows, intercutting --

VARIOUS PUNDITS

Prospects! Let's talk about Boeing's now. Boeing, the pride of American manufacturing. We've all heard about the crash and now there's some rumblings that officials want to ground the 737 MAX.

(sound effects)

Slow down, everyone! Do you know what that would do? The 737 is Boeing's most profitable plane in its history. It's got thousands of these babies flying all over the world. If I were a Boeing exec, I'd be doing whatever I could to keep those planes in the air. Grounding the 737 would most certainly tank Boeing's stock price! BEWARE INVESTORS! You kill the 737, might as well kill Boeing. And that's just un-American.

INT. BOEING CHICAGO HEADQUARTERS - DAY

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

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

DENNIS

All right, where are we on all this?

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

KEVIN

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

(beat)

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

DENNIS

What do you propose?

KEVIN

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

DENNIS

It is safe to fly, *right*?

KEVIN

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

DENNIS

You're not convincing me.

KEVIN

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

DENNIS

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

KEVIN

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

DENNIS

What are we saying about the pilots?

KEVIN

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

(beat)

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

DENNIS

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

KEVIN

(to room)

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

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

EXT. TORONTO PARK - DAY

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

CAROLINE

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

Paul smiles, looks down to baby **RUBI** in Caroline's arms.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

(beat)

She was born here, which means she's a citizen automatically.

PAUL

This is a good country to raise a family. You have a good job here.

CAROLINE
They like us here.

PAUL
People here are kind to foreigners.

They share a smile.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry to leave you to take the
children all by yourself.

CAROLINE
You have work. And my mother will
go with us. She's much more useful
than you are.

He laughs. Just then Ryan runs up with Kelli.

RYAN
Dad, did you bring the football?

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

Paul grabs Ryan and flips him upside down playfully as they
head off.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - DAY

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

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

A phone rings in the background and we hear --

WOMAN'S VOICE
Stan, phone!

Stan looks off --

STAN (PRE-LAP)
Hello?

INT. NYC APARTMENT - DAY

Julie sits on her sofa, printed pages everywhere.

JULIE
Hi, is this Stan? Stan Sorscher?

INT. LAKE HOUSE - DAY

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

STAN
Speaking.

INTERCUT NYC APARTMENT AND LAKE HOUSE

JULIE
Stan, this is Julie Johnsson. I'm a reporter at Bloomberg. I read your op-ed on Boeing corporate culture.

STAN
Oh yeah?

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

STAN
Jeez, yeah?

JULIE
(beat)
Yeah.

STAN
Okay, sure.

JULIE
I'll be in Seattle next week -- you're in the area, right?

STAN
Yeah, I work downtown.

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

STAN

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

Off Julie's look --

BEGIN MONTAGE

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

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER

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

>> At a private airstrip, Mark stands outside a small two-person propellor plane with a checklist in hand, going over each part: tires, engine, tail, etc.

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

>> Mark sits in the cockpit of the plane, begins flipping switches, checking comms, navigation system.

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

>> Mark's plane gets the all clear to take off. The plane begins to gain speed on the runway.

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

>> Mark's plane takes off into the air.

>> The Regulator finalizes her checklist, signs off.

>> Mark levels the plane at a cruising altitude. He turns to see his son Kyle, co-piloting with him.

END MONTAGE

EDDY (PRE-LAP)

Wanna know how the whole financial system came crashing down?

INT. PARIS HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

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

JEFF
Sure, enlighten me.

EDDY
It wasn't that the system didn't work. It was that it worked too well. It did too good a job doing what it was designed for.

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

JEFF
How do you mean by that?

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

JEFF
Sure. Chairman --

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

JEFF
Four pests? What is --

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

JEFF
Okay --

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

JEFF

So it was a success?

EDDY

Massive fucking success, except ...

JEFF

What?

EDDY

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

JEFF

Shit.

EDDY

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

JEFF

Forty-five million, Jesus Christ.

EDDY

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

(beat)

And that's what happened with the banks and the mortgages. That's what happens everyday all over the world. They build the system and the let them use it for exactly what it's designed for, without anyone keeping them in check.

(beat)

Kill the sparrows and you get the locusts.

Eddy takes a final swing of his drink.

DOMINIC (PRE-LAP)

We need to get someone from the FAA on record.

INT. SEATTLE HOME - NIGHT

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

MIKE (V.O.)
I'm looking into it.

DOMINIC
Did you speak to Ludtke?

INT. SEATTLE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mike also pores over mounds of printed pages.

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

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

INT. SEATTLE TIMES BULLPEN - DAY

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

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

Then, he leans back, shakes his head.

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Don sits at his desk across from --

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

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

MICHELE
I think we can make it work.

DON
(noticing)
Dominic, come in.

Dominic stands at the door.

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

DON
Yeah, all good, shut the door.

DOMINIC
(enters)
Michele, hi.

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

DOMINIC
(taking a seat)
Right.

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

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

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

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

DON
So what's on your mind?

DOMINIC
Okay, so still no word out of the
FAA about the design flaws I
flagged. They're chronically
muzzled.

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

DOMINIC

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

DON

Right.

DOMINIC

But no one's willing to say it. Now we've gone through all the approval documents from the FAA.

MICHELE

And?

DOMINIC

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

(beat)

Anyway, guess how many times the manual mentioned MCAS.

MICHELE

I dunno, how many?

DOMINIC

Once ... in the index.

MICHELE

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

DOMINIC

That's exactly what I'm saying.

INT. NYC CONFERENCE HALL - DAY

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

As the commotion grows, we land back on --

Kevin McAllister who steps up to the podium.

KEVIN

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

(beat)

We've been in business a long time. And over that time, I think we've done our job in earning your trust. So what I'd like to say is ... you know us. We've always looked out for you. And we're looking out for you now, so believe me when I tell you that the plane is one-hundred percent safe.

(beat)

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

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

BILL

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

KEVIN

Thanks for the question, Bill. MCAS is only triggered in extreme circumstances. We know you've all got a lot on your plates already. We didn't want to overwhelm everyone with unnecessary information. Figured you'd much rather spend time out on the golf course than reading a list of software updates. There is no reasonable belief that any pilot would ever encounter MCAS in ten million flights.

BILL

But these pilots did.

KEVIN

Because of the AOA sensor misreading. And we all know Lion Air's reputation with their maintenance.

(MORE)

KEVIN (CONT'D)

The Lion Air pilots lacked the necessary training to handle it -- they basically get these guys off the streets. Going through the NNC checklist, any American pilot with any degree of airmanship, basically any of you in this room, would have been able to navigate the system without error.

BILL

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

KEVIN

Yes, we've always believed in evolving and in making things even safer. It's our number one priority. Yeah, Robert?

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

ROBERT

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

KEVIN

No, there's no reason --

ROBERT

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

KEVIN

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

Everyone seems at ease with this explanation, except --

Mark Forkner who sits in the back of the audience, watching the entire thing. He sits there a bit stunned.

INT. CHEVY TAHOE - DAY

Mark sits in his car out in the parking lot, watching as the Boeing Executives make their way out.

He stares at them through the window, wanting to do something, but for some reason he can't. He just slams his hands on the steering wheel in frustration.

INT. TORONTO HOME - DAY

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

The rest of the family sits around the table.

PAUL

Do you have your passports?

CAROLINE

Yes, don't worry. I have everything. Not so fast, you'll make her spit up.

PAUL

She's fine.

(to Rubi)

Aren't you, baby?

KELLI

Papa, can we have ice cream now?

CAROLINE

When you finish your vegetables.

KELLI

That's not fair.

CAROLINE

Vegetables first, then ice cream.

RYAN

Will there be ice cream in Kenya?

CAROLINE

Of course, there's ice cream there.

RYAN

Good! I love ice cream!

Paul laughs heartily, looks around at his entire family. Then he notices the clock.

PAUL

All right, hurry and finish eating.
We have to get to the airport or
you'll miss your flight.

INT. SEATTLE STARBUCKS - DAY

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

INT. SEATTLE STARBUCKS - LATER

Julie and Stan are mid conversation --

JULIE

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

STAN

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

JULIE

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

STAN

This whole thing was way worse than
you think -- it still is.

JULIE

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

STAN

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

JULIE

(flips through notes)

That was -- wait, I think I
remember --

BEGIN INTERCUTTING: Various historical photos of McConnell
Douglas, the factories, press footage of the merger, etc.

STAN

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

JULIE

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

STAN

Exactly. They considered airplanes to be like -- pants. They could pay as little as they wanted to have them made. After the acquisition, there was a change in the company culture. See, Boeing started as a leader in innovation -- it had to employ the smartest engineers because it was difficult work they were doing. But once the jet engine came along, that was the last great piece of innovation. And so aircraft manufacturing became a commodities business, not an innovation business ... pants.

JULIE

So, what? There was pressure to cut costs?

STAN

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

(beat)

Look, it's fine when companies outsource pants to factories in Vietnam because worse comes to worst, the zipper breaks and you get caught with your fly down. Try to do it with a plane and ... well.

Off Julie's reaction --

INT. INVESTMENT OFFICE - DAY

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

Graphs. Charts. Airplanes.

GOLDMAN

Let's take a look at The Boeing Company, shall we? Publicly traded. Market cap's somewhere north of \$200 billion. Healthy revenue. Hefty profits. So how do we improve on an already mature stock? Well, let's take a look at how Boeing became one of the most profitable companies in the world.

An assembly line. Engines. Planes.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

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

BUSINESSMEN shaking hands in front of a model airplane.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

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

A bunch of **ENGINEERS** on strike.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

Unions are expensive, so why not outsource production to South Carolina where union regulations are non-existent and you can hire any schmuck out of the swamp?

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

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

But you can't stop there. You gotta save more. A.B.S. Always. Be. Saving. How do you do that?

(MORE)

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)
Stop spending money on R&D. New
planes cost a lot of money to
design, engineer, and test.

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

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)
Stick with your best sellers and
only make changes when *absolutely*
necessary.

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

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)
And since it's expensive to train
pilots, never ever build a brand
new model. Always always ALWAYS --
say it with me -- upgrade.

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

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

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

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

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

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)
And if that's not enough and you
wanna make a bit more cash for your
investors, you've always got one
final card up your sleeve ... the
stock buyback. What's a stock
buyback, you ask.

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

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

Instead of spending money paying engineers or reinvesting in new plants or covering pension and health plans, stash the money until you have enough to buy back stock from the market. Simple supply and demand. The less supply of stock on the open market, the higher the price. Buy back some stock and send your share price soaring. Ka-ching, that's how you make a lot of stockholders rich.

HEDGE FUND MANAGERS sitting on yachts. **INVESTMENT TEAMS** popping bottles of champagne. Private jets, Macao, etc.

GOLDMAN (CONT'D)

Any questions?

Goldman sits there looking smug as ever.

EXT. FAA HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A really depressing government building in stark contrast.

INT. FAA OFFICE - DAY

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

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

Her attention is broken, by --

COLLEAGUE

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

Grace quickly closes the window and takes the pages.

EXT. TORONTO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

Paul stands at the curbside dropoff, shuts the trunk, carrying a suitcase out toward --

Caroline and the rest of the family.

PAUL

Do you have everything?

CAROLINE

Yes.

PAUL

And you're okay to make your connection? Your mother will be there?

CAROLINE

Yes, we're going to be fine, Paul. Don't worry.

Paul pulls her in for a hug.

PAUL

Be safe, my love.

He lingers until --

CAROLINE

All right, we have to go or we'll miss our flight.

RYAN

Yeah, let's go! Let's go!

Caroline gathers the suitcases and the children, and they walk toward the entrance. Paul stands there waving goodbye, watching until they disappear out of sight.

BEGIN MONTAGE

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

AIRLINE REP

Welcome to Alaska Air. Would you like a coffee or a sparkling water?

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

BOEING EXECUTIVE

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

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

BOEING EXECUTIVE (CONT'D)

You know how fucking stupid those pilots are. You're American pilots, you've got nothing to worry about.

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

DENNIS

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

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

END MONTAGE

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. TORONTO HOME - NIGHT

The place is quiet, dark. A phone rings over and over again. Finally stops. Silence, then --

LESTER HOLT (PRE-LAP)

Breaking news out of Addis Ababa, a
commercial airline crashed on
takeoff killing all 157 on board.

INT. SEATTLE HOME - NIGHT

Dominic and Nina stand watching the television. Beth sits at the table doing homework.

LESTER HOLT

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

BETH

Dad, isn't that --

DOMINIC

Yeah. Same one.

Dominic's phone rings.

MIKE (V.O.)

Are you seeing this?

DOMINIC

Yeah, I'm watching it now.

INT. NURSING HOME REC ROOM - NIGHT

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

GRANDMOTHER
Your turn, Julie.

JULIE
Yeah, sorry.

INT. BLOOMBERG OFFICES - DAY

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

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

INT. BLOOMBERG CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

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

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

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

MICHELE (PRE-LAP)
You're telling me they're not pulling the plane?

INT. SEATTLE TIMES CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

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

DOMINIC
They refuse to ground it. It's completely irresponsible.

The Ethiopia Air wreck is on the TV, muted in the background.

DON
This is unreal.

MIKE

It's MCAS again. It has to be.
There's no other explanation.

MICHELE

How is the FAA not stepping in?

DOMINIC

Muilenburg already called Trump to ask him not to -- y'know, it's all deep pockets and you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours, *bullshit*. It's criminal!

DON

There were Americans on board, right?

MIKE

Eight, yeah.

DON

Someone's gonna have to answer for this. This is gonna hit home.

MIKE

The MAX is dangerous. End of story.

DON

(thinking, then)

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

DOMINIC

We need touch points at the FAA, at Boeing, and with the investigators on the ground in Ethiopia.

(realizing)

Jesus Christ ...

MIKE

What?

DOMINIC

I have to get comments from the families of the Americans on board.
(onto)

(MORE)

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

These politicians and corporate executives go around padding their own pockets, high fiving each other, congratulating themselves on being masters of the fucking universe.

(beat)

And the rest of us have to stand by and watch them do it.

INT. TORONTO HOME - NIGHT

We land on a calendar, marked trip to Kenya. And we catch a note scribbled beside it: Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302.

Beside it is a photo of the entire family smiling together.

Every room in the house is dark, empty, except --

INT. TORONTO HOME BATHROOM - NIGHT

The sound of weeping. It's coming from --

Paul -- he's crouched on the floor, hands covering his eyes. We know exactly what's happened.

INT. BLOOMBERG NYC OFFICES - DAY

Peter picks up the phone and dials.

INT. WASHINGTON DC OFFICE - DAY

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

ALLAN

Allan Levin.

INTERCUT NYC AND DC OFFICES

PETER

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

ALLAN

I just heard about the crash. Terrible.

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

ALLAN
That's right, yep.

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

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

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

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

PETER
That'd be great, thank you.

ALLAN
No problem.

MIKE (PRE-LAP)
So what does this new bill do?

INT. RESEARCH OFFICE - DAY

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

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

INT. SEATTLE TIMES OFFICE - DAY

Mike sits at his desk on the phone, going down the same
rabbit hole as Peter.

MIKE

More of the same?

AMY

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

MIKE

Sounds like a recipe for disaster.

AMY

Depends who you're asking. The manufacturers say that the FAA is too slow and stifles innovation. They can't compete if they can't get a plane approved. It's not just Boeing versus Airbus -- it's America versus Europe. Boeing is a shining star in a world where we have no manufacturing left. Add that all up, they let Boeing pretty much have free rein.

MIKE

That's insane -- maybe the planes shouldn't be in the air if they can't get them approved by the FAA! How can regulation work like that?

AMY

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

MIKE

Yet somehow they manage to find billions to kill school kids in Syria.

AMY

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

MIKE

It's like giving a robber the keys to your store and asking him to watch the register.

AMY

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

MIKE

And now 346 people are dead. So that's how well that worked out.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING GYM - NIGHT

Peter grabs a set of dumbbells, begins doing chest exercises on a bench. He stares up at the ceiling as various commercials play on a nearby television screen --

VARIOUS COMMERCIALS (V.O.)

-- the new Lincoln Navigator will have you saying -- that's why we at Pfizer believe in honesty -- BP cares about the environment. That's why we're --

With each rep Peter pumps harder and harder, letting the bullshit of every commercial enter his brain.

VARIOUS COMMERCIALS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

-- the only thing we care about is our customers -- we're looking out for you -- Johnson & Johnson, a family company -- Bank of America, valued trust since -- because the only thing that matters ... is you.

He drops the weights hard on the floor. He can't take it anymore. All the lies everywhere.

INT. NEWSROOM - NIGHT

A NEWS ANCHOR on screen.

NEWS ANCHOR

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

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

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

NEWS ANCHOR

(on nearby TV)

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

(beat)

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

(beat)

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

He's definitely drunk. He absent-mindedly folds his napkin as the Bartender comes over with another drink.

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

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

MATCH CUT TO:**EXT. SEATTLE-TACOMA AIRPORT - NIGHT**

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

MIKE (PRE-LAP)

There's another one.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Dominic and Mike sit on inside with drinks in hand.

DOMINIC

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

MIKE

Nothing we can do right now.

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

MIKE (CONT'D)

(beat)

I've got a contact at Boeing who
says he'll go on the record, a fuel
engineer on the MAX.

DOMINIC

Have you gotten any official word
from the FAA?

MIKE

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

DOMINIC

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

MIKE

We'll keep asking around.

Mike stares at him for a beat.

MIKE (CONT'D)

How are you doing? You're looking
tired.

DOMINIC

Well, thanks for that.

MIKE

Have you been sleeping enough?

Dominic takes another sip of his drink, consider something.

DOMINIC

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

MIKE

Which one?

DOMINIC

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

MIKE

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

DOMINIC

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

MIKE

You just gotta let her talk.

DOMINIC

(beat)

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

MIKE

What's that?

DOMINIC

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

MIKE

I dunno.

DOMINIC

We need to talk to an engineer.

INT. PRIVATE JET - DAY

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

Dennis, who sits there staring out the window.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Your drink, sir.

DENNIS

Thank you.

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

ASSISTANT

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

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

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

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

INT. SEATTLE TIMES OFFICE - DAY

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

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

Finally, he picks up the phone and dials.

INT. SHEFFIELD MASSACHUSETTS HOME - DAY

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

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

NADIA

Hello?

INTERCUT SEATTLE TIMES AND SHEFFIELD HOME

DOMINIC

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

NADIA

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

DOMINIC

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

INT. SHEFFIELD MASSACHUSETTS HOME - LATER

Nadia sits at her kitchen counter.

NADIA

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

DOMINIC

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

NADIA

Still doesn't feel real.

DOMINIC

I can only imagine.

NADIA

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

DOMINIC

Yeah, I heard.

INT. TORONTO HOME - DAY

Paul mindlessly makes himself a sandwich, barely able to perform the most basic tasks.

NADIA (V.O.)

Lost both of their boys.

DOMINIC (V.O.)

Awful.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

NADIA

One was about to have a baby.

(beat)

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

Paul sits by himself at his dining table eating.

DOMINIC

I know.

NADIA

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

DOMINIC

You're probably right.

Paul washes his one single plate.

NADIA

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

Paul leaves places the dish on the rack to dry. He notices a baby bottle there. He picks it up, stares at it.

DOMINIC

Can't imagine.

NADIA

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

INT. BLOOMBERG OFFICES - DAY

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

Julie finally walks in --

JULIE

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

RESEARCH INTERN

(getting off phone)

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

Everyone turns to him.

RESEARCH INTERN (CONT'D)
They're saying that the FDR
indicates the same MCAS issue as
Lion Air.

INT. SEATTLE TIMES EDITING ROOM - NIGHT

Mike sits at the editing station by himself. He scrolls through the footage. Tries to find something. Anything.

Finally he lands on a clip of Jeff. He hits play.

JEFF
You should understand one thing
about buying airplanes. You don't
really even have to know how they
work.

EXT. LE BOURGET AIRPORT - DAY

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

Eddy and Jeff stand under a new aircraft.

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

JEFF
That's what she said.

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

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

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

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

JEFF
Look what the cat dragged in.

MATT

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

BEN

Enjoying the festivities?

EDDY

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

JEFF

Yeah, I didn't realize you could fly regional to Europe.

MATT

Gotta love the Star Alliance.

EDDY

Being in Europe reminds you that we're not the center of the universe. It's a big world.

JEFF

American exceptionalism's a thing of the past. Every deal is global.

MATT

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

They look in the distance to see --

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

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

JEFF

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

BEN

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

The guys have a laugh as we FREEZE FRAME on them. As if they're part of the videos Mike's been watching.

STAN (PRE-LAP)

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

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

INT. BLOOMBERG OFFICE - DAY

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

JULIE

What's happening in 2011?

INT. SEATTLE HOME - DAY

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

STAN

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

JULIE

That's their plane?

STAN

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

JULIE

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

STAN

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

JULIE

What was the deal with the engine?

STAN

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

JULIE

Wow, okay.

STAN

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

INT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT - DAY

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

STAN (V.O.)

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

INT. PARIS HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

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

STAN (V.O.)

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

EXT. LE BOURGET AIRPORT - DAY

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

STAN (V.O.)

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

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

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

INT. SEATTLE HOME - AS BEFORE

STAN
Airbus *beats* Boeing. And so Boeing
has to hit back. The following
year, Boeing promises that it can
deliver a new model 737 with a new
engine that will deliver even more
fuel efficiency than the neo and it
says it can build and approve it in
six years.

JULIE
Is that a long time?

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

JULIE
How many?

STAN
None.

INT. SEATTLE TIMES EDITING ROOM - NIGHT

Mike stares at side-by-side monitors, each with Eddy and
Jeff's faces frozen on it.

He considers everything he's learned from their stories.

EXT. MOJAVE DESERT AIR FIELD - DAY

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

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

REPORTER (V.O.)

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

INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM - DAY

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

GARY

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

DENNIS

Honestly?

GARY

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

DENNIS

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

SUPER: APRIL 2019

GARY

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

DENNIS

I know, I know.

GARY

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

DENNIS

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

GARY

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

DENNIS
(takes the punch, then)
Look, Gary.

GARY
Stop saying my name like that.

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

GARY
Come on, Dennis. You have to see.

DENNIS
What?

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

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

GARY
(smiles, then)
Dennis, if that were true, it
wouldn't have crashed. Twice.

Gary goes back to his steak.

INT. SEATTLE TIMES OFFICE - DAY

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

He pops up from his desk.

MIKE

Dom, come over here for a second.

Dominic walks over behind his computer.

DOMINIC

What's that?

MIKE

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

DOMINIC

What is it?

MIKE

Right here, these are all the
approval signatures.

DOMINIC

Okay?

MIKE

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

Mike finally turns to look Dominic in the eyes.

MIKE (CONT'D)

It's like no one at the FAA even
bothered to check.

INT. NYC APARTMENT - NIGHT

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

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

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

TERI

When are you coming to bed?

PETER

Soon.

Teri sits down on the couch next to him.

TERI

We still have to decide on flower arrangements -- the calla lilies are more expensive but they go better with the color scheme.

PETER

Okay, I'll take a look in a bit.

TERI

Any updates?

(off shrug)

Explain where you're at to me. I might be able to give you an outside perspective.

PETER

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

(pulls pages)

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

TERI

What does that mean?

PETER

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

TERI

Which means?

PETER

It just means that there's another check in place so if a part fails, there's a backup.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)
So if MCAS was a hazardous failure
classification, where was the
redundancy?

As she continues looking through various wedding purchases --

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

Peter takes this in.

INT. SEATTLE HOME - DAY

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

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

He looks to Mark --

KYLE
You all right, dad?

MARK
Hmm? Yeah.

KYLE
Sure?

Kyle starts to head back as --

MARK
Kyle?

KYLE
Yeah, dad?

EXT. SEATTLE HOME - DAY

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

INT. SEATTLE HOME - SAME

MARK

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

KYLE

I know that.

MARK

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

KYLE

What are you talking about?

Mark shakes his head, notices the Agents throw the window.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Dad, are you sure you're all right?

The doorbell rings, as the Agents stand outside the door.

MARK

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

Kyle heads back outside.

EXT. BISHOFTU, ETHIOPIA, CRASH SITE - DAY

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

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

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

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

He contemplates the implication of this.

JULIE (PRE-LAP)

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

INT. HOTEL LOBBY RESTAURANT - DAY

Julie makes her way inside still on her phone.

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

JULIE

Rick? Hi.

(shakes, then into phone)

Grandma, I'm gonna have to call you back ... no, Grams don't worry. The people there are taking care of you. You have to let them do their jobs -- I have to go now, talk to you soon.

(hangs up)

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

RICK

I'm sure she just misses you.

JULIE

(smiles, then)

Shall we?

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

The **WAITER** finishes taking their orders.

JULIE

(handing menu)

Just a coffee for me.

RICK

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

As the Waiter takes off --

JULIE

So Rick, you were an engineer inside of Boeing, right?

RICK

That's right. I actually helped with the certification of the MAX.

JULIE

Really, the MAX? I'm trying to get a bit more information on exactly what Boeing and the FAA knew and didn't know about the potential safety issues before they approved the plane?

RICK

You mean did they know it could crash?

JULIE

That's what I want to know.

RICK

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

JULIE

You're sure?

RICK

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

JULIE

How's that?

RICK

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

JULIE

Level D?

RICK

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

JULIE

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

RICK

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

INT. SOUTHWEST OFFICES - DAY

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

RICK (V.O.)

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

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - AS BEFORE

JULIE

A million dollars per aircraft?
They had dozens of MAXes in their
fleet.

RICK

So you can see Boeing had a huge
incentive to keep changes minimal
enough to require only Level-D
training, which also means they had
a huge incentive to bury any
changes that might call that into
question.

JULIE

They purposely hid information
about the changes?

INT. BEOING OFFICE - DAY

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

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

INT. FAA OFFICES - DAY

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

JULIE (V.O.)
That's completely unethical.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - AS BEFORE

RICK
In the end Boeing issued pilots an iPad training course on the new plane. It was an hour long.
(off her shock)
Look, I would never go to bat for Boeing, but you have to think about it like this. Sure, we could demonize everyone involved, but all of them, everyone from the engineers to the FAA regulators up to the CEO -- they were just making decisions they were supposed to. They were doing what everyone told them they should be doing. But the system isn't built to look out for the customer or the passenger or the employee. It's all built to look out for one person.

JULIE
Who?

INT. CABLE NEWS STUDIOS - NIGHT

Various **FINANCIAL PUNDITS** go on air.

VARIOUS REPORTERS
Investors! You heard it here first! If you've bought Boeing stock, you're not sitting happy right now. The stock is falling, falling, FALLING! I say it's time to get those planes back up in the air. You know how many people die in car crashes every day in this country?
(MORE)

VARIOUS REPORTERS (CONT'D)

I'll tell you, a helluva lot more than die in plane crashes. Yet we don't stop car manufacturers from selling cars. Some people say you can't put a dollar value on human life, but to them I say, we do it every day.

INT. SEATTLE TIMES CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

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

DOMINIC

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

STEVE

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

DOMINIC

And?

Mike starts rifling through pages, finally gets to --

MIKE

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

STEVE

Zero point six degrees.

MIKE

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

STEVE

They increased it to two point five degrees.

MIKE

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

STEVE

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

MIKE

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

STEVE

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

MIKE

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

STEVE

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

Dominic shakes his head, fully upset by the revelation.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Dominic walks to his car as his phone rings.

DOMINIC

Hello?

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

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

GRACE

Hi, Dominic?

INTERCUT PARKING LOT AND APARTMENT

DOMINIC

Yes.

GRACE

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

DOMINIC

That's right -- who is this?

GRACE

(beat)

Would you be able to promise not to publish my name?

DOMINIC

What is this about?

GRACE

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

DOMINIC

(stopping in his tracks)

Yeah. I can do that.

GRACE

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

DOMINIC

You heard right.

GRACE

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

Dominic considers what this means.

BEGIN MONTAGE (INTERCUTTING)

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

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

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

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

>> Financial Analysts continue to monitor Boeing stock as it plummets.

END MONTAGE

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

INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL BALLROOM - DAY

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

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

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

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

The crowd applauds.

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

INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL BALLROOM - DAY

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

DENNIS
(putting it away)
Sorry.

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

SEAMUS
Dennis, good to see you.

DENNIS

You too.

SEAMUS

Rebecca, you look lovely.

REBECCA

Thank you, Seamus.

SEAMUS

(to Dennis)

Been meaning to get in touch with you. Can I have a word?

(to Rebecca)

You don't mind, do you?

INT. FOUR SEASONS HALLWAY - DAY

Seamus and Dennis find a corner where they can talk.

ATTENDEES periodically pass by requiring them to hush their voices.

SEAMUS

My office has been trying to reach you --

DENNIS

Sorry, you know, things have been busy --

SEAMUS

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

DENNIS

No reason to worry. We have it under control.

SEAMUS

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

DENNIS

Absolutely -- we're happy to oblige.

SEAMUS

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

DENNIS

The crashes, they're --

SEAMUS

Let me finish.

(beat)

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

DENNIS

We stand by our values.

SEAMUS

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

DENNIS

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

SEAMUS

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

Seamus spots someone in the distance, waves.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

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

Seamus excuses himself and leaves Dennis standing there.

INT. BLOOMBERG OFFICES - DAY

Peter sits at his desk. His phone rings.

PETER

This is Peter.

INT. SEATTLE OFFICE - DAY

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

ADAM

Peter, hi. This is Adam Dickson.

INTERCUT OFFICES

PETER

Adam, thank you for calling me back.

ADAM

No problem. Can you talk now?

PETER

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

ADAM

Sure, do what you gotta do.

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

PETER

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

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

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

They take seats at the conference table.

Peter taps the conference telephone.

PETER

Adam, can you hear me?

ADAM

Yep, I'm here.

PETER

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

ADAM

Hi, there.

JULIE

Adam, thanks for speaking with us.

ADAM

Not a problem.

JULIE

(flipping through notes)

Adam, you were the manager of fuel systems engineering for the 737 MAX, is that correct?

ADAM

That's correct, yes.

JULIE

We've already spoken to Rick Ludtke about his experience but we wanted to get a broader picture of Boeing during the FAA certification process. We need to know how far up the chain this went.

ADAM

Sure, yeah, I can speak to that. If you want a general characterization about Boeing's approval process, I'll say up front that all the managers -- and this came from the very top --

JULIE

Muilenberg?

ADAM

You said it. They put massive pressure on our team to deprioritize safety to ensure profits. They saw engineering as an obstacle, albeit a necessary one, to their financial success.

INT. DEUTSCHE BANK OFFICES - DAY

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

Boeing factories. Planes in the sky. Military aircraft.

DEUTSCHE

You wanna make an indictment of Boeing? Sure, go ahead.

(MORE)

DEUTSCHE (CONT'D)

But you have to understand if you're going to call Boeing out for how they made their money, you're gonna have to take a hard look at everyone else. And I mean everyone else.

Wall Street. Stock tickers. Banks.

DEUTSCHE (CONT'D)

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

Factories in China. Industrial farms. Amazon warehouses.

DEUTSCHE (CONT'D)

We're talking about capitalism at its heart. The way it's designed, the system works how it's supposed to -- it tells individuals make a buck wherever they can.

Industrialists. Farmers. Insurance agents. Stockbrokers.

DEUTSCHE (CONT'D)

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

Famous company logos we know and love. Amazon. Google. Apple. H&M. Their stock tickers in investment accounts multiplying.

DEUTSCHE (CONT'D)

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

BP oil spill. A kid vaping. Flint, Michigan. Assault rifles. School shootings.

DEUTSCHE (CONT'D)

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

(MORE)

DEUTSCHE (CONT'D)
That's what Boeing understood.
That's what every "good" company
understands.

INT. BOEING CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

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

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

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

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

DENNIS
What's our liability here?

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

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

LEAD COUNSEL
We know.

DENNIS
I don't want an extended legal
battle.

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

Off Dennis's look --

INT. SEATTLE STARBUCKS - DAY

Julie and Rick wait in line for their drinks.

RICK
Can we walk and talk?

JULIE
Sure.

EXT. SEATTLE PARK - DAY

Julie and Rick walk coffees in hand.

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

RICK
Because the FAA and Boeing are so intertwined with each other. Remember that Boeing is one of the largest U.S. exporters. Every president, Democrat, Republican, has made it his priority to see that Boeing continues to remain dominant in the global market. There's substantial economic pressure to keep them competitive. Boeing forced Washington state to give them billions in rebates just to keep its factory open. It was a shitty deal, but Inslee had no choice. Obama touted the Dreamliner as a huge win for American prowess, but that aircraft was a mess from the start. Muilenburg has the oval office on speed dial. Boeing isn't just in bed with the FAA, they're in bed with everyone. How can there ever be accountability with something like this?

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

(MORE)

JULIE (CONT'D)

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

RICK

You're right.

JULIE

So then where are the handcuffs?

INT. SEATTLE TIMES CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

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

GRACE

Thank you.

DOMINIC

Thanks for coming in.

Dominic takes out his notepad and pen.

GRACE

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

DOMINIC

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

GRACE

(beat)

Okay.

DOMINIC

Where do you want to start?

INT. FLIGHT SIMULATOR - DAY

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

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

Things seem to be going normally at first.

Then, something clicks in the control.

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

An error reading beeps loudly.

Auto-pilot kicks in forcing the plane down.

Mark regains control again. Fumbles to do so.

Then MCAS grabs hold one more time.

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

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

Another few seconds pass. MCAS kicks back in.

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

Mark tries to grab hold again.

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

Mark helplessly tries to regain control.

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

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

The simulator crashes. Mark moves back, totally dumbfounded.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Mark sits alone on his bed, staring out into space. He grabs his phone and starts texting. Texts pop up on screen:

Mark Forkner 6:50PM

Oh shocker alertT!

MCAS is now active down to M .2

It's running rampant in the sim on me

at least that's what Vince thinks is happening

Mark Forkner 6:51PM

So basically I lied to the regulators (unknowingly)

Patrik Gustavasson 6:51PM

it wasn't a lie no one told us that was the case

Mark Forkner 6:50PM

I'm levelling off at like 4000 ft, 230 knots and the plane is trimming itself like crazy
I'm like, WHAT?

He sets his phone down, looks around. Then he pours vodka from the mini fridge into a glass, downs the whole thing.

INT. SEATTLE TIMES OFFICE - DAY

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

DOMINIC

What's going on?

We hear the CNN reporter in the background --

MIKE

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

DON

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

DOMINIC

If that's not a smoking gun --

MIKE

They're saying he raised these concerns to Boeing. To Muilenburg.

DON

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

MIKE

This shows a concerted effort to hide serious flaws.

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

Off Mike and Don's look at the photo of Mark Forkner on
screen and we --

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. JFK BOARDING AREA - DAY

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

PETER
Yeah, I'm seeing it now.
(beat)
I've gotta board, but I'll call you
back when I land in Boston.

INT. BOEING 747 - DAY

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

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

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

EXT. ADDIS ABABA STREET - DAY

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

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

A somber mood follows the procession.

ETHIOPIA AIR ATTENDANT (PRE-LAP)
We are now prepared to board
Ethiopia Air Flight 302 --

INT. ADDIS ABABA BOLE AIRPORT - DAY

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

ETHIOPIA AIR ATTENDANT
 (over PA)
 -- with service to Nairobi.

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

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

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

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

CAROLINE
 Come on now. We have to board.

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

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

Caroline turns to see Ryan rushing toward the seats.

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

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

RYAN
 She left it on the seat.

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

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

FLASH BACK TO:

EXT. ADDIS ABABA STREET - DAY

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

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

He solemnly continues alongside the rest of the mourners.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SEATTLE HOME BACKYARD (VARIOUS) - AFTERNOON

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

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

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

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

INT. SEATTLE HOME - NIGHT

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

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

NINA

What's the matter?

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

DOMINIC

How'd she grow up so fast?

NINA

It's like we just blinked.

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

NINA (CONT'D)

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

DOMINIC

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

NINA

What?

DOMINIC

I keep thinking about them -- about the families.

NINA

It's terrible what happened.

DOMINIC

None of this is gonna make a difference.

NINA

How can you say that?

DOMINIC

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

NINA

Who does?

DOMINIC

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

NINA

That's not true.

DOMINIC

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

Nina doesn't know what to say.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Three-hundred-forty-six people died. All those families -- all the people on that plane -- I talked to them, had to look them in the eyes. They're all broken now. They're barely even people anymore. It's *destroyed* their lives. Mothers, daughters, brothers, entire families, killed. They're empty now. And the people who could've stopped it, the people who knew better, who decided that *their* lives weren't cost effective -- they're sitting rich in their offices.

(MORE)

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

And in all likelihood nothing will happen to them. They'll get a slap on the wrist. *Maybe.*

(beat)

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

Nina takes this in for a moment.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

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

NINA

(beat)

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

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

BEGIN MONTAGE

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

END MONTAGE

INT. SEATTLE TIMES EDITING ROOM - NIGHT

ON SCREEN we cut between the video interviews of --

EDDY

So did you have any other questions for me?

MIKE (O.S.)

I think that's it.

JEFF
You sure you got all you needed?

INT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT - DAY

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

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

EDDY
This is me.

JEFF
See you around.

They shake as they notice --

EDDY
Check it out.

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

JEFF
That's what butt hurt looks like.

EDDY
Sure does.

After the group passes --

JEFF
Give my best to the misses.

EDDY
Same to you.

JEFF
All right. Safe flight.

EDDY
Yeah, safe flight to you too.

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

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

But who's to say really?

INT. SEATTLE TIMES EDITING ROOM - NIGHT

Mike exports the final video file and drops it into a shared folder labeled FOR PUBLICATION.

He stares at the screen for a moment, then shuts off the computer monitor and heads out of the room.

INT. NURSING HOME BEDROOM - NIGHT

Julie sits as her Grandmother watches television.

JULIE
You okay, Grams?

GRANDMOTHER
Hmm, what's that?

JULIE
I'll be right back, Grams, okay?

GRANDMOTHER
Okay, hun.

INT. NURSING HOME HALLWAY - NIGHT

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

INT. SEATTLE OFFICE - NIGHT

Rick Ludtke answers as he sits at his desk.

RICK
Hello?

INTERCUT OFFICE AND NURSING HOME

JULIE
Rick, it's Julie.

RICK
Hey, Julie. How are you?

JULIE
Good, you?

RICK
Good, yeah.

JULIE
Story's gonna be published any day
now.

RICK
Good timing.

JULIE
Yeah.

RICK
(beat)
Was there something you needed?

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

RICK
What is it?

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

RICK
It's a great question.

JULIE
I mean, I'm not an engineer, but
doesn't it seem like really bad
design to allow one sensor to be
the single point of failure? If one
sensor malfunctions or misreads or
breaks down, then -- I mean, we
know it ended up misreading and
activating MCAS erroneously, so why
not rely on the second sensor to
verify the reading?

RICK
You're right. It's bad engineering.
(beat)
I can't say for certain, but here's
the explanation I can think of.
(beat)
Any program coded to take data from
both sensors would've needed to
account for the possibility the
sensors might *disagree* with each
other.

JULIE

Okay.

RICK

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

JULIE

Yes.

RICK

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

JULIE

(getting agitated)

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

RICK

That pretty much sums it up.

JULIE

(beat)

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

RICK

It does.

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

JULIE

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

INT. SEATTLE TIMES CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

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

DOMINIC

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

MICHELE

This is gonna blow the gates open, guys. Or maybe not.

MIKE

(handing to Michele)

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

MICHELE

(takes a look, then)

This is why we're here -- to hold a mirror up to their faces, make them look long and hard, force them to show who they really are. And sometimes, if we're lucky, people will see it when they do.

DOMINIC

We can't control what people do. All we can do is tell the truth. It's the only power we have.

INT. BLOOMBERG OFFICES - NIGHT

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

PETER

We're ready to go.

JOEL
We publish tomorrow.

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

JOEL (CONT'D)
What is it?

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

JOEL
You and the rest of us.

As Peter gets up to leave --

JOEL (CONT'D)
Pete?

PETER
Yeah?

JOEL
Bloomberg might only care about business reporting, but this is what actually matters.

I/E. JFK AIRPORT (VARIOUS) - DAY

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

Just more of the same.

VARIOUS REPORTERS
(intercutting)
Damning revelations from
journalists about the two Boeing
plane crashes --
(another)
-- Boeing was delegated too much
authority in the approval of its
own --
(another)
-- shows a concerted effort to
cover up the system that led to the
crashes --
(another)
-- the Seattle Times is reporting
that engineers knew --
(another)
(MORE)

VARIOUS REPORTERS (CONT'D)

-- Bloomberg has reported that
Boeing executives placed pressure
on regulators --

(another)

-- has several U.S. Representatives
asking questions about how Boeing
failed to disclose information
about the dangers of plane.

INT. CABLE NEWS ROOM - DAY

One of our Financial Cable News Pundits speaks to camera.

FINANCIAL PUNDIT

Well, everyone. It's a sad story.
Boeing's stock is trading at a near
all-time low. Shocking allegations
of a cover up, faulty plane
engineering, hundreds of deaths.
What is there to say now? Does this
mean the end for Boeing's stock?

(beat)

Or an opportunity for investors to
buy it cheap?

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. STREET - DAY

Monuments. The White House. K Street.

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

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

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

A **CONGRESSIONAL AIDE** approaches.

AIDE

Mr. Njoroge.

PAUL

Hello.

AIDE

They're almost ready for you.

Paul stands up and prepares to enter Congress.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

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

They begin to walk and we follow them as --

GOLDMAN

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

DEUTSCHE

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

GOLDMAN

We're not the good guys here.

They exit into the --

INT. FAA HALLWAY - DAY

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

DEUTSCHE

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

GOLDMAN

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

DEUTSCHE

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

They turn a corner and now they're --

INT. BOEING FACTORY - DAY

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

GOLDMAN

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

DEUTSCHE

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

GOLDMAN

The real sharks --

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

INT. BOEING EXECUTIVES SUITE - DAY

All the Boeing Executives stand around sipping whiskey.

DEUTSCHE

-- swim up at the top.

GOLDMAN

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

They pass Dennis Muilenburg who stands unapologetic.

DEUTSCHE

And who knows? Maybe that's worse.

GOLDMAN

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

As they exit the room, they're --

INT. SEATTLE TIMES OFFICE - DAY

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

DEUTSCHE

What we wanna say is --

GOLDMAN

-- we didn't see any of you complaining.

As they turn, they make their way onto a --

INT. BOEING 737 MAX - DAY

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

DEUTSCHE

You all seemed perfectly fine
collecting your paychecks --

GOLDMAN

-- and watching your 401ks grow.

DEUTSCHE

You were all too busy ripping out
each other's throats to notice --

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

GOLDMAN

-- that the world has been fucked
for a very long time.

DEUTSCHE

It was never great for any of us.
It was only ever great for them.

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

INT. THE CAPITOL - DAY

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

DEUTSCHE

They didn't even bother to think
about us when they made the world.

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

DEUTSCHE (CONT'D)

Because we're just rats chasing
after a block of cheese in a maze.

GOLDMAN

And rats don't rule the world

DEUTSCHE

They just try to survive it.

And with that Goldman and Deutsche exit frame and take their
seats in the audience, and we're just left with Paul.

CONGRESSMAN (O.C.)

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

PAUL

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

(beat)

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

(beat)

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

(beat)

But I speak for more than myself who are trying to cope with this insufferable loss.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

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

(beat)

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

(beat)

It could no longer be denied by Boeing.

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

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

As we consider that, we --

CUT TO BLACK.

SUPER OVER BLACK:

The Seattle Times and Bloomberg teams continued to report on the subsequent fallout of the 737 MAX crashes.

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

Boeing stated that its primary focus was to get the 737 MAX back in the air, but has yet to get it reapproved.

In December 2019 Dennis Muilenburg stepped down as CEO of Boeing. He walked away with an estimated compensation package of over \$60 million.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Government promised \$17 billion in loans and loan guarantees to the U.S. aerospace industry ... in essence to Boeing.