

EIGHT FIVE TWO SIX

8 5 2 6

BY

Max

FADE IN:

**INT. MEDICAL CENTRE - WAITING ROOM - DAY**

PATIENTS fidget in their seats. They flick through newspapers and gossip magazines.

At the far end, a door. The plaque reads: DR. STRAUSS

**INT. MEDICAL CENTRE - DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

A gentle breeze creeps in through an open window.

DR. STRAUSS (54) sits behind a desk. Opposite him, MARK BERKEN (27), receding hairline, smart casual attire.

Strauss scribbles on a pad. Mark watches him, nervous.

STRAUSS

Have you been experiencing any headaches as of late?

Mark shakes his head.

STRAUSS

Nausea?

MARK

A little.

Strauss takes note.

STRAUSS

How often?

Mark contemplates.

MARK

Three, maybe four times a week.

STRAUSS

I see.

Strauss takes another note.

STRAUSS

And do any particular thoughts accompany the nausea?

MARK

Thoughts?

Strauss flips to a page at the back.

STRAUSS

It states on your medical records that you were being treated in Oslo and were prescribed drugs by Dr. Monroe.

MARK

Yes. That's correct.

STRAUSS

And have the thoughts persisted in any way shape or form?

Mark daydreams.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT [FLASHBACK]**

Dimly lit. Aviation posters plaster the walls, stacked boxes cramp the space.

Mark sits at a desk in the corner. He types on a laptop.

INSERT: COMPUTER SCREEN

Google.co.uk - Mark searches "Airbus A320-200" in images.

He scrolls through the pictures, enlarges a picture of a cockpit door.

BACK TO SCENE

Mark stares at the screen. The image reflects in his eyes.

STRAUSS (V.O)

Mr. Berken?

**INT. MEDICAL CENTRE - DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

Mark jolts.

MARK

Sorry?

STRAUSS

Have the thoughts persisted?

Mark takes a moment to consider.

MARK  
 (smiling)  
 No, I'm much better now.

Strauss smiles.

STRAUSS  
 Good. That's good. Well in that case, I'll prescribe you an antiemetic for the nausea and you can be on your way.

Strauss fills in a prescription. He hands it to Mark.

STRAUSS  
 There you go Mr. Berken. Have a nice day.

Mark looks Strauss dead in the eye, a smile on his face.

MARK  
 I will.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Mark opens a wardrobe. An Airline Pilot Uniform hangs on the rail, hat tucked away on a shelf above.

Mark places the uniform on the bed.

He begins to undress, unbuttoning his collar to reveal a crucifix.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER)**

Rain pelts on the window. Lightning FLASHES.

Mark lies on the bed, staring up at the ceiling. He's dressed in the Airline Pilot Uniform.

Mark falls into a trance as he watches the blades of the ceiling fan go round, and round.

The ROAR of a PLANE ENGINE builds --

**EXT. BARCELONA EL-PRAT AIRPORT - RUNWAY - DAY**

SUPER: Barcelona El-Prat Airport

Flight 8526, a commercial twin-engine jetliner, descends, landing gear deployed.

The plane touches down on the asphalt with a SCREECH.

**INT. BARCELONA EL-PRAT AIRPORT - TERMINALS - DAY**

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) Passengers purchase tickets
- B) Passengers transfer luggage
- C) Passengers check through security

**EXT. BARCELONA EL-PRAT AIRPORT - PARKING LOT - DAY**

CPT. PATRICK NEUMANN (35) parks his SUV in one of the bays. Mark sits in the front passenger seat. They both wear Airline Pilot Uniforms.

**INT. PATRICK'S SUV - CONTINUOUS**

Patrick switches the engine off. He stretches beneath his seat for a thermos.

PATRICK  
Coffee?

Mark gazes out the window.

PATRICK  
Mark?...

Mark snaps out of his daydream.

MARK  
Huh?

PATRICK  
Do you want some coffee?

MARK  
Err, no thanks.

PATRICK  
Suit yourself.

Patrick pours himself a cup.

BUZZING.

PATRICK  
Shit, hold on.

Patrick unbuttons his top jacket pocket. He pulls out a mobile phone.

PATRICK  
(into phone)  
Hello?

**INT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - NURSERY - DAY**

Beautifully decorated, colorful and vibrant.

CLAIRE NEUMANN (36) breast feeds BABY MATTHEW, a phone tucked between her chin and shoulder.

She's attractive, elegant, Kate Middleton esque.

CLAIRE  
(into phone)  
Do you know who this is?

INTERCUT: PATRICK'S HOUSE/PATRICK'S SUV

Patrick smiles.

PATRICK  
Do I have to guess?

CLAIRE  
You can if you want to.

PATRICK  
And what's my prize?

Claire bites her bottom lip.

CLAIRE  
Me.

PATRICK  
Just you? I was kind of hoping for  
a six pack of beer.

CLAIRE  
Are you sure that's a good idea?  
Flying under the influence.

PATRICK  
It's perfectly safe, as long as you  
don't forget the landing gear.

Claire chuckles.

CLAIRE  
How long do we have left?

Patrick checks his watch.

PATRICK  
We have all the time in the world.

CLAIRE  
Be serious.

PATRICK  
Twenty minutes  
(looks at Mark)  
And it might be a good idea to tell  
my friend that.

Mark sleeps against the window.

Patrick SIGHS.

CLAIRE  
Why? What's wrong?

PATRICK  
I don't know...  
(beat)  
...something just doesn't seem  
right.

CLAIRE  
Are you okay?

PATRICK  
Yeah... I'm fine, it's just... I  
wish I was there, ya know.

CLAIRE  
I wish you were here too.

PATRICK  
...I'll catch you later, alright?

CLAIRE  
Don't be late.

PATRICK  
I won't.

Patrick hangs up. He looks at Mark, who is still fast asleep, in a world of his own.

**INT. FLIGHT 8526 - PASSENGER CABIN - GROUNDED - DAY**

FLIGHT ATTENDANTS check on PASSENGERS and help them with their luggage.

Patrick boards, Mark follows closely behind.

SARAH (29), a tall blonde stewardess, greets them.

SARAH  
Hello Captain.

Patrick welcomes Sarah with open arms.

PATRICK  
Sarah my sweet! How would I ever manage without you?

SARAH  
I hear congratulations are in order...

PATRICK  
They will be once I make my way home.

SARAH  
I see David couldn't make it...

Sarah nods at Mark.

PATRICK  
He's still feeling under the weather I'm afraid, but luckily we have Mark... he'll be operating as my co-pilot for the duration of today's flight.

Sarah extends her hand to Mark.

SARAH  
Nice to meet you.

Mark forces a smile. He shakes Sarah's hand.

MARK  
You too.

PATRICK  
Mark, this is our wonderful hostess, Sarah. We call her "Ice Queen", a couple hours with her and you'll soon know why.

SARAH  
 (whispers to Mark)  
 Don't pay any attention to him.  
 He's just mad because he picked the  
 wrong woman.

Patrick GASPS.

PATRICK  
 Oh is that right missy? Well I can  
 always-

Mark zones out of the conversation. He fixates on the  
 passengers as they secure their safety belts.

A BOY bangs on a compartment above his seat, an oxygen mask  
 deploys.

The MOTHER scorns him. She apologizes to a flight attendant.

PATRICK  
 -Why don't you ask Mark? I'm sure  
 he'll give you a few pointers.  
 Mark?... Mark?

Patrick taps Mark on the shoulder.

MARK  
 Sorry I uh-

A look of concern on Patrick's face.

PATRICK  
 (to Sarah)  
 Can you excuse us for a second?

SARAH  
 Sure.

Sarah backs away.

SARAH  
 We'll catch up later though right?

PATRICK  
 You bet.

Sarah disappears down the aisle. Patrick pulls Mark to one  
 side.

PATRICK  
 Are you okay?

Mark shakes the cobwebs.

MARK

Yeah I uh, I didn't get much sleep last night.

Mark wipes the sweat from his brow.

PATRICK

Late night huh? I know what that feels like. Are you okay to fly?

MARK

Yeah, I'm fine. I just need to go to the bathroom.

PATRICK

Can I ask you something?

Mark pulls on his collar.

MARK

Sure.

PATRICK

The man... with the dog, did he uh?... Nevermind...

Patrick puts his hand on Mark's shoulder.

PATRICK

...it's okay kid, if I had a dime for every time I got drunk behind my wife's back I'd be flying my own plane.

MARK

Yeah...

PATRICK

You'd be flying one as well huh?

Mark nods.

PATRICK

Go on. Sort yourself out. Freshen up.

MARK

Thank-you.

Patrick makes his way toward the cockpit. Mark watches him, every inch of the way.

Patrick enters the cockpit.

Mark takes a deep breath.

Mark gathers himself. He makes his way toward the other end of the plane. His pace quickens with each and every step.

**INT. FLIGHT 8526 - TOILET CUBICLE - GROUNDED - MOMENTS LATER**

Mark barges in, locking the door behind him.

Mark collapses to his knees. He wraps his arms around the porcelaine toilet.

He retches violently. Sweat drips off his forehead.

KNOCK KNOCK.

SARAH (O.S)  
Hey, are you okay in there?

Mark spits in the toilet.

He stands up, looks at himself in the mirror.

ANOTHER KNOCK.

SARAH (O.S)  
Hello?

Mark wipes the drool from his mouth.

MARK  
I'm fine.

SARAH (O.S)  
Do you need anything?

MARK  
No.

SARAH (O.S)  
Okay, well just give us a shout if you need anything alright hun.

Mark fixates on his reflection.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Mark looks at himself in the mirror. He wears the same Airline Pilot Uniform.

A COPPER KETTLE RATTLES on the stove as the water begins to boil.

Mark turns his shoulder toward the mirror. He notices a few hairs, brushes them off.

He straightens up his hat, tilts it one way, then another, an OCD-like attention to detail.

The kettle, now SQUEALING.

Mark walks over to the stove. He turns the flame off.

SILENCE.

Mark walks back over to the mirror, stares at his reflection.

**EXT. CATOLA STREET (BARCELONA) - DAY**

Lined with various apartment buildings. A sign reads: CATOLA STREET

XABIER (67) walks a dog on the pavement.

Patrick pulls up in his SUV. He too wears an Airline Pilot Uniform.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Mark parts the window blinds. He looks down to see Patrick exiting his SUV.

**EXT. CATOLA STREET - DAY**

Patrick walks toward the entrance of an apartment building. He throws his keys up in the air, as he catches them-

XABIER (O.S)  
(Spanish accent)  
Excuse me sir.

Patrick turns to see Xabier and his dog.

PATRICK  
Err, hey there.

XABIER  
Are you here to pick up your friend?

PATRICK  
My friend?

XABIER  
The pilot.

PATRICK  
Oh, you mean Mark?

XABIER  
Ah yes, Mark, of course.

The dog BARKS at Patrick. Xabier tugs on the leash.

XABIER  
Is he feeling better now?

PATRICK  
Huh?

Xabier points.

XABIER  
I saw him at Can Culleretes, it's a seafood restaurant, just around the corner from here. Your friend did not appear to be too happy. I tell him it will be okay but he did not listen, instead he throw glass on floor.

Patrick, curious, leans in closer.

PATRICK  
When did this happen?

XABIER  
Last night. I have not spoken to him since. I think he hide away because usually we talk to one another. He hates the travel you see but he loves the plane.

PATRICK  
He loves the plane huh?

XABIER  
Yeah, it's all he ever talk about. I tell him to be happy but he never cheer up. Perhaps you can speak to him?

PATRICK  
Err yeah, maybe.

XABIER  
 Thank-you my friend, you have a  
 nice day alright?  
 (to dog)  
 Come on Carla!

Xabier walks away. Patrick watches as he disappears around  
 the corner.

Patrick shakes his head, bemused.

PATRICK  
 (under breath)  
 What a loon...

END FLASHBACK

**EXT. 38,000 FEET ABOVE MEDITERRANEAN SEA - DAY**

Cotton white clouds drift across a baby blue sky.

Flight 8526 WHOOSHES, ROARS into frame --

**INT. FLIGHT 8526 - COCKPIT - IN FLIGHT - CONTINUOUS**

Patrick and Mark man the controls, strapped in, side by side.

Through the cockpit window, clouds part like the red sea.  
 All is calm and peaceful.

PATRICK  
 Looks like we're in for an easy  
 ride, Düsseldorf here we come!  
 Fancy hittin' the bar when we land?  
 Mark?...

MARK  
 I dunno I err-

PATRICK  
 You got somewhere else to be huh? I  
 get it, I used to be the same, but  
 now I got a kid to look after...  
 can't be seen out and about with  
 the workforce.

MARK  
 No, that's not-

PATRICK  
 I know, I know, I'm too hard on  
 myself right? Try tellin' her that.  
 (MORE)

PATRICK (CONT'D)

I love her but god damn... I'm a grown ass man who likes to enjoy a few drinks with his pals... is that such a crime?

Mark turns to face Patrick.

MARK

I think you should tell her...

PATRICK

Tell her what?

MARK

...that you love her.

Patrick grins.

PATRICK

Oh, she knows, she knows. Every-time I walk through that door, she got me on the floor eating out the palm of her hand. That's fucked up right? But that's what love is, you both know, you both feel it.

Silence.

MARK

I'm sorry Patrick.

PATRICK

Huh?

MARK

About earlier.

PATRICK

No problem man, we all have our off days right? Us airheads have to stick together. When I was a co-pilot I never caught a break, always had somebody riding my ass. It's alright to give people a chance now and then, you know?

MARK

Yeah, I guess.

Patrick pushes a button. The auto-pilot system engages.

PATRICK

Do me a favour?

MARK

Huh?

PATRICK

Keep an eye on the controls, yeah?

Patrick unbuckles his safety belt.

PATRICK

We're thirty eight thousand feet above sea level, four minutes, rough estimate, from Marseille. That makes an hour and twenty minutes from touch down. Air traffic control is due a contact, if they ask, Captain Patrick "Ellis" Neumann is taking a piss and will of course be available upon returning to the cockpit.

Patrick chuckles. He leaps out of his seat, nudges Mark's shoulder and heads toward the door-

MARK

Patrick?

Patrick turns around.

PATRICK

Yeah?

MARK

I am sorry you know.

MARK

I know, don't worry, we'll talk about it when I get back alright?

Patrick winks at Mark.

Mark watches Patrick as he exits. The door eases shut.

Mark looks out the cockpit window. He closes his eyes, takes a deep breath, mumbles something to himself.

**INT. FLIGHT 8526 - PASSENGER CABIN - IN FLIGHT - DAY**

Sarah pushes a food trolley down the aisle, smiling at each and every passenger she passes.

Patrick squeezes past, hands on her hips.

PATRICK  
Gotta go.

SARAH  
Again?

PATRICK  
You know me, can't stay seated for  
too long.

SARAH  
Don't I know it.

Sarah shakes her head. Patrick jogs down the aisle.

**INT. FLIGHT 8526 - TOILET CUBICLE - IN FLIGHT - MOMENTS LATER**

Patrick enters, locking the door behind him. He pulls out his mobile phone and dials.

**INT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

Claire slices vegetables on a chopping board. Matthew kicks and SCREAMS in his highchair.

The phone RINGS.

Claire wipes herself down, moving into the --

**INT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Claire picks the phone up off the coffee table.

CLAIRE  
(into phone)  
Hello?

**INTERCUT: PATRICK'S HOUSE/TOILET CUBICLE**

PATRICK  
(into phone)  
Guess who?

CLAIRE  
Patrick?

Claire lights up.

CLAIRE  
Couldn't stay away huh?

PATRICK  
Yeah, I'm kind of, in a weird place  
right now.

Patrick looks around the cubicle.

CLAIRE  
You're in Düsseldorf already?

Patrick laughs.

PATRICK  
Not quite...  
(beat)  
I was just ringing to tell you  
something...

Claire looks in on Matthew.

The line begins to break up.

CLAIRE  
And what is it that you wanted to  
tell me?

Claire twirls her hair.

PATRICK  
I wanted to tell you that I love  
you, and that I'll always be there  
for you and Matthew.

CLAIRE  
Hello?... Patrick?

PATRICK  
I know we haven't always seen eye  
to eye but... Claire?... Hello?

BEEP.

Patrick looks at his phone. No signal.

PATRICK  
God damn it!

Patrick SIGHS.

**INT. FLIGHT 8526 - COCKPIT - IN FLIGHT - MOMENTS LATER**

Mark, still in his seat, eyes closed. He mumbles something  
to himself, a prayer maybe.

His uniform, drenched in sweat.

He reaches beneath his collar, pulls out a crucifix and kisses it before tucking it back in.

Mark unbuckles his safety belt.

He stands up, walks toward the door, still mumbling. His words become louder and more audible, something religious, something Latin.

Mark comes to a halt.

MARK'S P.O.V

His hand reaches toward the door, fingers trembling as they wrap around the lever lock.

CLICK.

FADE TO BLACK:

**Flight 8526 was scheduled to arrive at Düsseldorf Airport by 11:39 CET.**

These words fade. Replaced by:

**It never reached its destination...**

These words fade. Replaced by:

**144 passengers were on board**

FADE OUT:

THE END