

J O D I E F O S T E R

*If Someone Took Everything
You Live For...
How Far Would You Go To Get It Back?*

FLIGHTPLAN

TOUCHSTONE PICTURES AND IMAGINE ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT A BRIAN GRAZER PRODUCTION JODIE FOSTER "FLIGHTPLAN" PETER SARSGAARD ERIKA CHRISTENSEN
AND SEAN BEAN MUSIC BY JAMES HOBNER COSTUME DESIGNER SUSAN LYALL EDITOR THOM NOBLE PRODUCTION DESIGNER ALEXANDER HAMMOND EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS FLORIAN BALLHAUS DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES WHITAKER CHARLES J. D. SCHLESSEL EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ROBERT DANIZZI ERIKA HUGGINS
IMAGINE ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS A BRIAN GRAZER PRODUCTION "FLIGHTPLAN" WRITTEN BY PETER A. DOVLENG AND BILLY RAY DIRECTED BY ROBERT SCHWENCKE
Touchstone Pictures
Flightplan.movies.com

About the movie

Aircraft engineer Kyle Pratt (Jodie Foster) is leaving Berlin to fly home to America with her six-year-old daughter Julia (Marlene Lawston). She is taking with her the casket containing the body of her husband who has recently died in an accident. Julia has become scared of everything, and Kyle has been prescribed medication to help her cope.

Three hours into the flight, Kyle wakes to find that her daughter has disappeared. As she searches the aircraft, she becomes increasingly anxious: there are only so many places in which a six year old can easily hide, even on board a huge aircraft with two decks. The cabin crew try to calm her, feeling she is being rather paranoid, and begin to search the plane. Kyle begins to suspect that someone has taken her daughter and hidden her in part of the plane where passengers cannot go. But when the cabin crew discover that Julia's name is not on the passenger manifest and the airport check-in desk has no record of her checking in, they clearly believe that Kyle is delusional. To make matters worse, no one can remember seeing Julia on the flight. Kyle bangs on the door of the flight deck to get the captain, but she is soon restrained by the plane's air marshal Gene Carson (Peter Sarsgaard).



When Captain Rich (Sean Bean) questions her, Kyle is adamant that the passenger manifest is wrong, and that the senior flight attendant made a mistake when she did the head count before flying. She reveals that her husband fell to his death from the roof of their house, and out of pity the Captain orders that the plane be thoroughly searched whilst Carson watches over Kyle. Carson seems to be sympathetic to Kyle's plight and strives to both help and calm her, but Kyle is now convinced that someone has taken her daughter and accuses an Arab passenger of spying on them the night before and subsequently taking Julia. Kyle helped to design the plane's engines and knows all of the potential hiding places where Julia could be, so she sets out to explore them all. However, the Captain receives word from Berlin that Julia died at the same time as her father, and Kyle herself begins to wonder whether everyone is right that her grief has affected her sanity.

Background

Screenwriter Peter Dowling's idea for *Flightplan* started with the simple idea of a child vanishing suddenly on board an aircraft. The story was developed long before the events of September 11, 2001, but has even more relevance now that air travel is filled with uncertainty about one's fellow passengers.

The script's mix of emotion, drama and dilemmas immediately appealed to producer Brian Glazer, who has previously produced *Apollo 13* (1995), Oscar-winning *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), *8 Mile* (2002), *Cinderella Man* (2005) and *Inside Man* (2006).





He says, 'The feeling of *Flightplan* was that of a Hitchcockian mystery taking place entirely in the sealed world of a modern jet airliner with all its nooks, crannies, shafts and hiding places. The combination of this irresistible idea with a very real, emotionally resonant human story about loss and grief was quite powerful.'

Grazer did, however, suggest casting Jodie Foster as Kyle, rather than having a traditional male lead. 'She is someone who engenders empathy,' says Grazer, 'who you really care about; someone you can believe as a mother yet also can demonstrate a tremendous amount of strength and power when she's put to the test.' Grazer also brought in Billy Ray (who wrote and directed *Shattered Glass* (2003)) to further develop the script to make it more suitable for Foster. Ray comments on the story, 'When strangers are stuck on a plane together, and you add tension and suspicion into the situation, it becomes a very explosive way to explore how humans react under pressure. You see people's humanity emerge in both good and bad ways as they make tough choices.'

Grazer wanted German writer and director Robert Schwentke to direct *Flightplan* because of his ability to create tension and excitement. Grazer comments, 'I knew he understood how to scare people, how to create suspense and how to have every moment accelerate into the next.'

The E-474 aircraft in the film is entirely fictional, though inspired by a number of real aeroplanes including the Airbus A-380 superjumbo. It was envisaged as a very stylish two-deck aeroplane and was constructed from scratch in two sound stages – one for the main decks and one for the non-passenger areas (hold, flight deck, avionics rom, etc.). Filming in such a confined space presented many challenges, so lighting was built into the set and the walls included large hinged panels to provide access for cameras.

Discussion questions

What are your impressions of the opening sequence of the film? How does its tone set the mood for the rest of the film?

What were your first impressions of Kyle Pratt? How much do you empathise with her? Is she a likeable character? Why/why not?

How has the death of her husband affected Kyle and her daughter? In what ways has it affected Kyle's attitude towards Julia? How well do you think Kyle is responding to her situation?

How do the early scenes of Kyle seeing her dead husband later affect your opinion of her character and her state of mind?

Why do you think it is so easy for the plane's staff to be sceptical about Kyle's story?

How do you think you would have reacted to the erratic behaviour of Kyle had you been on the flight?

How is authority represented in *Flightplan*? How is it used both positively and negative within the aircraft?

How does Kyle's state of mind affect the way you view her character at points through the film, particularly when she speaks to the therapist?

***'If you let them arrest me, she's gone forever. There'll be no one to save her.'* (Kyle)**

What does this quote say about Kyle's commitment to finding Julia?

Who did you think were the villains during the film? How often did your opinion change? Did you find that your reactions to various passengers on the plane revealed some prejudice within yourself?

What do you think you would have done in Kyle's situation?

Why does Kyle never give up on finding Julia even when it appears she has imagined her daughter's presence on the plane?

What are the similarities and differences between Kyle's searching and God's attitude to lost people seen in Luke 15?



What others thought about Flightplan

"Pratt's situation brings to mind the opening lines of Rudyard Kipling's classic poem "If": "If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you; if you can trust yourself when all men doubt you, but make allowance for their doubting too..."

This almost sounds like a backdoor definition of faith, a belief in something that allows you to transcend circumstances and influences to the point where you are willing to sacrifice everything for something you cannot see, hear, taste or feel. Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as "being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."

Pratt certainly exemplifies this virtue throughout her ordeal. Few of us ever have our beliefs tested to the same degree as she does in this film, but its nice to think we would all hold up as well as her.”

Kevin Miller, hollywoodjesus.com

“We assume people are guilty and we give them ugly stares, treat them how we would not want to be treated. *Flightplan* urges us to seek the truth, and that even when the truth maybe the harder thing to believe, we should never give up on it. That is the price of unconditional love: that we do all things for someone else under stress, even when those things appear in vain.”

Tim Spanburg, hollywoodjesus.com