INT. AIRPORT - MORNING

A middle-aged man is sitting down, reading a newspaper with a suitcase between his legs. He is nicely dressed in a business suit. His name is Robert Baker.

    HOLLY (O.S.)
    Dad...?

Robert folds up the newspaper and sets it on the seat beside him. He smiles.

    ROBERT
    Yes, honey?

HOLLY, a young girl, no older than 5, is looking out the window.

    HOLLY
    Is it fun flying in an airplane?

    ROBERT
    Yes, darling. Flying is very fun.

    HOLLY
    Really? I wanna fly! What’s it like?

Robert gets up from his chair and walks over to Holly. He rests his chin on his fist.

    ROBERT
    Hmm...what’s it like...what’s it like...Well. It’s kind of like...

He sweeps down and scoops Holly onto his shoulders.

    ROBERT
    ...this!

He lifts her up and spins her around.

    HOLLY
    Yay!
She stretches her arms out like wings. Robert runs down the airport corridor, both of them laughing.

ROBERT
So, Holly. How’s the weather up there?

HOLLY
Faster, faster!

He speeds up.

ROBERT
Holly Baker, the fastest pilot to ever take the skies! Here she go--

WOMEN (O.S.)
(interrupting)
Looks like you two are having fun without me.

Robert stops in his tracks. He turns around and sees a young woman holding two cups of coffee. Her name is LINDA. Holly spreads her arms out in Linda’s direction.

HOLLY
Mommy!

ROBERT
(setting her down)
May day. May day.

Holly runs toward Linda and hugs her legs. Linda smiles and hands a cup of coffee to Robert.

LINDA
Here. Decaf, right?

ROBERT
Yep. Thanks.

He takes a sip.
LINDA
Have you decided when you’ll be coming back?

ROBERT
I’ll be back in about a week.
(to Holly)
Right in time for my little girl’s birthday. When is it again? September...September..

HOLLY
20th! It’s September 20th!

ROBERT
I knew that. And you’ll be 5, right?

HOLLY
(pouting)
6!

ROBERT
(laughing)
Of course. I’m only joking.

Passengers begin lining up at the gate. A female voice rings over the intercom.

INTERCOM
Now boarding flight 11 to Los Angeles. I repeat. Now boarding flight 11 to Los Angeles.

Robert looks over at the gate and back at his family. Linda has Holly wrapped around her leg.

LINDA
Looks like it’s time to say good bye.

HOLLY
Bye, Daddy!
Robert gets down so he can speak with Holly eye to eye.

ROBERT
Now you be good, y’hear? I don’t want mommy complaining to me, like last time.

LINDA
(chuckling)
We’ll be fine, honey.

ROBERT
Okay. I’ll see you next week, okay?

He hugs Holly and pinches her button nose. She giggles. He gets up from the floor and looks at Linda.

ROBERT
(beat)
Good bye, Linda.

They hug and kiss.

LINDA
Bye, honey.

ROBERT
(beat)
Well, I’m off!

He picks up his suitcase, heads for the gate, and hands his ticket to the flight attendant. He looks back one last time, smiles, and waves at Linda and Holly.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE - LATER

The plane is already in the air, mid-flight. Robert is sitting next to the window reading a book titled, “Secret Symbols Within Our Nation’. We hear the voice of a STRANGER.

STRANGER (O.S.)
May I ask what you’re reading, sir?
Robert is too into the book at first.

ROBERT
Oh! It’s a-- It’s a book about symbols that are supposedly hidden in U.S. history and things like the American dollar.

We see a tall mysterious looking man sitting next to him.

STRANGER
Do you...actually believe in all that?

ROBERT
Heh, well, no. And yes. I’m actually a symbologist myself, but I just read this stuff for kicks. It’s full of misinformation and amateur research, but interesting nonetheless.

STRANGER
A symbologist? I didn’t know there was such a thing.

ROBERT
It’s okay, my friends don’t believe me either.

STRANGER
What exactly does a symbologist do?

ROBERT
Well, we, or I, rather, look for symbols in things like history, writings, and the culture of a people and decide if they were intended or if their presence is just mere coincidence.
STRANGER
And you think the symbols, in that book you’re reading there, is just mere coincidence?

ROBERT
Most of it is. You can find this stuff anywhere, for example, let’s see.
(beat)
Okay, pick a number.

STRANGER
(beat)
Eleven.

ROBERT
Okay, eleven.
(matter of fact)
I’m a little rusty so bear with me.

Robert rubs his hands together and looks at his surroundings.

ROBERT
Okay, my name is Robert Baker. 11 letters, right?
(pointing at his plane ticket)
The number of this flight. Flight 11.

The Stranger decides to join in.

STRANGER
Oh, I see. Today is the 254th day of the year, 2+5+4=11. Right?

ROBERT
Well, I’ll take your word for it, but if you’re right, yeah. Yeah!

STRANGER
And there are one hundred and 11 days left in the year.
ROBERT
You’re not bad at this.

STRANGER
And the number of passengers on this plane is 92. 9+2=11.

ROBERT
Ye--
(beat)
How-- How did you figure that?

STRANGER
It was on the flight monitor.

ROBERT
(embarrassed)
Oh...that’s-- that’s impressive. Really, you outdid even me, and I’ve been doing this for awhile, but like I said, it’s all a mere coincidence. There’s no way that all that was somehow put into place intentionally.

STRANGER
It is, if it is preordained by God.

ROBERT
Oh, a religious man.

STRANGER
Coincidence would be the easy answer. But what if this was part of God’s plan and the reason we are able to recognize these symbols is because He is giving us a sign to let us know that we are on the correct path towards our destiny?

ROBERT
Wow. That’s a very...interesting way to look at it. But it doesn’t apply to us of...
ROBERT (cont'd) (searching for the word) ...atheistic belief.

STRANGER
Oh, you don’t believe in God?

The Stranger looks almost disappointed.

ROBERT
Well, the way I see it, and I don’t mean to offend you, but the human mind is known to look for patterns where they don’t exist. And, my belief is, that we do these things because we can’t accept that the universe is random, that it’s just chaos. I mean, we live life with this daily routine, this pattern, but the truth is we can leave this world at any moment. We, as human beings, are very uncomfortable with that. So when we see things like this, I dunno, maybe we try too hard to make sense of it. To find a sense of order.

The Stranger nods his head and looks up at the ceiling. Then, smiles.

STRANGER
I’ve found another. Our destination? Also 11 letters.

Robert sits back in his chair and counts off using his fingers to double check.

ROBERT
No...I think you’re mistaken on this one. I believe it’s only 10. Los Angeles only has 10 letters in it.

The Stranger nods. Then reaches inside his pocket and pulls out a BOX CUTTER KNIFE. Robert shoots him a look of surprise.
At the same time, screaming is heard from the cockpit. A group of men rush down the isles with gas masks. They throw a canister towards the front of the plane, gas shoots EVERYWHERE. Robert’s eyes open wide.

ROBERT
(trembling)
What’s happening..?

STRANGER
There are several ‘coincidences’ that I would like to bring to your attention, Mr. Baker. My name is Mohamed Atta, 11 letters. Today is September. The eleventh. I say this is my destiny, but you seem to negate my belief. Tell me, Mr. Baker, do you want to waste the last hours of your life contemplating if all of this has been mere coincidence or would you rather spend that time praying to God?

Robert is too scared to respond.

STRANGER
And, no, it is you who are mistaken.

He extends the knife and moves it to the Robert’s neck.

MOHAMED (CONT’D)
We are going to New York City.

The screen goes black. And we see the following statement:

All statistics told in the preceding story are true, including the flight number, its original destination, and the number of passengers. Mohamed Atta al-Sayede was named as the suicide pilot who flew on flight 11 during the 9/11 attacks. His entire conversation is fictional. The character, Robert Baker, is also fictional.

THE END