on an AIRPLANE CABIN, one dark and stormy night in the early 1960s. Airplane and crowd NOISE drowns out much of the conversation between the passengers getting on the plane and the blonde, clipboard-carrying STEWARDESS who checks their boarding passes. A uniformed policeman, possibly a sheriff, enters and the stewardess sees that he's wearing a gun on his hip, so he shows her his badge as well as his boarding pass.

STEWARDESS
All right. Fine. Enjoy your flight.

The policeman heads for his seat. One passenger later, an attractive couple enter. This is BOB and JULIA WILSON. Bob gives the plane an apprehensive look while showing their passes to the stewardess. She clears them to go through.

There's no assigned seating so Julia, leading the way, points out a couple of likely seats to Bob.

JULIA
Those all right?

BOB
Yeah. Be fine.
(off Julia's coat)
Here, give me that.

Bob stows their coats in the overhead bin. Bob and Julia start to sit -- Julia on the aisle, Bob by the window.

JULIA
(suddenly concerned)
Do you want me to sit next to the window?

BOB
(reassuring)
No.

They sit.

BOB
I'm fine. I can sit--
Bob sees that he's seated by the auxiliary exit and tenses up.

JULIA
Honey, what is it? The emergency window? You want to move?

BOB
No, no, no. Doesn't matter. What's the difference where I sit? It's not the seat. It's the airplane.

Bob takes out a pack of cigarettes and starts to light up. Julia notices the non-smoking sign is lit.

JULIA
Honey, don't smoke that now. Wait till the plane takes off.

BOB
(puts the cigarette away)
I'm not acting much like a cured man, am I?

JULIA
Honey, you are cured. Doctor Martin wouldn't let you fly if you weren't, would he?

BOB
I suppose not.

JULIA
(takes his arm)
I mean if you weren't well, Doctor Martin just wouldn't let you fly all the way back home. It's just that simple.

BOB
Well, you make it sound simple, anyway.

JULIA
It is, Bob.
BOB
Yeah. Here I am hogging the whole stage and you're so tired. I've missed you... these last six months.

Bob kisses Julia. They hold hands.

JULIA
It's all over now, Bob. And mama's taking you home.

Julia steals a kiss.

BOB
It must have been awful for you. Taking care of the kids. Bearing the full responsibility.

JULIA
Well, everything is still intact.

BOB
Except me.

The FLIGHT ENGINEER gets ready to shut the cabin door.

JULIA
Now, Bob, I'm not going to let --

The loud THUMP of the cabin door slamming shut startles Bob.

FLIGHT ENGINEER
(on the phone to the cockpit)
Cabin door secured.

JULIA
(off Bob's jumpiness)
What?

BOB
Just a little... abject cowardice, that's all. I'm gonna be all right. Had a teensy weensy breakdown. Now, I'm cured. Understanding -- it's wonderful.

(MORE)
BOB (CONT'D)
It isn't the airplane at all. Overtension and overanxiety due to underconfidence.

The cabin lights dim as the stewardess makes a final walk down the aisle before take-off.

STEWARDESS
(to Bob)
Seat belt, sir.

A very nervous Bob buckles himself. He glances around uncertainly, turns on the little lights above his seat, offers a smile to Julia, and tries to stay calm.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Portrait of a frightened man: Mr. Robert Wilson, thirty-seven, husband, father, and salesman on sick leave. Mr. Wilson has just been discharged from a sanitarium where he spent the last six months recovering from a nervous breakdown, the onset of which took place on an evening not dissimilar to this one, on an airliner very much like the one in which Mr. Wilson is about to be flown home...

A FAST PAN to the omniscient NARRATOR, in suit and tie, standing beneath an airport direction sign that reads: "TERMINAL --->"

NARRATOR
...the difference being that, on that evening half a year ago, Mr. Wilson's flight was terminated by the onslaught of his mental breakdown. Tonight, he's traveling all the way to his appointed destination which, contrary to Mr. Wilson's plan, happens to be in the darkest corner of the Twilight Zone.

FADE OUT
FADE IN

on the unlit NO SMOKING and FASTEN SEAT BELT signs at the
front of the airplane's CABIN. The seat belt sign pops on
just as the stewardess enters through the cockpit door just
beneath them. She closes the door behind her and smiles at
a few of the passengers, working her way up the aisle,
eyeing everyone carefully.

STEWARDESS
(to a passenger)
Fasten your seat belt, sir.

The stewardess approaches Bob and Julia.

STEWARDESS
(to a Bob)
Fasten your seat belt, sir.

Bob starts to fasten his seat belt.

CUT TO:

The PLANE flying through dark storm clouds -- lots of wind
and rain and lightning and THUNDER.

CUT TO:

The CABIN where Bob tries to fasten Julia's seat belt while
she sleeps, only to wake her.

BOB
Sorry, darling. Go back to sleep.

JULIA
I shouldn't've taken that sleeping
pill. I should stay awake with you.

BOB
No, no, I don't want you to,
sweetheart. Go back to sleep. I'm
all right.
JULIA
Can't you sleep?

BOB
I will. Don't worry about me.

JULIA
Okay.

Julia pulls her jacket over her and nods off while Bob turns to his newspaper. He glances out the window which directly overlooks the wing of the plane. It's dark and rainy but two prop engines are clearly visible. As Bob continues to stare, he spots something besides wind-swept rainwater moving on the wing. It looks like the figure of a man. An ape-like man skulking slowly across the wing. The wind ought to have blown this creature away, but it easily stands upright, unaffected by the weather or the airspeed.

Bob is wild-eyed in disbelief. He turns to Julia twice, but she's asleep. He looks out the window. The creature squats and seems to be staring back at him, sort of taking an interest in Bob, the way a man might take an interest in an animal locked up in a cage at the zoo. An alarmed Bob starts looking around for the stewardess. She's nowhere to be seen.

Bob frantically pushes the button above his seat to summon her. He stops only to check that the creature on the wing is still there. It is. It watches Bob with curiosity. The stewardess enters the cabin and Bob beckons to her.

BOB
Here. Quickly!

STEWARDESS
May I help you?

BOB
There's a man out there!

STEWARDESS
What?

BOB
Look, look, he's crawling on--
Bob turns back to the window. The creature is gone. Bob's eyes widen. He stares out the window for a long moment and then, turns apologetically to the stewardess just as Julia wakes up.

BOB
Sorry. It must have been...

JULIA
Bob? What is it?

STEWARDESS
(to Julia)
Oh, it's nothing, Mrs. Wilson.
(to Bob)
Can I get you anything?

BOB
A glass of water.

STEWARDESS
Surely.

The stewardess departs. Julia rubs her eyes. Bob stares out the window and tries to come to grips with what he's just seen.

JULIA
Something wrong?

BOB
No. I-I thought I saw something out there.

JULIA
What?

Bob realizes he can't tell her. She'll think he's cracking up. He shakes his head.

BOB
Nothing.

Bob closes the window's curtain to block his view of the wing.

BOB
I guess I need a little sleep.
JULIA
Are you all right?

BOB
Yeah, fine.

JULIA
(cheks her watch)
Don't you think you ought to take a sleeping pill now?

BOB
(rubs his eyes)
Yeah, I-I'll take one of those, uh...

Julia digs the pills out of her purse as the stewardess arrives with a paper cup of water. Bob lets out his breath, trying to compose himself.

STEWARDESS
Here you are.

BOB
Thank you.

STEWARDESS
You're welcome. Can I get you a blanket?

BOB
No.
(to Julia)
Honey?

Julia hands Bob the sleeping pills.

JULIA
(to the stewardess)
Oh, no thanks.

The stewardess leaves. Bob swallows the pill and the entire cup of water.

CUT TO:

The PLANE flying through dark storm clouds -- more wind and rain and lightning and THUNDER.
The airplane's CABIN, a little later, where Julia is ready to go back to sleep.

JULIA
You'll be all right now?

BOB
Yeah, fine.

JULIA
Will you wake me if you need me?

BOB
I will.

Julia shuts her eyes and dozes off. Bob takes a deep breath and shuts his eyes. But they don't stay shut. The thing on the wing is still bothering him. He glances at Julia. Seeing that she's asleep, Bob hesitantly lifts his hand to the window curtain. But he immediately lowers it, afraid of what he might see on the other side. After a long moment, he comes to a decision. Very slowly, he reaches for the curtain. Abruptly, he whips the curtain away to reveal THE CREATURE'S HIDEOUS FACE pressed against the glass, staring at Bob curiously. Bob freaks. He shuts his eyes, rears his head back, opens his mouth, and starts whispering to himself.

BOB
It isn't there. It isn't there.

Bob opens his eyes but does not look at the window.

BOB
(weakly, to Julia)
Honey? Would you wake up, honey?

But she's fast asleep. Bob sees the creature hasn't moved. Panicking, Bob sees the stewardess.

BOB
(gestures to the stewardess)
Quickly!

While Bob turns to the stewardess, the creature nonchalantly flies straight up and out of view. The
stewardess arrives just as Bob turns back to the window.

    STEWARDESS
    Yes, Mr. Wilson?

Bob doesn't respond. He's staring out the window at the empty wing.

    STEWARDESS
    Can I help you, Mr. Wilson?

Bob tries to regain his composure.

    BOB
    Are we going into a storm?

    STEWARDESS
    (smiles)
    Just a small one. Nothing to worry about.

The stewardess walks off. Bob shuts his eyes and tries to get a grip.

    BOB
    (to Julia)
    Honey? Would you wake up please, honey?

As he says this, the creature flies down to the wing and lands just behind one of the engines. Bob sees it as it lands and their eyes meet. Bob watches and winces as the creature saunters forward, sits casually astride an engine, and pokes curiously at the rapidly spinning propellers with its fingers.

The creature backs away from the propellers and begins to pry up a cowling plate that covers the engine. Bob stares in horror as the creature easily pulls up the metal plate to reveal the hot, glowing engine underneath. As it does so, the creature shoots Bob a glance.

    FADE OUT

on a terrified Bob mouthing the word "No."

    END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

FADE IN

on the PLANE flying through dark storm clouds -- still more wind and rain and lightning and THUNDER.

CUT TO:

Bob trying to awaken Julia.

BOB
Honey... Julia, wake up.

Julia awakes with a start.

JULIA
What?

Bob turns to the window just in time to see the creature take off into the air. Julia, of course, fails to see anything.

JULIA
What are you looking at? Bob? Is it the storm? Does it bother you?

BOB
No. Honey, you remember what I told you before about seeing something outside?

JULIA
Yes.

BOB
Julia, there's a man out there.

Julia gives Bob a blank, uncomprehending look. THUNDER roars.

BOB
I-I don't mean a man, I mean... I don't know what I mean. I mean, maybe a... what'd they call them during the war? You know, the p-pilots? Gremlins! Gremlins. You remember the stories of the...
Julia just stares at him.

BOB
Julia, don't look at me like that.

JULIA
Bob...

BOB
I am not imagining it. I'm not imagining it. He's out there.

Julia glances at the window.

BOB
Don't look. He's not there now. He...
(realizes all too well how crazy this sounds)
He jumps away whenever anyone might see him. Except me. Honey, he's there.
I realize what this sounds like. Do I look insane?

JULIA
No, darling, no.

BOB
I know I had a mental breakdown. I know I had it in an airplane. I know it looks to you as if the same thing's happening again, but it isn't. I'm sure it isn't. Look, the reason I'm telling you this... isn't just to worry you. You notice I didn't tell you before.

JULIA
Well, I want you to tell me.

BOB
I didn't tell you before because I wasn't sure whether it was real or not. But I am sure now. It is real. There's a man out there. Or a... a gremlin, or... whatever it...
(almost laughs)
(MORE)
BOB (CONT'D)
If I described him to you, you'd really think I was gone.

JULIA
(already thinks he's gone)
No, darling, it's all right. It's all right.

BOB
Julia, I know your intentions are good. I know you love me. And sympathize with me. But don't patronize me. I am not insane.

JULIA
Did I say --?

BOB
Does it have to be said? It's in your face, in your--Look, for the last time, that creature's out there. And the reason I'm telling you is, he's starting to tamper with one of the engines. Look, look. Look. Think anything you want. Think I belong in a straitjacket, if it pleases you.

JULIA
If it pleases me!?

BOB
No, no, I-I-I-I didn't mean that. What I mean is, whatever you think of me--that I'm losing my mind, anything -- all I'm asking you to do is to tell the pilots what I've said. Ask them to keep an eye on the wings. If they see nothing... All right. All right, then I'll... commit myself. But if they do...

Julia tries very hard not to look at Bob as if he were a madman.

BOB
Won't you even allow the possibility--?
JULIA
I'll tell them.

BOB
I know it's asking a lot. I-- I-i-it's like asking you to... advertise your marriage to a lunatic.

JULIA
No, I'll tell them. You just sit tight and I'll go tell them.

Julia unbuckles her seat, rises, heads down the aisle to the cockpit door, and urgently KNOCKS. The stewardess rushes to her from the rear of the plane.

STEWARDESS
Mrs. Wilson, what's the problem? May I help you?

JULIA
Oh-oh, yes, my husband wants to see the flight engineer.

STEWARDESS
All right, if you'll stay right here, I'll have him see you.

JULIA
Oh, thank you, it's very important.

Still in his seat, Bob glances out the window just as the gremlin lands on the wing.

JULIA
(to the stewardess)
Hurry, please.

Bob watches the creature as it reaches to pry up the cowling plate again.

BOB
(to Julia)
Hurry! Hurry!

The flight engineer stands talking with Julia at the cockpit door. He rushes over to Bob. Julia follows.
BOB
(to the flight engineer)
He's out there!

FLIGHT ENGINEER
What's going on?

BOB
He's pulling up one of the cowling plates.

FLIGHT ENGINEER
He?

BOB
Didn't my wife--? There's a man out there!

FLIGHT ENGINEER
Listen, keep your voice down.

BOB
I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I-I-I--

FLIGHT ENGINEER
I don't know what's going on here.

BOB
Will you look?

FLIGHT ENGINEER
Mr. Wilson, I'm warning you.

BOB
Will you please look? In the name of --

Bob, Julia and the flight engineer all peer out the window at the empty wing. The cowling plate appears untouched. A long pause.

FLIGHT ENGINEER
Well?

BOB
Oh, now wait a minute. I saw him pull that plate up....

Julia and the flight engineer just look at Bob with blank
stares.

BOB
(insistent)
I said, I saw him pull that plate up.

FLIGHT ENGINEER
Mr. Wilson, please. All right, you saw him, but there are other people aboard. We mustn't alarm them.

BOB
(surprised)
You mean you've seen him too?

FLIGHT ENGINEER
Of course we have. But we don't want to frighten the passengers. You can understand that?

BOB
Of course...
  (bob suddenly realizes he's being humored)
I understand.

FLIGHT ENGINEER
Now, the thing we gotta remember...

BOB
(darkly)
You can stop now.

JULIA
Bob!

FLIGHT ENGINEER
Sir...

BOB
Get out of here.

FLIGHT ENGINEER
Mr. Wilson...

BOB
I said, you can stop.
JULIA
Honey, what is it?

BOB
(turns away from them)
I won't say another word. I'll see us crash first.

JULIA
Bob!

FLIGHT ENGINEER
Mr. Wilson, try to understand our position.

JULIA
Honey, I'll be right back.

Julia and the flight engineer head to the back of the plane, leaving Bob to bang his fists into his temples.

BOB
(whispers to himself)
He did pull it up. He did.

In the rear of the cabin, the flight engineer hands Julia some pills—sedatives. Meanwhile, Bob watches as, once again, the gremlin pulls up the cowling plate. Bob looks back at Julia, realizes he can't say anything, and pounds his fist into his chair. Julia starts to walk back down the aisle to Bob. Bob turns back to the window to see the gremlin, on cue, playfully stick out its arms and fly away. Julia sits down next to Bob.

JULIA
Honey, I was going to tell them when you--

BOB
Were you?

Julia hands Bob the sedative and a cup of water.

BOB
For me?

JULIA
Please, Bob.
Bob puts the pill in his mouth and drinks the water.

    JULIA
    You'll sleep--you'll sleep now, darling. Hm?

    BOB
    Sure.

The two of them lean back in their chairs and an uneasy silence ensues. Bob closes his eyes. A deeply concerned Julia gazes at him. The flight engineer makes his way down the aisle and confers with the stewardess.

    FLIGHT ENGINEER
    Oh, boy.

    STEWARDESS
    What'd you do? Get his wife to give him one of those pills?

    FLIGHT ENGINEER
    He'll be out for hours.

    STEWARDESS
    Well, I hope so, the way the storm's coming up.

    FLIGHT ENGINEER
    Don't worry, Betty, everything's fine.

    STEWARDESS
    I hope so.

The stewardess heads for the rear. The flight engineer heads for the cockpit. Julia sleeps. Bob sleeps. Ah, but he only appears to sleep. He opens his eyes and looks out the window.

Nothing. He puts his hand to his mouth and removes the unswallowed sedative from his cheek -- just as the gremlin flies down to the wing.

Bob reacts by throwing the sedative on the floor in disgust.

The gremlin immediately pries up the cowling plate and
starts tinkering with the engine. Bob looks around the cabin helplessly. Suddenly, his eye falls on the holstered gun of the policeman, who sleeps in an aisle seat, a few rows behind Bob.

Bob formulates a plan. He unbucks his seat belt, rises, and slowly walks down the aisle toward the sleeping policeman, clearly intending to steal the gun. But before Bob can reach the seat, the policeman shifts his arm, covering the holster. Bob backs off, turns, and pulls out his pack of cigarettes. The policeman moves his arm off the gun and Bob makes his move. Pretending to drop the cigarettes in the aisle next to the policeman, Bob kneels down and recovers the pack, then gently lifts the gun out of the holster, and hides it in his jacket.

Quickly returning to his seat, Bob draws the gun, and then stops. The gremlin continues its interminable sabotage operation on the engine. Bob realizes he can't shoot through the plane window. He sees the auxiliary exit handle and knows he must open the door to get a clear shot. He pockets the weapon and buckles himself in. He is about to draw the gun when he thinks of Julia's safety.

BOB
Honey? Honey, would you get me a glass of water, please?

Julia wakes up with a start, surprised to find Bob wide awake.

BOB
A glass of water. Please? Hurry.

Without a word, a confused Julia heads for the rear of the plane and talks with the stewardess. Seeing that she's safely in the rear of the plane, Bob draws the gun, releases its safety catch, removes the plastic guard from the auxiliary exit handle, takes one last look around, notes the location of the gremlin--still leaning over the engine--and, steeling himself, releases the emergency door.

The door flies off instantly and Bob is nearly sucked out, his seat belt barely securing him to the plane. Julia, the stewardess, and everybody else in the cabin start SCREAMING.
Bob, in excruciating pain—half in his seat and halfway out the door—is pressed against the outside of the airplane by the tremendous wind, trying to get a two-fisted grip on the gun and bring it to bear on the gremlin. The startled creature stands a few feet away and starts walking toward Bob. Slowly, Bob struggles to aim the weapon. The creature is closing in. With a Herculean effort, Bob aims and fires, emptying the gun into the gremlin. It topples backward onto the wing.

After the sixth shot, Bob lets go of the gun and SCREAMS.

CUT TO:

The inside of the nearly empty CABIN, sometime later that night. All is quiet. The policeman puts his hat on. A peaceful, smiling Bob, straitjacketed and strapped to a stretcher, is carried down the aisle and out of the plane by two attendants.

CUT TO:

An airport RUNWAY at night, seconds later. The plane is on the ground. The storm is over. The policeman silently leads the stretcher-bearers and Julia off the plane to a waiting ambulance and police car. The police RADIO chatters. The flight engineer and the stewardess watch the preparations to load Bob into the ambulance.

FLIGHT ENGINEER
(to the stewardess)
Nuttiest way of trying to commit suicide I've ever heard of.

Julia stands over the stretcher, comforting Bob.

JULIA
(to Bob)
It's all right now, darling.

A triumphant Bob struggles to sit upright.

BOB
I know. But I'm the only one who does know... right now.

Tired but happy, Bob lies back down. The attendants lift
him into the ambulance.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The flight of Mr. Robert Wilson has ended now, a flight not only from point A to point B, but also from the fear of recurring mental breakdown. Mr. Wilson has that fear no longer...

Slow PAN from the ambulance to the plane's wing, where the pried-up cowling plate is plainly visible.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...though, for the moment, he is, as he has said, alone in this assurance. Happily, his conviction will not remain isolated too much longer, for happily, tangible manifestation is very often left as evidence of trespass, even from so intangible a quarter as the Twilight Zone.

FADE OUT