



At the dawn of aviation, only the truly bold took flight

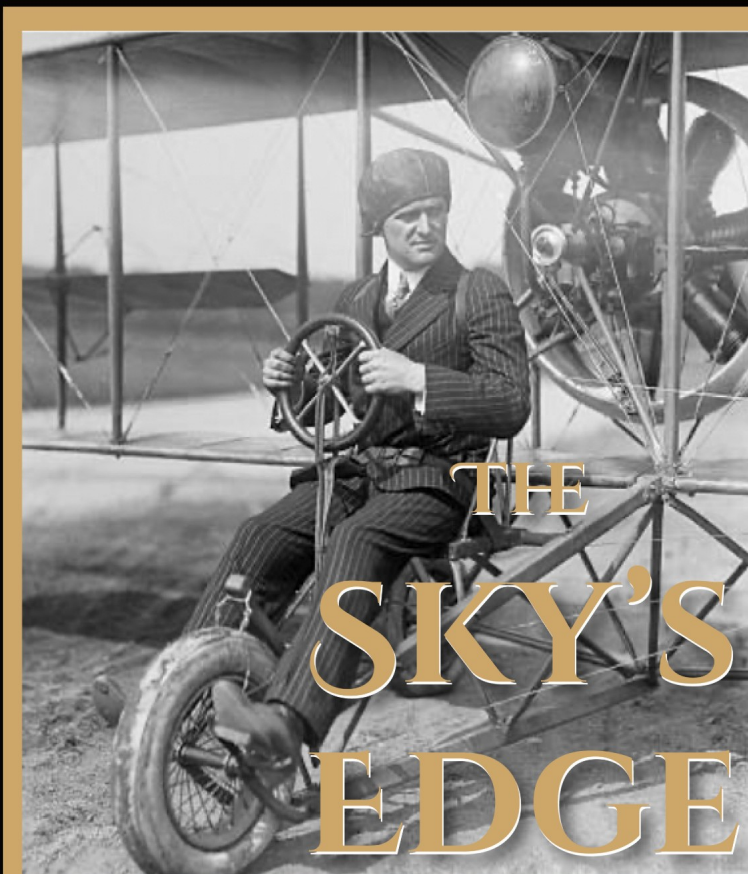
A BIOGRAPHICAL FEATURE • BASED ON A TRUE STORY

THE SKY'S EDGE

*At the dawn of aviation, only the truly bold
took flight.*

Written by **Michael Rhine**

SAN FRANCISCO • 1899 – 1915



BASED ON A TRUE STORY



WRITTEN BY MICHAEL RHINE

LOGLINE

At the dawn of aviation, the truly bold took to the sky, changing everything. Lincoln Beachey's fierce rivalries, personal tragedy, and obsession with conquering the impossible drove him from working-class mechanic to national hero — and toward one final, calculated defiance of death.

GENRE

Biographical drama · period · aviation

COMPS

The Aviator meets *Top Gun* meets *Ford v Ferrari*

SETTING

San Francisco and across America,
1899–1915



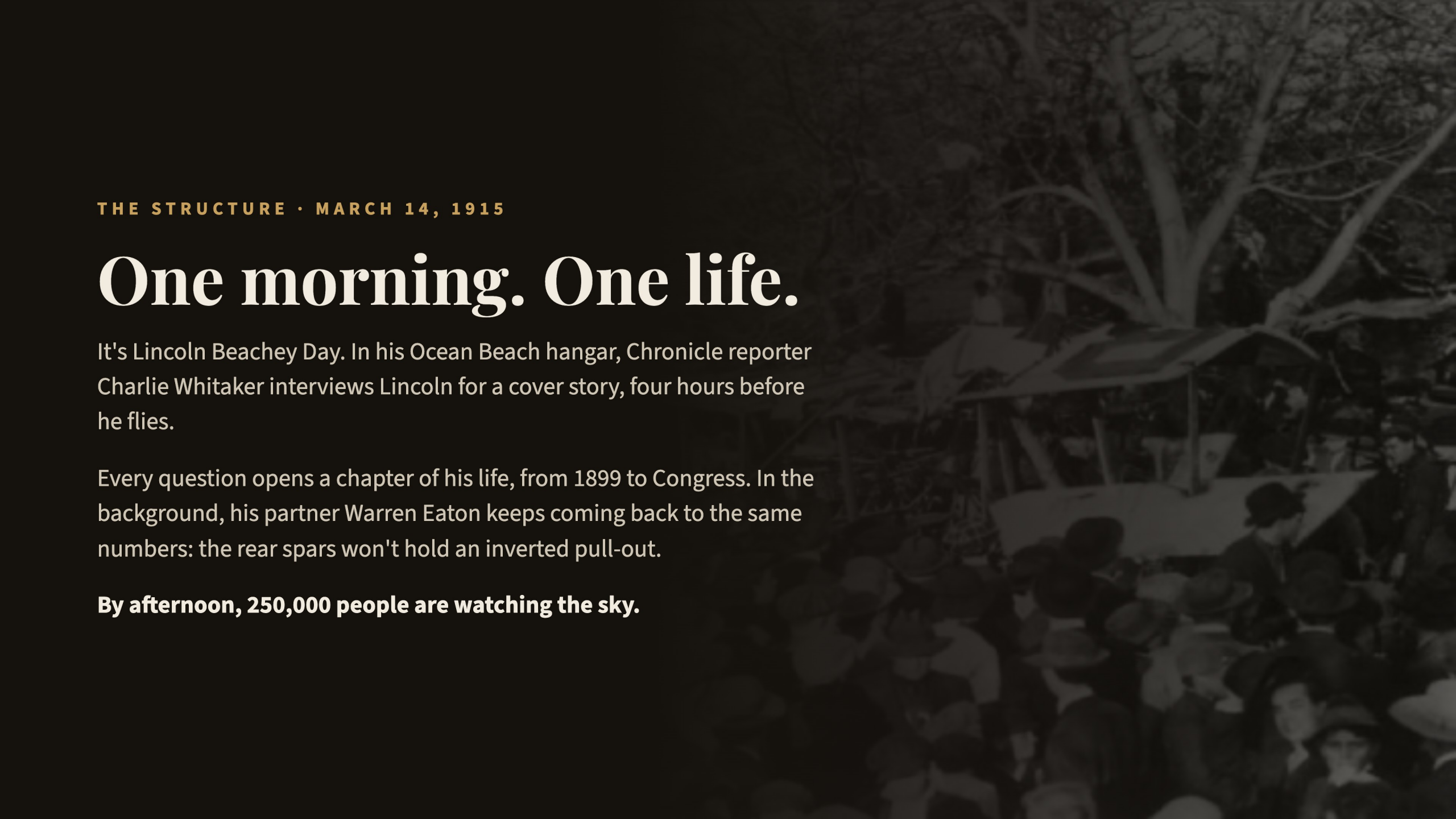
THE TRUE STORY

Lincoln Beachey

A San Francisco boy who became the most famous flyer in America. He flew under the bridge below Niagara Falls, raced Barney Oldfield, and was the first American to fly a loop.

On March 14, 1915, in front of the crowds at the Panama-Pacific Exposition, his new monoplane came apart over San Francisco Bay. He was 28.

*“An airplane in your hands is poetry, sir.”
— Orville Wright*



THE STRUCTURE · MARCH 14, 1915

One morning. One life.

It's Lincoln Beachey Day. In his Ocean Beach hangar, Chronicle reporter Charlie Whitaker interviews Lincoln for a cover story, four hours before he flies.

Every question opens a chapter of his life, from 1899 to Congress. In the background, his partner Warren Eaton keeps coming back to the same numbers: the rear spars won't hold an inverted pull-out.

By afternoon, 250,000 people are watching the sky.

The flashbacks, 1899 to 1915

1899

Races down
Laguna Street,
no brakes

1904

Flies Baldwin's
airship at 16

1906

The earthquake.
Then the
Capitol steps

1910

Joins Glenn
Curtiss

1911

Under the
bridge at
Niagara

1912

Chicago. Charlie
Welsh dies.
Lincoln quits

1913

Marries Minnie.
Flies the loop

1914

Races Oldfield.
Sinks the
“Oregon”

1915

**Lincoln Beachey
Day**

Each chapter is told to Whitaker in the hangar, and each one cuts back to the same morning, a few hours closer to the flight.

The story

ACT ONE

Learning to fly

A fearless San Francisco boy who reads a street the way he'll read the sky. At 16 he talks his way onto Thomas Baldwin's airship. He lands a dirigible on the Capitol steps and has tea with President Roosevelt. Then he sees Glenn Curtiss fly, and sets down his trophy.

ACT TWO

The price of going first

He crashes his way onto Curtiss's team, flies under the Niagara bridge with his eyes closed and becomes America's greatest flyer. Then the men who copy him start dying. After Charlie Welsh's widow finds him on a train, he quits.

ACT THREE

One more time

Minnie marries him knowing he'll go back. When a Frenchman flies the first loop, he does. He takes on Congress for the pilots who died in old planes. On Lincoln Beachey Day he nearly lands, then climbs for one more inverted pass.

THE HEART OF IT

“They paid to see me die.”

Every stunt Lincoln invents, other pilots try to copy. In one year, twenty-four of them are killed. The film asks what his brother asks him in the rain:

“Is all this still worth chasing, Linc?”

The Beacheys and their team

Lincoln Beachey

Calm and unafraid. Traces every maneuver in the air with his hand before he flies it, then waits one beat longer than anyone else would.

Hillery Beachey

His older brother, partner and conscience. Holds the ropes, negotiates his cut and sighs “Of course” every time Lincoln does the impossible.

Minnie Beachey

A title clerk who refuses to be impressed by him. She can't watch him fly, and she never asks him to stop.

Amy Beachey

Their mother. Stitches Lincoln's chin, buys her boys a broken engine and keeps the light on so they find their way home.

Warren Eaton

Chief mechanic and partner. Built the monoplane, and spends the whole morning trying to talk Lincoln out of one maneuver.

Charlie Whitaker

The Chronicle reporter who has covered every crash since 1910. He asks the questions nobody else has.

The legends around him

Thomas Baldwin. The showman who gives a 16-year-old his first airship.

Glenn Curtiss. At war with the Wrights in court, he builds Lincoln something their lawyers can't touch.

Charles Willard. Curtiss's first pilot, and the first to see what Lincoln is.

Jerome Fanciulli. Curtiss's exhibition manager. “The crash isn't the story.”

Orville Wright. Watches Lincoln fly four times, and tells him once.

Theodore Roosevelt. Pours him tea on the White House lawn.

Barney Oldfield. The fastest man on the ground races the fastest man in the air.

Blanche Stuart Scott. The only woman on the Curtiss team, and better than most of the men.

Arch Hoxsey and Charlie Welsh. Teammates and friends, killed chasing the sky.

Adolphe Pégoud. The Frenchman whose loop over Paris pulls Lincoln back into the air.

Set pieces

Laguna Street

A 12-year-old on a bicycle, no brakes, a mile of wet cobblestones and a produce market full of horses.

Niagara

Over the falls, down into the gorge, blind in the mist, under the bridge with two feet to spare.

The “Oregon”

A full-scale model battleship explodes in San Francisco Bay, and 80,000 people think it's real.

The Capitol steps

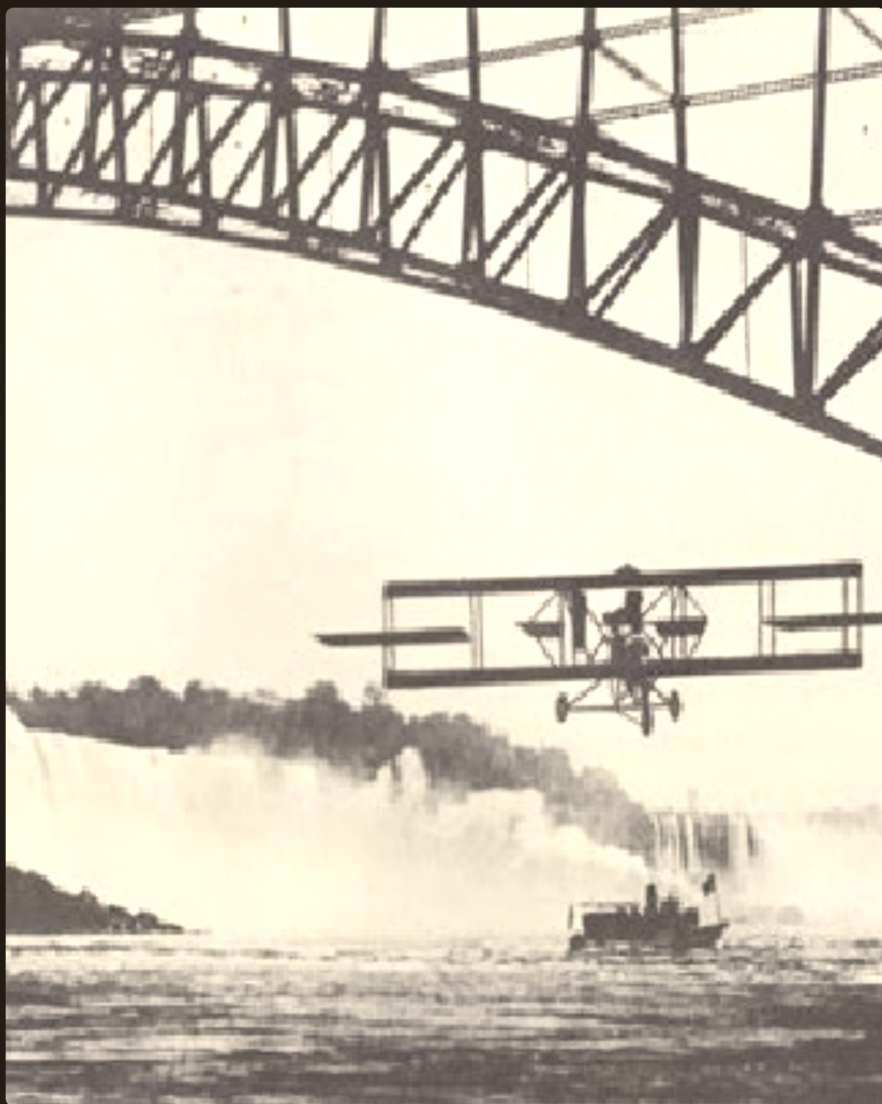
A golden airship lands on the steps of Congress, then on the White House lawn.

The woman pilot

In a flowered dress and hat, Lincoln fakes losing control over Chicago. An hour later, Welsh tries to copy him.

The last flight

Lincoln eases the throttle back to land, says “That's enough,” then smiles and climbs.



THE LOOK

Inside the aircraft

We fly with him. The flights are shot from the cockpit: fabric drumming, bracing wires singing, the ground coming up.

The hand. Before every flight, Lincoln traces the maneuver in the air. It's how we see him think.

The gull. The film opens and closes on a gull diving for the water and pulling up.

The record. Headlines, newsreel cameras and, at the end, real footage of the maneuvers he invented.

Why this movie

An untold American legend

The most famous flyer of his day, and a story most audiences have never heard.

Spectacle from real events

Niagara, the loop, the Capitol steps: true stories that play as big-screen set pieces.

Two brothers at its heart

Lincoln goes up. Hillery makes sure he comes home, until the day he can't.

A San Francisco story

From the 1906 earthquake to the 1915 world's fair, a city rebuilding itself around its hometown hero.

A question for today

Fame, risk and the crowds who pay to watch someone push too far.

Festival recognition

FINALIST

Cannes Script Festival

FINALIST

Oxford Script Awards 2026

FINALIST

Cambridge Script Festival

SEMIFINALIST

2026 Slamdance Screenplay
Competition

SEMIFINALIST

San Francisco International
Screenwriting Competition
2026

SECOND ROUNDER

Austin Film Festival Script
Competition 2026

THE WRITER

Michael Rhine

A television producer, writer and editor with more than 30 years in broadcast production and documentary filmmaking. He brings a documentarian's eye for real places and forgotten history to his fiction.

Like Lincoln Beachey, he is a San Francisco native. His slate also includes *Ghost Dorm!*, a 1983-set horror-comedy, and the original science fiction series *TERRA*.

HOMETOWN STORY

San Francisco

Beachey's city, and the writer's

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Written by **Michael Rhine**

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