

Up in the Air (2009)

Ryan Bingham (George Clooney) works for the Career Transitions Corporation (CTC). He makes his living traveling to workplaces around the United States and informing workers of their dismissals in place of their employers, who fear doing it themselves. Part-time, Ryan also delivers motivational speeches, using the metaphor "What's In Your Backpack?" to extol the virtues of a life free of burdens like relationships with people as well as things, arguing that the best way to live is to travel light, with little to hold one down.

Ryan relishes his perpetual travels. Already entitled to the **Concierge Key program** by American Airlines, his personal ambition is to earn ten million frequent flyer miles. While traveling, he meets another frequent flyer, Alex (Vera Farmiga). They begin a casual relationship, meeting and sleeping together whenever they can arrange to cross paths.

Ryan is unexpectedly called back to CTC's offices in Omaha, Nebraska. An ambitious, freshly graduated new hire, Natalie Keener (Anna Kendrick), is promoting a plan to cut costs by conducting layoffs via videoconferencing. Ryan argues that Natalie knows nothing about the actual process, live or not, as she has never fired anyone and does not know how to handle upset people. He plays the role of a fired employee to show her inexperience. His boss (Jason Bateman) assigns him to take Natalie with him on his next round of terminations, much to his annoyance. Throughout the rounds, Natalie is visibly disturbed by firing people face to face.

As they travel together and become better acquainted, Natalie questions Ryan's philosophy, but he is satisfied with his lifestyle. During the trip, Natalie is shattered when her boyfriend unceremoniously dumps her by text message. Ryan and Alex try to comfort her. Natalie later lectures Ryan about his refusal to consider a commitment to Alex in spite of their obvious compatibility, and becomes infuriated; she apologizes later, but soon afterwards they are ordered back to Omaha to begin implementing Natalie's program. There are problems during a test run; one laid-off man breaks down in tears before the camera, and she is unable to comfort him.

Instead of returning immediately to Omaha, Ryan convinces Alex to accompany him to his younger sister Julie's (Melanie Lynskey) wedding near Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Julie had him (and others) take photos of a cutout picture of her and future husband Jim (Danny McBride) in various places because they cannot afford a honeymoon trip. When Jim gets cold feet, Ryan's older sister talks Ryan into using his motivational skills to persuade Jim to go through with it. Although this runs counter to Ryan's personal philosophy of non-commitment, he persuades Jim that "everyone needs a co-pilot" and the important moments in life are rarely unshared. The wedding takes place without further problems.

Ryan begins having second thoughts about his own life. As he starts to deliver his "What's In Your Backpack?" speech at a convention in Las Vegas, he realizes he no longer believes it and walks off the stage. On an impulse, he flies to Alex's home in Chicago, Illinois. When she opens the door, he is stunned to discover she is married with children; Ryan leaves without saying a word. She later tells him on the phone that her family is her real life and he is simply an escape. When she asks him what he wants out of their relationship, he is unable to answer. Happy with the arrangement 'as is', she tells him he can still call her if he wants to.

On his flight home, the crew announces that Ryan has just crossed the ten-million-mile mark. The airline's chief pilot (Sam Elliott) comes out of the cockpit to meet Ryan and give him a special fulfillment card. He notes that Ryan is the youngest person to reach the milestone, only the seventh to do so (as the card is so numbered); Ryan, who had been preparing for that moment for a long time, shows little emotion. When the pilot asks him where he's from, Ryan says, "Here."

Back in his office, Ryan calls the airline to transfer five hundred thousand miles each to the newlyweds, enough for them to fly around the world for their honeymoon. His boss then tells Ryan that a woman he and Natalie fired has killed herself by jumping off a bridge, just as she warned them she would, and that when Natalie found out, she quit via text message. Ryan claims to have no

memory of the employee making this threat. The company puts the remote-layoff program on hold because of government concerns, and Ryan is once again "back on the road".

Natalie applies for a job in San Francisco, California. The interviewer is puzzled as to why she chose to work for CTC, given her sterling qualifications; she tells him she followed a boy. Based on a glowing recommendation from Ryan, he hires her. The film concludes with Ryan at the airport, standing in front of a vast destination board, looking up, and letting go of his luggage.

Cast

- George Clooney as Ryan Bingham, "a suave, smartly dressed businessman in his 40s"
- Vera Farmiga as Alexandra 'Alex' Goran, a "beguiling, mysterious fortysomething"
- Anna Kendrick as Natalie Keener, an ambitious 23-year-old
- Jason Bateman as Craig Gregory, owner of Career Transition Counseling
- Amy Morton as Kara Bingham, Ryan's older sister
- Melanie Lynskey as Julie Bingham, Ryan's younger sister
- Danny R. McBride as Jim Miller, Julie's fiancé
- Zach Galifianakis as Steve, a fired employee
- J. K. Simmons as Bob, a fired employee
- Sam Elliott as Maynard Finch, Chief Pilot
- Tamala Jones as Karen Barnes, a fired employee who commits suicide

Memorable quotes (with notes on difficult vocabulary)

Ryan Bingham: *[on getting through airport security]* Never get behind old people. Their bodies are littered with hidden metal and they never seem to appreciate how little time they have left. Bingo, Asians. They pack light, travel efficiently, and they have a thing for slip on shoes. Gotta love 'em.

Natalie Keener: That's racist.

Ryan Bingham: I'm like my mother, I stereotype. It's faster.

to litter with = (lett. riempire di spazzatura) qui: essere pieni di

Alex Goran: He broke up with you over text message?

Ryan Bingham: That's kind of like firing someone over the Internet.

He broke up with you over text message? = Ti ha scaricato inviandoti un sms?

Alex Goran: What a weasly prick.

Natalie Keener: Yeah, but what does that make me? Someone who falls for a prick.

Alex Goran: We all fall for the prick. Pricks are spontaneous, they're unpredictable and they're fun. And then we're surprised when they turn out to be pricks.

prick = (di persona) coglione

[as Ryan and Natalie enter the Hilton Miami Airport Hotel]

Natalie Keener: How about just not dying alone?

Ryan Bingham: Starting when I was 12, we moved each one of my grandparents into a nursing facility. My parents went the same way. Make no mistake, we all die alone. Now those cult members in San Diego, with the sneakers and the Kool-Aid, they didn't die alone. I'm just saying there are options.

[Natalie starts to cry]

Ryan Bingham: Oh, fuck.

Natalie Keener: *[sobs]* Brian left me.

[Natalie is sobbing hysterically; Ryan then comforts her and calms her down]

Ryan Bingham: All right. Okay, okay. All right. All right.

nursing facility = casa di riposo; **sneakers** = scarpe da ginnastica; **Kool-Aid** = bibita prodotta dalla Kraft:

drinking the Kool-Aid è un'espressione metaforica americana che sta ad indicare una persona o un gruppo di persone che abbraccia alcune idee in modo acritico

Kara Bingham: You're awfully isolated the way you live.

Ryan Bingham: Isolated? I'm surrounded.

Isolated? I'm surrounded. = Isolato? Ma se sono circondato!

Ryan Bingham: Your resume says you minored in French Culinary Arts. Most students work the fryer at KFC. You busted tables at Il Picatore to support yourself. Then you got out of college and started working here. How much did they pay you to give up on your dreams?

Bob: Twenty seven thousand a year.

Ryan Bingham: At what point were you going to stop and go back to what made you happy?

to minor = studiare come materia secondaria che è parte del proprio corso di laurea; **At what point were you going to stop** = a che punto ti saresti fermato...

Natalie Keener: I thought I'd be engaged by now. I thought by 23, I'd be married, maybe have a kid, corner office by day, entertaining at night. I was supposed to be driving a Grand Cherokee by now.

Alex Goran: Well, life can underwhelm you that way.

Natalie Keener: Where did you think you'd be by err...?

Alex Goran: It doesn't work that way. At a certain point, you stop with the deadlines. It can be a little counterproductive.

Natalie Keener: I don't want to say anything that is anti feminist. I really appreciate everything that your generation did for me.

Alex Goran: It was our pleasure.

Natalie Keener: Sometimes it feels like, no matter how much success I have, it's not gonna matter until I find the right guy. I could have made it work, he really fit the bill, you know. White collar, 6'1, college grad, loves dogs, likes funny movies, brown hair, kind eyes, works in finance but is outdoorsy. I always imagined he'd have a single syllable name like Matt or John or Dave. In a perfect world, he drives a 4 runner and the only thing he loves more than me is his golden lab. And a nice smile. What about you?

Alex Goran: You know, honestly by the time you're 34, all the physical requirements just go out the window. You secretly pray that he'll be taller than you, not an asshole would be nice just someone who

enjoys my company, comes from a good family. You don't think about that when you're younger. Someone who wants kids, likes kids. Healthy enough to play with his kids. Please let him earn more money than I do, you might not understand that now but believe me, you will one day otherwise that's a recipe for disaster. And hopefully, some hair on his head. I mean, that's not even a deal breaker these days. A nice smile. Yea, a nice smile just might do it.

Natalie Keener: Wow. That was depressing.

Life can underwhelm you that way = implicito gioco di parole tra *overwhelm* (sopraffare) e *underwhelm* usato come contrario di sopraffare: la vita a volte ti delude da questo punto di vista, no?; **6'1** = (per indicare l'altezza) circa 1,85m; **college grad** = laureato; **outdoorsy** = ama passare la vita all'aria aperta

Ryan Bingham: Aww... Maplewood card. How dare you bring that into this place?

Alex Goran: Hilton offers equal value and better food but the Maplewood gives out warm cookies at check-in... I'm a sucker for simulated hospitality.

Ryan Bingham: There's an industry term for that. It's a mixture of faux and homey - faumey.

Alex Goran: Oh, my God. I wasn't sure this actually existed. This is the American Airlines...

Ryan Bingham: It's a Concierge Key, yeah.

Alex Goran: What is that, carbon fibre?

Ryan Bingham: Graphite.

Alex Goran: Oh, I love the weight.

Ryan Bingham: I was pretty excited the day that bad boy came in.

Alex Goran: I'll say. I put up pretty pedestrian numbers. 60 thousand a year, domestic.

Ryan Bingham: That's not bad.

Alex Goran: Don't patronize me. What's your total?

Ryan Bingham: It's a personal question.

Alex Goran: Please.

Ryan Bingham: And we hardly know each other.

Alex Goran: Come on, show some hubris. Come on, impress me. I bet it's huge.

Ryan Bingham: You have no idea.

Alex Goran: How big? What is it, this big? This big?

Ryan Bingham: I don't want to brag.

Alex Goran: Oh, come on! Come on.

Ryan Bingham: Let's just say I have a number in mind and I haven't hit it yet.

Alex Goran: This is pretty fucking sexy.

Ryan Bingham: Hope it doesn't cheapen our relationship.

Alex Goran: We're two people who get turned on by elite status. I think cheap is our starting point.

Ryan Bingham: There's nothing cheap about loyalty.

to be am a sucker for = adorare, non riuscire a resistere a qualcosa; **hubris** = orgoglio

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Up_in_the_Air_%282009_film%29

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1193138/>