

"TAGS"

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FADE IN:

"TEN YEARS AGO"

EXT. MONTANA COUNTRYSIDE - SATURDAY MORNING

A black sedan speeds along a narrow country road.

INT. BLACK SEDAN -- CONTINUOUS

Four men, mid 30s, black slacks and black turtlenecks are JOSTLED by the uneven pavement.

NAVIGATOR struggles to read a map - holding a CUP OF COFFEE between his knees.

Rear PASSENGERS stare out both sides of the car, searching.

DRIVER
(to navigator)
How much farther?

Navigator rotates map back and forth, spills some coffee.

NAVIGATOR
Shit...I don't know. I can't find
any landmarks on this damn map.

PASSENGER 1
Shouldn't be too far now.

POV: INSIDE CAR: A SIGN 'DOUBLE T RANCH' passes and disappears from view.

PASSENGER 2
Whoa! There it is! You just passed
it! Double T Ranch. Turn around.

EXT. MONTANA COUNTRYSIDE -- CONTINUOUS

The sedan SCREECHES to a halt, makes an aggressive U-turn, and turns onto a dirt road.

INT. BLACK SEDAN -- CONTINUOUS

Navigator points to a CELLULAR PHONE TOWER.

NAVIGATOR
Look! There's one. There should be
eight more on the property.

The car BOUNCES erratically on the washboard road.

Navigator's knees compress, COFFEE EXPLODES over map, into his lap.

NAVIGATOR (CONT'D)

Shit. Slow down. Can't you control this thing? Looks like I pissed in my pants.

EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH-- CONTINUOUS

Tenant rancher, MATT PERKINS, mid 30s, and daughter, KATIE, a typical 7 year old country girl, stand on the front porch. A dust cloud appears over the horizon.

MATT

They're here.

KATIE

Who's here daddy?

MATT

Just some business people to meet with daddy, sweetheart. Go inside and tell mommy to come out.

Katie skips to the front door, yells at the top of her lungs.

KATIE

Mommy! Daddy wants you!

Matt cringes, looks at her over his shoulder.

The sedan pulls up to the porch steps, followed by the plume of dust that engulfs the car.

INT: BLACK SEDAN -- CONTINUOUS

DRIVER

(to the others)

Remember, act tough.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

The occupants exit and approach as Matt's wife, SALLY, early 30s, average looking, wearing jeans and a plaid shirt, steps outside.

DRIVER

Mr. Perkins?

Matt extends his hand. The driver ignores the hand shake. Matt's hand descends slowly.

MATT

(nervous)

Yes, hello. I'm Matt Perkins and this is my wife Sally. How was your flight? Was the hotel satisfactory? Can we get you some coffee? Does anyone need to use the bathroom? Sally, get some coffee for these folks, would you?

As Matt speaks, passenger 2 walks past the Perkins and precedes to enter the house.

Sally, puzzled, turns and follows him inside.

SALLY

(to Passenger 2)

Excuse me... Excuse me.

While she walks, she looks over her shoulder for support from Matt. She pauses and visually inspects each of the other three men.

DRIVER (O.S.)

These are my associates. We have much work to do and would like to start immediately. Where are they?

Sally disappears into the house

MATT

In the corral behind the barn. You can drive through it. They're just beyond the back doors.

Matt points to an old TWO STORY BARN 50 yards away. It bears the scars of a fire. The front and rear doors are open and a corral in back with cattle is visible through the narrow openings.

DRIVER

Bad fire.

MATT

Lost most everything...farmhouse, most of the herd... and my dad. Had to sell out to a California company.

DRIVER

Oh...sorry to hear that... (to his associates) Let's get started... Where's Paul?

PASSENGER 1

He went inside to take a piss.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Sally, carrying a tray of full coffee cups is blinded by the morning sun streaming in through the open front door.

Passenger 2 exiting the hall bathroom, startles her. They nearly collide. She JERKS BACK, COFFEE FLIES. Passenger 2 glares at her intently. No words are spoken.

EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH -- CONTINUOUS

Matt, hearing the crash, turns to the front door. Passenger 2 exits the house, pauses.

PASSENGER 2

Your wife should be more careful.

Passenger 2 walks toward the open barn door. Sally steps outside, soaked.

MATT

Are you alright? Are you burned?

SALLY

(pissed)

I'm fine. It wasn't that hot. Matt, I don't like this! I don't like this one bit! You don't know these people. And that guy walking to the barn gives me the creeps.

MATT

Sally, calm down. I...

Sally interrupts.

SALLY

(speaks rapidly)

Calm down! That jerk scared the shit out of me! I dropped the whole tray, coffee, sugar, cream, everything! It's all over the floor the walls and me! And do you think he said sorry or excuse me or offered to help clean it up? Hell no! He just stared at me. No, he stared through me! Matt, can they just leave now? Please?

MATT

You know that's not possible. It's part of the deal we made. Besides, they won't be here long... I hope... You need help inside?

SALLY
 (vacillates)
 Sure...No. I'm fine...Maybe you can
 get the mop.

INT. FARM HOUSE -- KATIE'S UPSTAIRS BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Katie watches the visitors from her window. Thru the open barn doors she sees them remove several large cases from the car's trunk.

She's curious.

EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH - -- MOMENTS LATER

Katie runs out the front door and slips into the barn.

INT. BARN -- CONTINUOUS

Katie climbs a ladder to the loft to spy on the visitors.

Moments later, Matt walks through the barn beneath her. Katie freezes.

EXT. CORRAL -- CONTINUOUS

The visitors close their open cases, obscuring Matt's view of the contents.

DRIVER
 Mr. Perkins, we won't be needing you here. Please return to your home... Oh, just one question before you leave. How many head are there here?

MATT
 One-hundred and forty-three

DRIVER
 That's much more than we expected.

MATT
 Well, they're free range. I can't control nature.

DRIVER
 Fine. Leave us to our work now.

INT. FARMHOUSE - DINNER TABLE -- EVENING

Matt, Sally and Katie are finishing the evening meal. Katie plays with remaining vegetables on her plate

KATIE

Daddy, why were those men hurting
the cattle?

MATT

What are you talking about? The
cattle are fine. They were released
to the fields hours ago.

KATIE

No daddy. I saw it...from the loft.
Those men were hurting them. They
had these things. Like when I get a
shot at the doctor's, only really
big. I could tell... it hurt.

EXT. SILICON VALLEY - HI-TECH INDUSTRIAL OFFICE COMPLEX -
TAG TECHNOLOGY OFFICES -- SUNDAY EVENING

A handful of cars in the parking lot.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

DAVID COOK, early 50s, Tag Technology's CEO, tall, thin,
white hair, sits impatiently tapping his fingers on the oak
conference table.

The phone RINGS. David presses the speaker phone button.

DAVID

Hello.

OPERATOR(O.S.)

(on speaker phone)

I have a collect call from John Doe
in Bozeman, Montana. Will you
accept the charges?

DAVID

(into speaker phone)

Yes, we accept.

PAN to others at the table: Dr. JEROME NASH, Dr. ELIZABETH
SOMERVILLE and Dr. STEPHAN WISMAN, all wearing monogramed
white lab coats.

JEROME

Those cheap bastards

DRIVER (O.S.)

(on speaker phone)

Hello

ELIZABETH

Hello.

(MORE)

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

This is Elizabeth Somerville.
Stephan Wiscom and Jerome Nash are
here with me. And David too.

DRIVER (O.S.)

Good. Everything went well. All the
implants were completed yesterday
afternoon. I sent you an email this
morning with all the identification
information, and codes for each
device. Did you receive it?

ELIZABETH

Yes. We all have it.

Stephan nods a silent approval.

DRIVER (O.S.)

Good. We activated the receiver and
it seems to be working fine. There
was no interference with the local
telephone towers that were
installed before winter. But that's
not saying much up here. You need
to verify this is in the high
cellular traffic area down there.
We were able to identify the exact
location of each animal to within
about two feet.

DAVID

Excellent. How long does it take to
boot up the handheld unit and
locate a desired animal?

DRIVER (O.S.)

Really Quick...just a few seconds.
Law enforcement's gonna love it.

DAVID

If these tests go as planned,
tagging parolees will begin next
month...The governor signed the
Prisoner Mandatory Medical Health
Exam Bill last week as expected.
They won't even know their being
tagged...just a routine inoculation
as far as they're concerned.

STEPHAN

Well, we know the tracking piece
works from the breast implants. No
adverse effects, right?

ELIZABETH

None reported... but we only have fifty subjects. It feels like being under a microscope, though. You guys know where I am all the time.

STEPHAN

You didn't have to volunteer.

ELIZABETH

Someone had to be the control subject. I didn't see you volunteer for a boob job...No heat issues and Paul can't even tell it's there.

STEPHAN

(snickers)

Lucky Paul...I'm anxious to see how well the termination app works...

Elizabeth passes a sharp glare to Stephan

STEPHAN (CONT'D)

... with the cattle, of course.

ELIZABETH

(sneers)

...of course.

DAVID

We'll know soon enough.

DRIVER (O.S.)

Are you guys on line?

Elizabeth rotates her computer so that the others can view the screen. The screen is gray with a large cluster of dots.

ELIZABETH

Yes, we can all see it.

DRIVER (O.S.)

Okay, I think we're ready at our end too. It's dark up here so you won't see any movement. They're probably all asleep. Do you have a preference as to which ones we terminate?

Elizabeth makes eye contact with each of the three men in her office.

ELIZABETH

I don't think so.

JEROME

It's not like we know any of them personally. A cow is a cow. Just do it.

DRIVER (O.S.)

Okay. Let's do tag number eighty-three.

ELIZABETH

Eighty-three.

Elizabeth types a few strokes on the keyboard

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Got it, center screen.

EXT. DOUBLE T RANCH - OPEN FIELD GRAZING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Several dozen cattle stand clustered for warmth in the cool evening air. Many are asleep.

A partial moon casts eerie shadows.

One of the cattle awakens. The moon reflects off its wide open eye revealing panic.

It JERKS SPASMODICALLY, staggers and drops to the ground, trembling momentarily, then lays still.

Nearby cattle move away, undisturbed by the death of one of their own.

INT. - CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DRIVER (O.S)

Did the dot extinguish?

STEPHAN

Yes. It's gone. So the animal dies and the chip deactivates at the same time?

DAVID

Yes. We don't want anything to draw attention to a death. The animal suffered a heart attack. It's that simple. The actual cause was a chemical delivered from the tag, through the animal's central nervous system. The chemical is undetectable in any laboratory analysis. It breaks down entirely in about five minutes.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(to the speaker
phone)

How many more do you need to do to
have a statistical confirmation
that it works.

DRIVER(O.S.)

Maybe another three or four. Want
to pick a number?

DAVID

No. You choose and tell us the
numbers so we can confirm
termination.

DRIVER(O.S.)

Let's just do one through four. Try
it from your end this time.

David steps to the keyboard and enters a few strokes.

Dots on the screen corresponding to cattle tagged with
numbers one through four disappear in order.

Nearby dots on the screen move away slightly.

STEPHAN

Wow!...Amazing. Law enforcement
will flip over this feature.

DAVID

I hope so.

DRIVER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I think we're done. I rented a
flatbed with a hoist. We'll be out
there before sunrise to retrieve
and dispose of the carcasses.

DAVID

Perfect... And make sure that
rancher doesn't know about this.

David disconnects the phone call. He studies the doctors.

A fleeting smile crosses his face.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Jerome...Stephan...Elizabeth...
You've done an excellent job
developing the toxin...
Congratulations everyone.