

[SCENE START]

EXT. ELIAS'S BACKYARD - DAY

It is the picture of Canadian normalcy. The lawn is immaculate. A sprinkler clicks rhythmically, watering a small, well-tended garden. The smell of burgers on a propane grill hangs in the bright, sunny air.

A half-dozen families from the neighborhood are milling about, drinking beer from cans, laughing. Kids shriek with delight as they run through the sprinkler. This is a "welcome to the neighborhood" BBQ for the three new families that recently moved in.

ELIAS (38), in a plain t-shirt and jeans, is at the grill, looking every bit the part of the friendly, slightly quiet neighbor. He expertly flips a row of burgers, his movements economical and precise.

Across the lawn, "JOSHAWA LE'CLAIR" (32) is the life of the party—charismatic, laughing, telling an animated story to a group of other dads. He fits in perfectly.

MAYA (26) sits on a patio chair, deep in conversation with another young mom. She seems shy, introverted, letting the other woman lead while she occasionally nods and offers a soft smile. To any observer, they are just three separate neighbors enjoying a perfect Saturday.

DAVE (40s), another neighbor, wanders over to the grill, holding an empty can of beer.

<div style="text-align: center;">DAVE</div>

Lookin' good, Elias. Don't burn 'em now.

<div style="text-align: center;">ELIAS</div>

(He offers a soft, disarming smile)

The key is patience, Dave. A lesson I'm still trying to learn.

<div style="text-align: center;">DAVE</div>

(Sighs, shaking his head)

Tell me about it. Got my carbon tax rebate. Fifty-three bucks. Barely covers the gas to get to the job I don't have anymore. Meanwhile, they're sending billions back east for God knows what.

 Elias chuckles sympathetically. He doesn't say anything political. He doesn't need to. He just gives a quiet, knowing nod. It's a gesture of pure validation. *I get it. I'm one of you.*

He glances across the yard. His gaze passes over Joshawa, and then lands on Maya for less than half a second. It's a look so brief, so utterly imperceptible, it's invisible to anyone not looking for it.

A non-verbal command has been given.

Maya, in the middle of her conversation, smiles and pulls out her phone as if to show the other mom a photo. Her smile doesn't falter as she discreetly places the phone screen-down on the low glass patio table beside her.

THE FINAL SHOT OF THE EPISODE:

CAMERA PUSHES IN SLOWLY on the glass table.

The world above the glass goes into BEAUTIFUL, IDYLLIC SLOW MOTION. We see the sprinkler arcing water in the background, kids frozen mid-laugh as they run through it. We see Dave walking away from the grill, a happy, oblivious look on his face, feeling understood.

Then, the CAMERA PUNCHES DOWN, looking UP THROUGH THE GLASS TABLE at Maya's phone.

And the world below the glass explodes into HYPER-SPEED.

We see the reflection of the phone's screen on the underside of the glass. It's not Instagram. It's the stark, black VSI AEGIS INTERFACE.

Text flashes across the screen at an impossible speed: **TARGET ACQUIRED:
DAVE_HENDERSON. INITIATING PROFILE SCULPTING...**

What follows is a dizzying, split-second visual of Aegis hijacking and rebuilding Dave's entire digital life.

- The Facebook icon flashes. A dozen "likes" appear on secessionist pages. It joins three private "Alberta Action Front" groups.
- The YouTube icon flashes. A dozen subscriptions to right-wing commentary channels are added. His "watch later" playlist is populated.
- The Spotify icon flashes. His podcast queue is instantly filled with VSI-approved, anti-Ottawa content.
- A flurry of Google searches are executed: "Alberta independence," "federal equalization unfair," "join the Alberta Action Front," "proof of carbon tax failure."

The entire hack takes maybe three seconds of screen time.

The Aegis interface flashes one final message: **PROFILE SCULPTING COMPLETE. ASSET CULTIVATION PHASE INITIATED.**

The phone's screen goes dark.

BACK TO SLOW MOTION: We stay on the shot looking up through the glass table. Maya's hand reaches down and picks up the phone. She smiles politely at the other mom, as if she just finished replying to a normal text.

In the background, out of focus, Elias places another perfectly cooked burger on a bun. The sizzle is silent.

FADE TO BLACK.

[END OF EPISODE]