

Scene: The Neighborhood BBQ

Setting: The backyard of Elias's modest suburban home in an Alberta subdivision. **Time:** A bright, sunny Saturday afternoon. **Characters:** Elias, Maya, Joshawa, and several neighborhood families, including DAVE.

[SCENE START]

EXT. ELIAS'S BACKYARD - DAY

It is the picture of Canadian normalcy. The lawn is green. A sprinkler clicks away, watering a small garden. The smell of burgers on a propane grill hangs in the air. A half-dozen families from the neighborhood are milling about, drinking beer from cans, laughing. Kids are running 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. He looks 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. He's laughing, charismatic, telling a funny story to a group of other dads. He fits in perfectly.

MAYA (26) sits on a patio chair, talking to another young mom. She seems shy, introverted, letting the other woman lead the conversation while she occasionally nods and smiles.

They do not interact with each other. They are just three separate neighbors enjoying a sunny afternoon.

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

<center>DAVE</center>

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

<center>ELIAS</center>

(He smiles, a soft, disarming smile) The key is patience, Dave. A lesson I'm still trying to learn.

<center>DAVE</center>

Tell me about it. Saw my property tax assessment this morning. Gonna need a hell of a lot of patience not to drive down to city hall and scream.

Elias chuckles sympathetically, shaking his head. He doesn't say anything political. 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 subtle, it's completely invisible to anyone not looking for it. A non-verbal command has been given.

Maya, still in her conversation with the other mom, discreetly pulls out her phone and places it screen-down on the low glass patio table beside her chair.

THE FINAL SHOT OF THE EPISODE:

CAMERA PUSHES IN SLOWLY on the glass table.

The world *above* the glass goes into **BEAUTIFUL SLOW MOTION**. We see the sprinkler arcing water in the background, kids running through it, their laughter unheard. We see Dave walking away from the grill, a happy, oblivious look on his face. The scene is peaceful, idyllic, normal.

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 Dave's digital life.

- We see the Facebook app icon flash. A dozen "likes" appear on secessionist pages.
- The YouTube icon flashes. A dozen subscriptions to right-wing channels are added.
- The Spotify icon flashes. His podcast queue is instantly filled with VSI-approved content.
- We see a flurry of Google search terms being entered and executed: "Alberta independence," "federal equalization unfair," "join the Alberta Action Front."

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 burger on the grill. The sizzle is silent.

FADE TO BLACK.

[END OF EPISODE]