

BOWEN

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FADE IN:

EXT. OUTDOORS - DAY

We open on several establishing scenic shots. Flying over trees and wooded areas, a junkyard, empty fields, train tracks, overgrown farms, derelict houses, empty roads. Golden hour.

MANS VOICE (V.O.)

In the near future, the world faced an event that will eventually be called "The Greater Depression."

Things were good for everyone. The economy was strong. We felt safe and invincible.

But everything started to tumble. Many lost their jobs. Companies started to consolidate.

The majority of the population moved towards major cities, but because of poor living conditions, a new virus outbreak killed many, and the population plummeted.

Those of us who managed to survive spread out to live in the country. But we have to make due with what's available to us, because there's no power, no running water, no phones, no more business, and no help.

This isn't the "Greater Depression." No, this is all that's left.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

We see a MAN, mid to late 40, scruffy-looking beard, well-worn jeans, and a fall jacket walking into a barn with a FLASHLIGHT. He walks over to his cot and kicks off his boots, takes off his jacket, and lies down. On a stand next to him is a pair of RADIO HEADPHONES. He turns on the power and puts them on. He lies back and looks up at the rafters. All he hears is static.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

A high-level camera view passes over the old barn. We can see a faint light shining through the barn door down below.

INT. BARN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The Man, with his eyes closed, hears a change in pitch in the STATIC NOISE from the headphones. The Man rolls over to turn off the flashlight.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

From the flyover view we see the light disappear.

INT. BARN - MORNING

The Man opens the barn door. He takes a look around and puts on his gloves. He grabs a shovel and a post digger and leaves the barn.

EXT. FIELD - MORNING

The Man is doing a series of chores. He's driving in the post digger and pulling out dirt. He's disking a field with an old tractor that looks to be from the 60s. He's walking through junkyards looking for stuff to use. We also see a couple bird's eye views. In a couple tight shots we see the Man look up at the sky, searching.

EXT. POND - EVENING

The sun is setting and the Man is sitting in his boat, fishing rod loosely resting.

The bird's eye view gets lower and lower. It comes down about eye level behind the Man in the boat. The Man QUICKLY turns around with his shotgun drawn at a SMALL DRONE, a quadcopter with a small camera on the front lower side. It's seen better days, discolored from dirt, and the plastic has been scorched by the sun. The DRONE leaves the Man and rises up into the sky.

The Man keeps his gun pointed to the sky for a beat.

MAN

Shit.

EXT. BARN - THE NEXT MORNING

The Man opens up the barn door and does his previous routine but is a bit more cautious this time. The drone keeps its distance, watching him.

After taking a breather from digging a post, he wipes his forehead and spots the drone off in the distance.

MAN

Go on! Get out of here!

The drone shakes side to side, and then goes up into the air.

EXT. POND - EVENING

The drone comes back later to find the Man fishing in the pond. It peeks around the corner of the barn. The Man spots the drone again.

MAN

What the hell did I say? Scat!

(under his breath)

You and your Big Brother doomsday plan.

EXT. SHED - AFTERNOON

The Man is walking to the shed to get into his tractor. He checks it over and heads off to the field.

EXT. FIELD - AFTERNOON - LATER

While disking the field, the tractor starts to cough and sputter. He shuts the tractor off and jumps down. The FRONT TIRE is caked in wet mud. The Man opens up the engine compartment and then steps up onto the SLIPPERY TIRE. As he pushes himself up, he slips and falls, knocking himself out.

EXT. POND - EARLY EVENING - LATER

The drone slowly peeks over the barn. The boat is on the bank, empty. The drone moves closer and looks around the boat. The drone heads back to the barn and peeks into the crack in the door. No light inside.

Frantic, the drone looks side to side and then rockets straight up into the air.

The drone flies over the fence line, the junkyard, and spots the tractor in the field.

EXT. FIELD - EARLY EVENING - CONTINUOUS

The drone comes down cautiously, the Man unaware. He sneaks up slowly and then backs off just a little. He's still not moving. The drone gets closer.

The Man's HAIR starts to blow wildly. The drone is just inches away from the Man's face. He slowly opens his eyes and sees what's right above him.

He clumsily springs to his feet and scurries around to the back of the tractor where his shotgun is. He draws it.

MAN

Now what did I say? I don't want you around here.

The drone doesn't respond. It only moves a bit closer. The Man takes a slow step back. Focused

MAN (CONT'D)

Come on. Leave. I came out here to live in peace. I'm not harming anyone and don't need your pesticides. I'm perfectly fine out here.

The Man sees the TOP and BOTTOM of the drone.

The Man slowly lowers his weapon.

MAN (CONT'D)

You're...too small to have a pesticide tank.

He then grabs the drone by the landing gear and sees an area where an antenna was broken off on top.

MAN (CONT'D)

And you don't have your long-range antenna. Who's controlling you? Without that antenna, you've probably got a half mile range, and there isn't anyone else around here for about 10 miles.

The Man tried to look the drone over better. He starts to spot something handwritten on the side, but the drone breaks free from his loose grip.

(Quietly)
 What kind of drone are you?

The Man walks to the back of the tractor. The drone follows. He puts his shotgun back and turns to the drone.

MAN (CONT'D)
 I guess you're no harm to me. Thank you for checking on me, but I still don't want you around. Go back to where you came from.

EXT. SHED - DUSK

The Man puts the tractor back into the shed. As he's walking out, he notices that the drone has followed him back.

MAN
 Now come on. Get out of here.

The drone doesn't listen and stays, shaking back and forth.

There is a distant rumble of thunder.

MAN (CONT'D)
 You better go find shelter. I can't imagine that you're all that waterproof.

The Man walks back to the barn, the drone still following.

EXT. BARN - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

The Man gets to the barn and opens the door. LOUD CRASH OF THUNDER. The Man opens the door wider.

MAN
 Okay, just this one night. Come on.

The drone zips inside the barn. He shuts the barn door.

EXT. PATH - NEXT MORNING

The Man and the drone are walking on a path to get to the next chore location. The path is a grassy path along the field.

MAN
 I'm not sure what your purpose is. You're too small to be weaponized.
 (MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)

Did they have scout drones when everything went to shit? To try and find those of us who spread out to the country? But who's going to know you found someone? Your built-in antenna's too small, and I'm guessing without the top one, ain't nobody receiving your signal.

EXT. FENCE LINE - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

The Man and drone get to the fence line. The Man bends down to pick up the post digger.

MAN

By all means. I'll dig this one.

EXT. FENCE LINE - DAY - LATER

After a period of time the Man jabs the post digger into the hole and leans on it. The Man is drenched in sweat. A bead drips down his forehead. He brushes it off with the back of his dirty gloves, leaving a streak of dirt.

The drone turns around and takes off. The Man, confused, watches the drone leave.

The drone comes back, and he sees it has something hanging from its landing gear. The drone gets closer. It has a RAG draped over the crossbar.

He pauses, then takes the rag and wipes his forehead.

MAN

Not sure how you were able to accomplish that. But thanks.

EXT. FIRE PIT - EVENING

The Man is building a fire. The sun has gone down, and just the orange glow over the horizon is all the light that's left. He arranges the logs and lights the inside of it.

He comes out of the shed with an end table and sets it down on the ground. He sets up a chair next to it.

The drone lands on the table. The Man is walking around the table and sees the drone's BATTERY is getting low.

MAN

So it looks like we need to get you some juice. Tomorrow I'll try something out.

INT. WORKBENCH - MORNING

The Man is working on an old, dirty, greasy workbench. He pulls an old cable from a canvas sack and snips the end off of the wire. He then takes another end of the cable and twists them together.

MAN

That should work. Now let's see if this port you have on the front of you is for charging.

He grabs the drone on the workbench and plugs the homemade cable into the port. He spins the drone around. The first green bar flashes. He spins the drone around so that its camera is facing him.

He sees what's written on the side of the drone: half worn-off Sharpie scribble, like it was done by a kid. "BENJAMIN."

MAN (CONT'D)

I repurposed an old solar panel found on the top of the one flashing stop sign in the town just a few miles away. Figured no one will notice it's missing. It's hanging up on the side of the barn now.

He points in a general direction with his thumb.

MAN (CONT'D)

It works for what I need. I figured we could alternate charging. Seems that your battery lasts a couple days at least.

EXT. FARM - AFTERNOON

The drone shows a full charge on its battery back. It's just hovering in the air watching the Man continue building his fence. The Man wipes his forehead with his rag.

MAN

So where did you come from? Did you escape?

(MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)

What's it like in the cities? Have you come across anyone else? Am I the only one left?

The drone makes a movement like he hears the Man but can't answer.

MAN (CONT'D)

You're not like the other drones I've seen. Those are made for control. Control over us. But you're different.

The drone seems to be listening intently.

MAN (CONT'D)

Benjamin.

The drone lurches forward and wags.

MAN (CONT'D)

Benjamin? Is that your name or your owner's name? Seems you must have been the pet project from some kid. What happened to him? Are you lost? Or have you lost him?

The drone, still seems excited to hear that name again.

The Man grabs a fence post and drops it into the hole.

MAN (CONT'D)

Anyways, I think those who made the other kind of drones may have made a major calculation mistake. A mistake that made a lot of people sick, and with that many people together, there was just no way to stop it from growing. Major cities like...Chicago got the worst of it.

EXT. - WOODS - LATE AFTERNOON

The Man and drone are now in a clearing chopping wood.

MAN

You see, something new started affecting infants, and little was known about it. Was it food? Was it insects? Was it pollution in the water or air?

(MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)

Ultimately, they figured it was a new virus spread through insects. So what'd they do? They sprayed pesticides. But since the fall of the economy and the massive amounts of people moving into the cities, it caused more issues than good.

People started getting sick just days after; the hospitals were too overrun to help everyone. And many were left to suffer, and the sickness spread like a virus.

The Man is getting choked up and taking a breath to regain his composure.

MAN (CONT'D)

So you'll have to forgive me with my aggressive introduction. You see, I left someone I cared deeply about in Chicago because of something just like you.

The Man splits one more log in half and sticks his axe into the stump.

MAN (CONT'D)

Now here's my theory. Cities like Chicago got the worst of it. But smaller towns are probably fine.

Towns started to dry up once jobs were moved to larger cities.

They focused those pesticides on those cities and left the smaller towns alone.

I've been living out here for the past few years, and I've been doing alright by myself. If those smaller cities are just like Chicago, it would be too painful to see. So I've decided to just keep it simple and live like our pioneers used to.

The sun is starting to set, and there's a distant rumble of thunder.

MAN (CONT'D)

Benjamin. I believe it's time to
get cleaned up and call it a night.

The thunder is getting closer as he's packing in his gear.

EXT. BARN - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

The Man stands at the entrance of the barn and looks off in the distance. He can see the clouds roll in and the winds pick up. He looks up at the sky and right then a SINGLE DROP OF WATER splatters on the TOE of his boot.

He sets the drone on the work bench. The rain pings off the tin roof. There are flashes of light shining through the boards when the lightning flashes. The wind howls.

EXT. BARN - MORNING

WATER DRIPS from soaked wood and leaves, and puddles of water stand. There are tree branches down all around the area.

INT. BARN - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

The Man walks to the door to open it to see the sun is starting to shine. He then walks over to the drone and plugs it into the charging port. The battery doesn't flash. He unplugs and plugs it back in. No flashing.

EXT. BARN - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

He walks around the barn to look up to the solar panel. He steps on some broken glass. The fallen solar panel.

MAN

Shit.

INT. BARN - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

The Man walks up to the work bench to get a better look at the solar panel. The drone looks up at the Man.

MAN

Well, Ben, I've got some bad news.
The storm smashed the cells. It
doesn't look like I'll be able to
repair it. I'm afraid I have
nothing else. That was it.

EXT. BARN - AFTERNOON - LATER

The Man is standing outside of the barn with a lost look. The drone is hovering next to him.

MAN

Well. There isn't much else to do other than to get back to work and prepare for winter.

The drone looks at the Man and then turns to zip to the gravel road just on the edge of the property. The drone hovers there for a bit, then turns to look at the Man.

The Man looks at the drone in confusion.

The drone zips back over to the Man, pauses, then zips back to where it was before, looking at the Man and then looking at the path in front of it.

MAN (CONT'D)

Do you want me to follow you?

The drone zips back to the Man and then back to the spot and turns to face the direction it wants to go.

MAN (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Am I about to follow this drone?

The drone turns back to the Man.

MAN (CONT'D)

Hold on. Let me gather some stuff before I take this adventure you're about to lead me on.

The drone turns around and slowly starts to move off.

The Man watches it go and turns to walk back to the barn.

MAN (CONT'D)

(In two different voices)

So, how did you end up here at the Pearly Gates?

I broke a solar panel and took orders from a kid's drone.

EXT. ROAD - AFTERNOON

The drone is leading the Man down an overgrown road. The town sign, BOWEN, leaving them behind. The Man is decked out in a heavy-duty jacket, a stocking cap, a backpack filled with all the gear he needs, and his shotgun between him and the backpack.

They make their way through the woods, through a creek, into a clearing, and stumble their way to an edge of a tree line. They pause for a second, and the drone heads up over the trees. The Man stands there and watches the drone continue above.

MAN

Oh, no. You go ahead. I'll just take this shortcut.

The Man starts his grueling march through the brush, trees, and slight unevenness of the ground. He continues to look up to make sure he's going the same direction as the drone. He finally finds the clearing where the drone is waiting for him.

MAN (CONT'D)

What took you so long?

The drone turns to move on. The Man, visibly out of breath, pauses for a beat.

MAN (CONT'D)

What are you waiting for? We gotta keep moving. There's no rest time.

EXT. CREEK - AFTERNOON

The drone is flying down the middle of a creek. The Man is walking along the side of the bank.

They come to an old train bridge over the water. The drone rises up above the tracks and hovers to wait for the Man. Once the Man gets up on the tracks, the drone turns to cross over the bridge. The Man follows.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - AFTERNOON - LATER

They walk down the tracks. The Man sees that the drone only has one bar left on its battery pack.

MAN

Any idea where we're heading?
You're not going to last much
longer.

The drone just keeps moving.

EXT. GRAIN ELEVATOR - EARLY DUSK - LATER

The drone starts to slow down and starts to dip lower. The drone turns around to look at the Man. It takes one last long look, and then slowly descends to the ground.

MAN

No. No. No. Come on buddy. You've
gotta keep going. You can't just
leave me out in the middle of
nowhere without at least telling me
where we're going.

The drone lands softly, the propellers stop spinning, and the camera droops down.

The Man wipes a tear from his eye.

MAN (CONT'D)

Let's go, Benjamin. We've got more
ground to cover. Let's go. Get back
up. That's enough resting.

The drone sits motionless with no response. There are no lights on the battery.

The Man looks around to see that they are near an old grain elevator. He sees a ledge. He wipes the final tear and grabs the drone.

EXT. GRAIN ELEVATOR - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

He sets the drone down on the loading platform with the sun starting to set. He puts his back against the wall and sits down. The sun is starting to set with a nice, warm, golden hour glow shining through the grain bins.

MAN

It's getting too dark to continue.
I'll rest here for the night and
figure out what to do tomorrow.

EXT. GRAIN ELEVATOR - DAWN - THE NEXT DAY

The Man uses his backpack as a pillow. The drone is still in the same space he left it the night before.

The Man wakes up, stands up, and looks around at his surroundings. The Man takes off his jacket, grabs the shotgun, and walks off.

He peeks into rooms and storage areas. Everything is empty.

He walks around to the back of a building and spots a pretty BABY BLUE DUMP TRUCK sitting in the tall grass. It looks like it's been sitting there for years. The Man walks up to it. The door creaks as he slowly forces it open. He sees the KEYS are still in it.

MAN

Let's see if you still have any
juice left in the battery.

He turns the key. Nothing. Sitting in the truck, he slowly looks around at its interior.

MAN (CONT'D)

I used to drive something like this
back in the day. Not everything was
computerized or navigated with...

He reaches over and opens the glovebox. He shifts through some papers and pulls out something folded.

EXT. DUMP TRUCK - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

He plops down a folded state road map. The year says 1954.

MAN

GPS.

He unfolds it across the hood of the truck. He points to the area where they started from.

MAN (CONT'D)

If we started here, traveled this
way, then we're right about here.

He drags his finger in a straight path in the general direction they were heading.

MAN (CONT'D)

And I think I now know where you
were taking me.

EXT. GRAIN ELEVATOR - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

The Man is packing up all his equipment. He puts the map in the backpack and clips the drone to the outside. He pulls out a bottle of water, takes a drink, and carefully slings the backpack over his shoulders.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

The Man walks along the tracks in various places. He continues to walk some more in a montage of shots of him walking through a stream, through a field, over and around cars in a junk yard, with an occasional break.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - EVENING

The sun is starting to set. The Man is continuing his journey on the tracks until he sees what he was walking towards. He leaves the tracks and walks slowly onto the changing ground. It is now a mix of dirt and sand.

He walks up with his toes at the edge of water. He looks down at his feet and then looks up to see an OLD POWER PLANT lit up across the MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

MAN

Well, Benjamin. I think we're here.
Think they have power?

EXT. POWER PLANT - EVENING - LATER

The power plant, an old hydro dam from the early 1900s, still seems to be running on its own.

The Man forces an old, rusty metal door open into one of the workshop buildings.

INT. WORKSHOP - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Somewhere in a dark workshop, the Man clears off a spot on the workbench. There's a haze in the room as he's kicked up years of settled dust. He sets the drone down gently onto the cleared area. He takes the charging cable from his backpack. He finds a source of power and slowly plugs it in. He takes the other end and slowly plugs it into the drone. For a second there is no light. Then...the first GREEN BAR flashes.

The DRONE'S CAMERA SNAPS UP.

FADE OUT.