

OVER BLACK -

MARIE (V.O.)

It started with the men...

FADE IN:

EXT. POPULATION CONTROL CENTER - DAY

A steel fenced corridor. Razor wire. Hopeless FACES looking through the gaps. Their fingers poking through. Spotlights flood over their sad expressions.

MARIE (V.O.)

Then, the women - eventually they started taking children.

A few on their knees. Forced to plead. The light giving way to -

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

It's hot. It's bright. It's Texas.

The BUZZING of summer insects. MARIE, attractive, 20's, walks past a farming landscape, under blue skies and sunshine, a nearby field with a TRACTOR.

A distant RUMBLING, indistinct. Marie stops - listens for a beat. She looks up to the sky as if it was THUNDER, but the sound does not repeat.

Marie continues down the path. She heads down a long straight pass towards a dark, forbidden looking wooded area.

Marie disappears into the trees. She is undeniably - alone.

Marie heads down a long straight road towards a battered overpass. Just ahead -

A BARN near the side of the road. She glances over a garden which is barren now.

There, a piece of paper that had been blowing in the wind, latches itself onto her leg.

Marie bends down to examine it. As she does, we get a quick glance of the big ass .45 tucked into her waist.

Her fingers flatten out the wrinkled paper - straight enough to read:

"HAS SOMEONE YOU KNOW BEEN CHOSEN FOR APPORTIONMENT? REPORT ANY UNWILLING SUBJECTS TO YOUR LOCAL POPULATION CONTROL AGENT..."

The words seem to affect Marie. She can't take her eyes off of the ink.

MARIE (V.O.)

There were so many names...

INT. MARIE'S OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Marie seated behind her desk. Pouring over a file. Pixilated photographs of unnamed souls. Growing. Names multiplying. Men. Women. Black. White. The daisy wheel pounds incessantly.

Until - a YOUNG BOY'S face. Some name on a piece of paper. The horror in his sullen eyes - Marie just stares into them. She wants to turn the page, but can't - she doesn't. The image affects her.

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

Marie slows down along the outskirts of a chain link fence. She finds an opening. Going off the road and stepping through the metal.

MARIE (V.O.)

That was my job. Choosing which ones would live and which ones would die.

Marie looks both ways, and assured the coast is clear, she walks towards some bushes. She knifes her way through, and soon finds a dirt path.

EXT. DIRT PATH - DAY

Marie navigates the path carefully. And through the trees - visible past the light of day:

Rows of beautiful houses.

MARIE (V.O.)

Revolution became murder. Murder became insanity. Knowing the consequences, I left.

Marie takes this in. Her eyes widen as if she's never seen this sort of place before.

EXT. UPSCALE SUBURBAN COMMUNITY - DAY

A calm, quiet street. American flags. Cars parked out front. Utterly deserted. It's as if time had suddenly passed over this place.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

MARIE, stands at the sink, draining a can of tuna fish in a colander. She SNIFFS it. Her eyes squint. She's starving.

MARIE (V.O.)

An outcast, guilty of treason.

Marie uses her index finger to scoop up a chunk of the white meat. Chews. Swallows. She chokes down the first few bites, and continues eating. She's all business tonight.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

A beautiful room. Marie sits at the table writing in an old composition notebook.

A FRAMED PHOTO of a FAMILY sits across the room. Marie notices. She does not move to get it. She just stares at it, almost afraid, she recognizes this face...

MARIE (V.O.)

Elected officials were the first
groups sent to the camps.

Marie walks over the photograph. Takes the photo out of the frame. She runs her fingers across their faces. Almost as if she's committing them to memory.

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

Just then. A separate set of FEET move over the dry, cracked asphalt. Military boots.

The track past the same field and tractor - through the woods and beyond the trees. A relentless pace.

They come to a stop before reaching the overpass. Now, we see NORMAN.

He's forty. Professional. Trim and polished. Dominant. Not to be messed with. A RIFLE in his grasp.

Norman stares out at the concrete bridge. Makes his way over to it.

He stands there. Checking his watch. The bridge. The ground. The perimeter.

Suddenly, the same flyer Marie once held comes into view. Norman reaches down for it. Reads. Sniffs. Balling it...

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Fast. Calm. Methodical. Some exfil procedure that Marie's honed and choreographed.

A duffel on the floor - her fingers plow through the medicine cabinet. Toothpaste - tampons - toilet paper - rolls up the hand towels. She packing like a machine -

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

That moment. The chain link fence. Norman glancing around nice and easy. He's that cool. He makes a slow pass through the fence. Eyes everywhere - the bushes...

INT. FOYER - DAY

Marie standing at the threshold, the duffel slung over her shoulder. The place is stripped, but she's taking one last glance around - one last thing - she almost forgot.

THE PHOTOGRAPH. The one of the smiling Family. Marie jams it into her notebook and she's gone...

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

The other side of the neighborhood. Marie moving on from this place. Alongside the desolate fences and burnt trees - an old CEMETERY. She stops to look.

The type of resting spot that reeks of history. Stained head stones and uneven plots.

Marie extends her hands and grips the outer edge of the rusted cemetery fence. She doesn't dare step inside...

MARIE (V.O.)

I know they'll send someone for me.
It's only a matter of time.

She's moving on. There's a dull ROAR of THUNDER in the distance. She starts moving the opposite way - one eye on sky.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Norman standing at the door like a ghost.

TIME CUTS.

Norman at the sink. Staring down into the empty colander which Marie had left behind.

Norman seated at the table. The exact same spot as Marie. He stares off into the windows.

Norman stares at the bathroom vanity. His eyes scouring the wake of Marie's chaos.

Norman back at the foyer. His rifle hangs down at his side. A look of comfort across his eyes. His method is crisp. This is how he finds his prey.

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

An abandoned car parked off to the side. Marie opens the passenger side door. Always suspicious, Marie gives the road a good look over and then opens the glove compartment.

An owner's manual and an oil change receipt.

The center console is filled with CD's and loose change. A bottle of aspirin. Marie scoops it up.

Moving on to the back seat - more of the same - wrappers and empty soda cans.

There's a baby rattle resting on the floorboard. Marie stares at it for a moment, then reaches down for it. She holds it in her hand like a diamond. A piece of history.

Marie opens her duffel and removes her notebook. She leans it against the hood of the car - places the rattle on a fresh page - and traces it with her pencil.

EXT. THE WOODS - NIGHT

Through swirls of smoggy air, Marie warms her hands by a small fire.

MARIE (V.O.)

I remember pieces of my training.

Marie has piled rocks around the edge of her fire pit in order to keep the flames from reaching a visible height.

MARIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

There are things you look for when
hunting someone down in the woods.

Marie removes her .45, and rests it beside her. For now,
everything is suspect - even the dark. Her paranoia grows
with the shadows around her. She's so small and insignificant
against the night landscape.

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

Marie is moving on from her camp. The sun beating down on her
back. A torn strip of fabric off her shirt used as a bandana
to keep the sweat out of her eyes.

Her route leads her to a side road off the beaten path. The
wind blows. Her pace slows a bit, as -

Sprawled, propped there actually, on the side of the road is
a STRANGER. His left leg hacked off near the knee. There's a
lot of blood. His lips chapped and skin dirty.

Marie approaches cautiously. The Stranger opens his eyes - he
and Marie lock eyes for a moment. He can barely muster the
energy to say the words -

STRANGER

You there! Please, help me.

Marie stands there. Silent. Wielding her blank expression
like a club. She's seen much worse.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

I need to get to a hospital.

MARIE

I can't help you. I'm sorry.

STRANGER

But, if I could just get to a
hospital -

MARIE

- there aren't any hospitals.
 (the wound)
 It's infected.

STRANGER

Are you a doctor?

MARIE

No. But I know when something's
 infected and when it's not.

STRANGER

(reaching for his leg)
 I'll die out here.

MARIE

(impatient)
 That's not my concern.

The Stranger attempts to sit up - Marie takes a giant step back and readies her .45. The Stranger sees this, he notices.

STRANGER

I don't mean you no harm. Look at
 me.

But there's no way around it -

MARIE

You're going to die out here.
 (softer)
 I'm sorry.

And with that stinger, the Stranger nods - understood. A tear falls from his eye. He looks down at empty street. Haunted. Wipes the tear from his face.

STRANGER

(a moment of clarity)
 It all went to hell. All of it.

Marie hesitates. Because now she really sees him. SOBBING. Shivering. A disaster.

Marie's eyes grow more hollow than his. She reaches into her duffel and takes out her notebook and a pen. The Stranger looks to her - just a complete mess.

MARIE
(pen to paper)
What's your name?

STRANGER
My name...?
(a beat, no answer)
My name...

Marie knows there's a moment of truth here. She braces, unsure. Fear overwhelmed by curiosity.

But before the Stranger can answer -

EXT. UP THE HILL - DAY

Norman. Eye to the scope. His finger squeezing. FIRING.

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

Suddenly, the Stranger's head jerking back.

The bullet tearing through his head. Marie instinctively reaching for him - too late! The Stranger's body finally plummets to the ground.

Marie's eyes scan the trees. Frantic - do I move? Do I run?

EXT. UP THE HILL - DAY

Norman lowers the scope. He's basically gone unnoticed. He stands.

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

Marie is not liking this. Eyes all over - trying to decide. She's making a move. One minute ago everything was fine, now - she's running for her life.

She looks behind and somehow finds Norman - a hundred yards away - a brief, hard stare between them.

EXT. THE WOODS - DAY

Marie running in the woods. A punishing pace. Moving strong. Deep into it. Flagrant. The sun and scenery are lost on her speed.

Moving fast, until -

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

Later.

Marie coming out on the other end. Catching her breath. Really huffing it. Freezing suddenly, because there -

A CHECKPOINT.

Maybe a hundred yards up the way. Two GUARDS. Smoking. Just talking. Military faces.

Marie raises her hands in the air - the universal sign for surrender. She knows the drill, she's taking her chances with these guys rather than facing the man in the woods.

The Guards see her approaching. They perk up instantly. It's the first warm body they've seen in a while.

As Marie comes forward -

GUARD #1

Stop right there! Keep your hands
up!

MARIE

(yells out)

I have identification!

Guard #2 runs out to meet her, weapon drawn. Suspicious eyes. Marie flashes her credentials.

GUARD #2
(looking it over)
A PC agent?
(off her nod)
Are you armed?

MARIE
No.

GUARD #2
Government issued piece?

MARIE
I lost it.

Guard #2 gives an unimpressed shrug and leads her in. Marie keeps one eye on the woods. As -

EXT. CHECKPOINT WORK STATION - DAY

The Guards, silent, examine her identification card. They study her.

GUARD #1
What are you doing all the way out
here?
(off her look)
You're thirty miles from the
nearest regional center...

Silence.

GUARD #2
Are you traveling alone?

Marie stares straight ahead. She's a steel trap. The curtain has fallen.

Guard #1 reaches for the phone - he's calling it in, but...

WRONG!

Out of nowhere - Marie's gun is out - BAM! - Guard #1 gets it in the chest. He's done.

Guard #2 - fumbles for his piece - as Marie follows up - knee up in the ribs - he's down for the count.

Marie takes one last look at the dead Guard on the floor and hustles down the street.

Just as she disappears into the distance, Norman emerges from the trees. Rifle hanging near his thighs. Calm. Collected. Seemingly in no rush whatsoever.

Norman stands where the dead Guard lies. He helps Guard #2 to his feet.

NORMAN
(the dead Guard)
What happened here?

GUARD #2
(wincing in pain)
She shot him.

NORMAN
I see that.
(off his GRUNTING)
Can you please be quiet?

The Guard quiets himself as best he can. Norman holds the rifle a bit higher now - the barrel pointed in the direction of Guard #2 as he remains wrenched over in pain.

Norman scans the landscape. His eyes follow the road over the horizon. He knows.

Suddenly, and without warning, he casually FIRES a single, close range round into Guard #2 as if he weren't even there.

Guard #2 falls HARD.

It's that simple. No words. Norman begins walking...

EXT. BARN - DAY

Marie wanders inside. She takes solace here. Resting on a stack of hay. It's quiet, almost too much so.

She sits. Her hands shake - shes rubs them and centers herself, really trying to pull herself together. Fighting off the nerves and fatigue.

Marie goes into her duffel. She takes out the notebook and begins flipping through the pages. We don't make out the words, but from the looks of it - she's been writing in there for some time now.

The photo of the Family falls out and lands to the ground. Marie reaches down to pick it up. She stares at it. Something longing in her eyes - maybe it's the love of a family, maybe it's the yearning for a child...

MARIE (V.O.)

He was right. It all went to hell.
Maybe the devil you know is simpler
than the devil you don't...

Her eyes move back down to the notebook. She runs her nails over the page - dried blood from when the Stranger was shot.

A NOISE outside. FOOTSTEPS.

Breaks her concentration. Changing the tone sharply. There's little to no time for her to react - to think.

She's not lingering. As she's -

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

The sun beating down. The duffel feeling somehow heavier. Marie never pauses, she sees a FARM HOUSE up the gravel road. She cuts across the field.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Marie moves to the front door - POUNDS on it. It's locked. Dead quiet now. Eerie.

Marie circles the house, peaks in all the windows that she can. The back door is locked - there's a blood stain there on the white steel facing.

Marie turns, shaken now. Gun in hand - knowing that the longer it takes to get inside, the quicker Norman will be on her back. And from around the corner of the house, comes -

CLICK.

Norman, rifle drawn, comes from around the bend. Marie turns to find him there - she instantly points her .45 directly at him. He stops. They've seen each other before.

A grin begins to form in the corner of his lips. Slight. Taunting - I got you!

Marie refuses to waver. She holds her ground - unable to pull the trigger, but not relinquishing this stand off. And then, finally -

MARIE

I didn't think it'd be you.

NORMAN

(already knowing the
answer)

It changes things? That knowledge?

Marie making sure her eyes don't leave his. They don't, because she's stunned. Doomed. Mouth dry. Struggling to make sense of the chaos.

MARIE

I can't put this gun down.

NORMAN

Neither can I.

Beat.

MARIE

You're here to bring me in?

NORMAN

(just staring)

No.

A body blow, but he has her attention. She wipes a tear with her sleeve.

MARIE

So, how does this end?

NORMAN

You know they won't let you walk
away. *I can't let you walk away.*

Almost paralyzed. Stalled out. As honest a moment as she's
ever given -

MARIE

I'm not sorry...

And there they are. Two people standing next to a farm house
in the middle of nowhere, pointing guns at each other.

Squared off.

CUT TO BLACK

