

**Excerpted from "Seed" a feature length screenplay by
Helen Weatherall (2004)**

61. INT. HALL OUTSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM IN BASEMENT OF CHAFFEE'S OFFICE

Raymond, Eve, Reece, Anne, Brian and Beth file into the conference room. Chaffee, his assistant and two men representing Malguya are standing by a long table. Malguya's men are dressed in suits cut of charcoal grey silk. Chaffee and his assistant are turned out in earth tone suits made of light weight wool.

CHAFFEE

Well here they come-
Ray, Reece, Brian (Pats Brian on the shoulder)

Raymond reaches forward to address Malguya's men. He shakes the hand of the one closest to him, a man with a self satisfied air and incongruous ponytail.

RAYMOND

Raymond Goode

CAL

Morales (Beat), Cal Morales.

Raymond steps toward the other man to shake his hand.

TRENT

Trent Framer

Reece and Brian take their turns shaking hands with the men.

CHAFFEE

(To Eve, Anne, and Brian's wife Beth) Ladies
(Beat) Help yourselves to seats.

Sterling, assistant to the Ag Commissioner appears in the doorway.

RAYMOND

(Noticing Sterling but not recognizing him) Uh
hello.

STERLING

(To Raymond) I'm Dan Goodhue's assistant. I'm sorry to come late.

RAYMOND

No, no- you're here! I'm just glad to see you.

Leaning away from the others Sterling speaks to Raymond in a low voice.

STERLING

Dan's keeping a close eye, he wants you to know that.

Raymond displays silent gratitude.

CAL

(With a touch of irritability) Looks like we've got quite a crowd now.

TRENT

We'd like to get started.

CHAFFEE

By all means gentlemen. I see no reason...

RAYMOND

Well there will be one or two more coming. As we said...

Journalist Glen Forsythe arrives at the door.

RAYMOND

(Shares a welcoming glance with Forsythe as he walks in) Yes- I think we're just about set.

Everyone gets seated.

TRENT

(To Chaffee) If you would be so cordial- why not get us started with introductions- (Beat) fair faces and all.

CHAFFEE

Glad to oblige. (Looks to his right) Beside me here is Reece Goode (Reece nods) and to his right Brian Goode his son, (Brian nods) next to him is Raymond his younger son and sitting down there- well that's Reece's wife Anne and with her Beth, is that right? (Beth smiles)- yes Beth, Brian's wife, and of course Eve, Raymond's better half. These other two- (Chaffee looks at Sterling and pauses)

STERLING

(Speaks up realizing Chaffee is drawing a blank) Sterling Plant. I'm with the state Ag Commission.

CHAFFEE

Good to have you. (Looks past him to Glen Forsythe) And you sir?

GLEN

I'm Glen Forsythe with the North Dakota Monitor.

TRENT

(Sitting back stiffly) The press.

CAL

(Errupts out of his seat) Son-of-a--! (Beat) Call it Trent (To Trent with quiet anger)

Cal thrusts a finger at Chaffee and the Goodes.

CAL

We're not here for 'Meet the Press'- This meeting is over.

Cal exits in a fury. Trent collects his brief case.

TRENT

So you know- Malguya instructed us to negotiate. Their intent was to spare you litigation.

Trent stands and walks out.

RAYMOND

(To Chaffee) What the hell Bart? You said you let them know. Didn't you tell me you had a phone conversation- what? A week or so ago? You told them we had invited these folks!

CHAFFEE

(Beet red) I'm as surprised as you. I talked to them. They weren't happy about it but they knew.

Bart gets up walks to the door, looks up and down the hall and turns back to the group.

They're just beating their chests. (Beat) A couple a apes beating their chests. They have no right telling you who you can and who you can't invite. (Long beat) Would anyone like coffee? We'll just sit tight.

Bart dials a phone mounted on the wall.

CHAFFEE

Sherri? Folks down here would like some coffee. Could you bring down a pot? Be sure you've got enough cups and water too, bring us some ice water.

CUT TO:

62. INT. HALL OUTSIDE OF THE CONFERENCE ROOM.

Sherri appears down the stairs passing Trent and Cal. The two men talk as Sherri collects cups and coffee from a closet and shuttles things to an adjoining kitchen. The men are careful to keep Sherri from hearing their discussion.

CUT TO:

63. INT. INSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM

Trent and Cal let themselves back into the room breaking an awkward silence. The men remain quiet as they take their seats.

TRENT

We will allow the assistant to the Ag Commissioner to stay. But as far as the newspaper man- we have to insist that he leave.

CAL

Malguya called this meeting for the benefit of the Goode family. Our evidence suggests that the Goode partnership has violated Malguya's contract (Shifts in his seat)-which by the way is a serious felony.

TRENT

In the interest of maintaining confidentiality on this matter we think it is in the best interest of the Goode family name to keep this meeting closed to the press.

Raymond casts a hard glance at Forsythe and turns back to Trent and Cal.

RAYMOND

Who are you kidding?! In our best interest? (Beat) Look- I invited these people. I invited them here because I thought they should have an interest in what's happening between Malguya and the farmers in this state (Beat)- in this country! I don't have anything to hide. I don't have any problem with these people being here. (Beat) And the way I see it, if you believe what you're telling us, about your evidence- you shouldn't either.

FORSYTHE

(Getting up to leave) I don't want to add any conflict.

Raymond throws a hard look at Chaffee.

CHAFFEE

Of course Mr. Forsythe is free to write either way.

TRENT

Of course. If he thinks this routine business affair merits a story. Our interest is to mitigate any distortion or inflation of the facts.

CAL

...distortion that may- well may not cast favor on the Goode family.

Forsythe picks up his things and leaves. He locks eyes with Raymond and with a look assures him that he is not going far.

As the door closes behind Forsythe Trent is quick to take control.

TRENT

I think this is a good time to remind everyone that Malguya called this meeting. These are grave allegations. It concerns us that Mr. Goode, you and your sons don't seem to grasp the seriousness of Malguya's grievances.

CAL

Again, to remind you- Malguya's samples taken from your fields tested positive. (Beat) But you see- that isn't the trouble- the trouble is you didn't compensate Malguya for the seed stock required to cover the acreage in question.

REECE

Clearly there's a mistake somewhere...

TRENT

Is there?

Not sure she should speak Eve tries but fails to contain her irritation or her question.

EVE

What percentage of our fields was HarvestNow according to this testing?

Trent and Cal stall. Cal looks at Trent as if waiting to confer.

TRENT

(Abruptly) 100%. All of them.

All of the Goodes look stunned.

REECE

That's a pile a horse shit.

CHAFFEE

100%- that's what you want to claim?

RAYMOND

Wait- Now let me understand what you're saying. Do you mean that 100% of our fields tested positive? Or were your tests 100% positive on a quantitative basis? See, you can have a whole soybean plant that's negative for HarvestNow- in fact its straight conventional- but find one pod on it that tests positive for HarvestNow. All it takes is one bee- one bee that's been on a field of HarvestNow soybean to cross pollinate a conventional soybean and alter it.

TRENT

(Not giving much thought to Raymond's comment) I agree- the results are disturbing.

RAYMOND

Well we would like you to explain them. You're saying that your tests were positive but what did you test?

CAL

(Laughs) My friend Trent here, he's a damn fine lawyer- I'll give him that- but Trent and I, we don't do plant science. Malguya pays scientists to do their science.

TRENT

(Chuckling) Thank you sir. (To the Goodes) We would have to refer your questions to our Dr. Copecech- I believe his name is.

RAYMOND

(Angrily) That's fine. In fact why don't you get him on the phone. (Gestures to the phone) Bart!?

Chaffee picks up the receiver and dials a couple numbers to connect to an outside line then hands it toward Trent)

CHAFFEE

It's all yours.

CAL

(Unflustered he smiles a condescending smile) I'm sure Copecech can't be reached. He'd be in the field.

TRENT

In any case Copecech visited your farm last November and his report states that 100% of your fields tested positive for HarvestNow.

REECE

This is the first I've heard anything of anyone named Copecech.

RAYMOND

(To Reece) That's because no one by that name was ever on our farm! (To Trent and Cal) What are you taking me- us for- (Beat) Fools? I know who came to our farm. I asked for their business cards. I'm glad I did! I know the two men who came. They spent two hours in our shop while I dug up legal descriptions of our fields so they could find them without me. They wouldn't let me take them to our fields myself. (Beat) Yeah I thought that was kind of strange- Why wouldn't they want me to go into my own fields with them?

CAL

(Wearily as if reminding a child of an elementary fact.) I can think of one reason. (Beat) Protocol-adherence to company protocol.

REECE

What I'd like to see is your evidence. See none of this makes any sense to us. We know what we planted. Those fellows Malguya sent saw our seed records. So what we want to see is your evidence against us. Let's see those test results. (Beat) I don't know if you can do it- but put yourself in our shoes.

TRENT

(Grins) This isn't a trial Mr. Goode, Reece.
(Smirks) Not yet- no (Beat) See there's no judge, no jury (Looks around the room) not that I can see. Malguya arranged this meeting as a service to you and your family.(Beat) This is an opportunity to nip this thing in the bud- or pod. I believe that's the right term.

Cal snorts.

RAYMOND

But we would like to see something to back up what your accusations.

CAL

Yes and as Mr. Framer has explained, we do not have the documents you are referring to with us today.

Raymond and Reece silently fume.

EVE

Maybe you could explain to us then how your tests were taken. You said they followed some protocol or other.

TRENT

Certainly Mrs. Goode (Smiles) I'm happy to do that. (Beat) As you know two technicians sent by Malguya visited your farm on November 13 of last year. (Beat) Using legal descriptions of your fields provided by your husband- I believe, (Looks at Raymond) they accessed your fields and proceeded to take samples.

RAYMOND

But where did they take samples? How?

CAL

They first layed out 5 acre grids.

CHAFFEE

How do you mean? They layed out a 5 acre grid on each field?

CAL

(Delays then brusquely responds) They established grids over the entire area so that each field was divided into a grid of 5 units.

Silence as everyone considers this.

CARL (LAWYER ASSISTING CHAFFEE)

Ah- (Beat)

Carl clears his throat, looks at Chaffee, glances quickly at Raymond and then the Ag Commissioner's assistant.

CARL

And these grids (Beat) How were they laid out exactly? Was GPS employed?

CAL

Global positioning technology?

TRENT

(Abruptly) Yes.

CARL

Well and they'd have to wouldn't they? But then that concerns me- (Beat) As it happens I know something about GPS (Beat) It's an area I've spent some time with- (Beat) GPS is a powerful mapping tool- (Beat) It can be... The problem is it lends a false security. Turns out those satellites up there are vulnerable to weather and what have you. (Beat) That and radio signal can interfere. Raymond, do you folks have your own radio tower?

RAYMOND

(Cracks a smile) You bet Carl- yep we do.

CARL

When they, Malguya's men set up those grids, (Beat) did they calibrate to guarantee accuracy?

CAL

Again, (Beat) were this a trial...

TRENT

(Interrupts) You're talking about GPS- No, see, it wasn't GPS. What they used was DGPS.

Cal casts a relieved glance at Trent then scans the group smugly.

RAYMOND

DGPS!

TRENT

The "D" makes the difference. DGPS relies on a different technology (Beat) Now I'm not an expert but as I understand it DGPS readings are accurate to within centimeters.

CARL

Yes and you say you don't have their readings with you?

RAYMOND

(Half under his breath) Convenient!

CHAFFEE

(Affably) I'll tell you what. (Beat) Why don't you express over to me those documents for myself and my clients to have a look at. I'd like to see the fruit of this remarkable technology.

RAYMOND

Right, fine. Send them to us then. Send us all of your D-GPS locations.

EVE

So you mean you took samples at those locations?

TRENT

That's right.

RAYMOND

That's a hell of a lot of samples.

REECE

Would be- one hell of a lot.

CHAFFEE

(Firmly) I'm sure you can tell us what the total was (Beat) How many samples were collected and tested...

TRENT

No- no, in fact we cannot.

CARL

But you will send that information?

CAL

I'm sure Malguya intends to live up to all of its legal obligations.

CHAFFEE

See to it- as a favor to me.

RAYMOND

Then we can at least determine if they were even in all our fields or not.

TRENT

Look (Beat)(Chuckles) Malguya does not employ hillbillies- I'm confident in telling you they don't have any hay eating Jetheros on their payroll (Beat) I can assure you that it was your fields they surveyed.

RAYMOND

Well then you shouldn't have any problem sending us those DGPS locations.(Beat) And I'll tell you why we think what you are saying is a crock a shit. Yeah- I'll tell you. See I had a good chunk of our fields tested.(Beat) That's right (Beat) We had a couple of Birch County extension reps come out and hand spray portions of our fields with HarvestNow. (Beat) And by the way- (Beat) we had them note the DGPS locations of all of these. Once they'd done that they collected samples from each spot (Beat) and then dad flew the two fellows with their samples directly to Brookings, South Dakota to a place called Biologic Services, I suspect you've heard of it- (Beat) Just so you know, we followed Biologics specifications to the word. (Beat) By their tests all our fields but two tested negative. As for the two that made the exception- (Beat) Our Birch County reps told us it had to be volunteers, common bee variety contamination that caused it.

TRENT

(Unimpressed) I'm sorry you wasted your money. You could have sprayed anything on those fields.

RAYMOND

Come have a look- we invite you- or send this Copecech.

CAL

It doesn't prove anything.

RAYMOND

Doesn't prove anything! You come here with your accusations and no evidence, no data and you say our tests don't prove anything! (Long beat) Okay- I'll tell you what, we are prepared to hire a plane to spray crossways over all our fields, why don't you gentlemen come, or hell- anyone from Malguya you want (Beat)- send them over to observe.

TRENT

Well- no. (Beat) No I don't think so- sounds expensive.

RAYMOND

No, no- don't worry- we'll pay for it! We just want to take care of this thing.

TRENT

Uh huh. (Beat) Yes well- We do our own work, run our own tests when we feel it is necessary.

CAL

That and we- Malguya isn't likely to endorse applying its HarvestNow to kill something intended for human consumption.

BRIAN

Is that so? By that I take it you're saying our beans are conventional.

TRENT

Heh- No. I don't think we know that- You misconstrued Mr. Morales' words.

CHAFFEE

I'm not so sure. (Beat) In any case it looks to me- gentlemen (Nods to Eve and Anne)- excuse me- and ladies- that we have come to an impasse here. (Beat) Or do you two have other business you would like to have us consider?

With a nod of his head Chaffee draws attention to a brief case in front of Trent.

Morales pushes the brief case a few inches away.

TRENT

Morales?

Cal Morales flicks his hand dismissively and considers Raymond, Brian and Reece with a look of disdain.

Raymond straightens his back and has his own look at Morales and Framer before glancing around at the others in the room seeking to affirm the absurdity of the proceedings. Gary Reasoner of the State Seed Department catches Raymond's attention. Unlike the others who are all sitting still Gary is busy working out calculations in a notebook.

CUT TO:

64. INT. LOBBY OF LAW OFFICE

Framer and Morales emerge from the stairway. They walk close to one another to keep the words they are sharing to themselves. Glen Forsythe is seated in the reception area. As Framer and Morales approach Forsythe sees them and gets to his feet.

CAL

(To Framer) Heh- the media shit's hung around- ignore him.

The two men walk through adjusting their coats as they walk.

FORSYTHE

(Walking up to them and then along side them.)
Gentlemen- my editor wants this story whether you talk to me or not. You can assure yourselves and your client a more rounded story if you give me five minutes.

The three exit the building together.

CUT TO:

63. INT. Back in the conference room where the meeting was held.

People are standing in groups talking. Chaffee, Brian, and Reece are standing together. Eve and Raymond are talking.

REASONER

(Walks up to Raymond and Eve. He holds out a notebook and seems intent on something. He sticks out his hand to Raymond.) Gary Reasoner, sorry to interrupt-

RAYMOND

(Shaking hands) Not at all, I'm glad you came Gary. (Puts his hand on Eve's shoulder and introduces her) My wife Eve.

Reasoner smiles at Eve and reaches out to grasp her hand.

REASONER

A pleasure. (Looks back at Raymond and holds up his notebook) I thought what those two said about these tests of Malguya's was pretty interesting-

EVE

(Ironically) You too?

REASONER

I wrote down all the information- the number of acres, the number of samples they said were taken and ah- I don't know what they're trying to pull- (Beat) I did some calculations and- well if I sent two of our men out to do what these fellows say Malguya's men did- it would take our guys about 30 days. (Beat) Gridding each field like they're saying they did- it would take 30 days!

RAYMOND

(Without surprise) 30 days.

EVE

And they weren't out there more than 8 hours- were they Ray?

RAYMOND

Nope.

REASONER

(Long beat as they stare hard at one another) Down the line, as this develops, if it does- I'm more than happy to provide an affidavit.

RAYMOND

Reeks to high heaven huh?

EVE

(Cheered) Thank you Gary, that sure would be great.

REASONER

It smells of something. I don't like what I saw here today.

Eve, Raymond and Gary overhear Chaffee.

CHAFFEE

(To Reece and Brian) Blowing smoke- (Laughs) They've got nothing, they know it. You won't hear from them again. Smug bastards- I'll give you that- but nothing more.

REECE

I'd like to believe what you're saying Bart.

CHAFFEE

Believe it.

CARL

(Looks on skeptically) It might be too soon to say Bart.

CHAFFEE

They've got nothing, nothing- less than nothing! If they had any evidence they would have brought it. I've been in this racket 40 years Carl-

Chaffee glances at Eve, Anne and Beth.

CHAFFEE

Look here (Beat) someone's got to take these women out for a nice dinner. The devil's off your back-breath easy.

CUT TO: