



I A M M Y D O M A I N

a film based on the story of Romaine Tenney
written and directed by Sean Kirby

In 1964, a Vermont dairy farmer struggles to maintain his traditional existence as the construction of Interstate 91 tears through his idyllic homestead.







On a Friday afternoon in the fall of 1962, surveyors working for the department of transportation plotted the very last section of Interstate 91 through eastern Vermont.

While a couple more survey points could have skirted a 94 acre property in Ascutney, they choose a straight path. There was pressure from a supervisor to finish the task before the following week and a celebration to get to at a local bar.

That property was the lifelong home and dairy farm of Romaine Tenney.

This is his story.



D I R E C T O R ' S S T A T E M E N T

After 20 years of working as a cinematographer on other filmmakers' visions, I decided to confront something that had been growing inside me: a strong desire move forward with creating a film of my own, tackling themes that are close to my heart.

While researching ideas, I stumbled across Howard Mansfield's 2013 article for Yankee Magazine,
"I Will Not Leave | Romaine Tenney Loved his Vermont Farm to Death."

I read the 10 page article and sat at my kitchen table in tears. I had not been so deeply moved by a story in a long time. I was stuck with Romaine's resolve, his love for his land, his lifestyle, and his work.

I saw themes in his story that so beautifully aligned with what I was looking for in a film of my own:
how our societal embrace of technology, modernization, and the need for constant growth has brought us to a place where we're concerned about our very survival as a species; the resolve of an individual who lived his life according to his principles amidst the all-consuming pressure of "progress"; in our world of constant travel, and movement how we have lost the ability to truly connect with the land we live on that provides for our survival.

T H E L A N D



T H E A N I M A L S

Romaine quite likely did not think about climate change, or even the direct impacts of global modernization on the natural world, but he seemed to see clearly what was really important to life, to the natural world and perhaps sensed what all this growth would eventually do to us.

I believe that these themes are some of the most important of our time and Romaine's story invites the viewer to look at of them from a unique perspective, that of a subsistence farmer in the early 1960's who is being confronted with losing everything he loves as the largest construction project in United States history consumes the land he lives on.

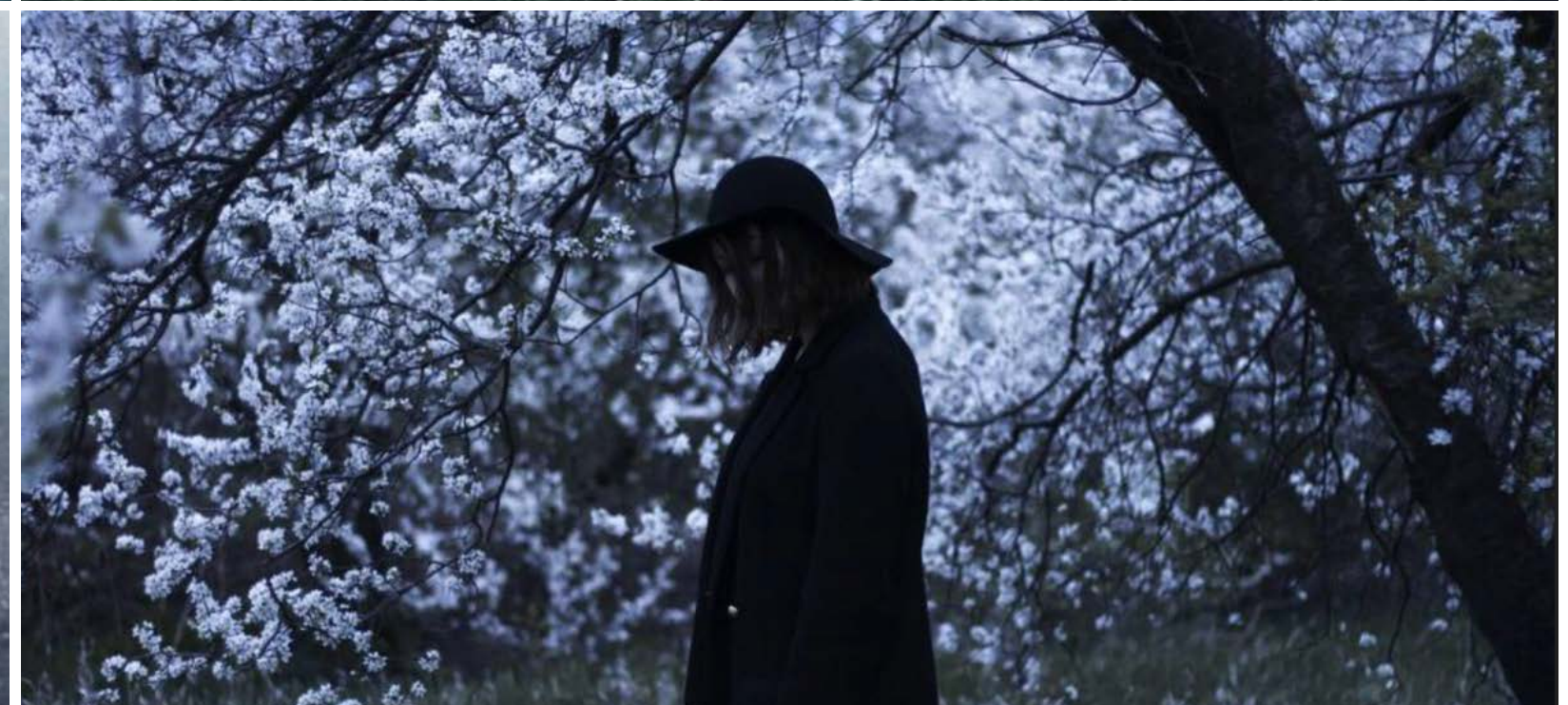
T H E F A R M



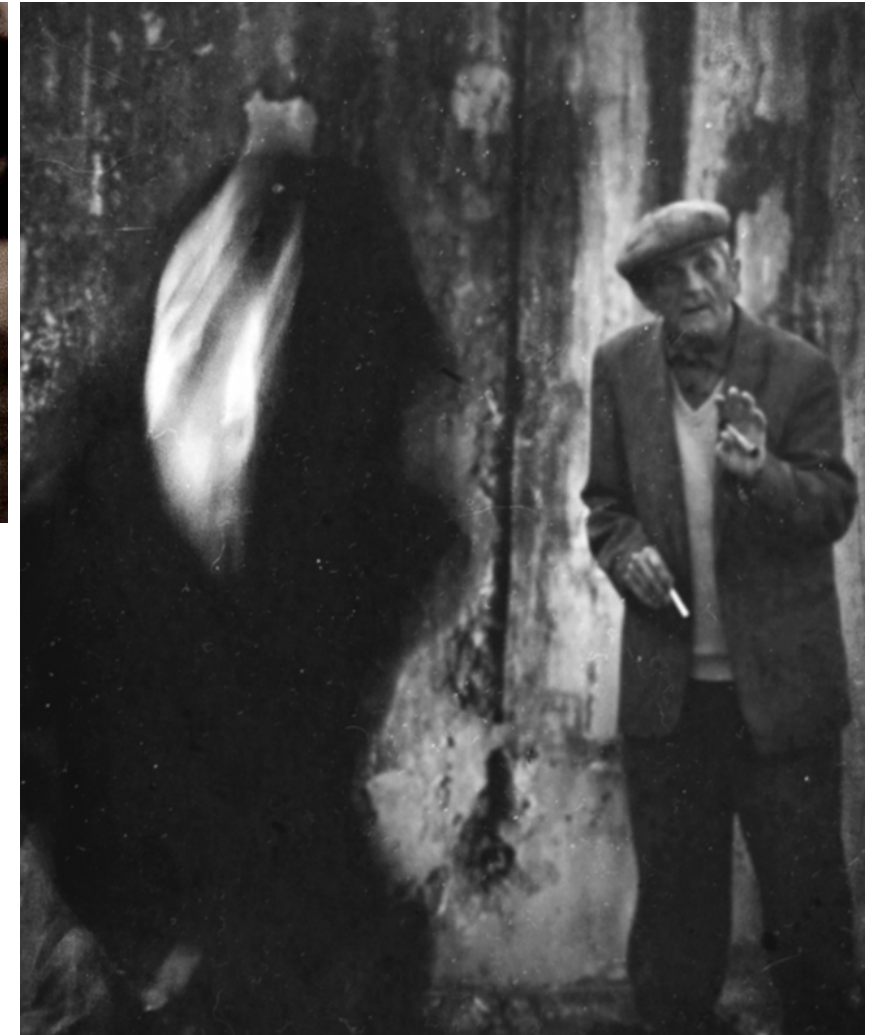
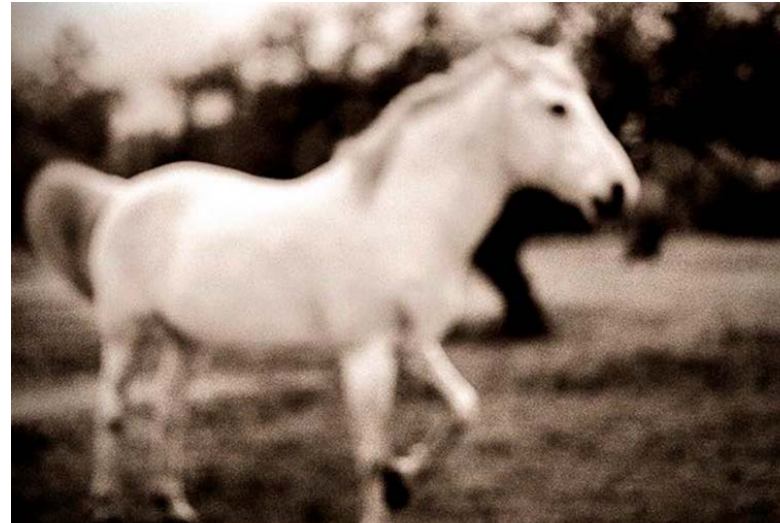
VERMONT IN THE 1960'S



1960's FILM STOCK



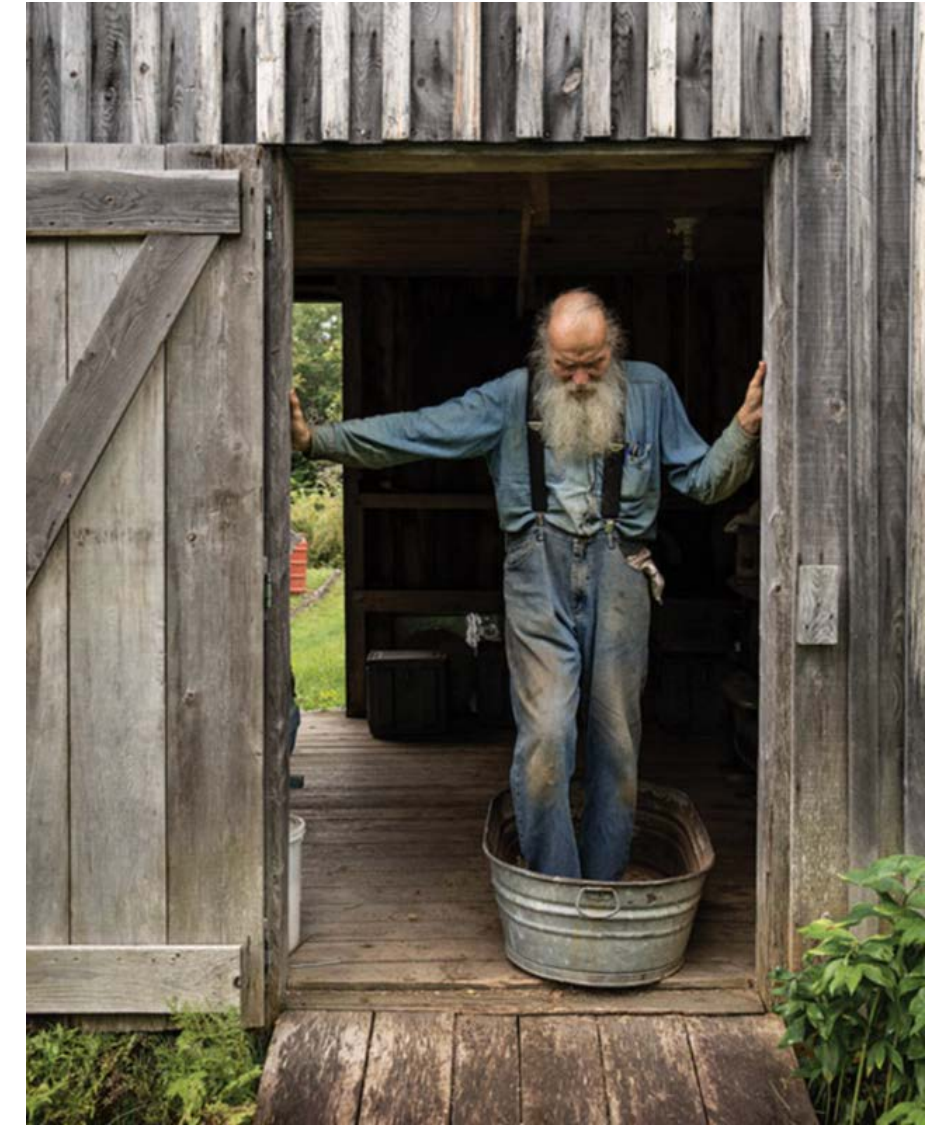
N O N M A T E R I A L T H I N G S



LAST NOTICE OF EVICTION:

You must **vacate** the property at RR 52,
Route 139 Ascutney, Vermont of **all**
persons, animals and material things by
June 1st, 1964"





This film will be a sensory experience.

The farmer is in touch with the land through experiences.

Sounds and images will invoke all the senses.



C O N S T R U C T I O N



FILMMAKER INFLUENCES

There Will Be Blood (2007), dir. Paul Thomas Anderson



Rams (2015), dir. Grímur Hákonarson

Stalker (1979)
dir. Andrei Tarkovsky



Blue (1993)
dir. Krzysztof Kieslowski



Un Prophète (2009)
dir. Jacques Audiard



Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives
(2010), dir. Apichatpong Weerasethakul

THE FIRE



Juries Up State's Offers In Two Cases On Road Land Taking

Ascutney Man, Who Didn't Want To Leave Farm To Make Way For Interstate Missing After Fire

By BETTY G. MURRAY
ASCUTNEY—Romaine E. Tenney, 64, farmer and independent Vermont, who didn't want to move from his homestead, which was obstructing construction of an interstate highway interchange in Ascutney, is believed to have perished in a house fire which broke out in the early morning hours, Sept. 12.

Progress of house and something suspiciously like part of a dental plate taken from the ashes of the cellar hole, Monday, were sent by Dr. Charles C. Cunningham, regional medical examiner at Burlington where Dr. Richard Woodruff, state pathologist has greater facilities for examining materials of this nature.

Dr. Cunningham stated in a letter, however, that he had not received a final statement from Dr. Woodruff concerning the findings in the house.

Mr. Tenney, 64, was a farmer who had been on the farm for 40 years. He was a member of the Ascutney Union Church and had a reputation for being a hard worker. He was also a member of the Ascutney Fire Department.

His wife, Mrs. E. Tenney, was a homemaker and had been on the farm for 40 years. She was also a member of the Ascutney Union Church and had a reputation for being a hard worker. She was also a member of the Ascutney Fire Department.

The house was a two-story structure with a gambrel roof. It was built in the late 1800s and was in good condition. The fire broke out in the early morning hours and spread rapidly. The house was completely destroyed and the remains were scattered over a large area.

The fire department arrived at the scene at 7:30 a.m. and worked for several hours to contain the fire. The cause of the fire is still unknown. The fire department is currently investigating the fire and will report its findings to the state fire marshal.

Ascutney

Mrs. E. W. Clark, organist at Ascutney Union Church, Sunday afternoon, Sept. 12, 1954.

Philip Bordenstein has been named as the organist at the Ascutney Union Church, Sunday afternoon, Sept. 12, 1954.

Mr. and Mrs. John D. Tenney, 64, of Ascutney, were the first to be notified of the fire. They were in the house at the time of the fire and were unable to escape. They were found in the ruins of the house.

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He Waited For Death

Ascutney Farmer Kept Home to End

PROBATE COURT

COMMISSIONERS' NOTICE

Estate of Romaine Tenney

The Undersigned, having been appointed by the Honorable Probate Court for the District of Windsor, COMMISSIONERS, to receive, examine, and adjust the claims and demands of all persons against the estate of Romaine Tenney late of Weathersfield in said District, deceased, and all claims exhibited

Memorial Rites Held For Romaine E. Tenney

(Betty G. Murray)
ASCUTNEY — "Rock of Ages" and other old familiar hymns were played at memorial services for Romaine E. Tenney, 64, at the Ascutney Union Church in Ascutney, Sunday afternoon, September 27.

Red and white carnations brightened memorial flowers arranged in the church and four young people, Karen Hinkley, Janet McKinnie, Gary Farnsworth and Mark Hull sang a special anthem. Mrs. William Waite was the organist.

Mark Hull, a student minister, and the Rev. Cassidy, a former pastor of the church, offered tribute to the bachelor farmer, presumed to have perished in the early morning blaze, September 12, when the picturesque buildings were destroyed.

It was recalled that Romaine Tenney was a special friend to the youth of the church and readily granted them permission to go

as of Monday morning, States Attorney John Parker of Springfield said "At this point the only proof we have is circumstantial and after studying the reports of the state pathologist and the fire investigators we assume that Mr. Tenney perished in the fire."

Pieces of human bones were found in the cellar under the section of the room in which a bed was located. Buttons and overall buckles like ones known to have been on overalls the missing man wore were also found as was part of a dental plate which could not be positively identified as belonging to him. The Vermont State police and the fire marshal's office made an extensive search of the area to try to determine the way in which the fire was started and to help establish the identity of the person to whom the fragments of human bones belonged and the manner in which death occurred.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Goodbye to a Yankee farmer, the ghost of Exit 8



FLAMES STILL FLICKER around ruins of old Vermont homestead. (Wayne Carter Photo)

Vt. Farmer Who Defied Highway May Have Set His Own Funeral Pyre



By Archie Mountain
WEATHERSFIELD, Vt. — Romaine E. Tenney, 64, resisting the advances of Interstate 91 construction in his front and back yard until the last minute, is believed to have perished Saturday morning in a funeral pyre he may have set himself.

The well-known and well-liked bearded bachelor faced eviction under eminent domain. The historic 150-year old farmhouse which he occupied stood directly in the path of the interchange that will connect Route 131 and Interstate 91.

Officials sifted through the charred remains of the once-beautiful homestead Sunday afternoon and discovered what they were told in the report just off the kitchen where a bedspring was resting. Alongside the bedspring officials found a .32 caliber rifle and revolver.

Mr. Tenney was a farmer and independent Vermont, who didn't want to move from his homestead, which was obstructing construction of an interstate highway interchange in Ascutney, is believed to have perished in a house fire which broke out in the early morning hours, Sept. 12.

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WRITER & DIRECTOR

Originally a visual artist, Sean began his filmmaking career in 2005 with the films *POLICE BEAT* and *THE GITS*, winning the Seattle International Film Festival Filmmaker's Award for cinematography on both films.

Sean has since photographed a multitude of other films that have premiered at Sundance, Tribeca, Toronto, Locarno, and Cannes film festivals, including the documentaries, '3100: Run and Become' (Sanjay Rawal), 'Zoo' and 'Pow Wow' (Robinson Devor), "Happy Valley" and "The Tillman Story" (Amir Bar-Lev), 'Racing Extinction' (Louie Psihoyos), 'We Are X' (Stephen Kijak), and narrative films *Lovely, Still* (Nik Fackler), 'Magic Valley' (Jaffe Zinn), and 'Against the Current' (Peter Callahan). Sean has also served as the director of photography on episodic documentaries, including 'Five Came Back' (produced by Steven Spielberg, Scott Rudin and John Battsek).

Sean lives on an off-grid farm in southern Vermont and is currently focusing his efforts to writing, directing and getting 'I Am My Domain' to the screen.

I A M M Y D O M A I N

for more information:

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www.seankirbydp.com/i-am-my-domain



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