

WHITE NOISE

"Pilot"

by

Cody Pearce

codypearce1987@gmail.com
Los Angeles, CA

TEASER

CLOSE ON:

A pair of gloved HANDS...

One grabs a leather satchel.

The other holds a large KNIFE. Hides it within the folds of an animal-skin coat.

EXT. MIDDLE OF THE WOODS, RUSTIC CABIN - DAY

Light snow falls upon a rustic cabin nestled among tall, quiet pines.

The front door CREAKS open. Out steps...

THE HERMIT, age unknown, wearing an animal skin overcoat, his face hidden beneath a large hood.

Before leaving, the hermit takes out a pair of EARPLUGS and sticks them in his ears.

EXT. MIDDLE OF THE WOODS - DAY

The hermit moves swift and silent through the dense forest.

He carefully steps past a series of BEAR TRAPS half-buried in the fallen leaves.

EXT. DESERTED ROAD - DAY

The hermit leaves the shady forest and starts down an empty dirt road.

EXT. PINE BRUSH TOWN - DAY

The hermit arrives on the outskirts of a small town. PINE BRUSH, Pop. 12,301.

The town is rustic and isolated, full of mom and pop shops and antique stores.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

The hermit walks down a sidewalk.

A FAMILY coming from the opposite direction crosses the street to avoid the scary-looking individual.

INT. CRAPPY GENERAL STORE - DAY

An old-fashioned general store. The place is empty except for BOB: 30s, balding, fat. He sits behind the grimy counter reading a hunting magazine.

DING!

The hermit enters. Bob looks up from his magazine, a tad weary of the strange visitor.

BOB
Can I help you?

The hermit doesn't answer. Sets his leather satchel on the counter. Grabs a few items from the shelves: bars of soap, Aspirin, tissues, candy bars.

The hermit opens his satchel, pulls out a stack of musty old bills. Roughly \$10.

Bob bags the items the hermit grabbed, takes the old money. Just then, the store phone RINGS. Bob picks up.

BOB (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Bob's General Store, how can I hel--

BOB'S POV: An eerie, static-filled SQUEAL emits from the phone's receiver.

This is WHITE NOISE.

Bob's mouth falls slack. Spittle drips from his lips. His eyes dim in color. His skin pales.

The hermit backs away from the counter, but Bob grabs the hermit before he can escape.

Bob rips the hermit's hood off, revealing...

MICHELLE, 30s, frightened but determined.

Bob smiles. When he speaks, it's not his voice at all, but the voice of ANOTHER, cold and metallic.

[NOTE: Whenever a character is under the control of White Noise his/her dialogue will be **bold**]

BOB (CONT'D)
Oh Michelle, you look terrible.

Michelle hits Bob's arm, breaking free of his grasp. She pulls out the KNIFE.

Bob sets the receiver down and puts the phone on speaker. White Noise fills the entire store.

Bob lunges over the counter with inhuman strength. He charges Michelle, knocking her flat on her back.

Michelle drops the knife. It slides down the hardware aisle.

Bob crawls on top of Michelle, pinning her to floor beneath his immense weight. His arms reach for Michelle's head.

He's trying to pull out her ear plugs.

Michelle struggles against Bob, but the man is too strong. His fingers closing in on her ears.

Desperate, Michelle knees Bob in the crotch. Hard.

Bob's eyes momentarily lose their cloudiness. He "wakes up."

Michelle crawls out from under Bob.

Seconds pass...

Bob returns to his trance-like state. He gets up. Marches toward Michelle, forcing her down the hardware aisle.

As Michelle backs away from Bob, her foot steps on the knife she dropped earlier. She picks it up.

Bob grabs a hammer hanging from a shelf nearby.

BOB (CONT'D)
**Don't do anything rash, Michelle.
You're smarter than that.**

Michelle raises her knife.

Bob raises his hammer.

A tense standoff.

Bob rushes at Michelle, but she's faster as she--

--JAMS the knife between Bob's ribs.

Bob's eyes lose all cloudiness. He stares at Michelle in disbelief. When he speaks, it is with his true voice.

BOB (CONT'D)

Wh-what?

Michelle gasps.

Bob slumps forward onto a nearby shelf, allowing Michelle to see...

A POLICE OFFICER, male, 30s, standing in the entranceway of the general store.

He just saw Michelle murder the store clerk.

ON MICHELLE: Oh shit! She turns and sprints out the emergency exit.

CLOSE ON: The police officer. His eyes cloud over. White Noise has tapped him.

EXT. ALLEYWAY BEHIND STORE - DAY

Michelle bursts from the emergency exit. Keeps running. She's at the end of the alleyway by the time--

The police officer exits the store. He FIRES off a few rounds at Michelle's legs. The bullets miss her body by mere inches, bouncing off the ground instead.

Michelle keeps running.

EXT. EDGE OF PINE BRUSH - DAY

Michelle, exhausted, finally starts to slow down as she reaches the thick forest bordering the town.

She stops to rest, leaning against a boulder.

SMACK.

A bullet grazes her calf. Michelle looks down at her bleeding leg. She stifles a scream of pain.

CRACK. Another bullet punctures the boulder near her legs.

Michelle keeps moving. She limps into...

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Michelle works her way up to a slight jog, trying her best not to put too much pressure on her wounded leg.

EXT. EDGE OF PINE BRUSH - DAY

The police officer continues his pursuit. He reloads. White Noise plays over his shoulder-mounted radio.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Michelle keeps jogging.

MICHELLE'S P.O.V.: She cannot hear anything with the earplugs in other than her own labored breaths.

EXT. WOODS - WITH THE POLICE OFFICER - DAY

The police officer pauses to check his surroundings. The White Noise causes his movements to be jerky and erratic, as if his body was fighting some invisible force controlling it.

The police officer speaks with the same voice that was coming from Bob...

POLICE OFFICER

**You're only hurting others by doing
this, Michelle. You killed that
general store owner. Not me!**

CRUNCH, CRUNCH, CRUNCH. The sound of footfalls across dead twigs. The police officer turns.

POLICE OFFICER P.O.V.: A glimpse of Michelle through the trees.

The police officer sprints after her, eyes locked on his target. Too bad he doesn't see...

THE BEAR TRAPS BELOW.

SNAP.

A bear trap latches onto the officer's left leg, breaking his shin. He falls to the ground.

For a moment the officer's eyes lose their cloudiness, taking on an expression of immense pain.

But the White Noise continues to hold sway over his consciousness.

The officer crawls forward, blood spewing from his leg. He's seemingly unaware of the pain.

Michelle runs out from behind a tree and SMASHES a heavy rock over the cop's head.

CRACK!

Michelle uses the rock to destroy the police officer's radio, ending its White Noise broadcast.

Before she leaves, Michelle takes the cop's handgun.

EXT. RUSTIC CABIN - DAY

The sun sets behind the mountains. It's growing dark.

INT. RUSTIC CABIN, ONLY ROOM - DAY

It's sparse, just an old chair, a table and a ratty mattress. Clearly Michelle has lived here by herself though it was not intended to be long-term.

Rusted cans of food lie on the shelves along with batteries, flashlights, a compass and a big box of *earplugs*.

AT THE TABLE

Michelle sits on the tabletop, her leg bleeding profusely. She douses her wound with antiseptic and bandages it up.

Exhausted and in pain, she cries silently.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK...

Michelle turns toward the door.

A half-dozen men wearing body armor emblazoned with the word "SILENCE" step inside the cabin.

They train assault rifles at Michelle.

END TEASER

ACT ONE**CLOSE ON: A PAIR OF EYES**

They stare straight ahead. Look left. Then right. Tracking something.

Each time the eyes move, we hear a loud BUZZING sound like that of a giant hornet. It's disconcerting.

Finally the eyes settle.

DREW (O.C.)

Fire!

BOOM! BOOOOM!

Two fiery explosions are reflected on the eyes. We pull out to reveal:

EXT. REMOTE DESERT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The eyes belong to, DREW, early 20s, black, a handsome, All-American marine.

A small EARPIECE sits in his right ear. We hear a slightly different version of White Noise coming from the ear-piece. A precursor perhaps?

CHYRON: 2 years ago...

Drew stands atop a high mountain crest next to some MILITARY OFFICERS and BILL, a smarmy man in his 50s, slicked back hair and an expensive suit.

Drew waves his hand towards his chest. This causes...

A wasp-shaped MILITARY DRONE to react to his movements.

A series of small explosive ROCKETS disappear into the drone's undercarriage as it zips towards the marine.

Just before it looks like the drone will smash into Drew, he puts his hand up and the drone stops, hovering inches from his face.

Bill beams with pride as the military officials applaud.

BILL

*Gentlemen, I present to you
complete AI-human integration.*

(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)

Our drones link with soldiers to create a personal bond, capable of providing reconnaissance, protection, even medical assistance to our heroes in the battlefield. Our drones are intuitive and flexible. They mold to each user's individual instincts and provide for--

A SKEPTICAL MILITARY OFFICIAL speaks up, interrupting Bill.

SKEPTICAL MILITARY OFFICIAL

Excuse me, but couldn't this kind of "pairing" lead to psychological or physical disorders for the soldier?

MICHELLE (O.S.)

The physiological connection between user and drone is the same as that between you and your iPhone.

MICHELLE approaches the officers. She looks younger and healthier than before, beautiful but fierce. The word DEMCORP is stenciled on her black military-style uniform.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Our tests reveal only minor physical and psychological risks for any host.

Bill smiles.

BILL

May I introduce you to Dr. Michelle Waters, our lead AI programmer. She helped pioneer White Noise.

The military officials are impressed, even in awe that such a young woman could accomplish so much. Except for...

SKEPTICAL MILITARY OFFICIAL

What if a soldier wants to get rid of the drone? Call it off?

MICHELLE

Each user establishes safe words that immediately terminate connection at any time.

(MORE)

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

And if the soldier loses consciousness or becomes unable to speak, the drone goes into security mode, flying back to the nearest military base.

SKEPTICAL MILITARY OFFICIAL

And if the drone decides to turn on its master?

MICHELLE

It--

BILL

--I'll field any further questions, thank you.

(to Drew)

Corporal, please accompany Dr. Waters back to the facility.

Michelle shoots Bill a disapproving look as Drew leads her away.

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIDGE - DAY

The wasp-drone follows Drew and Michelle as they walk down the mountain ridge, out of Bill's sight.

MICHELLE

They'll never go for it. Bill couldn't even explain e-mail, much less the basics of human-AI interface or frequency modulation.

DREW

Michelle, you've created something so unique, so powerful, it's bound to make people a little nervous. Just give them some time.

MICHELLE

But they need to trust the technology. That salesman up there will is only making things worse.

DREW

Well I think the demos speak for themselves. After a week or two... they may even wanna try it out themselves.

Drew puts his arm around Michelle.

MICHELLE

I would never trust someone to handle White Noise if I didn't know it was completely safe. Especially you.

Michelle takes Drew's hand, pulling him in for a kiss.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT EXPANSE - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

A nondescript white van zooms across a dirt highway, headed for an abandoned outlet mall.

INT. INVENTORY SECTION - NIGHT

The van parks inside an empty storage facility. SILENCE troops escort Michelle out the back door. She's blindfolded and handcuffed.

INT. SILENCE HQ, INTERROGATION ROOM

A small, windowless room (originally a dusty storage closet) has been retrofitted as an interrogation room.

Harsh fluorescent light fills the room.

Michelle is tied to a chair, no longer blindfolded.

A clunky security camera watches her.

Michelle stares at the camera. Defiant.

The door opens.

In walks WES, 40s, weathered, sporting an assault rifle and SILENCE uniform. A bushy, mountain-man beard covers his face.

He opens a bottled water.

WES

Water?

Michelle is clearly thirsty. Her lips are chapped. But she shakes her head no.

MICHELLE

Who are you?