

NO MAN'S LAND

Screenplay By

Joshua Zeman & Tom Ellis

2/1/13 WGA Registered

Artina Films
Bob Salerno
Naomi Despres
323-802-1500

Zero Gravity Management
Damon Lane
917-285-6102
damon@zerogravitymanagement.com

EXT. KMART PARKING LOT - DAY

A DARK SUBURBAN pulls alongside another SUBURBAN in an empty corner. THREE MARSHALS, putting on TACTICAL GEAR, look up.

TYLER

Get lost?

DIAZ

(strapping on his vest)
Traffic. Why the hell aren't we
doing this at dawn?

TYLER

The guy milks cows. He's up at like
three a.m.

An older LEAD MARSHAL (50's) grabs a clipboard from the dash.

LEAD MARSHAL

Alright, now that we're all here...

He passes around a MUG SHOT and a HOUSE SCHEMATIC.

LEAD MARSHAL

...our target is Glen Clay, white
male, 33, 6'2, 180 lbs. You should
all remember the intel, this guy's
no joke. Two rotations in Iraq and
he likes his toys that go bang. I
don't want anything spooking him,
so local PD is riding with us. Team
two takes the back, while team one
takes the front. Any questions?

The MARSHALS just grunt as they continue to dress.

I/E. BLACK SUBURBAN - AFTERNOON

ANGLE - Through the front windshield of the LEAD SUBURBAN as
it speeds over a dirt road, kicking up dust.

We pass a worn FARMHOUSE. An OLDER WOMAN stands out on the
front lawn watching the SUBURBANS fly by.

Inside the vehicle, a young DEPUTY SHERIFF looks over to
TYLER and DIAZ, hoping for some reassurance. He gets none.

DIAZ stares out at a passing SIGN that reads "WHIPPOORWILL
ROAD." A SHOUTING from the front seat pulls his attention.

LEAD MARSHAL

We got trouble!

The FRONT SUBURBAN slams on its brakes. Up ahead, we see TWO PICKUP TRUCKS blocking the road.

LEAD MARSHAL
Deputy, stay in the truck and stay
down!

THE CLICK of SAFETIES being flipped off.

The LEAD MARSHAL pushes open the door as sunlight streams into the BLACKED-OUT interior, blinding us.

We follow the LEAD MARSHAL up against the hood. TYLER and DIAZ, armed with AUTOMATIC WEAPONS, soldier up next to him.

Twenty yards ahead, FOUR MEN steady themselves behind the PICKUPS, RIFLES at the ready.

LEAD MARSHAL
(holding up papers)
Glen Clay, we have a federal
warrant for your arrest! Now you
put those guns down!

Our target, GLEN CLAY, tall with a shaved head and piercing blue eyes, stands quiet as his MEN shout back.

MAN #1
You ain't arresting nobody!

DIAZ
Drop the weapons now!

MAN #2
You've got no business--

TYLER
--Drop the fucking weapons!

THE LEAD MARSHAL shouts over the MEN.

LEAD MARSHAL
Glen, I'm gonna give you ten
seconds to put down your weapon.

GLEN finally speaks, his voice calm, yet resolute.

GLEN
Marshal, I'm gonna give you five.

The MARSHAL's face slackens. GLEN grins ever-so-slightly.

ANGLE - One of the MEN, leaning against the pickup, steadies his gun.

ANGLE - A FINGER moves against the TRIGGER of an automatic weapon.

Both sides hold their ground as an eerie silence hangs over THE STANDOFF.

CUT TO:

A single GUNSHOT echoes across the wide pasture, startling a lone BLACK BULL.

In response -- a THUNDEROUS wave of GUNFIRE follows.

CUT TO BLACK:

"NO MAN'S LAND"

INT. STUDIO MAKEUP ROOM - DAY

MICHAEL WHITE (41) with curly, blonde hair and an unkempt beard, steps into the room. Wearing blue jeans and a wrinkled corduroy jacket, he looks like he hasn't slept in days.

A paunchy man, GARY PAGE (53) tracks him in a mirror as a MAKEUP GIRL applies powder to his pink face.

PAGE

Well, if it isn't the esteemed Michael White.

TWO MAKEUP GIRLS smile as WHITE settles into an empty chair.

WHITE

Good to see you, Gary.

PAGE

Good to see me? Everything okay?

WHITE

I was being facetious.

PAGE

Oh good. The producers were hoping for fireworks. Don't want to disappoint.

WHITE

And yet, you always do.

PAGE

How's things at the Gray Lady? You've been quiet as of late.

WHITE
(guarded)
I've been busy.

PAGE
That's right, something about a
book, I hear?

WHITE flinches.

PAGE
And when is this opus going to be
finished?

WHITE
(quiet)
Soon.

PAGE
I'm getting my own show this
Spring. Maybe I'll let you come on
and hawk this book of yours.

WHITE
I'd rather burn it first.

PAGE rises from his chair, checking his cheeks in the mirror.

PAGE
You might want to consider that.
(opening the door)
Ladies, make sure Mr. White gets
some extra time in the chair. He
needs it.

PAGE gives WHITE a smug grin as he closes the door.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - LATER

We pull back on a LARGE STUDIO SCREEN behind the show's HOST.
A montage of images play from the recent ARAB SPRING.

PAGE
Chris, what the President is doing
is a disgrace. This leading from
behind isn't leading. It's
pandering to the liberal elite
while prolonging the murder of
those innocents who need our help.

The montage ends with the haunting image of an IRANIAN WOMAN
as she lay dying in the street.

HOST
 So, should we have done more during
 Iran's Green Revolution? Or stepped
 into Libya sooner?

WHITE is transfixed by the image of DYING WOMAN on the
 screen.

ANGLE - We push in on the WOMAN'S EYES, wide with fear. She
 gazes into camera as her life slowly drains away.

Blinking quickly, WHITE swallows, his throat suddenly dry. He
 clenches his eyes, trying to drive away the oncoming panic.

HOST (O.S.)
 And what about Egypt or Syria?
 Michael, I can't believe you're not
 all over this?

The STUDIO CAMERA catches WHITE, struggling off-screen.

HOST
 Michael?

WHITE
 (trying to recover)
 I'm sorry...Yes?

HOST
 Should we have done something
 sooner?

WHITE
 I ahh...um...I don't know. Maybe.

PAGE
 For once, he's speechless!

HOST
 He's in shock, Gary. It's the first
 time he's ever agreed with you.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

We now see the PROGRAM on a TV in the corner of a dark room.

HOST
 We'll give Mr. White some time to
 recover as we turn to Super-PAC's--

THE TV shuts off as WHITE slams down the remote. Walking into
 the KITCHEN, he emerges with a GLASS in hand.

CORNER DESK

Sitting down in front of a computer, WHITE takes a sip of WHISKY. He adjusts his chair and leans closer to the SCREEN.

ANGLE - His HANDS, hovering over the keyboard.

We hold on WHITE, waiting for him to begin. After a long moment, he leans back and exhales in frustration.

WHITE

Shit.

Slamming back his chair, WHITE exits. We push in on the MONITOR - BLANK except for a line that reads "CHAPTER THREE."

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN - EARLY MORNING (CREDIT SEQUENCE)

The cold light casts an eerie hue over the city streets.

- A HOMELESS MAN dozes on the steps of the SUPREME COURT.

- We hear the sound of a cellphone RINGING as a flock of PIGEONS take off, fluttering past CITY HALL.

- A POLICE OFFICER walks around a BOX TRUCK, idling outside the BATTERY TUNNEL. The CELLPHONE rings again.

- A RUNNER jogs along the HUDSON, the jagged SKYLINE behind her. Another RING, then the sound of someone picking up.

WHITE (O.S.)

Ummm...Yeah...hello?

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

WHITE sits up in bed, still in his clothes from the night before.

VOICE (O.S.)

Michael White please.

WHITE

Who is this?

VOICE (O.S.)

Am I speaking to Michael White?

WHITE pauses at the caller's insistent tone.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - HALLWAY - MORNING

A pair of shiny black SHOES echo across a marble floor. A second pair of shoes, well-worn BOOTS, follow behind.

Through pools of light, the SHOES pass over the UNITED STATES SEAL set in the floor.

An ESCORT, a young man in a shirt and tie, reaches a DOOR. After a quick knock, he opens it wide as WHITE steps inside.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

A small room bathed in harsh fluorescent light. WHITE looks up to a relief map of the United States hanging on the wall. We see a folded NEW YORK TIMES tucked under his arm.

VOICE (O.S.)

Thank you, Gregory.

The ESCORT slips out as we pan to THOMAS HAYES (37) very much the unimposing bureaucrat. He rises to shake WHITE'S HAND.

HAYES

Mr. White, Thomas Hayes with the Associate Director's Office. Please have a seat...

HAYES motions to a stainless steel table as WHITE sits.

HAYES

...Thank you for coming down on such short notice.

WHITE

An invitation from the FBI is like your grandmother asking you to lunch.

HAYES

How's that, Sir?

WHITE

You don't say "no."

HAYES chuckles, WHITE doesn't.

HAYES

I see you brought your paper.

WHITE

Just catching up.

HAYES

Been busy?

WHITE

I've been...taking a break.

HAYES

Yes, we actually had to call your employers to get your number.

WHITE shoots him a look of concern.

HAYES

It was imperative that we speak with you. I'm sorry. I didn't realize you were on leave.

WHITE

(shifting in his seat)
For the moment, yes.

HAYES

As I understand it, you were in the Middle East for quite some time?

WHITE

Six months last year.

HAYES

It's a tough job, I'm sure.

WHITE

Enough with the chitchat. You want to tell me what this is all about?

HAYES

How much do you know about the situation we spoke of earlier?

WHITE

Only what I've just read.

WHITE motions to the front page of the TIMES. A headline reads, "2 MARSHALS, 2 CIVILIANS DEAD IN VIOLENT CLASH."

HAYES

Then you haven't been following it?

WHITE

(clearly agitated)
Like I said, I've been taking a break.

HAYES

Yes, it's just that this story seems to be striking quite a nerve out there. In fact, the Associate Director himself requested I speak with you immediately.

WHITE

About what?

HAYES

Our proposal...You see, the women left behind after the firefight, the ones involved in the standoff. They've agreed to surrender, but under one condition. They want you to go up there, to the farmhouse, to interview them and hear what they have to say. If you do so, the women and their children will come out.

WHITE

You're saying they asked for me?

HAYES

Yes, they asked for you by name.
(letting it sink in)
I know it's a strange request.

WHITE

Not really. They want to be heard...before it's too late.

HAYES

Well, I won't sugar coat this. These women have arms and aren't afraid to use them.

HAYES pulls TWO PHOTOS from his briefcase, handing them over.

ANGLE - A photo of a small FARMHOUSE in the distance, a piece of yellow POLICE TAPE hangs across the foreground.

WHITE flips to the next PHOTO, taken with a telephoto lens.

ANGLE - A YOUNG WOMAN stands in a doorway of the farmhouse, shotgun in her hands. She's yelling at a man with "FBI" stenciled on his jacket.

HAYES

That's her; Patience Clay. She's the one who made the offer.

WHITE

What about the others, her husband?
Any closer to finding them?

HAYES

We have over 200 personnel
coordinating a statewide manhunt
with local law enforcement. We'll
find them.

WHITE

I'm sure you will. And what was it
that prompted all this? Something
about their farm?

HAYES

A land dispute that turned into a
war of attrition with the local
municipality. In recent months Clay
had been threatening officials,
disrupting services and we believe
stockpiling weapons. Typical
behavior for someone of his ilk.

WHITE

I'm not following you.

HAYES

The man is a hater who spews
nothing but vile and mindless
rhetoric.

WHITE

Sounds like you take his views very
personally.

HAYES

Personally, I'd say string him up.

WHITE

Well, there's always the First
Amendment to consider.

HAYES

(pitiful chuckle)
That's to be expected, I guess.

WHITE

Excuse me?

HAYES

From the Jewish writer of perhaps
the most sympathetic piece ever
written about the Palestinians.