

THE WHITE NOTE EPISODE 4:
"THE BALLAD OF THE TEARFUL"

INT. COURT STEPS, SOMEWHERE IN BROOKLYN

SXF: SOUNDS OF A MEDIA CIRCUS IN PROGRESS- PEOPLE SHOUTING
QUESTIONS/BULBS POPPING

SXF: SOMEONE TAPS A MIC. FEEDBACK BLASTS

DETECTIVE WILL

Good afternoon. My name is
Detective Wilma Mahoney and I'm
here on behalf of the DA, the
Mayor, the New York City Police
Department, and Precinct 84 to
provide an update on what seems to
be a rash of deaths in local clubs,
concentrated heavily here in
Brooklyn.

SXF: CROWD IS QUIETER NOW. WE HEAR SIGNS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
CARS DRIVING BY, AN AMBULANCE BLARING IN THE DISTANCE

DETECTIVE WILL

Over the past few weeks we've,
unfortunately, responded to a dozen
calls of reports of clubgoers, aged
19 through 29, who apparently have
been the victims of fatal drug
overdoses. Our hearts go out to
their families and loved ones, we'd
like to express our deepest
condolences.
(she sighs, pauses)

DETECTIVE WILL

We want to assure this community,
that we are doing everything within
our power, within our control, and
leveraging all of the available
resources that the New York Police
Department has at its disposal, to
find who or what is causing this.
We will not stop until we find the
person or persons responsible for
this. I'll take questions now.

SXF: ALL REPORTERS BLAST THEIR QUESTIONS AT ONCE, ITS A CACHOCOPHY OF NOISE

REPORTER #1

When you say that these deaths were caused by drug overdoses, can you confirm what kinds of drugs? Is there a common denominator?

DETECTIVE WILL

At this time, I can only confirm that we believe these deaths were caused by illegal drug overdoses. We're awaiting further toxicology reports from the coroner.

SXF: ALL REPORTERS BLAST QUESTIONS

REPORTER #2

Can you confirm all the victims were found at Cooper's Nightclub?

DETECTIVE WILL

At this time, I can only confirm that the victim's bodies have all been discovered on the premises of a single location. Next question?

SXF: ALL REPORTERS BLAST QUESTIONS

REPORTER #1

So are you confirming that these deaths might be the result of a bad batch of illegal club drugs at Cooper's Nightclub?

DETECTIVE WILL

(Her patience starting to wear thin) As I just stated. Our investigation, at this point, is not conclusive. We are not ruling anything, or anyone, out.

SXF: ALL REPORTERS BLAST THEIR QUESTIONS AT ONCE

BRODY

Detective, where are you on leads? Do you have any suspects?

DETECTIVE WILL

We are looking closely at all persons of interest, but at this time, we have nothing to report.

BRODY
Follow up to that, Detective?

DETECTIVE WILL
Yeah. Go ahead.

BRODY
Um. There's been a theory espoused, that somehow the music, you know, could somehow be responsible for this?

SXF: ALL REPORTERS ARE QUIET. THEN, EVERYONE BURSTS OUT LAUGHING

DETECTIVE WILL
Excuse me? I'm not sure I understood.

BRODY
Well, I just meant. Music has been known to have properties we don't fully understand. Certain frequencies can create --

DETECTIVE WILL
You know. Let's table that thought. We have to get back to work. I'd like to thank you all for coming. And to the public, we've set up a special tip line for anyone who has any information on these deaths. It's completely anonymous. Thank you. Details can be found on our website.

INTRO

SFX: FADE UP THEME MUSIC

NARRATOR
Welcome to The White Note.

INT. - BRODY'S APARTMENT

SXF: CAT MEOWS

MAGGIE

Thanks for the cat food. She was hungry. By the way, is your apartment always this messy?

BRODY

I wasn't expecting company.

MAGGIE

I also sorta can't help but notice, you don't actually have a cat?

BRODY

My girlfriend, my old girlfriend, she had two of them. I guess she forgot to take her Mighty Cat stash when she moved out last month.

MAGGIE

Oh. Sorry. Look, Brody, we've been going at this for hours, I don't care how many notes you scribble on that little pad of yours. I don't think you're getting it and time is running out. The cops don't understand the big picture. That's why I need you to.

BRODY

I'm trying, Maggie. I am. But, see it my way. These kids all OD'd. They all took illegal drugs. They all went to your club. I don't mean to sound like a hardass but...

MAGGIE

...You don't. You sound like a jerk.

BRODY

Look, Maggie. I've been Googling you. DJ Blizzy.

MAGGIE

So?

BRODY

Nothing comes up, okay? Nada. And this whole theory of yours? About the music?

MAGGIE
Yeah?

BRODY
Look. I get that music, maybe, has subliminal properties we don't fully understand. You know. Like commercial jingles you can't get out of your head. I know the government used Heavy Metal music to torture the prisoners in Guantanamo Bay. And when I was kid, it was common knowledge that if you played the Rolling Stone's album backwards, you heard the devil speaking in tongues. But this notion that club music can somehow kill someone? I just. I can't wrap my head around it.

MAGGIE
I changed it.

BRODY
What?

MAGGIE
My stage name. That's why it didn't come up in your stupid search. I mean, I didn't change it, exactly. He did.

BRODY
Who did, Karras?

MAGGIE
No.

BRODY
Maggie. Please. It's like we're going in circles here. Help me understand. I get that you're terrified. And that something possibly insidious is going on. But I need to make sense of it. I'll do

anything. I want to help you.

MAGGIE
Really?

BRODY
Yes.

MAGGIE
Anything?

BRODY
What are you thinking?

MAGGIE
Come with me. To the club.
Disguised.
We can dose, if you want. I mean.
So you'll know, what it's like.

BRODY
I don't know. That's not really my
scene.

MAGGIE
I thought you're an investigative
reporter? Isn't going undercover
what you guys do?

BRODY
Maybe in the movies.

SFX: PHONE RINGS

BRODY
Hello?

EDITOR IN CHIEF (ARTHUR)
Brody?

BRODY
Yeah. Hey Arthur, what's up?

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Saw the press conference this
morning.

BRODY
You did?

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Did you actually ask if these deaths could be related to the music being played?

BRODY

Well. Um. Not just the music. The frequencies.

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Look. I know you've been putting your heart and soul into this story. And I feel for those kids. But (he pauses) I think this piece is taking a toll on you.

BRODY

What? No way! I've been following this story since the beginning. (Whispers) I've got a source. I'm on the way to a major breakthrough.

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Oh yeah? What?

BRODY

I can't say. Not yet.

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Kid, this isn't working. I'm pulling you. Something's not right here. You're making the grey lady look like a laughingstock! I'm putting Lorraine on this.

BRODY

Lorraine! She writes obits! Come on!

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Look, I get it. This is grim shit. Kids in body bags. Sometimes you need to a breather. Get some perspective.

BRODY

I have perspective! What I need is time!

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Perfect. Take a few weeks.

BRODY
Thank you. (Breaths a sigh of relief)

EDITOR IN CHIEF
...As a lifestyle's reporter. Give you some time to get your head back on straight.

BRODY
Arthur, come on! You know me.

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Look. I've made my mind up. Take the next week off. And then on Monday. We'll get you hooked up with some wedding profiles. I gotta run. Take care of yourself, kid.

SFX: PHONE CLICKS OFF

BRODY
Shit.

MAGGIE
What's wrong? (no response) Brody?

BRODY
Ok. I'll do it. I'll go clubbing.

MAGGIE
First off, nobody says that anymore.

BRODY
Sorry. Whatever. I'm down.

MAGGIE
Cool. I guess.

BRODY
So, okay, finish your story. Where did you leave off? I know. The hotel. You're at the hotel...

INT. THE PLAZA HOTEL LOBBY - MORNING

MAGGIE (V.O.)

So I wake up at the hotel, I still feel like shit, and I go down to get an energy bar and some Pepsi. I'm at the register, but all I can think about is that girl crumpled up against the wall in the bathroom at Cooper's, staring at me...

SFX: CAFE SOUNDS. MUZAK. PEOPLE TALKING. CASHIERS RINGING

CLERK

Will that be all, miss?

Maggie doesn't answer. A moment passes.

CLERK

Miss?

MAGGIE

Yes. Sorry.

CLERK

Ok. That'll be six twenty-five.

MAGGIE

Ok. (pauses). Shit. I left my money in the room.

CLERK

That's okay, do you want to charge it to your account?

MAGGIE

Yeah. Wait. (pauses) Ugh. I don't remember the room number. It's on the fifth floor, the room at the end?

LONG GAME (V.O.)

No worries. Put it on my tab.

MAGGIE (V.O.)

And so I look over, and there he is. He's got a three-piece suit on, a nice one. Like an investment banker or something. And those thin leather gloves? He's still wearing

them.

BRODY
The English guy?

MAGGIE
Right. Long Game. I figure maybe
he's a germaphobe or something. You
know, like some eccentric rich
music producer. So one thing leads
to another.

SFX: RESTAURANT SOUNDS FADE IN

MAGGIE
Thank you for inviting me to
breakfast. Honestly, I'm not used
to eating at places with cloth
napkins and silverware that doesn't
come wrapped in plastic with a
napkin and salt and pepper packets.

LONG GAME
It's my pleasure. I've already
ordered for us.

MAGGIE
You have?

GIRL'S VOICE
Excuse me...(giggles)

MAGGIE (V.O.)
So just then, someone taps me on
the shoulder.
It's a girl, maybe she's 19 or 20.
She's standing next to another
girl, who looks about her same age.
They're wearing identical sweats
that say Columbia on them.

GIRL #1
We're like totally sorry to
interrupt your breakfast. But my
friend and I. We're pretty
convinced we saw you DJ a show at
the dock on Friday. It was you,
right?

MAGGIE

Uh, yeah. I guess, that was me..

SFX: BOTH GIRLS SQUEAL WITH DELIGHT

GIRL #1

See! I told you! I knew it! (back to Maggie) Oh. My. God. You like. Literally killed us.

MAGGIE

I did?

GIRL #1

Yes! (she drops her voice) Once everything kicked in, it was like - Tik-Tok Boom! We were like, flying. It was soooo sick.

MAGGIE

Wow. (unsure) Thanks?

GIRL #1

Can we get a pic? Crap. My phone's dead.

MAGGIE

Here I'll take it on mine and text it.

MAGGIE (V.O.)

So the girls crowd in, and I hold out my camera and take a pic of the three of us. The whole restaurant is watching now.

SFX: CELL PHONE CLICKS

GIRL #1

Awesome! Here, give me your phone I'll text it to myself. Do you have a like Insta or something? So we can catch your next show?

MAGGIE

Sure, I'll text you.

SFX: THEY GIGGLE IN TANDEM, WALK OFF, THEIR GIGGLES FADING DOWN.

MAGGIE

Wow. That was weird.

LONG GAME

Might have to get used to it.

MAGGIE

I guess I should save this for posterity. My first legit fan encounter.

MAGGIE (V.O.)

And I look at the picture, there's me and 2 girls, all of us grinning like idiots. But behind me, where Long Game is sitting. He's not there.

BRODY

What?

SFX: BACK AT THE RESTAURANT - A SERVING CART ROLLS OVER

WAITRESS

Here we are. Sunnyside for the gentleman and French toast for the lady.

MAGGIE

French toast? This used to be my favorite as a kid. How did you....

WAITRESS

Will there be anything else?

LONG GAME

Yes. Coffee, please. And a bloody Mary for the lady.

WAITRESS

(flirty) You got it, sir.

MAGGIE

How'd did you know?

BRODY

That you wanted a bloody Mary? Hair of the dog. It's obvious.

MAGGIE

No. How did you? (she's suddenly

very intense, suspicious, her
Spidey-sense totally rattled) Did
you know I was staying here?

LONG GAME
(Confused) Sorry?

MAGGIE
Did you know I was staying here?

LONG GAME
How would I?

MAGGIE
I don't know. I thought you and
Father Karras, maybe you talked?

LONG GAME
This is where I always repose while
we ready the boat back for the
voyage home, across the pond.

MAGGIE
Oh. Yeah. Of course. It was stupid
of me to ask...

LONG GAME
But I have spoken to Jim recently.
He's quite upset, poor chap.
There's been some unpleasantries.
At his club.

MAGGIE
I know. I was there, yesterday.
When the girl, you know.

SFX: SERVING TRAY RATTLES.

WAITRESS
Here ya go. High octane. Just
brewed. And a Spiked V8 for the
lady.

SFX: WAITRESS SETS DOWN THE DRINKS

MAGGIE
Thanks.

SFX: TRAY ROLLS OFF

LONG GAME

So, it's actually quite fortuitous
we've run into each other.

MAGGIE

Why is that?

LONG GAME

I wanted to talk to you. You were
impressive the other night.

MAGGIE

You caught my set?

LONG GAME

There was something about you. Your
energy. The way you interacted
with the crowd. Or, rather, how
they interacted with you. You had
them at your sway, completely at
your command. It was a magnificent
performance.

MAGGIE

Thanks.

LONG GAME

In fact, I dare say, you could live
100 years, and not see another show
quite like that.

MAGGIE

Come on. Be real, okay.

LONG GAME

I'm particularly interested in that
last bit. The song you played at
the end?

MAGGIE

It's nothing. I mean, it's
something, but, it's a work in
progress. I call it The White Note.

LONG GAME

The White Note. Hmmm. And, just
between us, did I detect the
slightest bit of, hmm, of César
Franck's Panis Angelicus, burnt

into that last track?

MAGGIE

Wow. (Surprised) That's amazing. It was supposed to be subliminal. You know, liturgical, but hidden from the naked eye. Ear. Whatever. How did you...?

LONG GAME

I have a bit of musical training. And you?

MAGGIE

Long story. My mom was a musician. Well, more of a church organist. She had kind of a drinking problem. And growing up, well, there's only so many churches in Minnesota you can show up to the bench blasted out of your mind before they hand you a bible and show you the door.

LONG GAME

I'm sorry.

MAGGIE

It's okay, I got used to it. But the thing was. Mom was always fighting these demons, you know?

LONG GAME

What do you mean?

MAGGIE

Look. Deep down. She's a good person. Loving. True. And there'd be stints. Long stints. When she'd be clean. And life was good. And she was top of her game.

LONG GAME

Not sure I understand?

MAGGIE

One time, I guess I was about 13, she was on the wagon. I thought it was gonna stick. It had been months since... Anyway, she was teaching me to be a

musician, like her. Piano lessons.
Guitar lessons. Opera -- and I'm
not much of a singer. And honestly,
I was never very good at any of it.
I don't know why she didn't give up
on me.

LONG GAME

Go on.

MAGGIE

Anyway. Don't ask me how or why,
but we'd somehow settled in Cape
Cod. And she was playing this old,
magnificent organ, I think they
smuggled it in on the Santa Maria.
Because the Pilgrims, you know,
they'd founded the place. And she
was on fire. Killing it. It wasn't
just her, there was a whole choir,
and an orchestra. But she was
stealing the show.

SFX: MUSIC FADES IN SLOWLY QUIETLY

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7Y0qKAzOrY&ab_channel=PrestCantabileTychy

MAGGIE

Literally, the place is vibrating.
And the crowd, the whole
congregation, is swaying and
humming, practically levitating. By
the time she finished the whole
place is in tears. It's as if we'd
all shared this crazy
transcendental experience. I know
this sounds insane, but it was as
if the holy spirit entered the room
and --

SFX: COFFEE SPILLS

LONG GAME

Goodness.. I've spilled coffee
everywhere.

MAGGIE

Oh, sorry. Let me help...

LONG GAME

No. It's my fault....Waitress...can we have some napkins? I've made a mess of things.

MAGGIE

(joking) If you'd wanted me to stop talking, you could have asked.

LONG GAME

Forgive my clumsiness. Your mother?

MAGGIE

Well, she's clean now. And that's half a miracle. But she has carpal tunnel. It's in her hands pretty bad, she needs an operation. So she's not playing anymore. I guess the reason I even told you that story, is because, well, (whispers) I think I can do it, too.

LONG GAME

Do what?

MAGGIE

I don't know. Move people?

LONG GAME

You've inherited her talents?

MAGGIE

Yeah. Lucky me. She's passed on a shit-ton of fine genetic propensities.

SFX: MAGGIE TAKES A SIP OF HER DRINK

MAGGIE

Sorry. About my French.

LONG GAME

Tell me more.

MAGGIE

When I'm performing. I can move people, too. Maybe not exactly like she did, not to tears, but I can take them on a journey, somewhere outside themselves. Even for a little while. And isn't that what we all want? To exit ourselves,

exist on a higher plane? Even if
it's just for a moment?

SFX - WAITRESS WALKS OVER

WAITRESS
Here's a fresh cup for ya, sir.

LONG GAME
Thank you.

SFX - WAITRESS WALKS OFF.

MAGGIE
I've never told anyone that before.

LONG GAME
I'm glad you did. You're an old
soul, Maggie. I have a feeling
we're going to be friends.

SFX: MANHATTAN NOISES

BRODY
Wow. That's some story.

MAGGIE
I don't know why I told him all
that, Brody. Really, I don't. But
after that moment, he put his hand
on mine. With the glove and all.
And he looked at me. Deeply.

BRODY
This sounds romantic.

MAGGIE
No. Just the opposite. It was
unnerving. He wasn't looking at me,
he was looking through me. And I
felt the hairs on the back of neck
creep up and I should have
realized...

BRODY
What? Realized what?

MAGGIE
Well, I didn't have time to think
about it, because someone tapped me

on the shoulder. I thought it was another fan. Right? Because now all of sudden I'm Lady Gaga.

(FEMALE VOICE)
Excuse me?

SFX - WE ARE BACK IN THE HOTEL LOBBY CAFE

FEMALE VOICE
Excuse me?

MAGGIE (V.O.)
So I turn around.

FEMALE VOICE
Maggie Smith?

MAGGIE (V.O.)
And it's the cop. The one from Cooper's. Detective Wilma. Will. So I don't know why, but, I panicked. I turn around and then, I just started running...

SFX: WE HEAR A GIANT CRASH COLLISION

MAGGIE (V.O.)
And of course, I instantly collide with a cart full of pancakes covered in whipped cream and strawberries... Boom. Mic Drop.

DETECTIVE WILL
Thatta girl. Okay. You're coming with me.

MAGGIE (V.O.)
She's got my arm gripped and she's pulling me to my feet.
She hands me a napkin so I can wipe the Cool Whip off my face.

DETECTIVE WILL
We just wanted to talk to you? Why are you running?

MAGGIE
I'm sorry. I don't know.

DETECTIVE WILL

Well, we need you to come down to the station. We have some questions.

MAGGIE
Okay, sure. But, my cat?

DETECTIVE WILL
What?

MAGGIE
My cat. I left her in my room. Can I get out my key and show you?

MAGGIE (V.O.)
So she nods her head and agrees, and lets me reach out into my back pocket for the card, and as soon as I feel her fingers off me. I take off.

BRODY
Is that how you ended up here, at my place.

MAGGIE
No. Not even close.

SFX: THEME MUSIC FADES UP.

NARRATOR
You've been listening to, The White Note.