

LEAD FOR THE LAWLESS: PILOT EXCERPT

Written by

Miles Luna

Copyright (c) 2022

hellomilesluna.com

EXT. RADLANDS - RED ROCK COUNTRY - SUNSET

The sun hangs low on the western horizon.

A CICADA CHIRPS on an enormous cactus.

A BLUE BUFFALO grazes, two eyes on either side of its head.

CONNIE LOCKE (28) rests her chin on her knees, comfortably curled up beneath the shadow of a giant bear skull. Her yellow eyes soak in everything. She wears banged up jeans and a jacket, red hair a mess.

As the sun sets, stars twinkle into view. They're joined by the bioluminescence of the RADLANDS. Cactus, yucca, grass, even the creatures all GLOW with streaks of neon light.

A rainbow of colors reflect off of Connie's face. She smiles.

Then the CICADAS FALL SILENT and the LIGHTS DIM. She scowls.

A dust cloud rises behind a distant hill. After a beat, MARTY - a lanky young man - soars into view atop a cobbled-together, futuristic MOTORBIKE. He flails his arms, SHOUTING.

Connie stands and turns as the bike tears down a dirt road past her towards a small SETTLEMENT.

CONNIE LOCKE
(sighs)
Marty.

EXT. RADLANDS - SETTLEMENT - NIGHT

Connie wanders in from the dark and into the more artificial glow of a small settlement straight out of the Old West, save for the futuristic lights and materials.

There's a buzz in the air; a slowly spreading panic as townsfolk dart to and fro. Connie quickens her pace.

A COMMOTION is coming from the SALOON. Marty's bike lies abandoned outside its entrance. Connie hurries over when-

Marty is FLUNG through the doors and onto the ground.

A fat drunkard (HAROLD) storms outside, several other TOWNSFOLK follow.

HAROLD
You got spotted, didn't ya?

MARTY

Naw, Harold, I-I swear! I seen 'em all in a caravan! They was already on the move!

HAROLD

Always out there ridin' around with your head in the clouds!

As Marty tries to pick himself up Harold makes to knock him back down. Connie steps between them and struggles to push Harold back with a forced smile and playful SOUTHERN ACCENT.

CONNIE LOCKE

Whoa, Hare! Okay, come on big guy. You're drunk.

HAROLD

Aw that's rich comin' from you, Red.

CONNIE LOCKE

Well I'm pissed you started without me. Now why the hell are we beatin' up on poor Marty, here?

HAROLD

Ask him yourself. Go on.

Connie turns to help Marty up.

CONNIE LOCKE

(SIGH)

Alright Slick, watcha gone and done?

MARTY

Protectives are coming.

The gathering crowd MURMURS and GASPS.

CONNIE LOCKE

...What?

MARTY

Ten wagon caravan, sharp lookin' Copperhead shoved right in the middle - all terrain model. I think they're bringing someone from the city.

Connie doesn't seem to understand.

CONNIE LOCKE

But. That ain't possible.

A towering man, BUTCH, exits the saloon with a rifle slung over his shoulder. He's accompanied by other OUTLAWS.

BUTCH

(to Connie)

Red, I have to say naivete is not very becoming of you. We knew we were gettin' too big for a camp this close to the city. Was only a matter of time before one of us got spotted.

MARTY

But I swear I--!

Butch holds up a calming hand then turns to a woman dressed in decorative tech and armor - SITU. She wears a SCANNER over her eyes and a compound BOW on her back.

BUTCH

Situ, I'd appreciate it if you and your friends got up on these here rooftops.

(to the rest)

I want noncombatants inside!

Everyone springs into action. Butch walks through the camp with purpose, Harold in tow. Connie hurries after them.

CONNIE LOCKE

What are you doin', Butch?

BUTCH

You of all people should know how much contraband we got stored here.

CONNIE LOCKE

Then we leave it. Ten wagons ain't a fight we can win.

BUTCH

We only need to hurt 'em bad enough so they fallback, then we grab what we can and ride for the mountains.

CONNIE LOCKE

Boss, if we don't--

Butch stops and gives Connie a hard stare.

BUTCH

...The hell's gotten into you, Red?

Connie blanks, unable to think of a response.

THOOM! Floodlights shine on the town from all directions.

Townsfolk SCREAM and flee for shelter. Bulky, modular ARMORED TRUCKS surround the settlement. RIOT OFFICERS in tactical armor pour out of them, rifles at the ready.

A chipper, PRE-RECORDED VOICE blares from one of the trucks.

PRE-RECORDED VOICE (O.S.)
 Attention: This is an official
 Sunshine Settlements Property
 Inspection. Please remain calm and
 have your lease information ready for
 review. A Sunshine Agent will be with
 you shortly. Thank you!

Harold takes hold of his rifle, annoyed. Connie sweats.

CONNIE LOCKE
 (warning)
 Butch.

An ARMORED SPORTS CAR rolls down main street and parks
 opposite Butch. Several other outlaws and townsfolk join in
 the street, armed.

A man in a black suit and bowler hat exits the car -
 PROTECTIVE MCALISTER. He flashes a SILVER STAR BADGE.

PROTECTIVE MCALISTER
 Horzion Protective! Stay where you
 are!

OTTO (O.S.)
 Could you not?

OTTO, a company man with a fake tan, slides out of the
 passenger side holding a bottle of champagne.

OTTO
 (to McAlister)
 I mean do you see the atmosphere
 you're manifesting here? It's bad.
 It's a bad energy.
 (to townsfolk)
 Sorry everybody! I'll try to make
 this up to you!

BUTCH
 You could leave.

OTTO
 (to McAlister)
 Exactly what I'm talking about.
 (clears throat, back
 to Butch)
 Sorry. Again. Uh, I'm not with them.
 This is all just...
 (MORE)

OTTO (cont'd)
 (gestures to
 everything)
 Protocol. My name is Otto, I'm here
 on behalf of Sunshine Settlements and
 I have great news for the founders of
 this lovely, uh, establishment.

Connie's eyes scan the area. Marty watches nervously behind
 cover. Children hide behind parents. Men grip their weapons.

BUTCH (O.S.)
 Anything you wanna say to me you can
 say to all of us.

OTTO
 Oh, you're Bernard!

Harold takes a step forward.

HAROLD
 (interrupting)
 Butch.

OTTO
 Butch. Got it. So then you must be
 Harold? Harry?

Otto's eyes GLOW. A HOLOGRAPHIC UI appears before him
 displaying the faces of Butch and Harold.

He waits for the men to respond. They don't.

OTTO (cont'd)
 You sure you wouldn't rather step
 inside? Have a drink? I brought--

BUTCH
 Say what you're gonna say.

Otto rings the neck of his champagne bottle, still all
 smiles. His UI disappears. Eyes cease to glow.

OTTO
 Right. In consideration of the mutual
 promises contained within the
 residential agreement lease between
 Sunshine Settlements and the parties
 of Harold Garnet and Bernard-- er,
 Butch, uh...

Otto's composure is quickly crumbling.

A CREATURE ROARS miles away - something big. Several Riot
 Officers retrain their rifles on the surrounding wilderness.

PROTECTIVE MCALISTER

(sotto)

Fuck this place.

(spits, to Butch)

You're being bought out.

HAROLD

(bewildered, to Butch)

What'd he say?

OTTO

Our parent company, Horizon, has chosen to develop these premises! Which means the two of you are being relieved of this property and awarded the coveted finder's fee. Congratulations.

Connie watches the townsfolk WHISPER. Butch remains unmoved.

BUTCH

And everyone else?

The town falls QUIET.

OTTO

(awkward beat)

As outlined in the terms, unauthorized inhabitants will be given the opportunity to retain their right to remain on the frontier through the purchase of one Sunshine Economy Class Pioneer Package.

PROTECTIVE MCALISTER

Once they've paid their trespassing fine to the Horizon Corporation.

CONNIE LOCKE

Protective.

All eyes turn to Connie for the first time. She stands, fists clenched, glaring at McAlister.

CONNIE LOCKE (cont'd)

Surely this is some sorta misunderstanding.

McAlister tilts his head. There's something about this woman he can't put his finger on.

BUTCH

I tell you what it is. It's a boardroom full of suits who don't understand that their city's taken everything from these people.

(MORE)

BUTCH (cont'd)
 People who risk their lives every day
 just to be out here, away from it.
 You wanna make things right? Let them
 go. Then we talk business.

Otto looks to McAlister. McAlister still locks eyes with
 Connie. After a beat he turns to Otto and shakes his head.

OTTO
 I'm sorry, Butch. Afraid there's no
 such thing as a free country.

SILENCE. Butch hands Connie his rifle, defeated.

BUTCH
 (to Otto)
 Gimme that bottle.

The townsfolk MURMUR with concern as Butch strolls over to
 Otto.

Connie lets out a BREATH she didn't know she was holding.
 She spots a look of betrayal on Harold's face. She shoulders
 the rifle and puts a hand on his shoulder.

CONNIE LOCKE
 It's better this way, Hare.

Otto presents Butch with the bottle of champagne.

OTTO
 Cheer up, pal. This is every
 pioneer's dream. You can be somebody
 now.

Butch's eye... twitches.

He takes the bottle and SMASHES IT across Otto's face,
 brings the same arm back, and SLICES OTTO'S HEAD OFF with a
 BLADE that extends from his forearm. Blue blood SPLATTERS.

Connie's eyes widen in horror.

McAlister stares in disbelief.

Harold lets out a joyous BATTLE CRY.

Gunfire EXPLODES from all directions.

Harold is RIDDLED WITH BULLETS as Connie dives to push him
 to the ground.

Too late. He's dead. Townsfolk rush into combat.

CONNIE LOCKE
 NO! RUN! YOU HAVE TO RUN!

Bodies hit the floor. Riot Officers FIRE on Butch.

Bullets ricochet off Butch's arms, tearing away at skin and revealing CYBERNETICS underneath. He charges McAlister.

McAlister draws a BIZARRE PISTOL and fires a MAGNETIC ROUND that sticks to Butch's shoulder. It GLOWS.

Butch's arms MALFUNCTION. He cuts off his own hand.

McAlister's eyes GLOW the same color of the magnetic bullet. Glaring with disgust, he draws a REVOLVER and puts it to Butch's head.

An ARROW strikes McAlister. He looks for the source - Situ stands on the rooftops with three other archers. Her scanner GLOWS.

The ARROW GLOWS. McAlister loses control of his body and begins FIRING on his own men.

Situ preps another arrow and turns to find a target. An RPG finds her first. The rooftop EXPLODES.

Splinters rain down on a BROTHER and SISTER. Connie scoops them up, out of danger, and into the saloon.

INT. SALOON - THEN

Connie sets the children down. Her southern accent is GONE.

CONNIE LOCKE
Out the back. Go. NOW.

They obey. Connie throws Butch's rifle to the floor in disgust and takes cover behind the bar. Her eyes GLOW.

A holographic UI appears before her - a Silver Star Symbol, an image of Connie - black suit, black hat, BLACK HAIR tied neatly.

CONNIE LOCKE (cont'd)
This is Horizon UCP one-eight-six-
nine to all nearby units! Cease fire!
(beat)
Please! They'll surrender, just--
(beat)
WILL SOMEBODY FUCKING LISTEN TO ME?!

MARTY (O.S.)
Red?

Connie spins around.

Marty stands in the saloon, shell-shocked and covered in blue and red blood.

CONNIE LOCKE
Marty! Marty, oh my god you're okay!

She rushes to embrace him, relieved.

CONNIE LOCKE (cont'd)
You've gotta get out of here. Do you understand? Take my bike, their wagons won't keep up. Okay? Can you do that?

MARTY
...Why do you sound funny?

Connie pulls away. Her SOUTHERN ACCENT RETURNS with a smile.

CONNIE LOCKE
Marty. You hurt your head.

MARTY
I didn't get spotted.

CONNIE LOCKE
I know. I know you didn't.

MARTY
But they knew we was here. They knew who was here.

A semblance of focus returns to Marty's eyes. He looks to Connie, her face twists into guilt... and shame.

CONNIE LOCKE
Marty, I'm not like them. I just want to live out here like the rest of y--

Marty CHOKES Connie, pushing her against the wall.

She fights for air. He tightens his grip, a scowl forming on his face. Connie's feet lift off the ground.

Her panic turns to sorrow. She stops fighting and gently wipes the furious tears from Marty's face before her arms go limp. The NOISE fades to SILENCE.

BANG. Marty drops to the floor.

Connie falls and STRIKES her head.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. HORIZON PROTECTIVE HQ - DEBRIEFING ROOM - LATER

Connie sits in a sterile, black room. Bandage around her head. Lost in a thousand-yard stare.

DEBRIEFING SUPERVISOR (O.S.)
Seems there was a bit of a mix up.

Connie gives a slight head tilt of acknowledgement.

CONNIE LOCKE
Hm.

An apathetic, well-groomed DEBRIEFING OFFICER sits opposite Connie, perusing through documents. At their side is a massive window to the monolithic megacity of RECLAMATION.

DEBRIEFING SUPERVISOR
The geo-survey data came back for that sector and the findings were... very promising. The Board felt it was more beneficial to secure the territory immediately rather than continue your undercover investigation. You were supposed to have received an extraction notice 48 hours ago, but unfortunately somebody in logistics dropped the ball. Not an ideal situation, but... so far shareholders are extremely pleased.

CONNIE LOCKE
...More beneficial.

DEBRIEFING SUPERVISOR
Protective Locke, on behalf of the Horizon Corporation, we want you to know that it's okay if you're feeling frustrated. Four months of work is a difficult thing to lose.

For a fleeting moment Connie recalls Marty's BLOODIED FACE, but her composure never falters.

CONNIE LOCKE
Yeah it is a bit frustrating.

FLASH MONTAGE:

- Connie on the crowded metro-rail.
- Connie in a crowded elevator.

INT. CONNIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Connie in the open doorway of her dark apartment, alone.

APARTMENT A.I. (O.S.)
Welcome home, Connie. I hope you had a productive day.