

LAWLESS

Pilot

Written by

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TEASER

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

CHYRON: APRIL 1920

Welcome to the Lower East Side!

Four and five story buildings loom over the city streets. The normally busy roads have calmed in the late hours - only a few cars and PEDESTRIANS remain.

They hustle to their homes, all bundled up in coats and jackets to hide from the cold winter night.

Spring is late this year.

INT. CIARA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

It's small. The furniture and appliances look new- not yet worn down by time and abuse.

A pot of soup slowly simmers. The steam from the soup wafts in the cold air. It's an idyllic picture of the ideal home.

Homemaker CIARA tastes the soup. Despite her calm exterior, ambition and passion stirs her soul.

CIARA

Still warm.

She smiles. Only one side of her face is visible.

FINN bursts into the kitchen. Her husband and a deadweight. Newspaper in hand, he picks up a beer from the island and tosses it in the air before catching it.

Ciara pauses for a kiss from her husband, but he just walks by, ignoring her.

CIARA

Want to lend a hand?

FINN

Hands are full.

He holds up the paper in one and beer in the other and shrugs.

Ciara side steps to Finn and kisses her husband on the cheek. He nods to the kitchen, the cooking. The domestic duties of the household.

His voice warm, softens.

FINN  
See. This suits you well.

Finn looks at her smugly.

FINN (CONT'D)  
Aren't you happier?

Ciara dodges his question - pushing him out the kitchen door.

CIARA  
Go sit down. I'll have this out in  
just a minute.

We follow Finn out the door and into the -

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Just like the kitchen, the dining room is simple. However, having their own place for just the two of them is a luxury not many of their overcrowded neighbors have.

Finn sits at a four person table. The candles on the table burn low - they've been set for a while.

Ciara walks in, a soup bowl in one hand and a plate of biscuits in the other. Finn doesn't look up. She returns to the kitchen.

The kitchen door opens - Ciara returns with a plate of lamb mashed potatoes.

CIARA  
Your favorite.

That breaks Finn out of his spell. He puts the paper. Ciara smiles at her husband, the dotting and attentive wife.

Finn opens his mouth to speak-

BANG! BANG!

Multiple shots ring out in quick succession.

Finn falls to the floor.

Ciara back peddles, crashing into the wall behind her. The plate of lamb mashed potatoes clatters to the floor with it's own deafening BANG.

Blood splatters her face. We see her face in full: beautiful, young. A large, faded bruise slapped across.

She reaches and gingerly touches her own face. She exams her fingertip - red.

Red with her husband's blood.

This is not your typical 1920s family nor your typical 1920s kind of girl.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

CHYRON: ONE MONTH EARLIER

A car turns the corner and drives down towards the apartment.

The car HONKS, announcing its arrival.

An older woman ALMA runs out of the house, a smile spread across her face. The car swivels to the front steps.

Finn steps out, very much alive.

ALMA

There's my wonderful son in law,  
father to my future grandchildren.

Finn embraces Alma and plants a kiss on both cheeks. Behind him, the DRIVER opens the car door for Ciara.

CIARA

Mama!

Ciara gives her mother a big hug.

ALMA

How was the honeymoon?

Ciara's face drops slightly and she shoots a glance towards her husband, whose attention is clearly divided.

CIARA

I brought you some parsnips. The  
best of the season.

ALMA

Thank you, Care-bear.

Ciara's face is flushed, from embarrassment and the cold.

CIARA

I'm a married woman now.

ALMA

So you don't have to hide  
embarrassing parts of yourself.

CIARA  
Keep one eye closed after marriage,  
I know.

Alma winks.

ALMA  
The key to a good marriage.

Finn moves from foot to foot.

FINN  
Where's the old man?

ALMA  
Second floor.

Finn takes off.

ALMA (CONT'D)  
Finn! Aren't you forgetting  
someone?

He looks back and a grin breaks when he sees Ciara. He runs over and sweeps Ciara off her feet.

Finn kisses her. She grins.

FINN  
Shall we?

He carries her through the front door.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

There's a shriek of joy and Finn and Ciara enter the apartment for the first time.

At the head of the table sits RONAN, Ciara's father with a full figure and strong features only accentuate his size. He's no Rockefeller. Yet.

Finn places Ciara on the ground.

CIARA  
Father, this place is beautiful.  
Thank you.

RONAN  
Anything for my favorite daughter  
and the heir of our two families.

CIARA  
I'm your only daughter.

RONAN  
All the better for you.

Ronan stands and faces Finn. Finn stiffens.

RONAN  
How was Albany?

FINN  
Just as you said. Giggle water at  
every street corner.

Ronan nods. Alma knocks at the door.

ALMA  
Let's leave the two young lovebirds  
alone, dear.

RONAN  
We'll talk later.

Ronan kisses Ciara and gives Finn a firm handshake. Ronan and  
Alma depart.

As soon as they leave-

CIARA  
We're home!

Ciara walks a few steps towards Finn. She puts her hands on  
his chest, undoing his tie.

Finn, however, pays no attention.

CIARA (CONT'D)  
Honey? Don't you want to break our  
new home in?

He moves her hands from his chest. Finn fixes his tie and  
puts his jacket back on.

FINN  
Not now.

CIARA  
Where are you going?

FINN  
Trying to stay in your father's  
good graces.

CIARA  
But it's our first night.

FINN  
I'm the heir of the families.

He kisses her, more of a dismissal.

CIARA  
Finn.

FINN  
Don't wait up.

Finn runs out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

It's not a huge apartment, but now alone it seems massive. A grandfather clock CHIMES. She jumps, startled.

The DRIVER appears in the doorway, suitcases in hand.

DRIVER  
Ma'am, where shall I place these?

CIARA  
The master bedroom, please.

DRIVER  
Where may I find the master?

Ciara sighs.

This isn't her home.

CIARA  
I'm not sure.

She straightens, takes a deep breath.

A smile returns to her face. Mask on.

CIARA  
I'm sure we can figure it out.

EXT. THE ORCHARD LODGE - DAY

A blindfolded Ciara is led by the hand up the street by Ronan. Her smile is trusting, yet uneasy.

CIARA  
Father, where are you taking me?

RONAN  
Have I not taught you that patience  
is a virtue?

They stop and Ronan positions her to face across the street.

He takes the blindfold off. In front of Ciara stands a six  
story building that reads: ORCHARD LODGE.

RONAN  
Welcome to Orchard Lodge.

CIARA  
Yes, this is your hotel.

Ronan shakes his head.

RONAN  
We don't always get what we want,  
but we get what we deserve.

CIARA  
I don't understand.

RONAN  
The hotel is yours.

CIARA  
Did another manager leave?

RONAN  
No, he's still there. How does  
owner sound?

CIARA  
This is the bee's knees.

RONAN  
The property deed is inside with  
your name on it.

Ciara's eyes brighten and she gives her father a hug.

CIARA  
Mine?

Ronan nods.

CIARA (CONT'D)  
When do I start?

RONAN

Now, if you'd like.

She looks both ways before running across the street to her hotel. The DOORMAN opens the door for the new owner.

The Driver walks up to Ronan, lighting Ronan's cigarette.

DRIVER

She looks happy.

Ronan exhales. The cigarette smoke drifts and distorts both of their faces.

RONAN

She's a fire that must be directed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Finn sleeps with the RADIO softly playing next to him. A beer bottle balances precariously in his hand.

Ciara quietly slips through the door. She sees the beer in his hand and reaches over, gently, trying not to wake him. It's been a good day - her first day - on the job.

Finn startles awake, disoriented, and he GRABS Ciara. About to strike.

She SHRIEKS and the beer bottle clashes to the floor.

FINN

What the fuck, you dumb Dora?

He gets out of the chair. He kicks the beer bottle. It breaks as it SMASHES into the wall.

FINN (CONT'D)

Where have you been all day?

Ciara kneels, picking up the shards of glass carefully off the floor.

CIARA

Happy to see you too. I had a great day, thanks for asking.

FINN

All I want after a hard day's work is to come home to a happy wife and warm meal. Is that too much to ask for?

Ciara walks through the doors that lead into the kitchen.

                    CIARA (O.S.)  
Well you better get used to it.

Finn follows her into the-

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ciara tosses the shards of glass carefully into the trash.

                    FINN  
Are you being smart with me?

                    CIARA  
Smart enough to own Orchard Lodge.

                    FINN  
Orchard Lodge?

                    CIARA  
The one and only.

                    FINN  
You? You're running the hotel?

                    CIARA  
You don't think I can?

                    FINN  
You can barely run this house.

He snickers.

                    FINN (CONT'D)  
That's okay, I can pawn it off to  
someone else.

                    CIARA  
I'm going out.

She grabs her jacket.

                    FINN  
You can't leave.

                    CIARA  
Why not? You didn't care what I did  
before.

                    FINN  
Marriage changes things.

CIARA  
Only if you let it.

Ciara exits.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Ciara walks, a hustle in her step. Lost in thought, she passes a dozen faces but her eyes don't register any of them.

FIONA  
Ciara!

Ciara's brought back to reality.

FIONA, her childhood best friend and light in her step, bounds up to her. Fiona's face is flushed red from the cold.

CIARA  
Fiona! I was unsure if you were  
going to make it.

Ciara kisses her friend on the cheek in greeting.

FIONA  
I wouldn't miss this for the world.  
You're the one who just got back  
from her Honeymoon.

Fiona gives her a warm smile and hugs her once more. They continue walking down the chilled, crowded streets.

Fiona speaks with a singsong voice.

FIONA  
Did you have fun?

CIARA  
Yeah, it was fine.

FIONA  
Fine? That's all you got?

Ciara and Fiona disappear as they turn a corner.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ciara and Fiona stand towards the back in a room full of WOMEN. Ladies, mostly from the working class, all here to discuss one thing: Suffrage.

ALICE PEN (35) pounds a gavel on the podium. The up and coming leader of the National Women's Party, her piercing, hungry eyes peer into the sea of ladies.

ALICE

Ladies, ladies. Thank you for joining us tonight. If you may.

The women quiet down.

ALICE (CONT'D)

We are privileged to have the vote in New York, however not everyone in the United States is as lucky. We continue to fight for those who cannot.

The women CHEER. We're all down for this.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The women lean forward, eating Alice's every word.

ALICE (CONT'D)

In August, Tennessee will vote and hopefully become our 36th state, turning the tide for ratification. Those in the planning committee, please be prepared. This may be our hardest battle yet.

The women cheer and Alice is escorted out. The women talk amongst themselves.

FIONA

I've heard she's been to jail more than a dozen times. Force-fed too.

Ciara nods, eyeing the room.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Does Finn know you're here?

CIARA

Finn is not my keeper.

EMILY STONE (25) smart and stunning, approaches the pair with an award winning smile.

EMILY

Well said, dear. You are your own person.

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

(beat)

Emily. Emily Stone.

CIARA

Ciara.

FIONA

Have we met before?

EMILY

That would be hard to imagine. I only just moved here recently.

Ciara nods.

FIONA

Would you like to join us? We're visiting a blind tiger.

EMILY

A blind tiger?

FIONA

A speakeasy.

Ciara shoots Fiona a look.

CIARA

I can't, not tonight.

FIONA

Come on, you just got married. We need to celebrate.

A look of disgust passes through Emily's face, but it disappears in an instant. Neither Ciara or Fiona notice.

EMILY

I can't tonight, but you girls enjoy yourself. Will our paths meet again?

CIARA

Yes, I'm sure they will.

Emily smiles and leaves.

FIONA

So you're going out tonight?

CIARA

Only if you force me to.

FIONA  
I don't take no for an answer.

INT. DANCING DOG SPEAKEASY - NIGHT

Dim lights and high energy music plays. In the corner is a live JAZZ BAND playing AVALON. Spurred with some giggle water, the energy is contagious.

Fiona and Ciara stand at a table by themselves. Fiona chugs down a glass, but not Ciara.

CIARA  
I don't want to dance.

FIONA  
You're such a bluenose.

Ciara takes a sip of her own.

CIARA  
A wet blanket wouldn't be here.

FIONA  
A wet blanket would, but not a dry one. Drink more!

She laughs at her own joke.

FIONA (CONT'D)  
Get me another?

Ciara smiles and goes to the-

INT. DANCING DOG - BAR - CONTINUOUS

CIARA  
I'll take the house cocktail.

The BARTENDER (25) turns around and gives her a wink.

BARTENDER  
Upfront or tab?

Ciara looks back at Fiona - there's a starry look in Fiona's gaze. Fiona sways by herself.

CIARA  
Close.

He nods.

BARTENDER  
That's two twenty-five.

CIARA  
Two twenty-five?

She shakes her head, getting her purse out.

CIARA (CONT'D)  
This place is a gold mine. How much  
do you make in a night?

BARTENDER  
House secret. Prohibition has been  
kind to us.

The Bartender gives her a grin and takes her money. Ciara looks around at the dozens of PEOPLE dancing, drinking, and swinging. All crammed in a tiny space.

CIARA  
I'm sure. More people and more  
drinks on more nights.

BARTENDER  
It's a good business.

CIARA  
How would one start a speakeasy?

The Bartender laughs.

BARTENDER  
Clearly I'm not doing my job right.  
A young lady like yourself should  
be having fun.

He counts the change before giving Ciara her drink.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)  
Besides, you'd need connections  
with either the Church or the mob.  
And you don't want to go to bed  
with either of them.

CIARA  
Mhm.

She gives the Bartender a tip.

CIARA (CONT'D)  
Thanks.