

This is the spec script I wrote to audition for a writing job for Jordan Weisman and team at Microsoft and FASA for the first Crimson Skies PC game. This work was not canon, nor was it ever used, it's only purpose was to show some character energy and story telling direction.

It worked! I got the job and collaborated with a great team on one of my favorite writing assignments ever.

— Lane Raichert

BOULDER DAM - FULL MOON - PARTLY CLOUDY NIGHT

A SIGN reads "Boulder Dam - Welcome to Arixo." The road across the top of the dam is blocked by HEAVY GATES and two cement TOWERS bristling with AA guns.

TWO ARMED GUARDS, lost mostly in dark silhouettes, stand outside doorway leading into one of the towers. The opening glows warmly within, framing the men in shadows. They both smoke, pacing watchfully, but calmly. The night is cool and silent. SFX WATER LAPPING AND CRICKETS.

One guard stops, cocks an ear.

GUARD

What's that?

GUARD

What's what?

GUARD

That?

A very distant SFX DULL DRONE hums.

GUARD

Son of a...!

The guards run to the shack.

GUARD

(shouts to tower)

ZEPPELIN!

SIREN CRANKS UP TO A WAIL as the few lights on the Dam black out.

Guards look skyward, holding up their rifles. The AA gun silhouettes behind them, turn silently into position, aiming skyward.

GUARD

Must have drifted in on the wind,
hidden above the clouds.

GUARD

She's using her engines now to
position over us.

GUARD

(pointing skyward)
There!

The AA guns OPEN FIRE, rumbling the scene with BRIGHT FLASHES.

Lit solely by the strobe of gunfire, A GUARD in dark silhouette shouts into a military telephone. SFX: OMINOUS WHISTLE OF HUGE BOMB APPROACHING.

GUARD

This is Boulder Checkpoint
Central, we are under attack!
Where is air cover? Repeat!
Where is air...

The guard looks up into the sky as the scene goes white in a blinding EXPLOSION.

GUARDS (O.C.)

(Screams)

DISSOLVE TO:

SCRATCHY BLACK AND WHITE NEWSREEL

SUPER READS "WAR??" over various shots of DROUGHT, destroyed Boulder Dam, warplanes patrolling. DRAMATIC NEWSREEL MUSIC BLASTS UNRELENTINGLY.

ANNOUNCER

(loud and boisterous)

Does War loom for the Great Western Nations? Ever since the mysterious bombing and near destruction of the Boulder Dam the accusations have been flying. Better that than bullets! Still, tensions are high in the new modern West. Free Colorado accuses Hollywood Nation of cutting off their much needed Boulder Dam revenues! Hollywood accuses Colorado of cutting off their precious water supply! Free Colorado Secretary of War Jane Halder has openly accused The Nation of Hollywood of conspiring with Pirates! Though President Lowe has distanced himself from Halder's wild remarks, she has struck a chord with the common man in Colorado and Arixo setting old anti-Hollywood sentiments ablaze!

Protesters march, Politicians meet.

ANNOUNCER

Amidst the furor, Politicians from all sides of the dispute try to keep calmer and cooler heads while they pound out a new multi-state Water-Treaty which expired only last month.

Hollywood Nation President Samuel Goldwyn speaks into large microphones. He holds out his hand.

PRESIDENT GOLDWYN

We can only hope that our neighbors will accept our hand offered forward in true friendship, and lay to rest these outrageous claims.

CUT TO:

OVER THE MOJAVE - DAWN

A majestic Zeppelin cuts through the golden sky over the desert. Its SFX ENGINES RUMBLE as camera focuses in on its name: the "HNS GABLE"

MR. KAEL (VO)

What gives around here, boys? I was thinking maybe you forgot all about me or something.

INT. HNS GABLE - INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Shutters let in golden slits. Two stoic HOLLYWOOD KNIGHTS stand guard at either side of a door behind a man handcuffed to a chair: AMBASSADOR KAEL. Kael is a large man in a expensive albeit rumpled suit. He tries to look back at the men.

KAEL

Locking me up in that room all night. [frowns] I got diplomatic rights, ya know. I got friends too. And the Capones don't take kindly to anybody roughin' up their employees, if you know what I mean. And they're not afraid of no Hollywood Knights neither.

Kael looks at the guards. Nothing.

KAEL

Rr. Regular chatterboxes, ain't ya?

SLAM. CHARLIE STEEL strides into the room carrying a loose folder. As she glides past Kael, he properly leers at her.

KAEL

Hel-lo, sister.

Steel takes a seat behind the table. She drops the folder to the table with loud SLAP.

STEEL

You like pictures, Johnny?

KAEL

(recognition dawning)

Hey. Ain't you...

STEEL

I asked you a question, Johnny.

KAEL

(leans back in his chair)

Yea. I like pictures. Of you.

(cracks a lecherous grin)

Maybe on a bearskin. Or a calendar.

STEEL

So that's the way it's gonna be, hm? Mr. Tough guy. Mr. Wise from Chicago is that it?

KAEL

Yeah, that's it, sister. I mean how's President Goldwyn gonna explain to the Industrial States of America that his ambassador got pinched by some Hollywood fly boys in the middle of the night? Breaking international immunity.

(smiles)

It would be a public scandal. Start a war even. And you don't need another one of those now, do you? Pacifica's bad enough, and now you got those Water-Treaty problems with Free Colorado and Arixo. They're just itching for an excuse to join up against you. Anyway, you straight-shooters always follow your laws.

(kicks back in his chair)

Way I see it, I'm all gravy. You have to let me walk. I'm untouchable.

STEEL

(smiling, something up her sleeve)
I'm afraid everything you say is all too true.

KAEL

Then why don't you be more useful, doll, and scare me up some smokes and a little gin.

STEEL

I've already arranged to drop you off in Long Beach. There's a friend waiting for you there. He's been so kind as to offer you a ride home. Back to Chicago, I assume.

KAEL

(curiously amused)
Friend?

STEEL

Yes, a well dressed gentlemen from New York by the name of Sam Lucci.

Kael sits up -- goes ghost white.

KAEL

(horrified)
Lucci?! Sam Lucci?!

Steel stands, collects her papers calmly, starts to leave.

STEEL

"Hamburger." What an unusual nickname. Wonder how he got it?

Kael squirms in his chair.

KAEL

Wait, wait, wait!! Maybe we can talk. Maybe I can help you out here with something.

Steel pauses in the doorway.

STEEL

I don't know...I wouldn't want to break any international laws or anything.

KAEL

No more lip, I swear. On the level. And off the record.

Steel sits back down, spreads out a series of pictures in front of Kael. He leans forward with interest as she talks.

STEEL

Look, we're not asking you to roll on your boss or anything, we just want to know who these people are and why your boys were suddenly so interested in the HA-2 Condor.

VARIOUS PICTURES of the Hughes HA-2 Condor, purchase orders, still photos of men shaking hands on a golf course:

KAEL (O.C.)

This here's Jimmy Paglia. He runs an aircraft plant for us out of Skokie. And this is Joe Bradley, a Pacifica money man. And that's some dame who owes me money. A lot of money. Where did you take these pictures?

STEEL (O.C.)

Johnny.

KAEL (O.C.)

Sorry. Jimmy here bought a dozen of Mr. Hughes' attack planes.

STEEL (O.C.)

But why would an aircraft factory buy fully built planes?

KAEL (O.C.)

Front man. After he bought 'em he passed them on to Bradley.

STEEL (O.C.)

Pacifica buying Hollywood built planes? But we're at war.

KAEL (O.C.)

Beats me too. Jimmy tried to sell 'em our planes instead, good prices too, but they were real interested in the Condor specifically. And paid sweet for it too. None of us could figure it either.

Back on the pair in the room. Steel is suddenly lost in thought. She turns to look out the shutters.

KAEL

Look, it's all legit, the ISA didn't know nothing about it until we told 'em. It was all done in the families, through private companies.

(looks worried)

That's the whole works, right there. I don't know nothing else.

Steel picks up a com-pipe to the bridge.

STEEL

Tom! Get HQ on the pipe. We got a problem. A Presidential problem.

TOM

Presidential? Wilco, chief.

Steel starts to leave but Kael leans toward her.

KAEL

Miss Steel, about this little conversation...private like, right? Just between us?

Steel turns back to Kael with a reassuring smile.

STEEL
A deal's a deal, Johnny. We'll
drop you off in Barlowe instead.

KAEL
Bless you.

HARD CUT TO:

COLORADO/HOLLYWOOD BORDER - HIGH NOON

Two planes ROAR HARD THRU SCENE. It's Steel and Hadley.

VARIOUS SHOTS: FROM OUTSIDE OF PLANES AND INTERIORS:

HADLEY
Charlie! What about radio
silence?!

STEEL
There's no time, is everyone here?

HOLLYWOOD KNIGHTS
(AD LIB AFFIRMATIVE CALLS)

STEEL
Listen up boys, we're looking for
a dozen of our own. Condors.
Marked up in our colors.

HADLEY
HA-2's? What, is this an escort?
Meet and greet?

STEEL
Nope. Search and destroy.

HOLLYWOOD KNIGHT
Search and destroy? Our own?

STEEL

Painted up to look like ours but they'll be Pacifica or Mexican Pilots inside. I already spoke to the President. Pacifica's planning some attack using our planes on Free Colorado. Probably another attack on the Dam, or the canals. Colorado will blame us, we'll go to war with them and Arixo, wear ourselves down...

HADLEY

Then the Mexicans and Pacificans waltz in and carve up what's left of us. There's a fix.

STEEL

You got it, Tom. Mexico gets her land back, Pacifica's done with us once and for all.

HADLEY

Bandits, three o'clock.

A dozen Condors, identical to Steel and Hadley's, come roaring straight on them.

STEEL

Time to dance, boys!

HADLEY

But -- how are we gonna tell each other apart?!

STEEL

There's the rub, Tom! Good luck!

CUT OUT: