

LAY YOUR SLEEPING HEAD, EPISODE 3

6/29/18

THEME MUSIC

ANNOUNCER

Persigo Press presents The Henry Rios Mysteries Podcast.

Hello, this is Michael Nava, author of a series of crime novels, featuring Henry Rios, a gay, Mexican-American criminal defense lawyer, and the producer of this podcast.

Today, we present episode three of *Lay Your Sleeping Head*, the first novel in the series.

Lay Your Sleeping opens in the summer of 1982, in the fictional town of Linden, California, thirty miles south of San Francisco. Linden is the home of the prestigious university of the same name, founded in the nineteenth century by railroad tycoon, Grover Linden.

Henry Rios is a Public Defender, born and raised in a small town in California's central valley and from a working class, Mexican-American family. He is a graduate of Linden University and its top-ranked law school.

In 1982, there is no Internet, [beat] people smoke in bars and airplanes [beat] most gay men are closeted and no one has heard of

AIDS [beat]. It's an America where 83 percent of the people identify as white, 85 percent as Christian and 83 percent say that homosexuality is morally wrong. [Beat] Ronald Wilson Reagan, who once declared that trees cause more pollution than automobiles, is the president of the United States.

In the last episode, Rios resigned from the Public Defender's office after his encounter with a young man named Hugh Paris at the jail, and his conflict with his supervisor over his drinking, led him to question the value of his work. In this episode, Hugh turns up at Rios's apartment in the middle of the night with an improbable tale of long ago murders in his wealthy family. Rios is skeptical of Paris's story. Nonetheless, they end up in bed where they discover an emotional bond deeper than mere sexual attraction.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS, FOLLOWED BY A SOFT KNOCK AT A DOOR, THEN A LOUDER ONE. INDOOR, SOUND OF SOMEONE ROLLING OUT OF BED, FOOTSTEPS, DOOR OPENING.

RIOS

Hugh?

PARIS

[Anxiously] Don't turn on any lights.

RIOS

It's three in the morning. What are you doing here?

PARIS

I think I'm being followed.

RIOS

Followed by who?

PARIS

Please, can I come in.

RIOS

Yeah, of course.

SFX: DOOR CLOSING.

RIOS

I just going to turn on the desk lamp, okay?

PARIS

Okay.

RIOS

Come over here, let me see your eyes.

PARIS

I'm not high, if that's what you're thinking. I could use a drink, though.

RIOS

I keep the booze in the kitchen. Make yourself at home.

SFX: GLASSES OUT OF CUPBOARD, ICE CUBES, SOUND OF LIQUID BEING POURED.

RIOS

Here you go.

PARIS

Cheers. [SFX: Glasses clink]

RIOS

What brings you here tonight, Hugh?

PARIS

You wrote your number and address on your card, remember? You told me I could call you for anything I needed.

RIOS

So, what do you need?

PARIS

The last time I saw you, you were wearing a shirt.

RIOS

You're lucky I remembered to pull on some pants before I answered the door.

PARIS

I'm not complaining, but when I pictured you shirtless, I imagined a hairy chest.

RIOS

It's the Indian blood. You spend a lot of time imagining me without a shirt on?

PARIS

Among other things. You ever think about me?

RIOS

Only when I'm awake.

RIOS

He took our glasses and set them on the coffee table, then stepped into my arms, tipped his face upwards and we kissed. His tongue slid lazily into my mouth and I savored the taste and the warmth of his hard, little body against mine. His fingers worked the buttons of my 501s and he tugged my pants down to my thighs. With a last, lewd kiss, he dropped to his knees. Just as he was about to take me in his mouth, I reached down, hooked my arms around his armpits and lifted him to his feet.

PARIS

What are you doing?

RIOS

Trying to pull my pants up over my hard on.

PARIS

You want me to stop?

RIOS

Sit down.

PARIS

My blow jobs are legendary.

RIOS

No doubt. I gave you my card weeks ago. If all you wanted was sex, you could've called me anytime. I would have come running. Instead, you show up at my apartment in the dead of night telling me you're being followed. I believe you when you say you're not high, so what's up?

PARIS

I'm sorry I didn't call. I wanted to. I felt . . . you know, like we connected.

RIOS

I tried to find you but you walked out of the jail and disappeared.

PARIS

I don't have anything in my name, not my house or phone or car. Precautions.

RIOS

Against what?

PARIS

I told you I came back from New York to deal with some family things.

RIOS

Yeah, I remember.

PARIS

They involve people who could hurt me, so I keep my head down. I got a scare tonight and I needed to find a safe place. I thought of you.

RIOS

You need to fill in a few more blanks for me.

PARIS

I don't want to drag you into my drama.

RIOS

You did that when you knocked at my door. So . . . ?

PARIS

[Beat] I come from money.

RIOS

I guessed that from the watch you're wearing.

PARIS

Good eye. Vintage Patek Philippe. Worth about fifty thousand dollars, I guess. It was my dad's. It's the only thing I have of his. I managed to hang on to it through – everything.

RIOS

Everything meaning, becoming a junkie.

PARIS

Everything. Including becoming a junkie. But like I told you at the jail, I'm clean now.

RIOS

Ok. Go on.

PARIS

My family has old and famous money. It comes from my grandmother's side – my dad's mom – but grandfather controls it through a family trust. I'm a beneficiary. When I was out there using, all I cared was that the money keep flowing, but he cut me off. I had to find other ways to take care of myself, but you know about that. After I got clean, I began to look into the trust, to get back what was mine. I discovered some things about how my grandfather got control of the money. Criminal things.

RIOS

Like what, diverting funds? Embezzlement?

PARIS

Murder.

RIOS

What?

PARIS

He had people killed, Henry. That's how he got control of the money.

RIOS

Who do you think he killed?

PARIS

Had killed. [Beat] My grandmother and my uncle. His son.

RIOS

[Skeptical] Ok. [Beat] Why them?

PARIS

Like I told you, it was her money. My grandfather married into it. She was going to divorce him. My uncle was helping her. If she had divorced him, he would have got nothing. So, he had them killed.

RIOS

What you're telling me is that while you were nosing around in the family trust, you discovered your grandfather is a murderer? Is he the guy you're hiding from? The one you think is following you?

PARIS

Having me followed.

RIOS

What do you think he'll do to you?

PARIS

Try to scare me off, and if that doesn't work, he'll have me killed, too.

RIOS

Your grandfather wants to murder you. Really?

PARIS

[Defensive] You think I'm crazy, don't you?

RIOS

Put yourself in my place. In the middle of the night, a guy you met once a jail, who admits to being a drug addict, shows up at your house and tells you he's being stalked by his grandfather who's some kind of serial killer. What would you think?

PARIS

[Angry] See, that's why I didn't say anything to you at the jail.

RIOS

Who got you out of jail, by the way?

PARIS

Uncle John. My grandmother's brother. He has some influence down here.

RIOS

I'll say. The D.A. dropped all the charges. The cops destroyed the record of your arrest. Does Uncle John know about your allegations against your grandfather?

PARIS

[Reluctantly] I told him. He thinks . . . He thinks I'm angry about how the old man treated me.

RIOS

So, he doesn't believe you either.

PARIS

[Defiantly] I have evidence.

RIOS

There's no statute of limitations on murder. If you have proof your grandfather killed someone, take it to the cops. If he's cheating you of money that belongs to you, I can refer you to a really good civil lawyer.

PARIS

Take it to the cops? Sue him? You have no idea who he is. He owns this town.

RIOS

Now you are starting to sound a little crazy.

PARIS

To hell with you. I'll be going now.

RIOS

Wait, Hugh. Hold on. This is what I think. You come from money but you ended up on the streets shooting junk. While you were out there, your grandfather cut you off. Maybe he was practicing tough love or maybe he's an asshole, I don't know. What I do know is that addiction does things to your head. You might be clean now but there are residual effects. I'd be very careful about accusing people of murder until you're sure you've shaken your addiction.

PARIS

[Sarcastic] So, I'm not crazy, I'm in detoxing.

RIOS

I'm just trying to make sense of what you've told me without having to write you off as a complete lunatic because . . .

PARIS

Because what?

RIOS

Because I don't want to have to ask you to leave.

PARIS

[Sarcastic] Is that lawyer talk for you want me to stay?

RIOS

Yes. I want you to stay. [Beat] I haven't stopped thinking about you since we met.

PARIS

If I'm so crazy, how do you know I would knife you in your sleep?

RIOS

Who said anything about sleeping?

SCENE TRANSITION MUSIC

SEXY MUSIC COMES UP BEHIND THE DIALOGUE

PARIS

Use me, baby. Do whatever you want. Hurt me.

RIOS

You want me to hurt you?

PARIS

That's usually what the guys who paid me wanted. [Beat] I got used to it. [Beat] I guess I even liked it.

RIOS

I'm not one of your johns, and you've been hurt enough. We both have.

PARIS

[Beat] You seem so self-confident I wouldn't have guessed that you're lonely, too.

RIOS

Now you know.

MUSIC FADES OUT

PARIS

Good morning, sleepy head. I put on some coffee.

RIOS

You're still here. I was afraid you'd left.

PARIS

Scoot over.

RIOS

That tattoo on your chest looks old. What is it, a peach?

PARIS

Yeah. I got in in Amsterdam when I was nine. My dad's idea.

RIOS

What kind of father makes his nine-year-old get a tattoo?

PARIS

My dad was pretty sick by then.

RIOS

What was wrong with him?

PARIS

I don't know, exactly, but I would've done anything for him. Anyway, he got one, too, and he went first so I wasn't scared when it was my turn.

RIOS

What were you doing in Amsterdam?

PARIS

It was the sixties and my parents . . . I guess you'd call them hippies. We lived in communes, ashrams and one winter in a castle in Scotland. God, that place was freezing cold.

RIOS

Who took care of you?

PARIS

My dad, when he could. My mom, when she was sober. Sometime I had a nanny, but I spent a lot of time on my own.

RIOS

Are those Chinese characters beneath the tattoo?

PARIS

Yes. I had no idea what they meant until this one time in New York I was with this john from Hong Kong and I asked him. He said it says, "Heaven protects the innocent."

RIOS

Protects them against what?

PARIS

You'd have to ask my dad, and he's dead.

RIOS

I'm sorry.

PARIS

He died a long time ago. [Beat] You ask a lot of questions.

RIOS

That's what lawyers do.

PARIS

I didn't get back into bed to be interrogated.

RIOS

Hey, that tickles.

PARIS

How about this? Does this tickle . . .

SCENE TRANSITION MUSIC

PARIS

When did you know you were gay?

RIOS

Around twelve, when I hit puberty. You?

PARIS

I didn't make it to twelve.

RIOS

What do you mean?

PARIS

I was raped when I was ten.

RIOS

What? That's terrible. Who –?

PARIS

I'm not ready to talk to you about it.

RIOS

[Beat] Will you tell me someday?

PARIS

I don't know.

RIOS

Come over here.

PARIS

You're sweet, Henry.

RIOS

You said that at the jail, too, but I'm not, you know.

PARIS

Yes, you are. You look tough and you talk tough but you're a soft touch. You learn these things when you're on the street. Who you can trust, who you can't.

RIOS

Hard to imagine you on the street.

PARIS

I clean up pretty well but don't be fooled. I'm a junkie, remember, and I supported my habit on my back. It doesn't matter where you started out, that life . . . it changes you.

RIOS

How did it start? Using, I mean.

PARIS

I needed to get well.

RIOS

What does that mean?

PARIS

That's what we say when we need a fix. I need to get well. Like life is the disease and junk is the cure. For a long time, it was.

RIOS

Then why get clean?

PARIS

The cure became worse than the disease and then the only cure was dying and . . . I guess I wasn't ready to die. [Beat] It's late. Should you be getting ready for work?

RIOS

I quit.

PARIS

You what? Why?

RIOS

I stopped believing what I was doing made enough of a difference to keep doing it.

PARIS

What will you do now?

RIOS

I don't know. [Beat] Get to know you better.

PARIS

You know I'm not really like you, Henry.

RIOS

What's that supposed to mean?

PARIS

Like I said, I clean up well, but I'm not another gay guy waiting for his prince to come. All I ever waited for was the next fix. Junk took away my pain but it turned me into a liar and a thief and a whore. Don't trust me.

RIOS

At the jail, you said you were trying to change your life.

PARIS

I do but . . . old habits die hard. I don't want to hurt you.

RIOS

Let me worry about that.

PARIS

For someone who makes his living defending criminals, you're kind of innocent.

RIOS

Why, because I believe you when you say you want to be a better person? I'm not naïve. I know when someone's shining me on and I know when he's being sincere.

PARIS

How can you know that about me when I'm not even sure myself?

RIOS

I just do.

PARIS

[Regretful] I have to go now.

RIOS

Was it something I said?

PARIS

I have a meeting in the city this afternoon with some who doesn't like to be kept waiting.

SFX: SOMEONE LEAVING THE ROOM

RIOS

Call me later?

PARIS

Thank you, Henry. Goodbye.

SFX: DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING.

THEME MUSIC COMES UP.

ANNOUNCER

You've been listening to episode three of *Lay Your Sleeping Head*, a Henry Rios mystery, starring Armando Rey as Henry Rios and Cameron La Brie as Hugh Paris. Our director is Russell Kaltschmidt. Our sound engineer is Dave Peck. Music and sound effects were composed by Josh DeRosa. This episode was written and produced by Michael Nava.

If you enjoyed this episode, please spread the word on social media. We depend upon your support to continue this series.

For behind the scene extras visit us at our Facebook page, The Henry Rios Mysteries, or at michaelnavawriter.com under the podcast tab. We'd also love to hear from you. Message us on Facebook or e-mail us at persigopress@gmail.com. That's P-e-r-s-i-g-o p-r-e-s-s @ gmail.com.

This is an abridged version of the novel *Lay Your Sleeping Head*. You can buy the complete novel at Amazon.

This is Michael Nava. Thank you for listening.