

LYSH Script, Episodes 1-6 final

LAY YOUR SLEEPING HEAD, EPISODE 6

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 six 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.

THEME MUSIC

RIOS

Hugh lived in a Victorian cottage on a sketchy street deep in Hayes Valley. I stood at the uncurtained window watching the fog lurk in the street, half expecting to hear the howl of the Hound of the Baskervilles. Out of the fog, a man emerged. I couldn't make out much more than his shape, tall and buff. He stopped. Was he watching the house? I saw the bright, brief

flare of a match and then he moved on. He'd paused to light a cigarette, that was all, but I remained unsettled.

Hugh was asleep. At the ER he swore that that night was the first time he'd used in six months. . . as if that was supposed to make me feel better. The fact he'd been clean that long meant his usual fix could have killed him.

I found a bottle of brandy in the kitchen, poured myself a glass and went back to pace the living room. In a bookcase I found an old copy of *The Little Prince*, the pages almost in tatters. Beside it was skinny volume entitled *Whirligig: Selected Poems* and the name of the author, Katherine Paris.

I opened it, scanned the table of contents and turned to a poem called "The Lost Child:"

*When they cleaned you and gave you to me,
long legs and fingers*

*I shook for three days
in my knot of hospital sheets.*

*Tears came later—cries, fears, fierce holding.
The ways you'd shake me off.
Your well of rage.*

PARIS

[Flat, tired] You found my mother's book. Let me see it. *The Lost Child*. She didn't lose me, she gave me away. Can I have some of that brandy?

HUGH HAS A COUGHING JAG

RIOS

Are you all right?

PARIS

[Recovering] You asked me something like that at the jail when we met. It was a stupid question then and it's a stupid question now.

RIOS

I guess that means you're fine. In that case, I'll be on my way.

PARIS

No, please. I'm sorry. Please don't leave me. Sit down. [Beat.]
I didn't mean to snap at you. I'm just . . . so ashamed of
myself for using.

RIOS

What the fuck were you thinking?

PARIS

I was thinking I was strong enough to do what I had to do. I
was wrong.

RIOS

What did you have to do?

PARIS

See my dad.

RIOS

You told me your dad was dead.

PARIS

He might as well be. He's in an institution, Henry. He's a
schizophrenic.

RIOS

I'm sorry, but why lie to me about it?

PARIS

Because I'm afraid I might be like him.

RIOS

Why would you think that?

PARIS

There's a history of schizophrenia in my family. Sometimes, I wonder if some of the things I think I remember aren't just delusions, like my dad's.

RIOS

Like what?

PARIS

At one of my rehabs, a shrink told me he didn't think my grandfather had raped me. He said it was . . what was the word he used? . . . A confabulation. That, when my dad went into the hospital and my mom left me with my grandparents I was too young to understand what was happening and I blamed my grandfather and invented the rape. [Desperate] Do you think that's possible? That I made it up

RIOS

What do you remember about it?

PARIS

I remember when he shoved his dick into my mouth it tasted like piss and I started to vomit. He pulled my head back and told me if I threw up on him, he'd hurt me. I remember the smell of the cream he used when he fucked me. One of my grandmother's creams. After that, every time I smelled it on her, I felt sick. I remember the next day there was blood on my underwear and I washed it out so one would see it. [Beat] It did happen, Henry, I swear it and not just that one time.

RIOS

I believe you. [Beat] Tell me about your dad.

PARIS

When I was nine years old, they took him away in a strait jacket. I was terrified. All my mother told me was that he was sick and had to go to the hospital. I already knew something was wrong with him. Half the time he didn't make sense and he had a bizarre terror of anyone Chinese.

RIOS

Do you know why?

PARIS

No one would tell me anything. My family's like that, a bottomless pit of secrets. All that matters to them are appearances. They're all so proper and unfeeling. It was like growing up around statues. Except for my dad. He was warm and alive and he loved me. He called me his—

RIOS AND PARIS [SIMULTANEOUSLY]

Little prince.

PARIS

How did you know?

RIOS

The book on your shelf You must have looked like the boy in book when you were a kid, blonde and blue-eyed. [Beat] What happened yesterday?

PARIS

I drove to Napa where they've locked him up. From the outside the place looks like a southern plantation. You wouldn't know it's a nuthouse. Appearances, right? Inside? It's just another hospital. Railings along the walls, disinfectant in the air. Reminded me of the jail where we met, except it was really, really quiet. Too quiet.

RIOS

What do you mean?

PARIS

I've made the rounds of institutions myself. Jails, rehabs, hospitals. They're not quiet places. In that place, you could've heard a pin drop. Then they brought my dad out. He was bloated and lethargic. His hands and face were twitching. I asked the nurse what was wrong with him and he said it was the side effects of the drugs they had him on. They must have

all the patients drugged into oblivion. That's why it was so quiet.

RIOS

Did you talk to him?

PARIS

He didn't know who I was. I tried to jog his memory but he sat there and stared at me and there was nothing in his eyes. [Starts to cry] As long as I thought he was alive somewhere, I didn't feel completely alone. But he's gone, Henry.

RIOS

You could have told me. I would have gone with you.

PARIS

[Beat] I was afraid of what you'd think. You thought I was crazy once – the first time I came to your place – and I was afraid if you knew about my dad . . .

RIOS

I don't think you're crazy anymore. [Beat] You should have taken someone with you?

PARIS

[Bitterly] Who? My grandfather? My uncle? My mother? They're the ones who put him there.

RIOS

Wait, your mother's here?

PARIS

She lives half the year in Boston and half the year out here, teaching at the university. She arrives next week. I haven't seen her since I got out of rehab the last time. I was going to surprise her. Now, I don't know. Part of me wants to run away from my family for good

RIOS

I ran away from mine.

PARIS

And you don't still carry them around with you?

RIOS

Okay. Point taken. What do you want from them?

PARIS

I want them to be different people. I want to have a different life.

RIOS

You can, starting now. But you can't change them or the past. [Beat] Hugh, I need to ask you this. The story you told me about your grandfather killing people to get his hands on the family money? Is that true?

PARIS

It doesn't matter. I can't prove it and without proof, who's going to believe me? You don't. No, you don't have to say anything. I didn't mean to drag you into it in the first place.

RIOS

Do you really think he's out to hurt you?

PARIS

I don't want to talk about my grandfather anymore. Everything seemed so clear when I left New York. Now I don't know what's true anymore. God, I'm so tired.

RIOS

We both are. Let's get some sleep.

PARIS

You're not leaving?

RIOS

I'm not going anywhere.

SCENE TRANSITION MUSIC

RIOS

The next morning I found Hugh in the living room in faded red sweatpants, kneeling in a patch of sunlight, his body twisted, forearms on the floor, legs curved over his head. He held the pose for ten slow breaths before he released it and sat on a floor with his back to me.

What was that?

PARIS

A yoga pose. I started yoga in rehab. It really helped calm me down but I haven't been keeping up.

RIOS

That looked pretty advanced for someone who's out of practice.

PARIS

I was a dancer in college, so yoga wasn't hard for me to pick up.

RIOS

What college was that? Linden?

PARIS

God, no. I never wanted to come back here. [Beat] I could use a cup a cup of coffee. There's a pot in the kitchen. [SFX: Coffee poured into cups] You take yours black, right?

RIOS

Yeah, thanks. You were going to tell me about college.

PARIS

I barely graduated from prep school. Uncle John found a college in New York, a couple of hours north of the city, that was basically a dumping ground for rich fuckups. I drifted through my first semester but I had this friend, a girl, who was a dance major. She thought dancing would get me off drugs

and made me sign up for beginning class. It turned out, I had some talent for it. Not that I was so great but there are never enough guy dancers, so I danced. When I wasn't getting high, or wandering around Manhattan, I mean.

RIOS

Did you pursue dance after you graduated?

PARIS

I dropped out and moved to New York. [Beat] Got it into my head to audition for the Joffrey Ballet School. They laughed me off the stage. That was the end of dancing.

RIOS

Wasn't there anything else you wanted to do?

PARIS

Being an addict turned out to be a full-time job. [Beat] What about you? Did you always know you wanted to be a lawyer?

RIOS

I knew pretty early on I wanted to do something to help people. Then it was a matter of deciding the best way to do that. I thought I'd figured it out with the law. Now . . . I don't know.

PARIS

I admire you. [Beat] I never wanted to do anything for anyone. I've wasted so much of my life.

RIOS

You're twenty-six. Most of your life is ahead of you. Still plenty of time.

PARIS

To do what?

RIOS

You'll figure it out.

PARIS

Will you help me, Henry? [Beat] Can we figure it out together?

RIOS

Yes. I'd like that. [Beat] We two boys. . . .

PARIS

We two boys? What does that mean?

RIOS

It's from a Walt Whitman poem. 'We two boys forever
clinging, one the other never leaving , up and down the roads
going, north and south . . .' I don't remember the rest. I'll find
it for you.

PARIS

Is it a love poem?

RIOS

Yes.

PARIS

I've never been in love with anyone before.

RIOS

Me, either. [Beat] Come back to bed.

SCENE TRANSITION MUSIC

PARIS

[Softly]

Them that's got shall get

Them that's not shall lose,

So the Bible says

And it still is news . . .

RIOS

[SFX: Toilet flushes in distance]

What were you singing?

PARIS

An old Billie Holiday tune.

RIOS

Don't stop.

PARIS

Mama may have,

And papa may have,

But God bless the child

That's got his own . . .

RIOS

You have a beautiful voice.

PARIS

Thanks. I love Billie. She's the queen of junkies.

RIOS

That why you have that poster of her above the desk?

PARIS

You noticed.

RIOS

Yeah, and I noticed the desk, too. It looks like it should be in a museum.

PARIS

It's a Biedermeier cylinder top bureau desk. Early nineteenth century probably made in Hamburg.

RIOS

I'm impressed!

PARIS

[Laughs] Don't be. I only know that because it's what my Uncle John told me when he unloaded it on me. [Beat] Are you coming back to bed?

RIOS

Yeah. [Beat] The desk is from your uncle?

PARIS

He collects antiques and he's been at it so long, there's no more room in his house, and most of his collection is in a warehouse down in South City. He wanted to furnish this place for me but I don't want to live in a mausoleum like he does, so I politely declined except for the desk. I took it so I wouldn't hurt his feelings.

RIOS

Sounds like you're pretty close to him. Does he have kids of his own?

PARIS

He never married. He — I shouldn't say anything. He belongs to a different generation that didn't discuss private matters.

RIOS

Now you have to tell me.

PARIS

My great-uncle is an elderly bachelor who collects antiques. Draw your own conclusions. [Beat] Can I ask you a legal question?

RIOS

Shoot.

PARIS

What does it mean when a document's been sealed in a court case?

RIOS

Well, generally papers filed in a lawsuit are public documents and anyone can go and look at them, but if a document's been sealed it means you have to get permission from a judge to look at it. Why?

PARIS

Last night you asked me if what I told you about my grandfather being a murderer is true. I believe it is, Henry. I've been gathering evidence but some of it is sealed.

RIOS

What made you think of that now?

PARIS

It's all in the desk. The evidence, I mean.

RIOS

What kind of evidence do you have?

PARIS

Whatever I could find. Police reports, my grandmother's will . . . stuff like that.

RIOS

Have you shown it to anyone?

PARIS

No, but I told my uncle about it.

RIOS

What did he say?

PARIS

He told me the day his sister and nephew were killed was one of the worst days of his life, but that it was an accident and I should leave it alone.

RIOS

How did they die?

PARIS

In a car crash.

RIOS

Was your grandfather in the car?

PARIS

No, he was at home. My Uncle Jeremy – my dad’s brother – was driving my grandmother to Reno to file for a divorce.

RIOS

So how was this murder?

PARIS

A witness told the police that someone forced them off the road.

RIOS

Did the police investigate his story?

PARIS

I don’t know.

RIOS

Do you want me to look at your evidence and give you my opinion?

PARIS

I’m afraid to show it to you.

RIOS

Why?

PARIS

Because if you tell me there's nothing to it, I'm not sure I could drop it and then you really would think I'm crazy.

RIOS

Let's take it one step at a time, okay. I'll look it over and then we'll talk.

PARIS

Okay . . . but not now. Not today. [Beat] I'm famished. How about some food?

RIOS

As long as we order in.

PARIS

Sure, there's a pizza place around the corner that delivers. [Beat] Henry . . . ?

RIOS

What is it, baby?

PARIS

I'm not crazy. He murdered them.

THEME MUSIC

You've been listening to episode six 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.

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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.