

LA MILES

Can fighting for justice become an unsound obsession?

By James C. Weaver, F. Sarah Pollard

The life of J. Miles Lenny

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LA Miles

INT. LOS ANGELES DISTRICT ATTORNEY OFFICE 1950 - DAY

A tall golden haired good looking man, PARKER FITZGERALD, 25, walks through the bustling main floor of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office. He carries a sheath of documents in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other. He moves through several people that acknowledge him with a glance and past two secretaries that smile at him. He reciprocates, then moves past them toward a far corner of the room. He stops next to a desk where another young man is seated. This young man is MILES at twenty five years of age. He tosses the documents onto the desk and the photograph seen earlier at Miles' home, falls partially out of an envelope amongst the documents onto the table.

PARKER

This ones for you, Lenny. Trial is next week. I'm sitting second chair on that Silver Lake murder trial and don't have time to play with it. So Banks told me that you can take it.

MILES

Why thank you, Parker, I'm glad to see that you're looking out for me. It would have been nice if you'd given it to me a month ago so I had time to prepare and still sleep at night.

Miles fingers the documents, taking care to push the photograph into the envelope.

PARKER

Three day jury at the most. Banks thinks that you've done enough time reading police reports and doing preliminary hearings. Time to develop your trial skills.

MILES

What's it about?

Miles picks up the top document and reads a little of it.

PARKER

Neighbor found some young Russian girl locked in a house over on Sunset. Home owner was supposedly out of town directing some low rent cowboy film in Lone Pine.

Miles looks up at him and finishes the case description.

MILES

Police went out and took her into protective custody. She told them her employer brought her to America to work as a starlet and they turned her into a whore.

Parker looks at Miles quizzically and then he smiles.

PARKER

You were the issuing deputy on this case. Right?

Miles pulls out the envelope and opens it up.

MILES

Yep. I read all the investigative reports and issued the complaint.

Miles pulls the photograph from the envelope and looks at it. It is the same photograph that he viewed in his room at his home, only the photograph is brand new. The photograph is of a beautiful Russian girl.

PARKER

She's a looker, all right.

Parker takes the photograph from Miles hand without asking.

PARKER (CONT'D)

But her kind are running all over Hollywood. Doing whatever they need to do to be discovered. Starlet, whore; whore, starlet. The words are interchangeable in this town.

Parker tosses the picture back with the other documents. Miles picks it up again.

PARKER (CONT'D)

He didn't make her a star. She got angry. Tried to black mail em and she made up the whole white slavery story.

MILES

Who told you that?

PARKER

Nobody did. But I'm sure that's what his lawyer will have him

PARKER
testify to in court. Probably make
her a card carrying member of the
Communist Party and the jury will
take their lunch break on county
time and then acquit in one day.

Looking serious.

PARKER (CONT'D)
Giesler is defense counsel for him.

They look at each other for several seconds. Parker smiles.

PARKER (CONT'D)
You've got to learn not to issue a
complaint just because the victim
is pretty. Evidence, not beauty,
gets a conviction. Jury will never
understand her accent and if you
get an interpreter for her you've
already lost. Good luck with this
one.

Parker turns and walks back through the bustling room. A
third secretary moves past him and they exchange smiles.

PARKER (CONT'D)
Love your backhand, Darlene.

Parker makes a motion of a tennis player hitting a back
stroke. She blushes lightly and continues to go past him. He
turns to look at her and she swishes her hips in expectation
of his look. He turns his head back to the direction he is
walking and crashes lightly into a slightly built, muscular
Chinese man with a severe crew cut. TONY WONG, 42, a
Chinese-American Los Angeles Police Detective wearing the
clean rumpled suit of a Homicide Detective. His tie jumps
out with the pattern of spilt blood set against creamy silk.
He has a big wrist watch which glistens platinum from its
band. There is a large gold ring on his left ring finger. On
his right ring finger is a large UCLA school ring.

TONY
Excuse me, Boss.

Tony looks up at the taller Parker and they exchange eye
contact for several seconds. Parker glances at Tony's tie
and then back to his face. He can't decide whether Tony is
disrespecting him or this is his normal conversation.
Finally he just gives up and moves past Tony. Tony moves
across the crowded room to where Miller is seated. Miller
looks over the documents in the file. Miller finishes what

he was reading and looks up to Tony. He sizes up Tony's haberdashery and then stands up to greet him.

MILES

(standing up with an
outstretched hand)

Wait. Don't say a word.

(Miles looks at Tony's hands)

You're left handed, aren't you?

TONY

(small surprise)

Yes.

Tony sees the case file on Miles desk.

TONY (CONT'D)

You read my handwritten notes?

MILES

I saw the slant of your cursive
writing. You must be Detective
Wong?

They are about the same height and they shake hands politely.

MILES (CONT'D)

I'm Miles. I like your writing.
Detailed, but concise.

TONY

I don't like to repeat myself for
the reports. I assume the reader
has seen this type of case before.
I don't need defense attorneys
knowing everything that I know.

MILES

I was going to contact you, but you
beat me to the punch.

TONY

Banks told me the case was being
re-assigned to you for trial.

MILES

What else did he tell you about me?

Tony looks Miles straight on.

TONY

Said you're a newbie. One year out of Michigan. Old man runs some liquor stores on La Brea so they did him a favor and hired you. Been issuing complaints and learning your courtroom skills with prelims.

They look at each other for several seconds.

MILES

Did he tell you any lies about me?

TONY

They say you are smart. Real smart.

Miles looks at Tony to discover the humor in the words. Tony keeps a straight face.

MILES

(small laugh)

I'm so smart they gave me this white slavery case that nobody else wants and Jerry G. is the defense attorney on the other side and he's going to drop-kick me from UCLA to USC.

Tony stands back a little from Miles sizing, him up.

TONY

You funning with me, Boss?

Miles motions for Tony to sit down at a chair beside his desk. Tony and Miles sit down simultaneously.

MILES

(quietly)

I read your reports. In my opinion there was a crime committed and Christopher did it. I issued the complaint. I don't issue on innocent people. He's guilty. I'll send him to prison.

Tony studies Miles for several seconds and then motions Miles to lean closer to him, as he moves his head closer to Miles. They speak quietly for the following conversation.

TONY

There might be other people going to prison on this one.

MILES

What do you mean?

Tony motions to him to speak softly.

TONY

Surfers called the sheriff about some young girl, maybe fifteen, sixteen, wandering around the pier at Malibu last week. She spoke very little English. She had some bruises along the left side of her face and what looked like slashes on her back and some needle tracks on her arms.

MILES

How do they connect up?

TONY

One of the surfers, Miki Dora. He was born in Hungary. His parents brought him to LA in the Depression. He talked with the girl. She came over here from Hungary last year to work at some house in the Malibu Colony and take acting lessons.

MILES

What did the sheriff do with her?

TONY

Nothing. There were some calls made. They stood around scratching their dicks. Then a Rolls Royce Silver Dawn drove up and the girl got in and left. I couldn't find any sheriff's report on the incident.

MILES

How did LAPD find out about this if there are no reports?

TONY

I know people.

MILES

Surfers tell you?

TONY

(moves in closer to Miles)
 Too many ears around here. Too much
 money in this town. Your Old Man
 running liquor in the Prohibition
 and not in prison?

MILES

(very quiet)
 Medicinal purposes is what they
 called it. Besides, most everybody
 likes to drink. My father is a good
 man. But we all have flaws. Some
 are larger than others. Too many
 flaws and you go to prison.

TONY

(almost inaudible)
 Unless you got money.

A long pause.

MILES

(a whisper in the ear)
 I am not sure about you, but I
 don't put my face this close to
 another man unless I trust him.

Tony's face slowly breaks a slight smile and then he leans
 back into laughter which is followed by Miles laughter.
 Other people in the room look at them. Miles looks past Tony
 to see another detective, FABIAN, 35, approaching them.
 Fabian is very good looking, dark hair, flashing dark
 intelligent eyes set inside olive skin. Identical rumped
 suit with a tie of black blood imprinted on cream
 background. Fertile ground for a Rorschach test. Fabian's
 hands are covered with large rings. Tony turns and sees
 Fabian and quietly introduces him to Miles.

TONY

This is my former partner, Fabian.
 He wrote one of the reports in the
 file.

MILES

Former?

FABIAN

I got reassigned to South Central
 two days ago.

MILES

Why?

Tony and Fabian keep their heads still but shift their eyes about the room.

FABIAN

Some of the higher ups in the Department don't like sweet and sour sauce with their tacos.

Miles looks at them for several seconds, they begin to smile and he quietly raises his hands to his chin and laughs into them.

MILES

I think I am going to enjoy working with you guys.