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THE LINCOLN LAWYER

Episode #101

"He Rides Again"

Written By

David E. Kelley

Based on the Novel By

Michael Connelly

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THE LINCOLN LAWYER
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Writer's Draft 11/14/19

CAST LIST

MICKEY HALLER
LORNA TAYLOR
DENNIS "CISCO" WOJCIECHOWSKI

A.D.A. MAGGIE MCPHERSON
HAYLEY HALLER

Walter Elliott
Charlotte Albrecht

Judge Mary Holder

Izzy Lott
A.D.A. Sarah Shepard
Judge Canter
Robert Holt
Lena Holt (non-speaking)
Marvin Beedleman
Michaela Gill
Clerk

Detective Jeffrey Frags
Officer Benz
Guard

Jerry Vincent

SONG LIST

CHUCK BERRY - "NO PARTICULAR PLACE TO GO"

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SET LIST

INTERIORS:

MICKEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT
- BEDROOM - MORNING
- SHOWER - MORNING

MAGGIE'S HOUSE - EVENING

ELLIOTT'S HOUSE - DAY
- BEDROOM - DAY

ARCHWAY PICTURES
- ELLIOTT'S OFFICE - DAY
- ELLIOTT'S CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY
- RECEPTION - DAY

MAGGIE'S OFFICE - MORNING

VINCENT'S OFFICE - DAY
- CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

COURTHOUSE - DAY
- COURTROOM - DAY
- CORRIDOR - DAY

LEGAL CENTER
- CORRIDOR - DAY

MICKEY'S LINCOLN - MORNING & DAY

CAR - NIGHT

DOWNTOWN PARKING GARAGE - DAY & NIGHT
- P2 LEVEL - DAY

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SET LIST

EXTERIORS:

MAGGIE'S HOUSE - EVENING

MICKEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT
- DECK - NIGHT

COURTHOUSE - DAY

LEGAL CENTER
- COURTYARD - DAY

PARAMOUNT LOT - DAY

LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

DOWNTOWN L.A. - MORNING & DAY

MELROSE AVENUE - DAY

PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - MORNING & DAY

BROAD BEACH - DAY

LAUREL CANYON - NIGHT

EL MATADOR BEACH - SUNRISE

"HE RIDES AGAIN"

ACT ONE

EXT. LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Clear January night, TWINKLING LIGHTS, quiet. The City of Angels is sleeping. Eerily quiet. Calm-before-the-storm quiet.

INT. DOWNTOWN PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

An office building, it seems, a few scattered cars, it's after hours. Desolate. Quiet, finally broken up by the DING OF AN ELEVATOR. REVEAL JERRY VINCENT, forty-eight, overworked criminal defense attorney. He's got a bit of the beleaguered slouch as he heads toward his car. The long hours have taken a toll, it's clear in both posture and gait.

THE SOUNDS OF HIS FOOTSTEPS REVERBERATE, ECHO... the quiet unnerves him some. He stops, suddenly spooked. Gets the feeling he's being watched. He looks around, nothing on the horizon, nothing to see. He resumes his trot to the car. And then a CRISP SOUND OF SORTS, this time he wheels, his head jerks to look around.

Nothing. Just silence.

JERRY
(doesn't trust it)
Hello?

Nothing. The silence is fucking with him. And doing a good job of it.

He gulps a bit of air to calm himself, resumes toward the car, climbs in.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

He fastens his belt, checks the rear-view mirror, and he freezes. The mirror has been turned down. Somebody's been in the car. A sudden jolt of fear, SOMEBODY IS IN THE CAR! He jerks his head to look in the back seat. Nothing. Nobody there. He must be losing his mind, either that or the recent sleep deprivation is robbing him of some sanity.

He turns forward to start the car, and that's when he (and we) see it. A SHADOW AT THE WINDOW.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Blurry, hard to make out. What is clearly visible -- THE SNUB NOSE OF A REVOLVER. BOOM. AND SUDDENLY JERRY IS BLEEDING. FROM HIS MOUTH, WHERE HE TOOK THE BULLET. Still conscious, he looks to his assailant. Begging him with a look. "Please. Let me live." No doing. BOOM!

CLOSE ON A GIRL, ten years old, SHE SCREAMS, it's a blood-curdling scream of terror.

CLOSE ON A PAIR OF EYES. THE EYES OF A WOUNDED MAN. Not broken, perhaps. But certainly fragile.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL MICKEY HALLER, forty-four, full wetsuit, sitting on the beach. Known among attorney colleagues as "The Lincoln Lawyer", famed for his charm, street-tough, and swagger. He's got none of it now. This is a man who's lost his confidence.

EXT. EL MATADOR BEACH, MALIBU - SUNRISE

Mickey's the only one on the beach, he sits next to his surfboard. He stares out at the sea. Once his friend, his salvation. Now, a place of past trauma.

And then from his beach bag... A RING. Mickey reaches for and retrieves his CELL PHONE. CALLER ID: "LORNA". He answers--

MICKEY

Hey.

LORNA (O.S.)

Where you been? I've been calling you for like an hour or so, where are you?

WE HEAR THE FAINT REMNANTS OF HER BROOKLYN ACCENT, which she's worked hard to lose.

MICKEY

Lorna, you are not my wife anymore.

LORNA (O.S.)

Oh gee, thanks for that, Mick, 'cause I still get confused, y'know. Some days I think I'm your wife. Others -- more like I'm your mother.

AS HE PULLS THE PHONE AWAY FROM HIS EAR--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORNA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Don't be doing that, you don't
think I can tell when you push the
phone away from your ear?

Wow. He returns the phone to his ear.

LORNA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
What I am is your secretary -- at
least technically speaking -- and
as such, I need to be able to reach
you.

MICKEY
Okay, you've reached me. What's the
problem?

LORNA (O.S.)
You got a call from Judge Holder,
she wants to see you in her
chambers ASAP.

Say what?

MICKEY
The Chief Justice?

LORNA (O.S.)
Please tell me you're not sleeping
with this woman.

MICKEY
Why would you say that?

LORNA (O.S.)
Because the only reason you would
be called to meet in the private
chambers of a female judge is: (A)
You have a case before her or (B)
You have a personal relationship,
and since you haven't had any cases
at all for six months--

MICKEY
I've never even met the woman.

LORNA (O.S.)
Well, she wants to meet you. Like
now.
(then; ever the optimist)
Maybe it's something good.

MICKEY
The judge herself called?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LORNA (O.S.)

Her clerk.

MICKEY

No indication what about?

LORNA (O.S.)

No. But Mickey, let's allow for the possibility that this could be something positive. Maybe she's assigning you something pro-bono or whatever.

MICKEY

(he can only hope)

Maybe.

LORNA (O.S.)

Mick?

MICKEY

Still here.

LORNA (O.S.)

Drive one of the Lincolns.

MICKEY

They're in storage.

LORNA (O.S.)

Well, get one out of storage. The Lincoln becomes you.

(then)

And you become you. And should this thing here present as an opportunity, you gotta go in there full Mickey Haller.

Off Mickey--

INT. MICKEY'S HOUSE, SHOWER - MINUTES LATER

Mickey stands, letting the water beat down on him.

TIME CUT:

INT. MICKEY'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Mickey slides open the closet door TO REVEAL HIS EXPENSIVE ARRAY OF ITALIAN SUITS, covered in plastic. He considers, makes his choice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then, from inside the closet, WE SEE THE DOOR CLOSE, BRINGING US TO DARKNESS. BLACK.

ANOTHER DOOR OPENS, A GARAGE DOOR. Sunlight streams in, Mickey is haloed, now wearing his suit. He looks the part.

HIS POV:

WE ARE AT AN AUTOMOBILE STORAGE FACILIITY. THREE LINCOLN TOWN CARS, all in mint condition. Black. Gold. Pale blue.

ANGLE MICKEY. Just to look at them, it's like taking a big swig of swagger. He considers.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - MORNING

WE FIND THE VINTAGE 1963 PALE BLUE LINCOLN CONTINENTAL CONVERTIBLE, top down, blazing down the road. Mickey, expensive Italian suit, drives. He looks the part. Again, THE CELL CHIMES, CALLER ID: "FIRST WIFE".

AS MICKEY ANSWERS, WE INTERCUT WITH A.D.A. MAGGIE MCPHERSON IN HER DOWNTOWN OFFICE. Known among legal circles as "Maggie McFierce". Forty-five, angular, smart-pretty good looks, she carries a certain ferocity, which begets the nickname. As she speaks, she flips through today's caseload.

INT. MAGGIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

MICKEY

Hey.

MAGGIE

You got Hayley tonight, just calling to remind.

MICKEY

Because you think I'll forget.

MAGGIE

Six o'clock. Not six-ten. Not six-oh-five.

MICKEY

Who's the lucky guy? Do I know him?

MAGGIE

Six p.m. sharp, Mick.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICKEY

What can you tell me about Mary Holder?

MAGGIE

The judge?

MICKEY

She's called me to her chambers.

MAGGIE

Why?

MICKEY

No idea.

MAGGIE

Have you done something?

MICKEY

No, I haven't "done something".

MAGGIE

Why would she be calling you to chambers, Mickey?

MICKEY

I don't know, which is why I'm asking. What can you tell me about her?

MAGGIE

I can tell you she has a bug up her ass the size of the legal canon of ethics, which makes me think you've done something.

And that's it. HE CLICKS OFF. STAY WITH MAGGIE--

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Hello? Mickey?

Nothing. SHE CLICKS OFF.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

(to herself)
He's done something.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Mickey heads for the courthouse, trial bag in hand. It's been awhile since he's set foot inside. He stops, takes measure of the place.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It used to be his turf, his playground, even. Now, not so much. He swallows another gulp of air, continues on.

INT. COURTHOUSE - LATER

Mickey proceeds through security, metal detector, et al. Like an old cowboy coming back to the rodeo. Knows how it goes. Just unsure if he can stay in the saddle. As he gets through the metal detector--

LORNA (V.O.)

Mick.

And there she is. LORNA TAYLOR, forty-ish, buxom, big blonde hair, silk blouse, skirt. A version of Jayne Mansfield. Big-breasted and even bigger heart, which she typically wears on her sleeve. She's done her best to replace her Brooklyn origins with Hollywood glam.

MICKEY

(surprised to see her)

Lorna.

LORNA

I was driving this way anyway.

MICKEY

No, you weren't. You're checking up.

LORNA

I ain't neither.

(as she tightens his tie)

You look good.

(re: his suit)

I always loved this one.

MICKEY

Why are you here, Lorna?

LORNA

Because this could be a big deal.

She's the chief judge, for god sakes, so I came down here to gather whatever intel I could.

MICKEY

And?

LORNA

Most of her work is administrative, assigning which judge goes where and so forth--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICKEY

--We knew this already.

LORNA

--and she assigns cases.

(a look)

If that's what this here is about--

MICKEY

--You don't want me to blow it.

LORNA

(off him)

I'm just saying, whatever this is,
it needs to go well.

A hint of desperation in her voice. She may no longer be his wife. But clearly she still has great affection for him, which is mutual.

INT. COURTHOUSE, CORRIDOR - LATER

Mickey walks with some trepidation, enters into--

INT. COURTHOUSE, COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is empty, dark, not in session. Mickey heads toward chambers, but again, he pauses to drink in the room. The courtroom. He never got in the ocean this morning. But he's standing in a courtroom. Progress. Let's hope.

He continues on, opens the door to head back, but suddenly, A SHRIEK.

REVEAL MICHAELA GILL, thirties, about to come out from the other side, the two nearly collide.

MICHAELA

Oh my god, you scared me half to death.

MICKEY

I apologize.

MICHAELA

Can I help you?

MICKEY

My name is Mickey Haller, I have an appointment to see Judge Holder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHAELA

Yes, and good that you're on time, she likes that. You can go right down that hall, first door on the left.

MICKEY

Thank you.

And Mickey continues on as Michaela takes a half-beat to "up and down" him. Mickey's a good-looking man.

Mickey arrives at the door which is ajar. He KNOCKS.

JUDGE HOLDER

Come on in.

And Mickey enters. JUDGE MARY HOLDER, handsome, formidable, is at her desk, she doesn't even look up. She oozes power, this is an imposing woman.

JUDGE HOLDER (CONT'D)

One second. Have a seat.

He does as she finishes up some business. Then, she finally looks up.

JUDGE HOLDER (CONT'D)

Mr. Haller. I don't believe we've met before, have we?

He would remember. She's too attractive.

MICKEY

No, Your Honor.

JUDGE HOLDER

The Lincoln Lawyer. That what they call you?

MICKEY

Some do, yes. Or did.

JUDGE HOLDER

Why?

MICKEY

I mainly worked out of my car. Going from court to court, all the driving and so forth.

JUDGE HOLDER

Being on the ready to flee the jurisdiction if need be.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MICKEY
(containing his offense)
I've never fled the jurisdiction.

JUDGE HOLDER
(wasting no time)
What's your relationship with Jerry
Vincent?

Mickey is thrown some, but he covers. The name's a blast
from the past.

MICKEY
Jerry. We started together in the
P.D.'s office. Colleagues, friends.

JUDGE HOLDER
He was murdered last night.

MICKEY
(shock)
Excuse me?

JUDGE HOLDER
Shot dead in his car.

MICKEY
(shock; weakly)
What?

JUDGE HOLDER
If you were close, please accept my
condolences. But that's not why I
called you here.
(then)
Were you close?

MICKEY
We were friends, as I said.

JUDGE HOLDER
He left you his practice.

It's like he didn't even hear that. A frozen beat.

MICKEY
I beg your pardon?

JUDGE HOLDER
Are you familiar with RPC two-three-
hundred?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MICKEY

(some)
Well...

JUDGE HOLDER

It's a section of the California Bar's rules of professional conduct referring to the transfer or sale of a law practice. Here we're talking about a transfer. Mr. Vincent named you as his second on his standard contract of representation. You didn't know this?

MICKEY

I know we named each other as seconds on some of our cases.

JUDGE HOLDER

It's a little more than that. Mr. Vincent filed a motion with the court ten days ago that allowed for the transfer of his entire practice to you should he become incapacitated or deceased. He never discussed this with you?

MICKEY

No.

JUDGE HOLDER

Well, last night he became deceased. Which means what was his is now yours. Including the Walter Elliott trial. You've heard of that one?

MICKEY

The Hollywood producer who killed his wife and her lover.

JUDGE HOLDER

Allegedly.

MICKEY

Yes.
(then)
That's now my case?

JUDGE HOLDER

They're all your cases, Mr. Haller. You might not get to keep them.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JUDGE HOLDER (CONT'D)

Each client has the right to move on to another attorney once apprised of Mr. Vincent's demise. What it does mean is you get first shot. Assuming I'm satisfied that Mr. Vincent's clients are being transferred to a replacement counsel of good standing and competent skill.

MICKEY

(so that's why I'm here)

Ah.

JUDGE HOLDER

As far as I can tell, you haven't had any cases in half a year.

MICKEY

I was in an accident about eighteen months ago. I took painkillers, got addicted to them. During which time the train jumped the track some. But that's over, I got help, I got clean. Got myself back on track.

JUDGE HOLDER

(not convinced)

Uh huh.

(then)

So why you? Of all the lawyers out there?

MICKEY

I'm not sure.

JUDGE HOLDER

If you were to guess?

MICKEY

Well. As I said, Jerry and I were friends, colleagues, we trusted each other. And second -- though this is subjective -- when I'm right, there's no better criminal defense attorney in Los Angeles.

JUDGE HOLDER

And you think you're right now?

MICKEY

I do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

She measures him again. And then... she signs a document. Mickey's heart is pounding. Could this be happening?

JUDGE HOLDER

Here is an order transferring Mr. Vincent's practice to you.

And now he nearly stops breathing, which she clocks.

JUDGE HOLDER (CONT'D)

I can rescind it just as fast.

(extending the document)

I will be monitoring you, Mr. Haller.

I want an updated inventory of cases by the beginning of next week. The status of every case on the list.

(then)

After that, bi-weekly status updates on all cases in which you remain counsel. Am I being clear?

MICKEY

I will not let you down.

JUDGE HOLDER

Don't let your clients down. I suggest you get to Mr. Vincent's office right now. The police are no doubt searching it, possibly invading their privacy as we speak.

MICKEY

Thank you, Your Honor.

JUDGE HOLDER

Good luck, Mr. Haller.

INT. COURTHOUSE, COURTROOM - SECONDS LATER

Mickey marches through the empty, darkened room, he looks visibly shaken. He's having a hard time processing what just happened.

INT. COURTHOUSE, CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Mickey emerges from the courtroom. And who else is waiting there -- Lorna.

LORNA

Well?

He just stares back, still a bit poleaxed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORNA (CONT'D)

Did you get a case?

MICKEY

I just got a lot of them. Including
the Walter Elliott murder trial.

That's a bombshell.

LORNA

What?

MICKEY

I need to meet with the clients,
get their sign-offs. But...

(poleaxed)

I might be back, Lorna. I might
actually be back.

She just stares back. She's as poleaxed as he is.
Coursing through both of their minds -- "Oh my fucking
god!"

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. DOWNTOWN L.A. - DAY

Mickey and Lorna walk from the courthouse to a building known as the Legal Center, home to many and varied law practices.

LORNA

It's kind of like that Latin thing, deus ex machina, right? You wake up, not a single client. Suddenly you're repping Walter Elliott in a murder trial, oh my god.

MICKEY

If he decides to keep me.

LORNA

Which he will, you're still the best defense lawyer in the city, people know this.

(then)

He was such a nice man, Jerry. My god.

MICKEY

You met him?

LORNA

Mickey, he was at our wedding.

MICKEY

Oh, right. I forgot.

LORNA

Did he have family?

MICKEY

Divorced. I don't think he had kids.

INT. LEGAL CENTER, CORRIDOR - DAY

Mickey and Lorna step off the elevator TO FIND A SEA OF POLICE ACTIVITY. They're immediately stopped by a UNIFORMED OFFICER, OFFICER BENZ.

OFFICER BENZ

Floor's closed, folks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICKEY

(pointing)

We have business in that office.

OFFICER BENZ

Not today, you don't.

MICKEY

I actually have a court order giving me access.

OFFICER BENZ

This is a crime scene investigation.

MICKEY

And that's a court order. Signed by a judge.

The officer examines the doc. Attitude, doesn't like losing an argument.

INT. VINCENT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The office itself has MORE OFFICERS, DETECTIVES, LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL. A BEEHIVE OF ACTIVITY.

As Mickey and Lorna enter, DETECTIVE JEFFREY FRAGS, fifty-ish, bit of a bulldog, steps in their path.

FRAGS

Help you?

MICKEY

Mickey Haller, I'm an attorney, I've taken over Mr. Vincent's practice.

FRAGS

Yeah, well, I'm afraid I'll need you to beat it. This is a crime scene and as you can see, we have the area sealed off.

MICKEY

The crime scene was the parking garage actually, not this office, and there are client files here I need to access. And apparently safeguard.

FRAGS

Who are you again?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICKEY

Mickey Haller. My assistant, Lorna Taylor.

FRAGS

Well, Mickey Haller and Lorna Taylor, I need you both to leave. Now.

Frag's gives Lorna a look up and down. Which men tend to do.

LORNA

Don't be doing that. Show some respect for the dead.

FRAGS

(back to Mickey)

You people can't be here, you're contaminating a crime scene.

MICKEY

This order will confirm -- I've been appointed by the chief judge of the Superior Court as replacement counsel to Jerry Vincent's clients. That means his cases are now my cases. And you have no right to be in here looking through files, it's a violation of my clients' right to protection against unlawful search and seizure. Those drawers contain privileged attorney-client communication and information.

FRAGS

Mr. Vincent's been murdered. The motive could be sitting in one of these files.

MICKEY

Even if that were the case--

FRAGS

Counsel--

MICKEY

Read the order, Detective. I'm not going anywhere. Your crime scene is out in the garage, and no judge in L.A. would extend it to this office and these files.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

They're two alpha dogs, eyeball-to-eyeball. Lorna is privately thrilled to see that Mickey's still got his fastball.

FRAGS

(re: the court order)

You say this gives you all of Mr. Vincent's cases?

MICKEY

That's right.

FRAGS

The entire law practice?

MICKEY

For now.

FRAGS

Well, I guess that puts you on our list.

MICKEY

Come again?

FRAGS

Our suspect list. He's dead and you get the whole business, that's motive, ask me. Care to tell us where you were last night between eight and midnight?

MICKEY

Okay. You got me. I killed Jerry -- case closed. You've done this before.

EXT. LEGAL CENTER, COURTYARD - LATER

Mickey and Lorna sit at a table eating turkey club sandwiches.

LORNA

Sometimes I think they must teach it in the academy. "How to be a dick." When you think of all the rancor in this town between the people and the police, "how to not be a dick" should maybe be part of the course curriculum.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICKEY

How would you feel about me hiring
Cisco?

LORNA

(come on)
Mickey.

MICKEY

He's a good investigator, maybe the
best I've ever worked with.

LORNA

Yeah, working with your ex-wife is
one thing. But hiring your ex-
wife's boyfriend is kinda pushing
it, don't you think?

MICKEY

If Walter Elliott decides to keep
me, I'm gonna need to move fast
with an investigator I trust.

AS MICKEY'S CELL GOES OFF, CALLER I.D. "LOS ANGELES
SUPERIOR COURT"--

MICKEY (CONT'D)

(answering)
This is Mickey Haller.
(then)
Yes, sir.
(then)
Two p.m. as in two p.m. today?
(then)
Yes, sir. We'll see you then.

AND HE CLICKS OFF.

LORNA

Who was that?

MICKEY

Judge Canter's clerk. Got my number
from Judge Holder. Seems Jerry has
a trial today.

And he rises.

LORNA

What?

INT. COURTHOUSE, COURTROOM - DAY

It's like the train station, LOT OF BODIES, LAWYERS, CLIENTS... the room has a certain criminal waft. The court is in session as Mickey enters. He takes a beat to inhale the room. The grime, the dirt, the smell of body odor... it's like pure oxygen to Mickey, adrenaline, too. He loves this muck. Thrives on it. He drinks it all in for a beat, then he discreetly heads for the D.A.'s table, this is all on the fly as some court business finishes up.

Mickey kneels next to A.D.A. SARAH SHEPARD, who sits with a gaggle of YOUNG PROSECUTORS.

MICKEY

Izzy Lott. I'm covering for Jerry Vincent.

SHEPARD

Oh, I heard, sorry. What's the name?

MICKEY

(like flirting in a bar)
Mickey. Haller.

Her eyes half-smile. But--

SHEPARD

Your client's name?

MICKEY

Ah. Lott, first name Izzy. I think it's a larceny.

SHEPARD

(checking list)
Okay, that would be Marc Daniels, who I'm covering for, so that one's actually mine. Grand larceny, by the by.

MICKEY

Obviously I'm going to need a continuance.

SHEPARD

Obviously I'm not going to give it to you.

MICKEY

(you gotta be kidding)
What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHEPARD

I got out-of-town witnesses here,
I'd rather they be pissed off with
the judge or you than me,
especially if I want to get them
back.

The CLERK--

CLERK

Three-two-seven-oh-one. People vs.
Izzy Lott--

SHEPARD

And we're on.
(then)
Sarah Shepard for the People,
Judge, ready for trial.

MICKEY

Mickey Haller for the defendant,
Your Honor.

Mickey then sees IZZY LOTT stepping forward, late
twenties, short brown hair, thin, tom-boy-sexy. A
confused look on her face.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

(to Izzy)
How you doing, I'll be with you in
one second.
(back to the judge)
Approach, Your Honor?

And Mickey and Shepard approach.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Mr. Vincent unexpectedly passed
yesterday, I'm filling in.

JUDGE CANTER

Yes. Word has spread about Mr.
Vincent. My sincere condolences.
When can you be ready?

MICKEY

Well--

JUDGE CANTER

Don't be greedy, it's a bench trial
with two witnesses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SHEPARD

Out-of-town witnesses, who I'm at risk of losing with a continuance.

JUDGE CANTER

(to Mickey)

How's tomorrow?

MICKEY

Tomorrow?

JUDGE CANTER

Look at the file, if you feel you can't be ready, let me know. Step back.

As they do--

JUDGE CANTER (CONT'D)

This case is continued until tomorrow at two p.m.

Upon which, ROBERT HOLT, fifties, expensive suit, pops up in the gallery.

HOLT

Wait, what?

Next to Holt is his beautifully manicured wife -- LENA -- forties, a bit trophy-esque if one were to judge her by appearance.

JUDGE CANTER

Sir.

HOLT

Your Honor, we flew down here for this, this is simply not fair.

JUDGE CANTER

Mr. Holt, we had an emergency.

HOLT

What about the victims? We had an emergency, my wife was attacked, for god's sake, she had a necklace violently snatched off her person while she was walking down the street.

JUDGE CANTER

The court is sympathetic. But--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HOLT

And my time is extremely valuable,
I have flown here from San
Francisco, we both have. The cost
of having to wait--

JUDGE CANTER

Sir, we've had a tragedy. The court
certainly sympathizes with the
imposition, but this case is pushed
over 'til tomorrow. Two p.m.

As Mickey steps back--

HOLT

It's an outrage. The victims have
no rights in this process. It's an
absolute outrage.

The evidence -- a DIAMOND NECKLACE -- is being boxed back
up on the prosecutor's table.

MICKEY

(re: the necklace)
That's what she stole?

SHEPARD

At least your client has taste.

Mickey regards the necklace again, then heads for Izzy.

MICKEY

Mickey Haller.

IZZY

Where's Jerry?

MICKEY

Jerry passed away last night.

IZZY

What?

MICKEY

I'm sorry to just drop that on you.
But--

IZZY

What happened?

MICKEY

He was murdered.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

IZZY

Are you fucking kidding me? By who?

MICKEY

That's still to be determined.

IZZY

He's dead?

MICKEY

Let's go someplace where we can talk.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - TEN MINUTES LATER

Mickey and Izzy sit on a bench, she is in some despair.

IZZY

He was such a nice man. He wasn't even charging me, at least not yet.

(then)

Why would somebody kill him?

MICKEY

We don't know. The police are still gathering evidence.

IZZY

What kind of a world is this?

MICKEY

First thing first, I gotta be ready on your case by tomorrow. So anything you can tell me about--

IZZY

I did not attack her. I snatched the necklace and ran, I did not attack her.

MICKEY

Okay. And is there a reason Jerry didn't try to plead this? 'Cause--

IZZY

They wanted two years. And Jerry said it was excessive. He thought with a trial I could at least impress the judge with my extenuating circumstances.

MICKEY

Which are?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IZZY

I'm a nice person. Who had a drug problem. It wasn't me who stole that necklace so much as... somebody I don't even recognize. Somebody who is gone. I went through rehab, I'm healed now. Recovered.

MICKEY

No, you're not. You might be recovering. But you're not recovered.

Spoken like a man who knows.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

(off her)

Mine was oxy. You?

IZZY

Same, basically. Heroin. Which I switched to after I could no longer grind up the oxy.

MICKEY

So Jerry planned to put you up there.

IZZY

And introduce my good personhood status into evidence.

There's something infectious about this girl. Mickey takes an instant like to her.

EXT. MELROSE AVENUE - DAY

MICKEY IN HIS CONVERTIBLE, INTERCUT WITH LORNA IN VINCENT'S OFFICE.

LORNA

The trial is tomorrow, you say?

MICKEY

Bench trial, two witnesses, I think I'm good.

LORNA

Mickey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICKEY

Call Marvin Beedleman though, tell him I need a favor. And he's pushing eighty, you might have to remind him that he owes me a favor.

(then)

You got anything on Walter Elliott?

LORNA

Jerry took a retainer of six-hundred-twenty-five-thousand dollars, most of which seems to be gone. He's due to get another four-fifty at trial. Nonrefundable.

MICKEY

Wow.

LORNA

The case was originally assigned to Bryce Andrews, but Jerry got it switched. Andrews doesn't go for bail on double-murder cases.

MICKEY

How'd he get it switched?

LORNA

You're gonna like this. Judge Andrews' wife is an attorney. Jerry hired her so he could get Andrews recused. Soon as he got a new judge, he broomed the wife. Basically paid her thirty-thousand dollars just to sign the appearance. Nice work if you can get it, though she does have to sleep with Judge Andrews.

MICKEY

And who's the judge now?

LORNA

James Stanton. Ex-defense attorney, probably a good thing. You almost there, by the way, 'cause your appointment is at three.

As Mickey pulls into the PARAMOUNT LOT--

EXT. PARAMOUNT LOT - CONTINUOUS

MICKEY

I'm pulling into the lot now. Do we know for sure Elliott hasn't already hired another lawyer?

LORNA

We do not know for sure.

As Mickey pulls up to SECURITY--

GUARD

I.D., please.

(then)

Nice car, man.

MICKEY

Thank you.

TIME CUT:

EXT. PARAMOUNT LOT - MINUTES LATER

Mickey walks toward a small bungalow, the sign says "ARCHWAY PICTURES".

Mickey heads for and enters into--

INT. ARCHWAY PICTURES, RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE ALBRECHT, fifties, executive assistant, is there.

MICKEY

Hey. Mickey Haller to see Walter Elliott.

ALBRECHT

Yes. I'm Charlotte Albrecht, Mr. Elliott's executive assistant.

MICKEY

Nice to meet you.

ALBRECHT

You can go right in, he's waiting. Can I get you some water or coffee?

MICKEY

I'm good, thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And Mickey proceeds to enter into--

INT. ARCHWAY PICTURES, ELLIOTT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

WALTER ELLIOTT, mid-fifties, tall, broad shoulders,
stands at the window.

MICKEY

Mr. Elliott.

As Elliott turns--

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Mickey Haller. How you doing?

ELLIOTT

I stand trial for murder next week,
Mr. Haller. My attorney has just
been shot dead. You can probably
imagine how I might be doing.

MICKEY

Sorry.

ELLIOTT

Do they know what happened? Any
suspects?

MICKEY

Not to my knowledge, but they're
just getting started. I'm told they
want to interview all his clients.
Obviously I would not advise that
you talk to them while this other
matter is pending.

ELLIOTT

So what, they want to charge me
with killing Jerry, too? Why not,
it's open fucking season.

MICKEY

As my assistant explained to your
assistant over the phone, Jerry
transferred his practice to me. If
you look at the contract of
representation you signed with him,
you'll find my name in a paragraph
with language that allowed Jerry to
discuss your case with me and to
include me within the bounds of the
attorney-client relationship.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELLIOTT

And did he? Discuss the case with you?

MICKEY

No. The point I'm making, Jerry trusted me.

ELLIOTT

It doesn't mean I have to.

MICKEY

No, it does not.

Mickey has to play this carefully. Not come off as desperate. Which he is.

ELLIOTT

Look, I don't mean to be an asshole. Or maybe I do. This whole thing... We're set for trial next week, I've been waiting five months to clear my name.

MICKEY

I understand.

ELLIOTT

Really? You understand what it's like for an innocent man to have to wait and wait and wait for justice. To read all the fucking innuendo and bullshit in the media, to have a prosecutor deep up your ass, teething on your fucking intestines while waiting for you to make the move that gets your bail pulled? To have to wear a fucking ankle bracelet, you understand all that?

MICKEY

I've dealt with many clients wrongly accused.

ELLIOTT

Do not handle me.

MICKEY

Okay, then I'll get right to the punchline. Jerry Vincent was an excellent attorney. I'm better.

ELLIOTT

Says you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MICKEY

And so would say Jerry.

ELLIOTT

Maybe if he were here, which he is not because somebody shot him dead a week before my goddamn trial.

Wow. Elliott is quite the powderkeg.

MICKEY

I can understand your frustration.

ELLIOTT

I asked you not to handle me.

(then)

Before I so much as even consider you, I would need to know you'd be ready to go next week. Because I'm not pushing this, not for another week, not for another fucking day. I want this over.

MICKEY

(lying)

I could be ready next week.

ELLIOTT

You're up to speed on the case?

MICKEY

Not yet. I will be. If I don't think I'm properly prepared, I'll tell you. But I'm confident you won't have to delay the trial.

ELLIOTT

You're confident that you have to tell me that to get me to even consider you.

MICKEY

(true)

Alright.

ELLIOTT

I'm gonna have to think about this. I need to talk to some people and have you checked out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MICKEY

That's a good idea. Take your time but not too much, the longer you wait, the greater the chance that Judge Stanton will find it necessary to push the trial back. If you choose me, I'll get to him as soon as possible and tell him we're still good to go.

ELLIOTT

Trying to close the deal.

MICKEY

Criminal defense is what I do, Mr. Elliott. And I do it very well.

ELLIOTT

You better. This thing has cost me my life, my career, not to mention my wife, who I very much did love. I need to get this behind me. I want this over.

His desperation, his anguish, it's palpable.

MICKEY

I get it.

ELLIOTT

You get nothing. At least not yet.
(then)
You think you just hit the lottery.
(once again)
I'm telling you, "not yet".

Off this, we--

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. DOWNTOWN PARKING GARAGE - LATER

Mickey driving, pulling in, ON HIS CELL WITH LORNA.

LORNA (O.S.)
So do we got him or not?

MICKEY
Not yet. I gave it my best shot,
including promising that I could be
ready to try the thing next week.

LORNA (O.S.)
Mickey, that's impossible.

MICKEY
Well, it was a dealbreaker, I could
tell. First things first, let's
land him. Then maybe I can talk him
into the continuance.

LORNA
But next week? Are you serious?

MICKEY
I'm pulling in, I'll be up in a
second.

Mickey parks, deboards.

HIS POV:

HE SPIES THE YELLOW POLICE TAPE, BLOCKING ACCESS TO "P2".
Mickey considers, "What the hell?" He begins to walk on
foot for P2.

INT. DOWNTOWN PARKING GARAGE, P2 LEVEL - SECONDS LATER

Mickey comes down the rampway. No police activity but
signs of the investigation. Jerry's car is now gone. But
the haunt of it still looms. The place reeks of horror.
The few other vehicles that were there the night of, they
remain.

Mickey approaches the death spot. BLOOD. A DISCARDED
RUBBER GLOVE. It gives him chills.

FLACKBACK:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOOM.

BACK TO PRESENT. Mickey shudders internally, the idea of such a violent end. And then, A SOUND, A RUSTLE. Mickey spins to look, nobody there. But he heard something. Knows he did.

ANGLE ONE OF THE PARKED CARS. That's where the sound came from. Like a moth to a flame, Mickey approaches. Fear coursing through his veins, but still...

His better judgment is telling him, "Walk the other way." "Do not go near that car." Someone is lurking. Mickey gets the feeling and so do we.

Mickey nears the car, his fear compounding with every step. He looks in the car. Nobody. He crouches down to look under the car, maybe there's somebody on the other side. Nothing.

He rises. Turns. And there he is. A BIG MAN GRABS HIM.

CISCO

Settle.

MICKEY

Jesus fucking Christ!!

CISCO

Settle.

MEET DENNIS "CISCO" WOJCIECHOWSKI, fifty. Dark looks, mustache going gray, big, strong, physically intimidating when necessary. One-hundred-percent Polish from the south side of Milwaukee, he was a former associate member of the Road Saints Motorcycle Club. More than a few tattoos.

MICKEY

You scared me to death!

CISCO

I wasn't sure it was you, so I hid.

MICKEY

What are you even doing here, Cisco?

CISCO

Lorna said you wanted to hire me.

MICKEY

Not for this! To work on the Walter Elliott case. The police will handle who killed Jerry Vincent.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MICKEY (CONT'D)

(still collecting himself;
gulping air)

Jesus. You coulda given me a heart
attack.

CISCO

You coulda given me one.

They both take a beat to settle themselves.

CISCO (CONT'D)

Sorry.

(then)

So Walter Elliott, huh? That's a
big get.

MICKEY

If I get him. I haven't nailed down
the gig. I'll need to be able to
tell him something good, something
to make him want to hire me. Have
you seen the file?

CISCO

Some. Two dead people. He was at
the scene. Not exactly stellar.

MICKEY

Well, I gotta offer "stellar"
somehow.

CISCO

Maybe Maggie could give you a
little inside baseball on the
State's case.

Mickey jerks to look at his watch. He forgot.

MICKEY

Maggie! Shit.

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - 6:20 P.M.

Maggie sits with HAYLEY HALLER, twelve years old. Hayley
is the girl we saw in the flashback. Maggie looks like
she might implode.

HAYLEY

You can go, Mom. I'll be fine 'til
he gets here.

MAGGIE

I'm not going to go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAYLEY

I think I'm okay to be by myself
for a half-hour, the world hasn't
gotten that dangerous.

MAGGIE

Hayley.

HAYLEY

It's just that I'm hoping to have a
nice time tonight. My chances are
better if Dad's in a good mood, the
chances of that are better if you
don't rip him a new asshole for
being fifteen minutes late.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

MICKEY SCREECHES UP, PULLS TO A STOP, bounds out of the
car. As he charges up the walkway, Maggie opens the door
to greet/confront him.

MICKEY

Sorry. Sorry.
(re: Maggie's dress)
Wow. You look fantastic.

MAGGIE

You gave me your word, six o'clock.
(sotto; livid)
You say you want joint custody,
when you can't even be trusted to--

MICKEY

(sotto)
Maggie.

MAGGIE

(sotto)
--show up on goddamn time.

MICKEY

Maggie. I am here now.

He shoots her a look -- Hayley's at the door.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

How 'bout we deal with you and me
later.

Fine. Maggie goes back to Hayley, gives her a kiss.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGIE

Pick you up in the morning, honey.

HAYLEY

'Kay.

MAGGIE

Love you.

And Maggie then goes to blast past Mickey. No "love you" thrown at him. He takes her by the arm.

MICKEY

(sotto)

Hey. If you're going to treat me like shit, at least have the decency to not look so amazing.

And just like that, he's diffused her. It's what he's good at. Part of her heart will always go out to this man.

INT. VINCENT'S OFFICE, CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Cisco and Lorna. Some CRIME PHOTOS spread on the table.

CISCO

He hadda sense what was coming, Jerry.

LORNA

I dunno.

CISCO

He files a motion ten days ago to transfer his practice in case of his death?

As Lorna looks at some CRIME SCENE PHOTOS on the table--

LORNA

Look, let's just focus on this for now, the Elliott case.

CISCO

Mickey's not really serious about trying it next week, is he?

LORNA

It's kind of his foot in the door. His ability to get up to speed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CISCO

Come on. A week?

LORNA

He needs this case, Cisco. This thing here could put him back on his feet.

CISCO

And you really think him and me working together is a good idea?

Lorna shrugs.

CISCO (CONT'D)

I take it you haven't told him.

LORNA

I'm waiting for the right moment.

EXT. LAUREL CANYON - NIGHT

WE CLOSE ON MICKEY'S HOUSE, small abode but with stunning views.

EXT. MICKEY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

WE FIND MICKEY AND HAYLEY on the back deck, bucket of soft-shell crabs, their favorite.

HAYLEY

So you didn't actually go in the water?

MICKEY

No.

(then)

Y'know the nightmare I have. It's not so much of me almost drowning. It's of you seeing me half-dead. You ever get that nightmare?

HAYLEY

Sometimes.

(then; downplaying)

Look, you had an accident, you got hit by your board. You're not the first surfer it's happened to. And I'm not the first kid to see something bad happen to a parent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICKEY

You're getting tougher every day.
Like your mom. Don't get quite as
tough as her, okay?

HAYLEY

I'll try not to.

These two have a close relationship.

HAYLEY (CONT'D)

She's worried about you. Mom.

MICKEY

She said that?

HAYLEY

She thinks it might be mid-life on
top of the drugs. Is it?

MICKEY

Well. Maybe a little "mid-life".
The big "what have I done with my
life" wake-up call.

HAYLEY

What do you mean?

MICKEY

Two failed marriages, a busted law
practice, six months in rehab.

HAYLEY

Hit the jackpot with your daughter.

MICKEY

(smiles)
That I did.

A beat. There's a conversation he's been meaning to have
with his daughter. Perhaps now is the time.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Honey. Clearly I'm no saint. But...
in many ways, I'm not even good. I've
made my living trying to help guilty
people get away with their crimes.
Serious crimes. Murder. Rape.

HAYLEY

Is Walter Elliott guilty?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MICKEY

He says no, but... to me it's irrelevant. I'm just desperate to get the case, so desperate I lied to him, told him I could be ready in a week.

(then)

That's the other thing. I'm in a profession where everybody lies. Cops. Lawyers. Witnesses. Victims. A trial is a contest of lies. And everybody in the courtroom knows it. Even the jury. They come into the building knowing they will be lied to. They take their seats in the box and agree to be lied to. For the most part, I try to be the truth in a place where everybody lies. But often I'm no better.

HAYLEY

Is there a reason you're telling me all this?

MICKEY

As a matter of fact, yes. Whatever my sins, whatever my untruths, I will not lie to my daughter. That's a vow I made. So when you ask me, "Are you having a mid-life crisis thing", you're gonna have to brace for impact. 'Cause I'm gonna give you the truth.

A beat. THE SOUND OF A DOORBELL. What the?

HAYLEY

Expecting somebody?

Mickey rises, enters--

INT. MICKEY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

WE FOLLOW HIM TO THE DOOR, WHICH HE OPENS TO REVEAL:
DETECTIVE FRAGS.

FRAGS

Sorry to intrude.

MICKEY

Are you kidding me? You come to my home? This better be good.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRAGS

It's important.

And then Frags' eyes find Hayley.

EXT. MICKEY'S HOUSE, DECK - SECONDS LATER

FragS and Mickey emerge from the house.

FRAGS

We gotta see Vincent's files. I realize you got attorney-client privilege. The D.A.'s office says you probably got the right to shut us down.

He then pulls out a PHOTO, shows it to Mickey, who recoils.

MICKEY

Jesus.

FRAGS

Sorry. But him getting shot in the mouth first. That was a "message" shot prior to the "kill" shot. Jerry Vincent was probably killed 'cause he was about to talk. To who, about what, who knows. But the likelihood is the answer was in his files. Or maybe only on his computer, which was taken.

MICKEY

I wish I could help you, Detective.

FRAGS

I'm asking you to help yourself. Once you dip into his files, then maybe you come into knowledge of whatever got Jerry killed.

(then)

You're at risk, counselor. You could be next.

The truth of that shocks Mickey some. Off this, we--

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. DOWNTOWN L.A. - MORNING

INT. COURTHOUSE, CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Mickey on the move, ON HIS CELL, INTERCUT WITH CISCO, WHO SITS ATOP HIS PARKED MOTORCYCLE OUTSIDE OF THE LEGAL CENTER.

CISCO

Was he involved with some wiseguys,
Jerry?

MICKEY

I doubt it, he was pretty straight
ahead. Ex-prosecutor.

CISCO

Maybe it was somebody who he put in
prison. Some of them hold grudges.

MICKEY

That occurred to me. We got to comb
through the files, look for any hint
of threats, clients, ex-clients...
Meanwhile, Walter Elliott has agreed
to give us access to his house in
Malibu, where the murders happened.
I think it's important we get a true
picture. I'll shoot you the address,
we can meet there around noon.

CISCO

This mean we have the case?

MICKEY

Not yet. But the more we learn, the
better our chances.

CISCO

And where are you now?

MICKEY

Heading into trial.

STAY WITH MICKEY AS HE ENTERS--

INT. COURTHOUSE, COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

As Mickey enters, he encounters MARVIN BEEDLEMAN, eighties, wears an old worn suit.

MARVIN

Mickey.

MICKEY

Thanks for coming, Marvin, I really appreciate this.

MARVIN

Why wouldn't I come? The greatest person I ever met says he wants my help, I give him my help. This is what good people do for other good people, am I right?

MICKEY

How's Eleanor?

MARVIN

She's absolutely fantastic is how she is, she gets more beautiful every day and she sends her love.

AS THE CLERK CALLS THE CASE, ALL PARTIES ARE PRESENT, including Izzy who rises to move up.

MICKEY

Gotta head up.

(approaching)

Mickey Haller, Judge, ask that we approach?

Uh oh. As they do--

JUDGE CANTER

Please tell me you're ready.

MICKEY

Almost, Judge.

JUDGE CANTER

Mr. Haller.

MICKEY

Actually, Judge, at the risk of further antagonizing Mr. Holt, maybe we could call him up for the sidebar?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUDGE CANTER

Excuse me?

SHEPARD

What's going on?

MICKEY

A bit unorthodox, but all in the best interest of both judicial economy and justice, I believe. Take thirty seconds.

JUDGE CANTER

Mr. Holt, could you approach the bench, please?

Holt does so. Uh oh. THE FOLLOWING IS ALL SIDEBAR:

MICKEY

(to Holt)

How you doing?

(to Judge)

I'll make this quick. My client is charged with grand larceny, which of course means the object of the theft exceeds nine-hundred-fifty dollars. The necklace is worth about five-hundred tops.

HOLT

What?

MICKEY

I've taken more than a few payments in diamonds and pearls, I developed a pretty good eye. But to be sure, I also brought with me an expert--

(pointing at Beedleman)

--that man over there, Marvin Beedleman, he's a jeweler and he can give us a pretty quick appraisal. I realize the district attorney might want to get one of her own. But I'm guessing a mistake was made.

(to Holt)

I'm thinking your wife doesn't know it's a knockoff. I of course don't want to upset her.

HOLT

(pissed)

Are you kidding me? Are you kidding me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MICKEY

I am not. I am not.

SHEPARD

Even if it's a knockoff, the defendant thought she was stealing the real thing.

MICKEY

And you have a witness to testify as to her state of mind?

JUDGE CANTER

(to Shepard)

Did you not have the necklace appraised?

SHEPARD

We have the appraisal from his insurance company.

MICKEY

(to Holt)

Which might open up a whole new can of fraud. I could be wrong.

A beat.

JUDGE CANTER

Mr. Holt, how do you want to play this?

Holt looks back at his wife. We know how he's going to play it.

INT. COURTHOUSE, CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

As Mickey and Izzy emerge--

IZZY

Completely dismissed? I get to just go?

MICKEY

Unless the D.A. decides to prosecute the Holts and you get called as a witness against them. But I don't think that'll happen.

IZZY

Oh my god.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICKEY

You didn't even have to get up there and testify as to what a nice person you are.

IZZY

I don't know how to thank you, Mr. Haller. I will pay you one day, I promise.

MICKEY

Oh, you'll pay me now.

IZZY

I'm broke. I don't have a nickel to my name.

MICKEY

You got a driver's license?

IZZY

Excuse me?

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - LATER

THE BLACK LINCOLN IS ON THE MOVE.

INT. MICKEY'S LINCOLN - CONTINUOUS

MICKEY IS ON THE PHONE, INTERCUT WITH LORNA, IN THE OFFICE. IZZY DRIVING. Mickey in the backseat.

LORNA

What do you mean you hired her?

MICKEY

I need a driver. She can drive.

IZZY

I'm actually a good driver.

MICKEY

(to Lorna)

She's actually a good driver. And I need to be able to get work done as I go from here to there.

LORNA

Ah. And may I ask what this girl looks like?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICKEY

Not about that. But she is
attractive.

IZZY

And nice.

MICKEY

(to Lorna)

And nice.

(to Izzy)

Left right here.

(back to Lorna)

Okay, I'm here, I'll call you back.

AS IZZY TURNS ONTO BROAD BEACH ROAD, WE STAY WITH LORNA
AS SHE CLICKS OFF, A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. Lorna looks up to
see Maggie.

LORNA

(surprised)

Maggie.

MAGGIE

Hey, Lorna. Looking good.

LORNA

Thank you. As are you.

Theirs is an awkward and delicate relationship. Just to
look at them... polar opposites. But they have a bond in
their affection/loyalty for Mickey. Maggie looks around
the office.

LORNA (CONT'D)

Something I can help you with?

MAGGIE

Well.

(might as well say it)

I'm happy for all this. Positive
turn of events for Mickey.

LORNA

But?

MAGGIE

He's coming off an opioid
addiction, the propensity for
relapse is off-the-charts.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

He looks to hit the ground with a high-profile murder case, taking over the practice of a lawyer who was just gunned down for who knows what reason.

(a beat)

We both care for him, Lorna. Are we sure this a good idea?

LORNA

You really expect him to walk away from all this?

MAGGIE

His life is bigger than his law career.

LORNA

I don't disagree.

(then)

Look, he ain't got the case for sure yet. But we both know Mickey. There's no way he's turning this down.

True.

MAGGIE

This is a lot to bite off.

Also true.

EXT. BROAD BEACH - DAY

The Lincoln pulls into the parking lot of Elliott's beach house, a modern white whale.

INT. MICKEY'S LINCOLN - CONTINUOUS

MICKEY

I'll be about fifteen minutes.

IZZY

Sounds good.

He deboards, walks around to the beach side, stares out at the ocean.

FLASHBACK:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WATER, A FLYING BODY, A FLYING SURFBOARD, A SCREAM. AN UNCONSCIOUS MAN WASHES ASHORE AS A DAUGHTER SCREAMS IN HORROR.

BACK TO PRESENT

Mickey just stares. A KNOCK STARTLES MICKEY back to the present, Mickey turns to see Cisco on the other side of the glass walls, inside the house.

INT. ELLIOTT'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - LATER

Cisco has mounted some of the CRIME PHOTOS on the wall, in an attempt to reconstruct the scene. There are YELLOW MARKERS where the bodies were found.

CISCO

The wife was there in the bed. The boyfriend on the floor. Both naked. Police think he stood at the window, maybe watching them fornicate before he came in and shot 'em.

MICKEY

Murder weapon was never found.

CISCO

Could be out there in the ocean.
(then)
I dunno, Mick. You're good. But this good? They can place Elliott here. Motive all over.
(then)
Has he given you his story?

MICKEY

Not yet.

A beat. Mickey looks around.

CISCO

Listen. Something else. I know you're okay with me seeing Lorna and shit. At least you say you're okay with it.
(a beat)
Lorna's been meaning to tell you when the time is right, but I somehow suspect the time is never going to be right with her, so I'm just gonna say it myself.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CISCO (CONT'D)

Me and Lorna... we're going to get married.

MICKEY

Ah.

CISCO

What do you mean "ah", what is "ah"? Is it okay with you?

MICKEY

I'm not part of the equation, Cisco.

CISCO

But I want to know. Is it okay with you?

MICKEY

You love her?

CISCO

With all my heart.

MICKEY

Then it's alright with me. But I'll tell you, Cisco. She's one of the four most important people in my life. Should you ever hurt her...

CISCO

'Course I would never hurt her. She's the greatest thing ever.

(then)

Who's the fourth?

MICKEY

I'm sorry?

CISCO

You said four people. Lorna, Maggie, and Hayley. Who's the fourth?

UPON WHICH, THE PHONE RINGS.

MICKEY

(answering)

This is Mickey Haller.

(then)

I'm on my way.

And MICKEY CLICKS OFF.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Walter Elliott has summoned me.

EXT. PARAMOUNT LOT - DAY

Mickey walks the lot toward "ARCHWAY PICTURES". Nervous energy coursing through him. Man on a mission. He's got to land this case.

ELLIOTT (O.S.)

You checked out pretty good.

INT. ARCHWAY PICTURES, ELLIOTT'S CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Mickey sits across from Elliott.

ELLIOTT

High-performing litigator, way better than Jerry according to most. That is until you went off the deep end and became a drug addict.

MICKEY

(holding tight)

I'm not an addict now.

ELLIOTT

So I'm told. I also hear you were pretty nimble in court this morning.

(off Mickey)

What, you don't think I got people watching out for me?

MICKEY

Great. So you can take their word for it. I know what I'm doing.

A beat.

ELLIOTT

The thing about this case, Mr. Haller. I need to win it in court. And I need to prevail in the court of public opinion. Otherwise I'm Harvey fucking Weinstein. I'm looking for a lawyer who can give me my freedom back. And my career back. Are you that lawyer?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICKEY

No.

The answer throws Elliott a bit. Mickey meant to throw him.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

All I can do is get you a not guilty. I can't deliver you a finding of innocent, the courts don't work that way. Not guilty. Best I can do.

ELLIOTT

And can you get that? For sure?

MICKEY

Depends on what I have to work with.

(then)

Did you kill them?

ELLIOTT

I told you I didn't.

A beat. Mickey is boring into Elliott with a look. Finally--

MICKEY

Here's the deal, Walter. I can win almost any case. If I know what I'm dealing with. Right now I don't. Lie to me, I don't want your case, however much I might need it.

This is a risky play on Mickey's part. But he's a poker player to his core.

ELLIOTT

You want to know what you're dealing with, Mr. Haller? I'll tell you. I had acne all through high school. I couldn't get a girl to so much as look at me unless she were blind, and even the blind ones... I was bullied, scorned, ridiculed. I had one mission in life: to grow up to be none of that.

(then)

I made my money with some software development, had some surgery to remove the pock marks.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

One day, I'm rich, with a smooth face, a Hollywood producer, and I get the girl. Only I didn't get the girl. I got taken. By a leech who, as she was sucking me for all my money, was fucking a man under my nose, in my house, all the while he was pretending to be gay so I wouldn't suspect. They played me for a sap.

His anger is palpable. Mickey says nothing, knows there's more to come.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

(powderkegging)

I followed them to the house that day. Hoping to catch them in the act. Instead, I found them dead. She in the bed. Him on the floor. Their guts half-splattered. I felt both horror and delight. Good for them. Good for her. She got what she fucking deserved.

A beat. His nostrils are flaring, like he's a wild bull.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

(contained but still powderkegging)

I loved her more than anything. But I haven't even grieved, not for a second. Maybe one day I will, but... so far it's "good for her". She got what she deserved. Had she died in my arms, I might be devastated. But she didn't die in my arms. She died in somebody else's. Part of me... let people think I killed her, better to be a monster than some pathetic victim who got used and humiliated. Better to be hated than pitied as a fucking fool. Better to say I shot them. But I didn't shoot them.

(a beat)

You want to know what you're dealing with? You got a vengeful man, his heart full of hatred and rage. And the rage... some of it comes from the fact that I didn't get to kill them myself.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

And I'll tell you this: I hope that as she lay dying, she perhaps thought I had something to do with it. So her last thought might be -- she got what she deserved. I hope to god she thought it was me. But it wasn't.

Wow. Mickey just stares, a bit gape-jawed. At the rage. The hurt. And perhaps the truth of it. A beat.

ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

That's what you're dealing with, counsel. Can you work with that?

A beat.

MICKEY

I can win with that.

Elliott holds a look. He's trying to stare into Mickey, take full measure of him. He takes a step into him.

ELLIOTT

You can win with that?

MICKEY

I can.

ELLIOTT

You can win with that next week?

MICKEY

I can.

A beat.

ELLIOTT

Then you're hired.

Mickey's heart nearly explodes, but he covers.

MICKEY

(neutral)
You won't be disappointed.

ELLIOTT

I better not be.

A beat.

EXT. PARAMOUNT LOT - MINUTES LATER

Mickey, stone-faced, neutral, walks back to his car. Like it's just another day. But it's not another day. This is a rebirth. He gets into the car and Izzy starts it.

INT. MICKEY'S LINCOLN - CONTINUOUS

As Izzy pulls out, MICKEY SPEED-DIALS LORNA.

LORNA

Well?

MICKEY

We got it.

LORNA

Oh my god.

MICKEY

(downplaying)

A lot of work to do. We need to keep our heads.

LORNA

We got the case?

Mickey is going all "Bill Belichick".

MICKEY

Lot of work. Tell Cisco to meet me at the office. A lot of work.

LORNA

(near tears)

Mickey.

Just the sound of her voice, it could make him crack.

MICKEY

See you in a few.

AND HE CLICKS OFF.

IZZY

Are you okay? Your eyes look like you're about to cry or something.

MICKEY

Allergies. Your eyes should be on the road, by the way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IZZY

The road and the rear-view mirror.
I Googled chauffeur etiquette; rule
number one: the client. I'm kind of
like a butler.

MICKEY

Just drive, Izzy. And turn up the
music if you don't mind.

IZZY

You really okay?

MICKEY

I've never been better.

As they drive on Melrose, the suit, the car, he looks the
part. He doesn't want to let the emotion of the moment
get hold of him. He fights against it. IZZY CRANKS UP THE
MUSIC, CHUCK BERRY'S "NO PARTICULAR PLACE TO GO".

CHUCK BERRY

(singing)

*Riding along in my automobile/ My
baby beside me at the wheel...*

Cruising down Melrose Avenue in his Lincoln Town Car, his
Italian suit, a driver even -- Mickey is Hollywood-cool.
He looks the part. He could fool anybody, and is fooling
whoever spies him in his snazzy-jazzy rig. But he's not
fooling himself. He's got a second chance to be full-on
Mickey Haller again. He's in the game. His eyes are wet
with emotion. He's coming back. Something he doubted was
possible. The Lincoln Lawyer rides again. By god, he
rides again.

IZZY

Am I allowed to talk as I drive?

MICKEY

Only if you've got something to
say. Do you?

IZZY

Yes. We're being followed.

AS MICKEY TURNS TO LOOK, WE--

SMASH TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK, WE HEAR "NO PARTICULAR PLACE TO GO".

TO BE CONTINUED