

"The funniest crime thriller ever set among the hustlers  
and con artists of the movie colony." *Wall Street Journal*

*New York Times* Bestselling Author of *Technique Blues*

# ELMORE LEONARD

*GET  
SHORTY*

**ELMORE  
LEONARD**

***GET  
SHORTY***

**For Walter Mirisch, one of the good guys**

# Contents

## The Extras

### Chapters:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15,  
16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27,  
28

About the Author

Praise and Acclaim

Books by Elmore Leonard

Copyright

Front Cover

About the Publisher



# 1



When Chili first came to Miami Beach twelve years ago they were having one of their off-and-on cold winters: thirty-four degrees the day he met Tommy Carlo for lunch at Vesuvio's on South Collins and had his leather jacket ripped off. One his wife had given him for Christmas a year ago, before they moved down here.

Chili and Tommy were both from Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, old buddies now in business together. Tommy Carlo was connected to a Brooklyn crew through his uncle, a guy named Momo, Tommy keeping his books and picking up betting slips till Momo sent him to Miami, with a hundred thousand to put on the street as loan money. Chili was connected through some people on his mother's side, the Manzara brothers. He worked usually for Manzara Moving & Storage in Bensonhurst, finding high-volume customers for items such as cigarettes, TVs, VCRs, stepladders, dresses, frozen orange juice. . . . But he could never be a made guy himself because of tainted blood, some Sunset Park Puerto Rican on his father's side, even though he was raised Italian. Chili didn't care to be made anyway, get

into all that bullshit having to do with respect. It was bad enough having to treat these guys like they were your heroes, smile when they made some stupid remark they thought was funny. Though it was pretty nice, go in a restaurant on 86th or Cropsey Avenue the way they knew his name, still a young guy then, and would bust their ass to wait on him. His wife Debbie ate it up, until they were married a few years and she got pregnant. Then it was a different story. Debbie said with a child coming into their lives he had to get a regular job, quit associating with “those people” and bitched at him till he said okay, all *right*, Jesus, and lined up the deal with Tommy Carlo in Miami. He told Debbie he’d be selling restaurant supplies to the big hotels like the Fontainebleau and she believed him—till they were down here less than a year and he had his jacket ripped off.

This time at Vesuvio’s, they finished eating, Tommy said he’d see him at the barbershop—where they had a phone in back—turned up the collar of his Palm Beach sport coat for whatever good it would do him and took off. Chili went in the checkroom to get his jacket and all that was in there were a couple of raincoats and a leather flight jacket must’ve been from World War Two. When Chili got the manager, an older Italian guy in a black suit, the manager looked around the practically empty checkroom and asked Chili, “You don’t find it? Is not one of these?”

Chili said, “You see a black leather jacket, fingertip length, has lapels like a suitcoat? You don’t, you owe me three seventy-nine.” The manager told him to look at the sign there on the wall. WE CANNOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST ARTICLES. Chili said to him, “I bet you can if you try. I didn’t come down to sunny

Florida to freeze my ass. You follow me? You get the coat back or you give me the three seventy-nine my wife paid for it at Alexander's."

So then the manager got a waiter over and they talked to each other in Italian for a while, the waiter nervous or he was anxious to get back to folding napkins. Chili caught some of what they were saying and a name that came up a few times, Ray Barboni. He knew the name, a guy they called Bones he'd seen hanging out at the Cardozo Hotel on the beach. Ray Bones worked for a guy named Jimmy Capotorto who'd recently taken over a local operation from a deceased guy named Ed Grossi—but that was another story. The manager said to the waiter, "Explain to him Mr. Barboni borrow the coat."

The waiter, trying to act like an innocent bystander, said, "Somebody take his coat, you know, leave this old one. So Mr. Barboni put on this other coat that fit him pretty good. He say he gonna borrow it."

Chili said, "Wait a minute," and had the waiter, who didn't seem to think it was unusual for some asshole to take a jacket that didn't belong to him, explain it again.

"He didn't take it," the waiter said, "he borrow it. See, we get his coat for him and he return the one he borrow. Or I think maybe if it's your coat," the waiter said, "he give it to you. He was wearing it, you know, to go home. He wasn't gonna keep it."

"My car keys are in the pocket," Chili said.

They both looked at him now, the manager and the waiter, like they didn't understand English.

"What I'm saying," Chili said, "how'm I suppose to go get my coat if I don't have the keys to my car?"

The manager said they'd call him a taxi.

"Lemme get it straight," Chili said. "You aren't responsible for any lost articles like an expensive coat of mine, but you're gonna find Ray Bones' coat or get him a new one. Is that what you're telling me?"

Basically, he saw they weren't telling him shit, other than Ray Bones was a good customer who came in two three times a week and worked for Jimmy Cap. They didn't know where he lived and his phone number wasn't in the book. So Chili called Tommy Carlo at the barbershop, told him the situation, asked him a few times if he believed it and if he'd come by, pick him up.

"I want to get my coat. Also pull this guy's head out of his ass and nail him one."

Tommy said, "Tomorrow, I see on the TV weather, it's gonna be nice and warm. You won't need the coat."

Chili said, "Debbie gave me it for Christmas, for Christ sake. I go home, she's gonna want to know where it's at."

"So tell her you lost it."

"She's still in bed since the miscarriage. You can't talk to her. I mean in a way that makes any fuckin sense if you have to explain something."

Tommy said, "Hey, Chil? Then don't fuckin tell her."

Chili said, "The guy takes my coat, I can't ask for it back?"

Tommy Carlo picked him up at the restaurant and they stopped by Chili's apartment on Meridian where they were living at the time so he could run in and get something. He tried to be quiet about it, grab

a pair of gloves out of the front closet and leave, but Debbie heard him.

She said from the bedroom, “Ernie, is that you?” She never called him Chili. She called him honey in her invalid voice if she wanted something. “Honey? Would you get my pills for me from the sink in the kitchen and a glass of water, please, while you’re up?” Pause. “Or, no—honey? Gimme a glass of milk instead and some of those cookies, the ones you got at Winn-Dixie, you know the chocolate chip ones?” Dragging it out in this tired voice she used since the miscarriage, three months ago. Taking forever now to ask him what time it was, the alarm clock sitting on the bed table a foot away if she turned her head. They had known each other since high school, when he’d played basketball and she was a baton twirler with a nice ass. Chili told her it was three-thirty and he was running late for an appointment; bye. He heard her say, “Honey? Would you . . .” but he was out of there.

In the car driving the few blocks over to the Victor Hotel on Ocean Drive, Tommy Carlo said, “Get your coat, but don’t piss the guy off, okay? It could get complicated and we’d have to call Momo to straighten it out. Okay? Then Momo gets pissed for wasting his time and we don’t need it. Right?”

Chili was thinking that if he was always bringing Debbie her pills, how did they get back to the kitchen after? But he heard Tommy and said to him, “Don’t worry about it. I won’t say any more than I have to, if that.”

He put on his black leather gloves going up the stairs to the third floor, knocked on the door three times, waited, pulling the right-hand glove on tight,