

HELEN (CONT'D)  
What happened?

FRANK  
I went to prison.

She rolls her eyes in exasperation.

HELEN  
I meant with "Debórah."

Frank looks down and takes a long time to reply.

FRANK  
She met some rich guy...who wasn't  
going to prison.

He stares at his glass morosely.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Helen and Frank stroll.

HELEN  
Why didn't you try to make a deal  
and testify against Chris?

FRANK  
I figured he'd kill my parents.

Something in Helen's eyes says she agrees with his logic.

FRANK (CONT'D)  
It was bad enough dragging them  
through the trial. And then my dad  
blows his retirement savings on my  
appeal.

HELEN  
Sounds like he really loves you.

FRANK  
He did. And it killed him. Heart  
attack.

Compassion paints Helen's face. She looks like she's about  
to lean in for a kiss when he suddenly speaks again.

FRANK (CONT'D)  
Mind if I ask you a few questions?

Not what she was expecting. She smiles warily.

START

↓  
CONT.

HELEN

That depends on the questions.

Frank smirks.

INT. HELEN'S CAR - DAY

Helen drives as Frank studies her.

FRANK

So you're an actress?

She laughs to herself.

HELEN

That was the idea, anyways. Dance by night, audition by day.

FRANK

Didn't work out?

HELEN

Couple of one-line parts on TV...a commercial once - local, not national.

FRANK

Ever think about doing something else?

HELEN

I wanted to be a psychologist. I even took a few classes in community college.

FRANK

What happened?

She looks at him, mildly annoyed by the question.

HELEN

Life.

Frank looks cowed. She notices and seems to feel bad.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I just...It's really hard to work all night and then study all day.

(beat)

And I got used to a certain... standard of living.

Beat.

CONT.

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FRANK

But you don't like it anymore.

She's stung by this clearly accurate assessment.

HELEN

What makes you say that?

FRANK

You cry behind the club...and you get drunk.

She's near tears as she pulls the car into her apartment's underground lot and parks.

She wipes a tear from her eye and looks over at Frank.

HELEN

You think you've got me all figured out, don't you?

He stares at her sympathetically.

FRANK

Why don't you quit?

HELEN

And do what? I don't know how to do anything else!

(beat)

Besides, I can't. I owe a lot of money to...someone.

Frank nods solemnly. He knows the feeling.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I can't make \$1500 a night like I used to - I'm too old.

(her voice shakes)

But I still do okay.

She gets out of the car.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - MAIN ROOM - DAY

Frank and Helen slowly walk in, both looking depressed.

Frank shuts the door and watches as she sets her purse and keys down on the table and stares sadly at the white roses.

FRANK

You're not old.

END

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INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

A steady trail of Frank and Helen's clothing lies on the floor, leading into:

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Frank and Helen lie together in bed, Helen on her back, Frank curled up against her like a little boy.

There's a moment of silent bliss as they both contemplate their thoughts.

FRANK

I almost held up a store today.

She looks at him in shock.

HELEN

What?

FRANK

It was the only thing left I could think of.

He sits up.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I was gonna make sure they caught me...You know, go back to prison.

HELEN

Why?

FRANK

So I wouldn't have to do that... thing Pender wants me to do.

HELEN

But you'd be in prison!

FRANK

I've been there before.

(beat)

I'm kind of used to it.

She stares at him in disbelief.

HELEN

That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard!

Frank looks hurt and surprised.

START

CONT

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HELEN (CONT'D)  
(angrily)  
Why don't you just do what Chris  
Pendler wants already?

Frank's about to respond when she cuts him off.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
He's just making you do this to  
prove that he can! Go along with  
it and then you can walk away.

Frank stares at her for a long time, a realization slowly  
dawning on him.

FRANK  
Russ had it all wrong.  
(beat)  
Pendler told you to go after me,  
didn't he?

She looks stunned, and tears start welling in her eyes.

Frank jumps out of bed like he's in a tub full of scalding  
water and hurriedly pulls on his pants.

FRANK (CONT'D)  
Of course he did! I'm a goddamned  
fool.

HELEN  
(pleadingly)  
Frank...It only started out that  
way. But this...this is real!

He rapidly finishes dressing.

FRANK  
A woman who chooses to spend half  
her life in the sex industry. What  
the hell was I thinking?

She's stung by this comment.

HELEN  
(indignant)  
I had no choice.

Frank glares down at her angrily.

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**END**

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