SEA OF LOVE
BY
RICHARD PRICE

RED ORIGINAL

MARTIN BREGMAN PRODUCTIONS
FINAL DRAFT
INT. ROOM - EARLY MORNING - NIGHT.
CLOSE ON A NAKED, THIRTYISH MAN, JAMES MACKEY

Face down on a bed. He's grinding sexually as if there's an
imaginary woman beneath him. His face, lying in profile on the
pillow, reveals an expression of pure horse-wild terror as he
mechanically humps away. From another room we hear "Sea of
Love", a 1950's rock 'n' roll stroll tune.

JAMES MACKEY
(grinding on his bed)
Uh uh uh, oh, baby, oh, baby, oh, baby.
(to an unseen person
standing behind him)
OK? Like that? Is that OK?
(beat; teary with fear)
What is your problem?

A bullet zips into the back of James Mackey's head. He lies on
his pillow unblinking as we hear "Sea of Love" continue to play.
And we hear footsteps fading away: a door closing.

EXT. BURNSIDE CATERERS - GRAND CONCOURSE -
THE BRONX - DAY.

A shabby catering hall on a shabby, formerly resplendent
commercial avenue.

Two men, wearing dark blue warm-up jackets, the N.Y. Yankees logo
prominent on the chest, stand with clipboards in front of the
street entrance. Behind them is a large sign leaning on an
easel: "EIGHTH ANNUAL MEET THE YANKEES BRUNCH" - INVITATION
ONLY. PAN of guys waiting in a loose line for admission -- a
young rough-edged-looking crew.

INT. CATERING HALL - DAY.

A big Yankee banner is strung across a stage. Rows of long
folding tables covered with Yankee pinstripe tablecloths, name
cards and place settings. Ray Charles sings his soulful version
of "America" over a P.A. The room is half full with guests;
twenty-five men, mostly young; white, black, Hispanic. A dozen
guys in Yankee warm-up jackets usher and escort guests to their
assigned seats.

CLOSE ON FRANK KELLER

Forty-three, short, quick, wiry, wearing a Yankee jacket. He
moves from guest to guest, pouring them orange juice, a quart
pitcher in each hand. He pours for the Maldonado twins. The
Maldonados are in their late twenties, goatees, Hispanic, nattily
dressed.
CONTINUED

FRANK
How you guys doin'?

OMAR MALDONADO
Yo, brother, where the Yankees at?

FRANK
They're comin'.

EFRAM MALDONADO
You a Yankee?

FRANK
You don't recognize me?

OMAR
What... you a short-stop?

The twins laugh and high five each other.

FRANK
(straight-faced)
Used to be.

EFRAM
What...

FRANK
(doing a perfect imitation of Phil Rizzuto's patented exclamation)
Ho-lee Cow!

OMAR
(jaw on the floor)
You the Scooter! Yo, Efrem, this dude Phil Rizzuto. Do that again!

FRANK
(winking at some fellow workers)
Ho-lee Cow!

The twins stand and shake Frank's hand.

EFRAM
Yo, Phil... how come you pourin' us juice?

INT. DOORWAY - CATERING HALL - DAY.

A dozen more guys waiting to be admitted.

CLIPBOARD GUYS
Invites and I.D.'s, fellas. Invites and I.D.'s.

CONTINUED
CONTINUED

BLACK GUY
How we gettin' to the game after? I ain't got no car.

CLIPBOARD GUY
We got you covered.

INT. CATERING HALL - DAY.
CLOSE ON A SLOW PAN OF EGG McMUFFINS, BREADKAST DEBRIS AND PLACE CARDS.

Frank heads to the stage. The guests applaud. Shouts of "Scooter!" and "hoolee Cow". Laughter. Frank holds up his hands for silence. Suddenly twenty guys with Yankee jackets file in around the walls of the room, surrounding the guests.

FRANK
Fellas... fellas... I got some good news, I got some bad news... which you want first?

Chorus of "bad news" overrides "good news".

FRANK (cont'd.)
Bad news wins... here we go... the Yanks can't make it here, guys.

Groans.

FRANK (cont'd.)
And you can't make it over to the stadium later.

Silence except for one loud "uh-oh".

FRANK (cont'd.)
We got thirty-five outstanding warrants here eating our McMuffins and an... on behalf of the New York Yankees and the New York City Career Criminals' Investigations Unit... you're all under arrest.

Utter silence as Frank and all the Yankee jackets pull out their detectives' gold shields. The rear wall rolls back on casters, REVEALING a whole booking setup -- photographer, fingerprint station clerks... It's a major sting operation.

FRANK (cont'd.)
good-natured
Sorry, guys... we got'cha.

The guests slouch and groan in resignation.
CONTINUED

VOICE
(defeated)
F**ck you, Scooter.

Laughter from both the cops and the cons.

VOICE
What's the good news?

FRANK
Good news is comin' around...

Four cops, holding half gallons of vodka, make their way from guest to guest, converting all the orange juices to screwdrivers -- one for the road. Before anyone can take a drink, Detective Struk, tall, moustache, leaps on stage, puts an arm around Frank.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO THE CATERING HALL. DAY.

Frank is lounging with two other detectives on the street. They're smoking -- day is done. Drinks in hand.

STRUK
Yo! Yo! I'd like to propose a toast...
To Detective Frank Keller on today, his twentieth anniversary on the job...Skoal.

ALL
Speech! Speech!

FRANK
Yeah, well, what can I...

DETECTIVE #1 (SERAFINO)
F**ck you, Scooter.

They all laugh.

DARGAN
I can't believe you're hangin' in, Frank
I hit my twenty and a wake-up I'm history --
taking my half pay and...

FRANK
(finishing the sentence)
opening a motel...a bar...a polygraph school.

CONTINUED
CONTINUED

DARGAN
Hey, you think I'm gonna be forty-six years old in some alley sticking my pencil in some dead skull diggin' around for the bullet? Nothing wrong with a nice motel in Florida, my friend.

Frank shrugs, not wishing to pursue it.

DARGAN (cont'd.)
(embarrassed at his own heat)
Anyways --

(shakes hands with Frank)
Happy Anniversary.

A black guy, Ernest Lee, and his ten-year-old son come running towards Frank and his pals.

ERNEST
(winded)
Am I too late?

The kid pulls up, also winded, holding a baseball glove. Ernest hands his invite to Frank.

FRANK
(thrown by the presence of the kid)
Who's this?

ERNEST
That's my son.

FRANK
Invitation's for you only... you Ernest Lee?

ERNEST
Hey, man, how'ma gonna meet Dave Winfield without takin' mah boy?

Frank whispers to one of the detectives who consults his clipboard.

FRANK
You got some I.D., Ernest?

DETECTIVE
(in Frank's ear)
Grand theft auto... two counts.

Frank signs, thinks for a beat, ignoring Ernest's I.D.

FRANK
We're booked up in there, Ernest.
CONTINUED

ERNEST
Hay. I got an invite here.

Frank casually pulls back his jacket so that his gold shield shows.

FRANK
(looking away)
I said we're booked up.

Ernest's face turns grey. He involuntarily backs up.

FRANK (cont'd.)
We'll catch you later.

Ernest nods a barely perceptible "thanks" and briskly walks away with his uncomprehending son.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - MANHATTAN 10:00 P.M.
CLOSE ON THE SCREEN.

A wounded bank robber on his back, stares up into the .44 Magnum of Dirty Harry. The robber's fingers inch toward his own shotgun on the ground at his side.

DIRTY HARRY
(his gun in our face)
Uhh uhh... I know what you're thinking, "Did he fire six shots or only five?"... Well, to tell you the truth, in all this excitement I kind of lost track myself.

Over this dialogue from the screen we hear a half-dozen drunken male voices from the movie audience.

CHORUS
Shoot the hump! Blow his friggin' head off!

ANGLE - THE SCREAMERS

Six men, early thirties, sitting in the dark, blasted on rum and Cokes, which they concoct sloppily in their seats.

ANGLE - LAST ROW OF THE THEATRE.

Frank sits with Serafino, a Hispanic detective.

FRANK
(sighing)
Hey. I got a real estate license about five years ago. What am I supposed to do, walk around in one of those Century 21 orange blazers selling condos? You want
SERAFINO
You should have planned better. There's other things.

FRANK
What are you, the ant and the grasshopper?
(beat)
Look, I just don't think there's anything really out there after this. I mean, retire to what... besides I'm young still... I feel young.

SERAFINO
I thought you were a smart guy, Frank.

FRANK
I am. I'm very smart. That's why I say this.

Frank squints in irritation at the raucous crew down near the screen who are still screaming at Dirty Harry.

FRANK (cont'd.)
(rising)
Who the hell are those assholes down there? I'm gonna cool 'em out. Watch my back.

SERAFINO
(to Frank's back as Frank marches down the aisle; amused)
Hey, crime fighter!

ANGLE - THE SCREEN

DIRTY HARRY
(calmly, deadly)
Well, do you, punk?

DRUNKS (OS)
(start chanting)
Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!

ANGLE - THE THEATER.

Two ushers hover over the six guys.

usher
Yo, fellas... you us want to call the cops?

Frank comes up alongside the usher, unconsciously moving him aside. He flashes his shield.
CONTINUED

FRANK
(automatic pilot authoritatian)
Hey, fellas, you wanna start to behave.

Frank stops, hisses, throwing his eyes as all six guys, greatly amused, flash their gold shields.

DRUNKEN DETECTIVE
Hey, Scooter, fuck you!

CLOSE ON - THEIR FACES

Looking up at Frank: drunk, smiling, angelic, young.

Frank is older than the oldest by ten years. His face registers the shock of this fact.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - 10:00 P.M. THAT NIGHT.

In the darkness WE SEE an old lady, Miss Allen, Bette Davis feisty, smoking in bed, pissed off, sleepless, as "Sea of Love" is heard from the apartment next door over and over, driving her nuts. She takes a cane and whacks the dividing wall.

MISS ALLEN
(shouting)
Shut that goddamn thing off, you sonofabitch!

INT. WHITE WORKING-CLASS BAR - UPPER BROADWAY - 1:00 A.M. THAT NIGHT.

Seedy cop bar. A dozen and a half patrons, 5 or 6 women, the rest locals. Jukebox. Drink discounts, advertised over the mirror. Some hard-looking women, not whores, but cop groupies, scotch, cigarettes and tight faces, talking to older guys, some of whom are plainclothes cops half in the bag.

FRANK - AT THE BAR

Three stools down, Serafino (Detective #1, gun visible over his hip inside his open jacket), is rapping to some lady.

FRANK'S POV

Four empty seats away Dawn, Irish, attractive, early 30's, is talking intimately to a cop in civilian clothes. She furtively catches Frank looking at her - Frank looks away. After a beat, Dawn sidles up to him.
DAWN
I hate this scene.

FRANK

Oh yeah?

DAWN
I'm going to California, live with my sister.

FRANK

Oh yeah?

DAWN
I dreamt about you again last night.

FRANK

Oh yeah?

DAWN
Don't you want to know what happened in the dream?

FRANK
(Nodding at the abandoned cop)
Maybe some other time.

DAWN
(Wounded)
Fuck you, Frankie.

FRANK'S POV

Serafino is holding up giant tattooed forearms to his pickup. The tattoos are of Sylvester the Cat and Tweety-Bird, the cartoon characters.

SERAFINO
I got this done for my kids. I sit 'em down and go like this.

He moves his forearms so it looks like Sylvester is chasing Tweety-Bird.

SERAFINO (cont'd.)
I'm a human cartoon show. What I do for my kids, I'm telling you...

FRANK
(smiles)
Dawn, you want me to buy you a drink?

DAWN
(sulking)
I have my own money.

FRANK
Let's get married...
CONTINUED

Dawn smiles, then realizes she can't tell if he's kidding or not. Spooked, she splits.

FRANK (cont'd.)
(alone, smiles at his drink again)
I'm kidding, I'm kidding.

INT. ALL-NIGHT KOREAN VEGETABLE STAND/MINI.MARKET - 2:00 A.M. - NIGHT.

Under the fluorescents Frank stands on line with a quart of juice and some ice cream, waiting to check out.

WE SEE from his POV, three women, shopping alone, not ugly, not pretty - all self-contained, absorbed in their actions, ignoring the fact that, like Frank, they're doing their grocery shopping at 2:00 a.m.

CLOSE ON FRANK

Observing them but impassive.

INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM - 3:00 A.M. - NIGHT.

CLOSE ON A SOFTBALL TROPHY.

Frank's name is on the base. "Two Four PCT Tornados - 2nd Place"

Frank, in his underwear, hunched over, elbows on knees, phone to ear, sits on the edge of his bed. The trophy is next to the phone on his night-table. A table clock reads 3:00. The room is in shadows.

FRANK
Gruber... Frank Keller... Did I wake you? Sorry
(beat)
Listen, I'd like to talk to my wife... my ex-wife... just put her on...
just put her on... Thank you.
(beat)
Denise... did I wake you? I'm sorry...
I think I got appendicitis.

CONTINUED
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ANGLE - FRANK'S BEDROOM - 4:00 A.M. - NIGHT.

TV is on to some moronic cable talk show. Room is spare -- bed, wall-mounted TV, some workout equipment.

Frank is doing sit-ups on a slant board at the foot of his bed. WE SEE him do a furious set, then stop, fingers clasped behind his neck, his head three feet below his ankles. His face suffused with blood. WE SEE Frank's eyes close... finally.

INT. MACKEY'S APARTMENT - NEXT DAY. MID-AFTERNOON
CLOSE ON APARTMENT DOOR.

We hear "Sea of Love". We hear someone banging. The door opens and Miss Allen tentatively enters, squinting through her harlequin glasses. She gingerly moves to the record player surrounded by cascades of old 45's and removes the needle from "Sea of Love". She moves back into the apartment, scared, trespassing, curious. She stops at the bedroom threshold. WE SEE James Mackey lying there -- calmly dead. WE SEE her wising up to Mackey's medical condition.

MISS ALLEN
(awed, but cool)
Fuckin' hell.

EXT. WEST END AVENUE - 4:15 P.M. - DAY.

Row of canopied apartment houses. The cop cars double-parked in front of 365 West End Avenue Canopy. A cop is taking down license numbers of all cars near the building. Frank and Gruber (bespectacled, enormous, but soft and sad-looking, a little prim, too) pull up in an unmarked car and exit.

GRUBER
(to the cop)
Get the cars across the street too, OK?

PATROLMAN
(pissy)
I know the job.

INT. 365 WEST END AVENUE LOBBY - DAY.

There's a uniformed fifty-year-old doorman, a long foyer. Gruber and Frank enter.

FRANK
(flashing his badge)
Where's it at, Chief?
DOORMAN
(straightening up)

3 K.

FRANK
Anybody talk to you yet?

DOORMAN
(man to man confidential)
No one of weight.

FRANK
(smiling)
You ever on the job?

DOORMAN
(flattered)
Me? Nah. I'm just a square badge. I was in Korea though.

FRANK
(flattering)
Yeah? I could have sworn you were on the job.

The doorman almost turns ramrod straight, fights down a grin.

FRANK (cont'd.)
(turns for the elevator)
I'll come down talk to you later.
(beat; winking)
I'm "of weight".

The doorman almost salutes. He's in some kind of military hog heaven.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY.

Gruber and Frank.

GRUBER
You ever on the job...shit.

FRANK
It's called making people feel good so they'll co-operate with you...you should try it sometime.
(beat)
I'm sorry about the phone thing last night.
GRUBER
I don't want you calling us three in the morning any more...you want to talk to Denice, you call her decent hours.

FRANK
(slightly angry - breaking balls)
Decent hours...what do you mean...like nine a.m. to what...dinner time? Eight P.M.?

Gruber gives him a dirty look.

INT. HALLWAY LEADING TO 3K - DAY.

Frank and Gruber enter from the stairwell. There's a lone policeman standing guard.

GRUBER
Where's it at?

COP
In the bedroom, straight through.

Two cops leave the apartment, talking. We hear other voices inside.

FRANK
We got a cherry scene in there? It sounds like a cocktail party.

COP
Hey...I'm out here.

INT. MACKEY APARTMENT - DAY.

Gruber and Frank gingerly step inside, hands in pockets so as not to touch anything. They walk down a short foyer into a combination dining room-living room, where two cops, and an old lady (Miss Allen) are chatting about baseball. There are two wine glasses, a quarter full, and a bottle of wine, half full, on a coffee table. An ashtray has half a dozen cigarette butts. A pile of 45 RPM records are stacked sloppily next to a record player on the floor.

YOUNG COP
It's in the bedroom.

The young cop, finishing up a cigarette, ditches it into the ashtray. Frank hesitates, walks over to the ashtray. All the other butts have lipstick on them.
CONTINUED

Frank gingerly extracts the cop's butt and flips it out an open window. The cops stare at him.

FRANK
Hey, fellas, you wanna take the lady outside? It's a little crowded in here.

MISS ALLEN
(to the cops as they leave)
What's his problem?

INT. MACKEY BEDROOM - DAY.

Queen-sized bed, bookcases. Wall-mounted TV. Bathrobe in a heap on the rug. The corpse is a well-muscled man, belly down, nude, on top of his made bed. His face lies on its side, his eyes staring calmly at the wall. There's no mess, no blood, save for a dried clot over his ear. Gruber and Frank put on elastic gloves and begin to circle the body. They both go to great pains not to touch the corpse. As they talk they gently poke and prod around the room for evidence.

GRuber
(referring to the corpse)
What's this guy's name?

FRANK
James... Mackey.

(beat)
Mack the Knife... Jimmy Mack. Oh Jimmy Mack, when are ya comin' back...

(beat)
You know, when she was married to me, I was never gonna die. We split up, she goes to you, life goes on. I passed my 20 yesterday, everybody says retire, I feel kind of mor-tal all of a sudden, you know?

(shifting gears)
I say this guy's dead 48 hours.

GRuber
(prodding)
Nah... look at the lividity... 36 tops.

FRANK
Smells like 48.

GRuber
Smells like 36.

Frank gives him a dirty look, realizes that Gruber is still pissed, shifts gears again.

FRANK
(apologetic)
Look, I was just trying to get some attention.
Frank extends his elastic-gloved hand to Gruber's elastic-gloved hand. Gruber hesitates. They shake over the corpse.

FRANK (cont'd.)
It's just...
(beat)
...we're in the same precinct six years, we never even so much as have a beer together, right?
(beat)
How the hell did you take my wife away?

GRUBER
(controlled fury)
Hey!... I didn't take nobody nowhere...
You didn't treat her right, she walked...
You want to kick somebody's ass about it, kick your own...

Gruber walks out, leaving Frank standing over the corpse.

FRANK
(talking to himself)
Hey, Gruber, I'll take it from here, OK? Seriously. This one's mine,
(beat)
OK with you, fuck-face?

INT. MACKEY LIVING ROOM - THIRTY MINUTES LATER - DAY.
CLOSE ON RECORD PLAYER.

45's all around. "Sea of Love" (45 RPM) is still on the turntable. A pen is gently pressed against the automatic record changer lever so as not to leave fingerprints.

CLOSE ON FRANK'S FACE.

As "Sea of Love" starts to play again, that haunting stroll-paced love tune, odd and dreamy, Frank opens a linen closet, pulls out a pillow case and starts to gingerly remove personal effects from desk drawers; address books, memo pads, checkbooks, photos of family, stuffing them into the pillow case like Santa Claus in reverse.

CONTINUED
INT. JAMES MACKEY'S BEDROOM - DAY.

With "Sea of Love" still playing, Frank stands in the doorway to the bedroom, pillow case over one shoulder. James Mackey's corpse is floodlit for the crime scene photographer -- the star of an obscene and heartless movie. The technicians scurry about the bedroom dusting, measuring and collecting. The whole tableau is a clinical rape of a dead man's personal collage to the tune "Sea of Love" -- more sad than lurid. Frank is watching all this, his face impassive.

INT. LIEUTENANT'S OFFICE - 11:30 AT NIGHT.

Frank, sprawled in an old creaky chair, is running down his notes with his superior officer.

FRANK
Look, I'll check everybody out but to tell you the truth, I think it boils down to grabbing this strange trim he got hooked up with. This guy's a swordsman extra-ordinaire, right? The doorman says the ladies sit around the lobby with numbers in their laps. Could be some lady got pissed because he was moaning Mary when her name's Gladys. Hell hath no fury and all that, right?

LIEUTENANT
Yeah, but how do you know the trim is strange?
Maybe it's a steady.

FRANK
Nah, it's strange. You know how I know? The 45's. No one whips out their old 45's on anything but a first or second date when you're doing your "the wonder of me" thing. You know,

(singing)
"Getting to know you". You bring them out to show the broad that you kept them after all these years -- meaning you're a wonderful, sentimental individual. Who does that with someone they really know? Who gives a shit once you get to know each other?

INT. TOWER RECORDS - 2:00 A.M.

It's a massive fluorescently lit store awash in rock music and multiple videos.

Under the ice blue light Frank is the only person in the store over twenty-five.
CONTINUED

Frank is browsing through the oldies section.

ANGLE - FRANK

In checkout line with an oldies tape.

The cashier is a punky, alien-looking girl, 26, mid 20's, spikey but cute.

FRANK
Under this light? Your skin looks like blue ice.

GIRL
(mild, tired)
Gimme a break, it's two in the morning.

FRANK
(Leaving)
C'mon, I'm only kidding. I'm old enough to be your relative.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - 3:00 A.M.
CLOSE ON YELLOW TOWER RECORDS BAG, FRANK'S HANDS.

"Sea of Love" is taken from the bag, put on a turntable.

CLOSE ON FRANK

Shirtless. He stares at the spinning record impassively as "Sea of Love" fills the silence of his apartment.

The music carries over to....

INT. DARKENED BEDROOM SOMEWHERE - SAME TIME
CLOSE ON A NAKED MAN

bald, muscular, alone, grinding sexually on his bed, his face in terrified profile on a pillow.

BALD MAN
(with "Sea of Love" playing over this)
So good... so good... yeah... oh yeah, oh yeah, oh --
(he starts to cry, addresses someone not seen, standing behind him)
Is that OK? Is that OK? Everything's OK?
sobs
Please.... CONTINUED
CONTINUED

We hear a sad, long exhalation, a sigh from behind the bald man.
A bullet rips into his hairless head. Silence, save for retreating footsteps.

INT. LOBBY - 9:00 A.M.

Frank coming off the street, walking towards the doorman that he befriended the day before.

FRANK
Hey, Chief.

DOORMAN
What do you do, work night and day?

FRANK
Ah, I swapped shifts today... Listen, you think of anybody else coming in or out yesterday morning?

DOORMAN
(wincing)
Anybody else? Jesus...the mailman? Maybe he came in the afternoon. I don't remember. Ah...a cable TV repair guy was here, I think. What's that? Cable Time? Cable Tone? But he was down in the basement.
(beat)
People in the building... shit. Pretty much what I told you yesterday.

FRANK
No ladies, hah? Young ladies? I thought you said it was like a sex parade up there.

DOORMAN
You know, if I'm looking to see somebody in particular, I'll see them, if not, if I'm hailing a cab, if I'm in the package room...
(he shrugs helplessly)

EXT. BUILDING ENTRANCE - DAY.

Frank exits under the canopy, looks around. Stops a guy smoking a joint and walking two King Charles spaniels.

FRANK
'Scuse me... you walk these guys around here this time yesterday?... What are they, cocker spaniels?

CONTINUED
Frank bends down to pet them. They shy away.

**GUY**
King Charles Spaniels. Please don't pet them.

Frank rises and shows his badge. The guy freaks, puts the joint behind his back. Frank ignores the joint.

**FRANK**
You must walk 'em like clock-work, right? You were here yesterday, this time? You notice a woman, young, youngish, wearing dinner-type clothes coming out the building?

**GUY**
(paranoid)
Uh-uh.

**FRANK**
Some lady looking a little freaked out, maybe rumpled dressup clothes?

**GUY**
Uh-uh.

The guy jumps, hisses in pain. He's burned his fingers on the joint behind his back.

**EXT. BUILDING - STREET - FRANK - DAY.**

Standing across the street from the building, humming "Sea of Love", still scanning the street for people who are habitually in front of the building at this time every day. The only other person on the corner is an Arabic, middle-aged man in a suit leaning against the side of a private school. He looks nervous.

He's staring at Frank. When Frank turns to meet his gaze, he looks off. The guy's nervous alertness, his focus on Frank is very weird. Frank walks past the guy.

**FRANK'S POV.**

We see through the guy's open jacket that he's carrying a gun. Frank keeps walking, goes to a pay phone.

**FRANK**
(on phone)
This is Detective Keller, of the Two-Seven Squad. Yeah, listen, I got a 1013 at the Hoisting School 365 West End Avenue -- guy's got a gun -- I need back-up.
Frank hangs up and nonchalantly strolls to a parked car, leans on the hood.

FRANK'S POV.

He glances at the guy. The guy is staring at him directly.

GUY'S POV.

WE SEE Frank's gun over his left hip attached to his belt. Frank is probably unaware it's peeking out.

Frank studies the traffic on West End Avenue.

The guy purposely walks to a part of the school wall directly across the sidewalk (six feet away) from Frank. He's glaring at Frank now.

Frank tries not to notice, but WE SEE Frank is starting to freak.

He gets up, moves down two car hoods away.

The guy moves down the same distance on the school wall.

Frank's breathing gets rapid.

The guy looks like he might have a heart attack.

Frank and the guy stare at each other without pretense now, both of them adrenalized and scared.

After a long, passionate beat they suddenly simultaneously draw their weapons on each other and start screaming.

FRANK
(screeching)
Don't fuckin' move, motherfucker!

GUY

You drop it! You drop it! You drop it!

Suddenly three squad cars come flying in on them, cops leap out, guns drawn, join in on the screaming.

Frank raises his badge to the cops so he won't get shot.

There's eight drawn guns on the Arabic guy. Everybody yelling with adrenaline.

CONTINUED
Suddenly there's the shriek of a teacher's whistle and under this canopy of death charges an army of elementary school kids spilling out on the sidewalk. They're out for an outside gym class -- all dressed in blue T-shirts and shorts. Seeing the kids, the guy quickly, suddenly puts his gun on the sidewalk, raises his arms. Frank charges him, ramming him up against the wall as the kids freeze in awe. Frank has his gun to the guy's head. The guy starts shouting.

GUY
I am buddy-God! Buddy-God. I am not know who you are! I am doing job here!

FRANK
(still trembling)
Your ass, you friggin' geek!
(still trembling, adrenalized)
Shut up, motherfucker! Just shut up!

CLOSE ON AN IRANIAN KID

Eight years old. Comes up to the spread-eagled guy.

KID
(in Iranian, a.k.a.
Farsi, casual)
What happened?

GUARD
(in Farsi)
Explain to them who I am.

KID
(calmly, he's used to
crisis, has been well-drilled)
He is Iman Aziz. He is my bodyguard against bad people. Please call my father at the United Nations.

(He hands Frank a business card from his junior-sized wallet)
He is with the Iranian Delegation.

FRANK
(angry)
Oh yeah?
Frank whips through the gunman's wallet. WE SEE documentation to back up the kid's claim. The cops and kids stare at Frank expectantly. Frank walks away.

EXT. PARK BENCH - TEN MINUTES LATER - DAY.

Frank sitting alone, totally freaked out from his near shootout. He touches his temples delicately with his fingertips. His kneecaps fan wildly.

INT. DEAD, BALD GUY'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME - DAY.

CLOSE ON A FAT DETECTIVE.

Sherman Touhey, hands covering his eyes. He's surrounded by uniformed police.

SHERMAN
(jokingly)
I don't wanna look! I don't wanna look! Is it messy?

He peeks between his fingers as the cops laugh.

SHERMAN'S POV.

WE SEE the bald man who was shot through the head. He lies in his bed, profiled on his bloody pillow.

SHERMAN (OS)
Ah Christ. This guy looks healthier than me.

Sherman laughs at his own joke.

INT. CANTEEN OF THE CABLE TIME REPAIRMAN'S STATION - 3:00 P.M. - DAY.

A four-star shit hole -- looks like the locker area of a detectives' squad. A coffee machine, a dented table, littered with candy wrappers, sputtering fluorescent overheads.

Three installer/repairmen sit around the table, bull-shitting and drinking coffee as Frank and the supervisor enter.

CONTINUED
TERRY
(repairman -- mid-thirties, streetly big guy, good-looking, funny)
So the emcee says to the first husband, "OK, Gene? Where did your wife say was the most exotic place you ever made love to her. And this guy Gene, he's thinking, right? He got a brain like a friggin' pca... he's thin'ing, thinking... finally he says... "In the butt"?

The two repairmen crack up as does the supervisor. Frank smiles.

SUPERVISOR
Hey... anybody do any work over 365 West End Avenue Monday?

The three of them shrug, suddenly Terry brightens.

TERRY
Yeah... I was over there.

FRANK
(showing his badge)
You see anybody down there looking not right? Anybody kind of freaked out... anybody running? Looking lost?

TERRY
Hey... I'm down in the basement with a chewed cable and a fried rat... nah... I seen a few ladies going to the laundry room, I guess? Who the hell can remember... nah... what happened?

FRANK
(giving him his card)
There was a shooting... give me a call if you remember anything, OK?

TERRY
(shrugging)
You got it.

INT. DETECTIVES PROMOTION RACKET - VAST CHURCH BASEMENT - 6:00 P.M. THAT EVENING - NIGHT.

It's a party put on by ten detectives who just received grade promotions, for all detectives in the city (traditional).
CLOSE ON FRANK

Sweaty, flushed with booze, having an impromptu half-assed Karate match with a young Chinese undercover cop in a corner of the party room. It's more horseplay than expertise. Frank really doesn't know what he's doing.

They're surrounded by a dozen detectives, drinks and sandwiches in hand.

PAN of two hundred detectives in boozy clusters throughout the huge room. They come in all sizes and ages, all styles of dress, from hippy to shoe salesman to chairman of the board natty.

CLOSE ON THE TEN DETECTIVES

Who got promoted. They're lined up each with a white carnation in their lapel. Another detective is whistling for quiet.

TOASTMASTER
A toast for our hosts, ten promotions overdue, underpaid...

The noise from Frank's Karate match is disruptive.

TOASTMASTER'S POV

Across the large room WE SEE Frank and Co. still at it.

TOASTMASTER
(annoyed at the Karate ruckus)
Hey fellas!

ANGLE - TWO MINUTES LATER.

Frank and the Chinese kid taking back their sport jackets and guns from their seconds. Shaking hands. A detective from the ring of Karate fans approaches Frank. It's Sherman Touhey, the detective who caught the bald man's murder. Touhey is forty-five, fat, beaming, mischievous-faced, easy laughter -- a warm, good-time Charley in a three-piece suit.

SHERMAN
Where the hell did you learn that?
It's like a freakin' movie.

FRANK
(slightly drunk brag)
Hey... You gotta keep fit. I get in a beef, I hit the guy fast and a lot... I don't like getting hurt... know what I mean?
CONTINUED

SHERMAN
God gave fat guys guns so we wouldn't have to do that stuff. You Frank Keller? I'm Sherman Touhey from the one-twelve.

FRANK
Forest Hills?

They turn to the front to hoist a toast with the rest of the room.

SHERMAN
I heard from one of your guys you caught a good one. Face down taxpayer back of the head in his own bed?

(imitates and pantomimes a gun being fired)

Me too, out on Yellowstone Boulevard...

FRANK
(interested)

No shit...

SHERMAN
The bullet we can't do nothing with. It got pancaked on the bed frame.

FRANK
We got a great bullet. We got cigarette butts with lipstick too.

SHERMAN
Yeah? We didn't get any butts.

FRANK
Get any prints?

SHERMAN
(shrugs)
Yeah... nothing showed up on the files though.

FRANK
Let's compare tomorrow.

SHERMAN
You know something?... you talk lipstick I think my guy got done by a broad.

FRANK
Oh yeah?

SHERMAN
We're talking a four star ladies' man here, OK? Hey... you play, you pay, right? My wedding night? I wake up, my wife's got the tattoo needle, the eyeshades. I look down...

(MORE)
SHERMAN (cont'd)
She's got "property of..." on my balls.
(laughing)
I'm only kidding, but you catch my drift?
This guy, I found something like thirty
letters from this singles magazine he
placed an ad in? He didn't even get around
to opening the envelopes yet.

FRANK
You find any records there?

SHERMAN
What do you mean, files?

FRANK
Records... My guy had all these 45's... old
records... there was even one playing on the
turntable when they found him.... "Sea of
Love"... remember that one?

SHERMAN
"Sea of Love"... yeah, how's it go?

FRANK
(singing in a self-
conscious low murmur)
Come with me-e, my-hy love
Come with me to the Sea-e-e of Love.

Suddenly Sherman joins in, in a beautiful choir-like tenor.

SHERMAN
(moving, snapping like a pro)
Ah wanna tell ya how-ow much ah love you.
Do you remember when we met...

He gestures for Frank to keep singing. Sherman's voice is so
powerful and beautiful that conversation stops in the area around
them and a half dozen of the 35 to 45-year-old detectives
haltingly join in.

SHERMAN (MAINLY,
FRANK & A FEW OTHERS)
That's the day I knew you were my pet.

SHERMAN (cont'd.)
(solo, overpowering, beautific)
Ah wanna tell you how-ow much, ah love you...

Sherman laughs uproariously.
INT. CHURCH BASEMENT STAIRWAY - 7:00 P.M. - NIGHT.

Narrow, claustrophobic, jammed with cops trudging up to the street, as the party ends below. Frank, fairly drunk, talks to Sherman as they inch upwards. Gruber is standing behind him, and Frank talks to be overheard.

FRANK
Actually, one thing about this lady, whoever she is, I admire her directness, you know? The guy fucks around? Falls asleep on her, whatever... bingo.
(sheots his finger)
Pop' him in the head, it's all over. Other women, like my ex-wife, Denice? You step out a line a little she liked to stick it here,
(points to his side)
or here,
(points to his belly)
let you walk around and bleed, you know? This one, bingo... no muss, no fuss, no walking wounded.
(he turns, maliciously)
Fucking women, right, Gruber?

Gruber, a little bombed himself, tries to ignore the baiting.

FRANK (cont'd.)
Right, Gruber?

Gruber still ignores him.

FRANK (cont'd.)
Gruber, let me ask you something. Your wife she ever stick it to you? You know, like here?

Frank lightly pokes Gruber's gut. Gruber flicks his hand away.

FRANK (cont'd.)
Or here?

A finger in Gruber's ribs.

GRUBER
(sodden, but getting steamed)
Cut it out.

CONTINUED
FRANK
(incredulous)
Gruber, what are you trying to say, you're a happily married man?
(to Sherman)
Maybe Gruber's too busy stickin' it to her to notice where she's stickin' it to him.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF CHURCH ENTRANCE - NIGHT - SMOTHERED WITH CHATTING DETECTIVES.

Suddenly Frank explodes from the stairway door propelled by an enraged Gruber who pulls him across the sidewalk, through the startled detectives, and into the side of a parked car. Before anyone can break it up, Frank has turned the balance and is beating the shit out of the larger man. Fat Sherman of all people pulls Frank off -- he takes him down with a debilitating judo hold. The fat man has reacted faster than anybody. He knows his shit too. Swift and graceful. Gruber rises from the sidewalk, bloody, dignified, and walks head high through the crowd. Sherman lets Frank go, smooths his jacket.

CLOSE ON FRANK.
He looks ashamed.

INT. LOBBY OF 365 WEST END AVENUE - THE CRIME SCENE BUILDING - 8:00 P.M. - NIGHT.

WE SEE Frank enter, talk to the night doorman, show his badge and a key.

INT. HALLWAY LEADING TO CRIME SCENE APARTMENT - NIGHT.

There's yellow crime scene tape across the door to 3K. Frank removes it, unlocks the door, enters.

INT. CRIME SCENE APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Frank turns on the lights. The place looks like a bomb hit it. Typical post-crime scene circus mess. Frank moves into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT.

The sheets have been stripped.

CONTINUED
CONTINUED

Frank makes a half-hearted search through some drawers, a closet, then sits down on the bed.

He puts a hand on the phone receiver but doesn’t pick it up.

FRANK
(out loud to the room)
Gruber... look, this is getting out of hand. Gruber... Frank... hey, I’m sorry, man. Hey, Gruber... Shit...

Frank lays back on the dead man’s bed and closes his eyes.

ANGLE - SAME SCENE - 9:00 P.M. - NIGHT.

Frank dead asleep, sprawled out making an X with the marked body outline. Suddenly the doorbell rings. Frank shoots straight up, dazed, disoriented, frantically trying to figure out where the hell he is.

INT. APARTMENT DOOR - NIGHT.

Frank, disheveled, dopey with sleep, opens the door on an attractive, slightly chubby woman dressed sportily as for a happy hour party at a singles bar. She’s got half a dozen silver mylar balloons tied to her arms bobbing over her head.

WOMAN
(giggling)
Silver moons. A lifetime of Junes.
Old rock tunes.

The woman stops reciting, waiting expectantly for Frank’s reaction.

FRANK
(after a long beat)
Who the hell are you?

The girl is speechless, stung by his brusqueness. Frank stares at her, blinking, suddenly comes alert.

FRANK (cont’d.)
Wait a minute... Who am I? What’s my name?

WOMAN
(angry)
Hey... I don’t like being treated...

CONTINUED
CONTINUED

FRANK
(sharply)
I said what's my name!

WOMAN
(scared)
Jim Mackey?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Frank and the balloon lady, Gina Gallagher, sit on opposite sides of the room. She's softly weeping as Frank reviews his notes.

FRANK
 stil disheveled
So you read his ad in New York Weekly.

GINA
(still wearing her balloons tied on her arms)
I don't know why I'm crying, I never even got to meet him... it's just so sad somebody dying.

FRANK
You wrote him a letter or you called him...

GINA
I wrote him; then he called me. Fate sucks, I swear.

FRANK
(kindly)
Gina... maybe you'd feel better if you took those balloons off?

GINA
(morosely)
They're the only things keeping me up.

Frank poorly controls an explosion of sniggers. People are just too much sometimes.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - 4:00 P.M. - NEXT DAY.

Frank walks in, sees Sherman Touhey, the fat, singing detective, sitting at Frank's desk going over some files. Sherman looks up, grins.

SHERMAN
Hey! Guess what! The prints match! Same doer... ain't that grand?
FRANK
(excited)
Yeah, well I got one for you, my man.
Your guy put an ad in a singles magazine,
right? You told me that, right?

SHERMAN
New York Weekly.

FRANK
Well bingo to that... my man's in there too.
(reciting)
Silver balloons endless Junes old rock tunes
I'll put it in your moon wire Palladin...
something like that?

SHERMAN
You want to hear my guy?
City street beneath my feet/ 4am the
longest hour/ the hunt goes on till the
break of dawn/ For love, the rarest
flower.

FRANK
This lady, man,
(winks)
she's in the crosshairs.

SHERMAN
The poetry lover.

FRANK
More like she hates it, you know what I
mean?

Frank mimes a gun with his fingers.

SHERMAN
Hey, I had my Loo talk to your Loo. Me
and you a two-man task force on this,
what do you think?

FRANK
(wary)
Queens or here?

SHERMAN
Ah... you got the better murder. Besides,
are you kidding me? I'd fucking kill to
work Manhattan. You want to work Queens?
CONTINUED

FRANK
(relieved)
Let me introduce you around.

SHERMAN
(exciting, demurring)
Hey... I'll catch 'em tomorrow. I got a tuxedo fitting in like an hour.

FRANK
Tuxedo... what you have a lounge act?

SHERMAN
I wish... my daughter's getting married Sunday out on the Island...
(beat)
Hey... you like weddings?

INT. LOCKER ROOM - TEN MINUTES LATER - DAY.

Frank over the coffee pot. Serafino enters, grabs his cup "Serafino" on the side.

SERAFINO
(pouring himself a cup)
What's up?

FRANK
I almost got shot yesterday, you hear that?

SERAFINO
(opens his shirt to reveal an old bullet scar)
Almost?

FRANK
Fuck you... this was yesterday, OK?

SERAFINO
You OK?

FRANK'S POV
through the doorway. He sees a woman, attractive, thirty-five, standing over his desk. This is Denice.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - FRANK - DAY.
strolling over to his desk.
FRANK (slightly wired)
You looking for Gruber?

DENICE
For you.

FRANK
For me?

EXT. POLICE PARKING LOT BEHIND THE POLICE STATION -
TEN MINUTES LATER - D

Frank handing Denice a Coke.

DENICE
(wearily)
Frank, why are you tormenting my husband?
You don't want to be married to me again...
What's your problem?

FRANK
Tormenting? Is that what Gruber told you?
The guy can't take a little ribbing? I say
one thing next thing I know he's trying to
kill me. What am I supposed to do, let him?

Denice stares at him with a don't bullshit me look.

DENICE (waving)
Hey, yoo hoo. Frank? It's me,
Denice. Cut the shit (beat)
Talk to me. What's the matter?

FRANK
(shrugging, coming off the defensive)
I'm staring into a gun barrel yesterday...
you know what I'm thinking? Other than how
do I get this asshole to drop it? I'm thinking
I don't love nobody and nobody loves me. I
got no wife, no kids, no nothing.
Those were my exact thoughts.

DENICE
Well a wife you had, kids you coulda had,
(beat) besides, ah, about three years ago?
I seem to remember you saying to me something
about not being able to breathe, about feeling
like you're on a leash, about....

FRANK (cutting her off)
Hey! people change.
DENICE
Oh yeah? I don't. A good job and a good man. That's all I ever wanted.

FRANK
A good job and a good man, huh?
Which one is Gruber?

DENICE (straight on)
A good man.

They give each other an old, knowing look, then smile. Frank feels OK about Gruber.

FRANK
Look this 20-year thing is kicking my ass. I'm not a kid any more you know?
The job'll never change, I'll never quit, so
(beat)
I want to be in love or something.
(beat)
I think I want to be in love 'cause otherwise...
(beat)
it's too straight a drive to the toll booth....
you know what I mean?

Denise looks at Frank with sympathy.

FRANK
I look at you, you know what I think of?
Going up to that cabin upstate. Right in the middle of Fall you remember? It was so beautiful. So Goddam spectacular.

DENICE (laughing)
What are you talking about. We didn’t get out of bed for three days.

A fond memory. Another long smile between them.

FRANK (contd.)
(whispering, confidential)
Straight up...how's making love with him compared to making love with us. You tell me it's as good, I'll call you a liar to your face.
CONTINUED

Denice stars at him deadpan for a long beat, then breaks out in a radiant grin. Frank beams in triumph.

DENICE (leaning forward)

I'm pregnant.

FRANK
(stunned, whipped, trying to be gracious)

Good...good for you, Denice...you deserve to be pregnant.

INT. CATERING HALL - LONG ISLAND - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A BAGPIPER

playing a dignified tune. The bagpiper is wearing his kilt and tam over a police uniform -- an Emerald Society marching band musician. WE SEE he's playing at the entrance to the catering hall chapel as cops and their wives file in, ditching butts.

CONTINUED
CONTINUED

INT. THE PARTY ROOM - NIGHT.
CLOSE ON A ROCK BAND

with a young female lead singer. She's doing a dorky, unfunky
cover of Queen's white soul hit, "Another One Bites The Dust", as
dozens of cops in suits dance with their wives -- a middle-aged
armed American Bandstand.

Frank sits at his assigned place-carded seated at the edge of the
dance floor watching these Queens cops kick up. Frank wears the
embarrassed smile of someone who is the only stranger in a sea of
intimate celebrants. He's drinking, slightly drunk.

Three couples of Frank's table are yakking it up as Sherman,
making the glad hand rounds, comes by.

SHERMAN
Hey! Hey! Hey!

WOMAN
(breathy, dramatically
earnest)
She looks gorgeous, Sherm...

SHERMAN
You'd never know she's knocked up
three months, would you?

Everybody laughs and waves him off. Sherman turns to Frank,
leans down.

SHERMAN (cont'd.)
(grinning, under his breath)
It's fucking true.
(fleeting sadness)
Eighteen years old.

Frank doesn't know what to say, so keeps smiling.

SHERMAN (cont'd.)
What the hell, so was her mother. You
don't love 'em less, I tell you that.

ANGLE - FRANK - NIGHT.

watches as Sherman, on the bandstand, mike in hand, tears
streaming down his cheeks, sings "Sunrise, Sunset" (Fiddler on
the Roof) to his daughter and his guests. Not a dry eye in the
room except Frank, a little more bombed, withdrawn, smiling to
himself about something, melancholy.

CONTINUED
drinking in his seat, he's ripped now, shiny-eyed. Watching
couples dance slow as the band plays "Three Times A Lady". Frank
intensely watches each couple, looks down as if deep in thought,
then studies them again. Something's cooking with him. Sherman
slides into the seat next to him, his bow tie hanging and his
collar unbuttoned.

SHERMAN
You want to dance with my twin sister?

FRANK
(stoned, abruptly)
OK... You want to know how we catch her?
We put our own ad in.

SHERMAN
Say what?

FRANK
New York Weekly magazine. We put our own
ad in. A hundred guys place ads in there
a month. They get thirty to fifty responses
each. That's five thousand women minus
multiple responses, say four thousand women.
What are we gonna do, track down four thousand
women? Hell no... we know the broad is into
the rhyming ads, right? So we put in a rhyming
ad moon June spoon sand dune. Set up dates
with the thirty-forty, fifty ladies who write
us, take 'em out, get their prints on some wine
glasses at some restaurant. Bingo, she's dropped.

SHERMAN
(laughing)
I love it... it's horseshit but I love it.

FRANK
There were only three ads from men that
rhymed in the magazine last month. We
know she went out with two of them --
(momentarily startled sober)
Shit... I can't believe we haven't chased
down that third guy; we gotta do that.

SHERMAN
Raymond Brown, 3300 Johnson Avenue, Riverdale...
I tracked him through his post box... we'll
go see him tomorrow.

FRANK (taken aback)
What are you, a fucking detective?

SHERMAN (winking)
Sometimes.
FRANK
You know something? It's a good thing that it's guys getting popped. A hundred women put ads in that rag a month. You know how many guys answer a hundred women? I checked with the editor.

(beat)
Twenty thousand...

INT. SQUAD ROOM - NEXT DAY.

Sherman and Frank are getting ready to leave, grabbing a car key off the keyboard.

FRANK'S POV

of Gruber, making tea at the coffee station.

FRANK
(to Sherman)
Hang on.

(awkwardly)
Hey, Gruber.

Gruber slowly turns so as not to spill the tea.

FRANK (cont'd.)
Congratulations... I heard, uh...

Frank can't find the words -- he extends his hand to Gruber.

FRANK (cont'd.)
Congratulations.

Gruber takes his hand - bygones are bygones.

GRUBER
You know at first I thought I'm too old but then I remembered -- my father was fifty when I was born, so what the hell...

For some reason this personal piece of history makes Frank want to cry.

FRANK
(warmly)
You'll be great...
GRUBER
(beaming)
I hope it's a girl.

INT. CAR - THIRTY MINUTES LATER - DAY.

Frank and Sherman are driving to the home of Raymond Brown, the third "poet" in that issue of New York Weekly.

SHERMAN
Raymond Brown...Downtown Brown

FRANK
(reciting from the magazine)
Loneliness and silence envelop a heart
that pounds like thunder.
All the love I have inside,
is ripping me asunder.
This city is a jungle of pain
But my love is from the soul...

SHERMAN
(giggling)
So be so kind as to answer this ad,
and you can ride my pole.

FRANK
Hey, c'mon... give the guy a break...
he sounds like a major lonelyhearts.

Silence for a beat, then they both break into uncontrollable sniggers.

EXT. FRONT DOOR OF A COMFORTABLE PRIVATE HOUSE - BRONX - DAY.

Frank knocks, idly plays with his shield in its leather case. A woman answers the door, fortyish, housedress.

FRANK
Good afternoon. I'm Detective Frank Keller,
this is Detective Sherman Touhey. Does ah,
Raymond Brown live here.

WOMAN
What's the matter?

The woman is suddenly joined by three little kids. The biggest (eight) bellows back into the house.

KID
Daa-Deee!
CONTINUED

The woman stares at the detectives.

ALL THE KIDS
(in chorus)
Daa-Deee!

A big good-looking 40 year old managerial type comes to the door. Raymond Brown.

OLDEST KID
Dad! They're cops!

RAYMOND BROWN
What's up, gents...

WIFE
(finally speaking; taut)
What's the matter?

RAYMOND
Honey relax...relax.

WIFE
(ignoring him)
What's the matter?

OLDEST KID
(to Sherman)
Dad's got a gun but we can't play with it.

WIFE
What's the matter?

RAYMOND
(calling for order)
Hey! Hey! Hey!

Raymond, in the midst of this irritating cacophony, spies the copy of NEW YORK WEEKLY in Sherman's hand and his face goes white.

EXT. RAYMOND BROWN'S BACKYARD - DAY.

The three men sit on redwood wood chairs by an expensive barbeque grill.

RAYMOND
(whispering)
I want to tell you something
... I love my family.

CONTINUED
SHERMAN
Hey Raymond ... no kidding ... we
don't give a shit ... all's we want
is the names of the women you went
out with ... and all the letters
you got back from the ladies.

RAYMOND
(whispers)
Guys ... I swear ... I didn't
go out with any of them ... I threw
the letters away ... I didn't have
the heart.

Raymond winces and tilts his head for them to look up
and behind them.

FRANK'S POV

WE SEE Raymond's wife hovering behind a curtained window.

FRANK
(whispering)
Raymond ... you go to the trouble
to make up that beautiful poem
about loneliness and silence ...
you spring three hundred dollars
to put an ad in the paper, you
spring another five yards a month
for some love nest in the Village,
fifty bucks for a post office box
and you didn't even go out with
any of them? Please, please ...

SHERMAN
(whispering)
You know what's the worst part of
being a cop? Eight hours a day
all you hear from people is lies
... I didn't do it ... I wasn't
there, it was the other guy ...
blah this, blah that.

RAYMOND
(almost in tears)
I swear on my child's eyes.
EXT. THE PATH FROM RAYMOND BROWN'S HOUSE BACK TO THE UNMARKED CAR

SHERMAN
I feel for the guy ... fidelity is an art, marriage is an art form. You cultivate a happy home like you cultivate an oyster.

FRANK
You sound like a fortune cookie.

SHERMAN
Hey I been married nineteen years ... I fucked around once, well twice ... what I'm saying is ... there's a reason why you should be faithful, it doesn't work if you're not ... I know.

FRANK
When I was married? I laid other broads but I never made love to them.

   (beat)
Blah blah blah.

SHERMAN
   (shrugging)
So what do we do?

FRANK
I told you what we do.
CONTINUED

RAYMOND
(cold fury)
You got the wrong Raymond Fucking Brown.

INT. LIEUTENANT'S OFFICE - NIGHT.

Frank and Sherman are pitching the plan to the Loo.

FRANK
...thirty sit-downs, thirty sets of prints.
Miss Wrong... We got her... upstairs gives
us three hundred to put the ad in the
magazine, we spring for a few vinos, a chef
salad or two... we bag the wine glasses...
it's all over.

The Loo stares at Frank with amused incredulousness.

FRANK (cont'd.)
What?
(fighting down a smile)
C'mon...

LIEUTENANT
(doing Frank)
What... c'mon...

FRANK
How's about I go to my cash machine, pull
out three hundred. Buy my own ad, we drop
her, you pay me back, you know, like a
personal bet that this is gonna work.

LIEUTENANT
Frank, you want me to I'll set you up with
my sister-in-law, how's that? She got great
tits, divorced, no kids, no cats...

ANGLE - SHERMAN AND FRANK.

exiting the office.

SHERMAN
The Loo's sister-in-law. She sounds
great, Frank.
CONTINUED

INT. STUDIO - GREENWICH VILLAGE - NIGHT
CLOSE ON RAYMOND BROWN'S FACE.

He's lying on his cheek in bed, staring calmly at nothing. Dried blood streaks the side of his head. Frank and Sherman stare down at him, hands in pockets. They look like they're pissed at the corpse.

FRANK
(to Raymond's body,
imitating his riff)
...The wrong Raymond Fucking Brown...

SHERMAN
...Hey, I been married twenty-four years, that's more than half my life... I fucked around once... thirteen years ago and I only did it one night... well, two nights, but... what I'm saying is... there's a reason why you should be faithful, it doesn't work if you're not... I know...

FRANK
We fucked up. We should have tailed him.

SHERMAN
(shrugging)
He fucked up.

INT. THE LIEUTENANT'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY.

Frank and Sherman stare at the Lieutenant. He stares back at them, one hand reflectively covering his mouth.

LIEUTENANT
You are not to take them out of the restaurant. You are not to lay a hand on them. You are not to have intercourse with them. You converse, get prints and split. You wear a wire. We're gonna have a sound van outside and a two-man back-up at another table. Keep the restaurant receipts. And fellas, I don't want to read about this in The Village Voice.

FRANK
What's with the back-up... What do I need a wire for, what do you think she's gonna do, confess? Shoot me? We're in a restaurant.

CONTINUED
LIEUTENANT

Make me happy, OK? Who's writing the ad... who's the poet?

Frank and Sherman look at each other.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - 11:00 P.M.

Frank comes exploding through the front door, his arms full with shopping bags which he flings on the dining table. He vanishes into the kitchen, re-emerges in a full-length apron with a vacuum, some cleaning rags, a few big bowls, dumps them all on the rug (the room is a joint dining/living room), races back into the kitchen, comes back in with an armload of liquor bottles. At breakneck speed, he dusts and vacuums, fluffs couches, then furiously tears open the grocery bags, filling the bowls with bridge mix, Triscuits, Fritos, lining up the liquor bottles, stacking plastic cups, etc.

Suddenly his father, Frank Sr., seventy-one, ex-cop, drink in hand, staggers from the bedroom.

FRANK'S DAD

What are you having, a mah jongg party?

Startled, still in his full-length apron, Frank yells, pretzels go flying and he has his gun halfway out of his rear holster before he realizes who the interloper is.

FRANK'S DAD (cont'd.)

(unmoved)
You shoot me, Frankie, I'll spill my drink.

FRANK

(hand on heart)
Jesus! What are you doing here, Pop?

FRANK'S DAD

(sarcastic)
I came over to see if your telephone was broke.

FRANK

I called you two days ago.

(beat)
Is everything OK?

FRANK'S DAD

Remember Jack Grogan? My partner from the two-eight? He died last night. His wife called me in Florida... He was a good cop, old Jackie.

CONTINUED
Frank's Dad drains his drink, looks helplessly at his son.

FRANK'S DAD (cont'd.)
Can you freshen up my drink there, Frankie?

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - 1:00 A.M.

The room is filled with cigarette and cigar smoke. Frank, Sherman, Struk, Dargan and Serafino are fairly ripped as they sit around Frank's dining table shouting out possible poems to each other. There's pretzels on the floor. Frank's Dad sits alone, calmly drinking in the shadows.

STRUK
OK, OK, here we go.
Roses are red
Violets are blue
I got a thing yea long
And it's all for you.

They shout him down, laughing and coughing.

SERAFINO
Hey! Hey! Check it out. Windswept hallways in my heart Echo the blackness of eternity...

He gets shouted down.

FRANK
C'mon, c'mon, get happy, happy. You guys sound like jumpers and flashers. I'm gonna be sitting across from Morticia Adams with that stuff.

DARGAN
Hey, she's a shooter, right?
(pausing to recite)
Many a girl has shot me down...

STRUK
(reciting)
Hot to trot? Give Frank a shot.

FRANK
C'mon, we're lookin' for romance here... a little hopefulness... How about we just throw her "Sea of Love"?

The phone rings. Dargan picks up.
Serafino!

Serafino (groans to his feet; on the phone)
Yeah... hey... I'm workin'... when I'm done workin'... whenever that is... hey, read my lips...

They crack up and repeat "read my lips".

Serafino (cont'd)
(one word at a time)
I am on official police business... I will see you when I get home... goodbye.

Sherman (mocking a rolling pin housewife)
C'mere, you worm!

Suddenly we hear Frank's Dad in the shadows start to recite as they shoosh each other.

Frank's Dad
I live alone within myself
like a hut within the woods
I keep my heart high upon a shelf
barren of other goods
I need another's arms to reach for it
and place it where it belongs
I need another's touch and smile
to fill my hut with songs.

There's a respectful silence, half amused, half touched, all bombed.

Frank (gently)
That's pretty corny, Dad.

Sherman
I think it's beautiful.

Serafino
You just make that up, Mister K?
CONTINUED

FRANK'S DAD
Frank's mother wrote that in high school... 1934... she was a goddamn beautiful person.  
(beat)
G'head, use it... she would have liked that...

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - 4:00 A.M.
Guys staggering to the door in a drunken shuffle. DARGAN dead asleep in an easy chair, Frank's father asleep on the couch.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER.
Frank carrying his father in his arms into the bedroom.

FRANK'S DAD
(half-asleep - bombed)
...where you takin' me... am I walking?  
I'm walking, right?

They disappear into the black mouth of the bedroom.

INT. FRANK'S LIVING ROOM - MID-MORNING.
The smokey living room is blasted with light and party debris. Frank is sprawled belly down on his own sofa. The guy in the easy chair is still dead asleep from 4:00 a.m.

INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM.
Frank's father is on his back, mouth agape, eyes shut, like a corpse on Frank's bed. Frank saunters in the room wearing a towel, regards his father, does a mild double take, gently feels for a pulse in his neck.

Frank's father, eyes still closed, gently pats the hand that is feeling to see if he's still alive.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - A FEW DAYS LATER
CLOSE OF THE BULLETIN BOARD - DAY.
a page of N.Y. Weekly magazine -- forty boxed pleas for companionship, is pinned to the bulletin board. Frank's mother's poem is outlined in red magic marker for the perusal of all. It's dead center on the page. Frank, coffee cup in hand, stares at his poem like a proud parent. Two detectives hustle a kicking, screaming bad guy who bumps Frank into the wall, but he's too enraptured to react.

CONTINUED
CONTINUED

EXT. STREET ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE - DAY.

An unmarked car, Sherman at the wheel.

Frank emerges from a post box rental center. He holds up fistfuls of envelopes for Sherman to see. Many of these are in a variety of pastel shades, purples, pinks, greens, etc.

EXT./INT. THE CAR - DAY.

Frank slides in and passes the envelopes under Sherman's nose.

FRANK
You smell a shooter in there?

INT. STATION HOUSE SQUAD ROOM - EARLY EVENING.

Sherman and Frank sit at desks working off stacks of letters, calling the women, setting up dates.

CLOSE ON FRANK

FRANK
(on the phone)
I dunno, Gloria, I just got this...
hopeful feeling when I read your letter...
I can't explain it.

Frank's gaze wanders, he pinches the exhaustion in his eyes.

FRANK (cont'd.)
I'm a printer... yeah. My own business.

CLOSE ON SHERMAN.

SHERMAN
(on the phone)
My mother's name was Amanda.

(beat)
Miranda?

(shrugs)
Well, my aunt's name is Carmen, how's that?

CLOSE ON FRANK

FRANK
You're a what? That's what... you like guys and girls... or girls.

(MORE)

CONTINUED
FRANK (cont'd)
(beat)
That's cool, that's cool... me? Yeah...
well, sometimes, but, ah, mainly girls...
women, you know.
(he's blushing; beat)
How's eight sound?

CLOSE ON A HUGE CROSS GRID CHART

of days, broken into hours on Frank's desk. There are twenty
women's names inked into the boxes. WE SEE Frank's pen resting
on an open eight o'clock box. WE SEE the pen slide down past
three booked boxes to rest at the open midnight slot.

FRANK (VO)
Well, that's cool, let's get crazy then...
you a night owl?

Frank writes in her name in the midnight box.

FRANK (VO cont'd)
Solid.

INT. REAR OF A SURVEILLANCE VAN - 5:30 P.M. DAY.

Seated, patient, stripped to the waist, Frank is being wired by
the surveillance team -- there's something both medical and
religious about the tableau. Sherman calmly watches the
preparation -- he's dressed as a waiter.

EXT. STREET - THIRTY MINUTES LATER.

Frank, leaves the van and blends into the sidewalk stream.

INT. STANLEY AND LIVINGSTON'S - 6:00 P.M.

Frank sipping a white wine at a table for two. He's alone.

FRANK
(speaking into his own wire
-- low, as if to himself)
Can I get a hi de hi?

FRANK'S POV

WE SEE two detectives, male and female yuppie types, at their
table by the door. They both raise their hands, elbows on the
table and casually wiggle their fingers. They both seem to be
wearing hearing aids.

CONTINUED
CONTINUED

INT. THE SURVEILLANCE VAN.

We hear Frank's voice coming through a P.A. speaker. He's tunelessly humming "Sea of Love" via his wire.

INT. STANLEY AND LIVINGSTON'S - THIRTY MINUTES LATER.
CLOSE ON A BEAUTIFUL SIXTY YEAR OLD WOMAN.
grey-haired, fine-boned, classy but tense, embarrassed. We hear Frank as WE HOLD on her.

FRANK (OS)
Look, I think you're being very foolish... do you hear me complaining or anything?... I should look half as good as you when I'm that age... your age... you're great... you're great.

WOMAN
You're very sweet... it's just... I should have said on the phone I'm... the age I am.

CLOSE ON FRANK

FRANK
Hey, hey, I wanna tell you... you look better now than three-quarters of the women I know that are half your age.

(beat)
Did that come out right?

They both laugh. Frank flags down Sherman, dressed as a waiter.

FRANK (cont'd.)
Bourbon and water, right? And another beer.

Sherman removes her glass, holding it from underneath like a brandy sniffer.

INT. STANLEY AND LIVINGSTON'S KITCHEN - NIGHT.

WE TRACK Sherman into the kitchen, where a fingerprint expert goes to work labeling it for the lab.

CONTINUED
ANGLE - THE TABLE.

OLDER WOMAN
When Jack died... well, it wasn't a great...
(hesitates)
You know, sometimes, in a marriage, you
confuse loyalty with love.
(awkward beat)
After a certain number of years... it wasn't...
(beat)
...we didn't have passion.

CLOSE ON FRANK.

INT. SURVEILLANCE VAN.

Everyone is going about their business as the older woman's voice
is broadcasted over the P.A.

OLDER WOMAN (OS)
(coming in over Frank's
wire on the P.A., teary)
But we were such good friends.

CLOSE ON THE FACES OF THE PROS AT WORK.
...impassive.

INT. STANLEY AND LIVINGSTON'S KITCHEN.

The labeled glass is slid into a paper bag for safety. The bag
is stenciled "LAB".

INT. STANLEY AND LIVINGSTON'S RESTAURANT.

OLDER WOMAN
(awkward, laughing nervously)
Well... ah... What do we do...

FRANK
Well, I told you. I've got this thing
with my son in half an hour... the
timing is terrible.

OLDER WOMAN
...Should we have dinner sometime?

FRANK
Oh... hey... we'll call you.
OLDER WOMAN
(amused, confused)
We?

FRANK
(blushing)
We... like I'm still on the job... all
day on the phone I say we meaning my
company... I... I will call you.

OLDER WOMAN
(kindly)
No you won't.

She rises, smiles sadly and leaves. Frank sits there exhaling
with unhappiness.

FRANK'S POV - NIGHT.

WE SEE the undercover yuppie couple looking at him and returning
to their salads.

ANGLE - FIVE MINUTES LATER - FRANK - NIGHT.

At bar watching his table being reset.

ANGLE - TWENTY MINUTES LATER - FRANK - NIGHT.

At the table with another date.

TENSE WOMAN
I don't know... I get this very weird
feeling... you're not who you say you are...
there's something... not right about this.

FRANK
Why would I lie to you. You think I'm what...
what are you thinking?

TENSE WOMAN
You got cop's eyes.

ANGLE - RESTAURANT.
The yuppie couple straighten up -- ready for action.

INT. SURVEILLANCE VAN - NIGHT.
The surveillance crew perks up with interest for the first time
all night.
INT. STANLEY AND LIVINGSTON'S - NIGHT.
CLOSE ON FRANK.

FRANK
(awkward)
Cop's eyes.

TENSE WOMAN
You look at me I feel like I did something.

FRANK
(looking away)
What do you mean did something? Like what?

TENSE WOMAN
(staring at him, dead eye)
Yeah... yeah... My ex-husband's a cop. What you say? You're a printer? If you're a printer I got a dick.

She walks out leaving Frank staring at her glass.

CLOSE ON TABLE - FIVE MINUTES LATER - NIGHT.
being cleaned.

ANGLE - TABLE - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER - NIGHT.
CLOSE ON WOMAN.

WOMAN
(softly)
You have a lot of hurt in your eyes.
You know that?

She reaches out to touch his face.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT.
CLOSE ON THREE GLASSES.
in "lab" bags lined up on a shelf.

INT. STANLEY AND LIVINGSTON'S - NIGHT.
CLOSE ON FRANK'S PALM

being held by fourth date as she traces his lifeline. She starts to cry. Frank looks down at his palm, alarmed.
EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT.

Frank in his suit. Sherman in his waiter whites. They both sit on garbage can lids. Sherman smokes a cigarette. Frank takes a swig from a half-pint of rum, then looks at his watch. Sherman drops his butt. They return to work.

INT. STANLEY AND LIVINGSTON'S TEN MINUTES LATER
CLOSE ON HELEN

an attractive woman in her early thirties possessed of an intelligently direct and intense expression that is disorienting and sexy. She stares at Frank like she's taking X-rays of his heart and brain -- conversation seems a distraction for her; she's barely listening, barely answering. A drink remains untouched in front of her crossed forearms.

FRANK
(disoriented by her eyes,
her manner)
So, what... you're divorced?

HELEN
I said that.

FRANK
Right, right, and you have a kid, a boy, right? No, a girl... a girl.

She doesn't answer, just studies him.

FRANK (cont'd.)
It's interesting, you know, you coming from York, Pennsylvania, because in a way you've gone from York to ah, New York.

They stare at each other over this last inanity. They simultaneously smile. He gestures helplessly.

CONTINUED
HELEN
You like the park, I like the beach.
You like movies, I like plays...you're
a printer, I manage a shoe store.
Look...I don't believe in wasting time
on this kind of stuff. You know what
you know and you go with it.

FRANK
Go with what?

HELEN
You're just not my type.

FRANK
(wounded)
You just sat down, how do you know?

HELEN
I believe in animal attraction.
I believe in love at first sight.
I believe in this...
(she snaps her fingers)
I don't feel it with you.

FRANK
(wounded but game)
I happen to be hell on wheels once
you get to know me.

She stares at him. No dice.

SHERMAN
(hovers in his waiter getup)
Anything wrong with the wine, miss?
CONTINUED

FRANK
(sighing)
You haven't even touched your drink.
Could we at least have a happy hunting toast? You know, raise a glass, here?

She smiles, rises, puts a hand over his, kisses him on the cheek and leaves. Frank turns and follows her with his eyes. This one turned him on -- and made him ache a little. Sherman shrugs and returns to the kitchen.

FRANK
(to his wire)
Kiss my tiara. Who the hell she think she is?

(beat)
Shit... I didn't get any prints.

(he sighs)
How many more tonight?

FRANK'S POV.

WE SEE the yuppy detectives not looking at him, raise two fingers for two more dates. Frank, beat, blasted, rubs his eyes absentely, scans the bar and freezes.

FRANK'S POV

WE SEE his first date of the evening, the older woman, sitting at the bar, totally blitzed, staring at him with a mixture of anger, confusion and pride. Her appearance has totally degenerated with her drinking. He has no idea of how long she's been watching him. Frank looks like he wants to die. She rises unsteadily, moves toward his table as he waits, motionless. She keeps moving straight on out the door, head high.

FRANK
(to his wire)
That lady coming out now?
Somebody see she gets home OK...

(beat)
Ah, mercy...

CLOSE ON TABLE - NIGHT.

being cleaned -- restaurant almost deserted. Frank and Sherman are gone, as are the yuppies.

INT. SURVEILLANCE VAN - NIGHT.

Frank, nude to the waist, is being stripped of his wire. He's numb, bushed, fucked up. Sherman is smoking a cigarette. He's still dressed as a waiter.
SHERMAN
(in falsetto)
You have such hurt in your eyes.

He reaches out to touch Frank's face in imitation of the date. Frank swipes Sherman's hand away -- harshly. Frank takes a swig of rum, giving Sherman a thousand yard stare.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - 4:00 P.M. - NEXT DAY.

Frank enters, looking beat. He sees Sherman talking to Terry, the cable TV man interviewed earlier.

FRANK
(to Sherman)
Anything on the prints.

SHERMAN
Not yet ... how's your head?

FRANK
Couldn't be worse.
(to Terry, trying to place him)
How you doin'...

TERRY
(shaking his hand)
Terry from Cable Time?

FRANK
Oh yeah ... what's up?

TERRY
You got to understand, I'm in so many buildings every day, you ask me things, if I saw people, it's easy to mix up memories, you know?

FRANK
Yeah? So?

TERRY
There was a kid that day ... a black kid. I think he was from the supermarket because I saw him come in with groceries earlier? Anyways ... I'm working down in the basement, about twenty minutes later he came tearing through there like a bat outta hell ... no groceries.

(MORE)
TERRY (cont'd)

(beat)
I mean, why's he going back out through the basement, right? There's a lobby, right?

Sherman and Frank exchange glances.

TERRY (cont'd.)
He had those black militant corn holes?
Corn rows?
(miming braids furrowing his scalp)
The kid looked like a real shitbag if you ask me.

INT. SUPERMARKET - THIRTY MINUTES LATER - DAY.

Sherman and Frank stand by the checkout trying to catch the eye of the manager -- an Oriental who's on two phones at once. His office is a ten-foot-high guardhouse overlooking the whole store. The manager ignores them. We see the cashiers, stock help, delivery boys -- all black, Oriental, Hispanic kids in their late teens, early twenties.

Frank climbs the four stairs to be on eye-level with the manager, puts his badge in the guy's face.

FRANK
One of your kids got corn rows ... you know, that Afro hairdo?

The manager looks at him blankly.

FRANK (cont'd.)
Stevie Wonder hair...

MANAGER
Wonder hair?

Frank throws his eyes.

CASHIER
(eavesdropping)
Reggie ... he means Quawi.

FRANK
Quawi ... where's he at ...

MANAGER
You got me. I fired his ass on Monday.
FRANK

How come?

MANAGER

He goes out on a delivery, he don't like the tip, he starts screaming at the customer. You can't do that.

Frank and Sherman exchange quick hopeful glances.

SHERMAN

You got an address for him?

MANAGER

Maybe. What he do, kill somebody?

Frank says nothing. He looks wired like a hunting dog as the manager looks in a file box.

MANAGER

(still looking)

... Quaw Benjamin ... "Spooney" ...

You call him that he goes crazy.

(standing)

I got nothing here. He only worked like a week or so.

CASHIER

Wherever he do live, he ain't there now.

FRANK

What?

CASHIER

He went down south to see some aunt...

(to another cashier)

Yo, where'd Quawi say he's going? Jacksonville?

CASHIER #2

Atlanta.

CASHIER #3

He told me L.A.

CASHIER #1

He don't know nobody in Los Angeles.

CASHIER #3

Lower Alabama.
CONTINUED

All the cashiers crack up as Frank and Sherman look crestfallen. The kid beat it across state lines.

SHERMAN
(handing his card to
the manager; he's crushed)
He comes back here, or you see him somewheres, you call us... thank you.

EXT. STREET - 1:45 A.M. THAT NIGHT.

Frank, defeated, tired, heading into the all-night Korean grocery stand for his usual insomniac shopping.

INT. KOREAN GROCERY STAND - NIGHT.

Frank plastic basket on his arm, picking fruit under the grim fluorescent lighting from multi-colored fruit pyramids.

WOMAN (OS)
"Hell on wheels", huh?

Frank looks up. It's Helen, the woman who wouldn't even stay for a drink with him the night before. Frank stares at her trying to place the face.

HELEN
(noting his confusion)
How quickly we forget.

FRANK
(making the connection)
Oh yeah..."Animal Attraction"... you live around here?

HELEN
88th and Broadway.

FRANK
Oh yeah? I'm on 85th.

HELEN
(friendly, now that the date is over, the pressure's off)
You know that poem you wrote? You didn't write that... I read it in the magazine and figured this is either a very sensitive guy or he ripped off some lady's poem or some girl's poem... you didn't write it, right?

CONTINUED
FRANK  
(apathectic)  

Nope.

HELEN  

Some lady did, right?

FRANK  

My mother ... she wrote it in high school fifty-odd years ago ... that's why my father fell in love with her ... or something like that.

HELEN  

(off-balanced, unexpectedly moved)  

Really.

FRANK  

(shrugs)  

So he says.

HELEN  

(musing, a little internal -- starting to get that "feeling")  

Wow ... that's ... huh ... I like that ... that you did that.

FRANK  

(shrugging it off)  

You know what my idea of poetry is? Precision in life. Knowing how and when to make your move, to say your piece ... I mean yesterday? With me?  

(laughing)  

You were what I'd call poetry in motion. Bam!  

(he laughs)

Helen studies him as he picks fruit, then moves to him until she's a foot away and staring him in the eye. She's making up her mind about something.

HELEN  

Look at me.

Frank looks up, still distracted, then slightly coming to life because of her intense eyes and her proximity. There's a willful, impulsive playfulness in her face which disorients and hooks him. Again.

CONTINUED
FRANK
(suddenly shy,
captured off guard)
What's up.

HELEN
(fighting down a smile)
You still want to have that happy hunting toast?

FRANK
(laughing, flustered)
Hey, what happened to an ... love at first sight...there, y'know...I mean, last night

Helen just stares at him, her intensity, her spontaneous decision an utter turn-on. Frank, still making laugh, nervous half words, suddenly pours his fruit back into the display pyramids--a gesture of surrender.

INT. SHERMAN'S BEDROOM IN QUEENS - 2:15 A.M. - NIGHT.

Sherman lying like a beached whale on his bed, sleep mask pushed up to his forehead, wife dead asleep next to him, is talking to Frank on the phone.

SHERMAN
What are you, fuckin' nuts? What if she's the do-er? We won't get the prints back 'til tomorrow. She clears, go out with her tomorrow night ...

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF KOREAN GROCERY - 2:20 A.M.
INTERCUT WITH SHERMAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Helen is two payphones down from Frank. They're both simultaneously clearing the boards.

FRANK
Hey, c'mon, the do'er's down South somewheres. "Spooney". Quawi, whatever his name is. Besides, this one walked, you remember her?

SHERMAN
Oh Jesus ... you're with that bitch wouldn't even drink with you?

FRANK
Well ... this is good in a way ...
I can get her prints now.
SHERMAN
Yeah, bullshit, what are you gonna do, send your dick to the lab? And that'll be some great testimony if she's the one. "See, your honor, first I whipped it out then she whipped it out." You catch my drift?
(beat)
And how do you know it's that Quawi kid? It's probably a broad, you know that...
(beat)
She's a friggin suspect, Frank ... just walk away ... just walk away...

FRANK
You're right... you're right... I swear...
I'm walkin'... I'm walkin'... no sweat...
nothing' to it chief... see you tomorrow.

Frank steps back from the phone booth, watches Helen who's still talking.

HELEN
If she wakes up, give her one of the little apple juice boxes in the fridge... a friend ma... I met a friend... I'll be home when I get home. Mom? Mom?
(patient, but not taking shit)
I'll be home when I get home... I'm fine.
We'll talk later, OK? Thanks, bye.

Helen hangs up and turns to Frank with a happy, dazzling smile.

FRANK
Ah... listen... something came up.
(laughs)
What's your name again?

HELEN
Helen.

FRANK
(nodding)
Helen...

OMIT

CONTINUED
INT. AMBER LIT BAR - TWENTY MINUTES LATER - NIGHT

Helen and Frank easing into a second drink. They talk rapidly and excitedly about each other to each other. There's a flush of discovery in the atmosphere — it's nerve-wracking even though there's no real romance talk verbatim.

FRANK
You know why I got married? I was thirty-seven and I wasn't married,
(beat)
so I got married. How do you like that...

HELEN
(smoking a cigarette)
I can top that. You know why I got married? Because a guy says to me "I love you". I knew him a week.

FRANK
Playing hard to get, Hah?

HELEN
Yeah, right...We didn't last too long,
I tell you that.

FRANK
Me neither. The wedding took longer than the marriage...we're still friends though...Sort of...How about you?

HELEN
Friends...? About this time last year I took the baby and walked.

FRANK
What do you mean "walked", he don't even see his kid?

CONTINUED
HELEN
(cold)
He's out of the picture
(beat)
Sometimes I look back on some of the choices
I made? ...the people I got involved with?
It's amazing
(beat)
but you know what I found out? There are
very few mistakes in life that can't
be corrected...if you got the guts.

FRANK
(repeating absently)
If you got the guts..

SUDDENLY the bar lights blink on and off - last call- a time
pressure set in that they both feel.

FRANK
(nervous, desirious)
Sometimes when it's late? I feel like a
big cat in a small cage.

HELEN
(also nervous, desirious)
Oh yeah?

FRANK
In my entire life I don't think I
ever got a good night's sleep ...
even when I was a little kid ...
HELEN
(staring at him intensely)
I got that too. I think maybe we're
afraid if we close our eyes we're gonna
miss out on something.

FRANK
(nervous, exhaling)
Man, I have done some desperate and
foolish things come three in the morning.

HELEN
(shy, turned on)
What do you mean, like being here with me?

They stare at each other, hitting on it.
INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.
CLOSE ON FRANK AND HELEN

grinding and kissing against a wall. Helen tearing away, walking in a little circle, then attacking Frank against the wall again.

She pulls away.

HELEN
Frank, where's the bathroom?

Frank tilts his head.

HELEN (cont'd.)
(whirling around, disoriented)
Where's my bag?

FRANK'S POV

Helen's bag wide open on the floor where she dropped it. In plain view among the assorted paraphernalia is a gun butt. Frank freezes as Helen scoops up the bag and disappears behind the bathroom door.

HELEN (OS)
(as the lock clicks on the bathroom door)
Get in bed.

Frank wigs. He grabs his head, hissing.

CONTINUED
FRANK
Jesus!
(paces furiously)
Jesus!
He quickly strips to his shorts, takes his gun and jumps in bed.
FRANK (cont’d.)
Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!
He puts his gun under the blanket, behind the pillows, dangles it down the side of the mattress.
FRANK (cont’d.)
Shit!
He leaps out of bed, hides behind the bedroom door, gun held high.
FRANK (cont’d.)
(hissing)
Fuck!
He changes his mind, flies back to his bed, gets down, knees on the floor, arms across the bed; gun trained on the bathroom doorway. He holds this for a beat, slips the gun under the mattress, grabs his head totally freaked as how to deal with this.
ANGLE - THE BATHROOM DOOR
Helen emerges in Frank’s bathrobe.
HELEN’S POV
The bedroom is deserted.
HELEN
Frank? I borrowed your...
Frank comes up fast behind her, throws her up against a wall and briskly frisks her before she can catch her breath.
FRANK
(hysterical)
What you do with it?
Frank shoves her into a linen closet, holds the closet shut with a foot and stretches his arm into the bathroom to snag the purse. He comes up with the gun. He stares at it with wonder which turns to relief.
CONTINUED
FRANK (cont'd.)

Goddamn!
(happily)
This isn't real.

He absentely opens the linen closet. Helen explodes out in a fury whamming him with a shove into the wall.

FRANK
(happily talking over her furious counter assault)
This is a starter's pistol...

HELEN
(terrified)
You sonofabitch!

FRANK
I'm sorry. I saw the butt sticking out of your bag... I couldn't tell... it's a starter's pistol. Jesus.

HELEN
Who the FUCK you think you are!

Frank grabs her flailing arms -- tries to calm her down.

FRANK
Easy baby easy easy... what are you doing with a starter's pistol...

HELEN
(furious and scared)
I got mugged once, OK with you? Why'd you shove me like that!

FRANK
Hey! Hey! Hey! I got scared.

HELEN
(wild in his face)
Scared! You don't fucking know what scared is! Don't you tell me about scared.

Helen gets herself all jacked up again. Starts going at Frank. Frank almost has to wrestle her arms down to her sides.

FRANK
Hey! Listen to me! Listen to me!
(calmly, firmly)
I saw the gun sticking out and freaked. It was a reflex, OK? I'm sorry, OK.
(MORE)
FRANK (cont'd)
(Frank takes her hand, coaxing her)
C'mon... I mean what would you do?

HELEN
(still wild but coming down, almost gasping for breath)
I'll tell you some stories about scared.

FRANK
(puts her hand on his chest, coming on a little)
Feel my heart... it's like a drum.

HELEN
(gasping, wild-eyed, fighting for control)
You just don't know...

They stare at each other. Helen starts to calm down. Frank cases her into a clinch, Helen starts to embrace him but suddenly shoves him away, again.

FRANK (cont'd.)
What's the matter?

Helen doesn't answer. She flips out the light, comes at him, turns him around so he's facing the wall (like he did to her). With her starter's pistol still in one hand, he stands there, hands on the wall and Helen slips out of his bathrobe and, pressing her naked breasts on his back, conducts her own kinky frisk, hands sliding up and down his body, pulling down his shorts, driving him crazy.

HELEN
(in a breathy, sexy chant)
What are you looking for... what are you looking for?

FRANK
You're crazy... Jesus... What are you doing? What's that... let me put this down...

Frank tries to turn around, Helen won't let him, driving him nuts with her body rubbing on his back, her hands darting everywhere. He can't put his hands on her like this.

HELEN
Are you the man? Are you the man?

CONTINUED
FRANK
(ceased)
What are you doing to me?... What
are you doing to me?

Finally she slides between him and the wall; they're face to face
now, belly to belly. His hands come down from the frisk position
to around her back they go at it.

HELEN (OS)
(a slithery hot whisper chant)
Are you the man?

INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM - 6:30 A.M.

Helen sitting on the side of the bed hunched over, on the phone,
her back to Frank who's asleep.

HELEN
(hushed, heated, on the phone)
It was too late to call you back. It was
too late...
(beat)
A friend's house... a girl - friend's
house.... I'll be home... I said I'll
be home.

CLOSE ON FRANK

-- barely alert. Helen slides back under the covers Frank closes
his eyes again. Helen spoons into his back, raises him with a
hand under the covers. They start going at it.

FRANK
You're killing me, babe.

ANGLE - BEDROOM - 8:00 A.M.

Frank, groggy, rising from a deep, exhausted sleep as Helen comes in
holding a coffee cup (for herself, we can't have Frank's prints on
it later). She puts it down next to his police trophy.

FRANK
What is this sunlight? Are we
still alive?

CONTINUED
HELEN
I thought you were an insomniac.

FRANK
I am. I must have fainted.

He smiles at Helen who's standing over him at the side of the bed.

FRANK (cont'd)
You're so far away I can hardly make you out. C'mere.

He pulls her down on him in a sexually promising position.

HELEN
(laughing)
You gotta be kidding.

FRANK
I am, I am. Are you serious?
I'm gonna have to be airlifted to a standing position. I don't understand, you got up, you made it to the kitchen, you made coffee... who do you think you are, Superman?

HELEN
Wonder Woman.

FRANK
(kissing her)
Yeah? What do you wonder about?

HELEN
I wonder how we made it through last night in one piece.

FRANK
Last night... let me tell you about last night.

Frank kisses her. They start getting it on, but Helen pulls away.

HELEN
Hang on, hang on... I can't stay too long. I got to go home to my baby.

FRANK
Your baby. She's with your mother right? You live with your mother? (mock concern)
I don't know about this.
HELEN
She's only staying with me for a few weeks.

(beat)
Hey, you want a job? I'm looking for a babysitter. Full time, live in.

FRANK
I got a better idea... you want a second child?

HELEN
(pausing, not knowing how to take this)
With you?

FRANK
What with me? I'm talking about me. You want to adopt me? This way you don't have to pay me when I take the job.

They stare at each other lost in the romantic implications behind the banter. They're deep in love.

FRANK
(shaken, self-conscious, overwhelmed)
So, ah... what's it like running a shoe store? It sucks, right?

HELEN
Of course. What's it like being a printer?

FRANK'S POV
The trophy. Reality.

FRANK
(burdened, distracted)
A printer? It sucks but we don't live for the job, do we?

HELEN
I like to think I live for love. You have to, right? What else is there? Food?

CONTINUED
FRANK
(stares at her with affectionate curiosity)
You’re something else.

HELEN
No... you’re something else. You have no idea how many creeps are out there...

She lies on top of him and kisses him.

HELEN (cont'd)
You're wired like nobody I ever met, but you’re a good man.

FRANK
You never know.

HELEN
I always know. Or at least I find out.

They stare at each other, nose to nose. Helen lying flat on Frank.

FRANK
(suddenly tense)
What do you mean "creeps"?

HELEN
(getting wound up)
Creeps... manipulators... liars. Guys like my ex-husband. They wait until you get in over your head with them before they show you who they really are. Guys that all of a sudden you have to survive... creeps.

FRANK
(warily)
Oh yeah?

HELEN
(laughing, self-conscious)
Well, you asked.

You have any cigarettes?

FRANK
I'm out... you smoke?

HELEN
Sometimes... does that bother you?

CONTINUED
FRANK
(tensing)
What brand?

HELEN
(shrugging)
I mooch...

FRANK
(getting suddenly tense)
I got to make a phone call.

INT. SHERMAN'S KITCHEN — DAY.

Tchatskes everywhere. Homey, corny. His fat wife by the sink.

SHERMAN
(on the phone)
Guess what, chief... she's still out there. None of the prints match up. So, oh, should we dust your dick? You know, cover all bases?

Frank, in bed, watches Helen get dressed, her back to him. It's a sexy reverse strip-tease -- a voyeuristic moment.

FRANK
(softly)
Fuck you... it's the delivery kid...
I'm telling you..

SHERMAN
Oh yeah?... let me ask you something... this phone call... I didn't disrupt anything, did I?

Frank hangs up.

HELEN
Who's that?

FRANK
(upset)
Work... the print shop.

HELEN
(crouching over him and taking his hand)
You know for a printer you've got the cleanest hands. Work... the print shop.
FRANK
We use this industrial ah... cleaner...
industrial strength.

Helen pauses, looks him in the eye then abruptly stands up and
finishes dressing. It's like she suddenly withdrew - panicked.

FRANK
What's wrong?

HELEN
I never stay out like this. I should
have been home when she woke up. I like
being home when she wakes up.

Helen is ready to go. She looks at Frank in bed.

HELEN
(almost a plead)
We're gonna be good to each other, right?

OMITTED

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - TWENTY MINUTES
LATER - DAY.

The unmade bed, deserted.

CLOSE ON FRANK'S NIGHT TABLE.

The Softball Trophy. Helen's glass coffee cup. The cup is
carefully lifted by a pencil through the finger loop. WE SEE
Frank dressed in a towel, hold the cup (by the pencil) over the
mouth of a paper bag. He's bagging it for prints. Frank
hesitates, agonizing. He finally takes the cup in his hand,
wipes off her prints with his own fingers. Fuck it, man.

FRANK'S APARTMENT - FIVE MINUTES LATER - DAY.

PAN of empty living room. We hear the shower OS. The door-
bell rings. The shower drowns out the sound. The
ringing is persistent, steady, going on longer than would be
expected.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM

Frank in the shower. He finally hears the persistent ringing of the
doorbell over the sounds of the shower. He turns the shower off,
quickly towels himself dry, throws on a robe and goes to the door.
He opens it.

INT. THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE FRANK'S APARTMENT

The long hallway is empty. The lights are out. The elevator is just
closing. He watches the lights above; the elevator pop from one floor
to another as the elevator descends. Frank returns to his apartment.
He glances down the hall before closing the door.
EXT. INT. CAR - 8:30 THAT NIGHT

Sherman, Frank, Serafino, Struk riding.
SHERMAN
I tell you Frank, if this kid is the doer, he's got a lot of balls.

SERAFINO
That ain't balls, that's stupidity... coming back for your paycheck.

FRANK
The manager didn't tell him anything?

SHERMAN
Nah... he played it nice... he told him he needed his address for social security... he even cashed the check for him.
(beat; to Frank)
So how was she?

FRANK
Who?

Sherman waits out Frank's bluff.

FRANK (cont'd.)
Oh... nah, I just told her something came up and I had to split... it was a temptation, I tell you... good thing I called... I mean I'm sorry I woke you and all...

SERAFINO
She make you breakfast after? I always liked when they make you breakfast after.

FRANK
Hey! I didn't fucking sleep with her, OK? Besides even if I did, so fucking what. She ain't the shooter, this kid is. We got him. It's over. Shit, what do you think I am?

They travel in silence for a beat.

SHERMAN
So how was she?

Sherman and Serafino explode into sniggers.

FRANK
(defensive)
It's this fucking kid.
(beat)
CONTINUED

SHERMAN
Did you get her prints at least.

FRANK
Don't fuck with me.

CLOSE ON FRANK - FURTIVELY FREAKED.

EXT. MALCOLM X HOUSING PROJECTS - 9:00 P.M. - NIGHT.

Frank, Sherman, Serafino and Struk park in front of the projects. The streets are filled with teenagers and kids. The project is a hellhole of garbage, noise and promised violence. They walk from their car towards a building entrance. A half-dozen hoody sullen young men stand in their path.

FRANK
(casually)
You got the grenade?

SERAFINO
I'll shout these motherfuckers to death.

Frank walks right up to these dudes as if he's going to plow through them. His gait is so swift that they involuntarily step back.

FRANK
How ya doing, fellas, how's school?

Frank keeps moving for the building.

KID
(recovering)
School... what's that, something to eat?

FRANK
(laughs)
Take care, fellas.
(almost as an afterthought)
Hey... where's Quawi live... ten what...

Kids turn mumbly. Frank shrugs. It's to be expected.

INT. MALCOLM X HOUSING - LOBBY - NIGHT.

Graffiti, trash, burned-out mailboxes. Serafino winces. There's two six-year-old kids running through the halls even though it's late.

FRANK
(to the kids)
Hey... Hey!

CONTINUED
CONTINUED

They halt.

FRANK (cont'd.)
(dramatically)
Who's Mister Big.

KID
(grabbing his crotch)
This Mister Big.

Sherman whoops in laughter.

INT. MALCOLM X HOUSING - HALLWAY - TENTH FLOOR - NIGHT.

Long, gloomy, & cacophony of noise from behind twenty apartment doors -- sizzles, shouts, music.

Frank and company stand in front of a door. Frank hitches up his pants, takes out his badge and bangs on the apartment door jarringly hard. The door swings open TO REVEAL a skinny, pop-eyed young woman, two kids coiled around her legs. Frank puts his badge in her face.

FRANK
(friendly, but with a rapid, slightly intimating delivery)
How ya doing? Detective Keller. Quawi Benjamin live here? You Quawi's wife?

WOMAN
(slow, southern)
I don't know no Quawi Benjamin. I ain't even married!

FRANK
(rapid)
You're not married? You want to marry me? Get my wife outa paying me alimony?

She laughs nervously.

FRANK (cont'd.)
(rapidly)
You don't wanna marry me? Quawi don't live here? So where's he live?
(hes puts his hand on the apartment door opposite)
Quawi lives here? This the apartment?

WOMAN
I don't know no Quawi.

CONTINUED
INT. MALCOLM X HALLWAY - TENTH FLOOR - NIGHT.

Frank knocks with his fist on the next apartment, again jarringly loud. The door swings open with violent speed. A wiry, angry-looking, shirtless black man fills the doorway, but before he can say anything, Frank's got his badge in his face. The guy steps back. Frank leans forward.

FRANK (rapid)
Detective Keller... you always open your door that fast?

ANGRY GUY
Yeah, well, I don't like people hanging on it.

FRANK
You should get some chimes then. You Quawi Benjamin?

ANGRY GUY
Who?

FRANK
Quawi Benjamin... he your cousin?

ANGRY GUY
I don't know no Quawi.

FRANK
So where's he live... over here?

Frank puts his hand on another apartment door.

ANGRY GUY
I don't know no Quawi.

SHERMAN
How 'bout Spooner... he goes by the name Spooner sometimes.

ANGRY GUY
(brightening)
Oh, Spooner!
(catches himself; he's talking to the pigs)
Nah, I don't know him.
INT. MALCOLM X HALLWAY - ELEVATOR - FRANK AND COMPANY - NIGHT. 110.

At the tenth floor elevator. The elevator doors open. A young black man with corn rows starts to exit. Quawi Benjamin.

FRANK
Hey! You Theotis Clark?

QUAWI
Who!? 

FRANK
You're Theotis, right?
(displaying badge)
We been looking for you.

QUAWI
I ain't no Theotis Clark.

FRANK
Yeah? What's your name?

QUAWI
Quawi Benjamin, man, what's your problem.

FRANK
(conducting a quick pat down)
Problem's all yours.

QUAWI
Aw shit, what...

They just stare at him.

QUAWI (cont'd.)
(after a long beat, confused)
What?

They continue to stare. He continues to look thrown.

QUAWI (cont'd.)
What!

SERAFINO
This kid's good, ain't he?

SHERRMEN
Raymond Brown says hello.

QUAWI
Who?

SERAFINO
What did James Madkey ever do to you?

James who? QUAWI
SHERMAN
Where's the gun, Quawi?

QUAWI
(stunned)
The what?

SERAFINO
(nodding to the elaborate
corn rows)
How long does it take to do that?

QUAWI
Fuck you, motherfucker.

Frank inches up to him so that they're nose to nose.

FRANK
(softly)
What you say?

Quawi is silent, flinching, trying to cover himself up from
undelivered blows.

FRANK (cont'd.)
(hissing soft)
What you say?

Frank suddenly explodes on him and is snatched off by Sherman and
Serafino before he can do any damage.

FRANK (cont'd.)
(yelling; being restrained)
You're dropped, you piece of shit!

SHERMAN
(holding Frank)
Easy up, easy up!

FRANK
(pointing)
You're dropped!

CLOSE ON QUAWI

stunned, gawking, slowly building fury as he pieces together
what's going on.

INT. QUAWI'S APARTMENT - LIVING/DINING ROOM - NIGHT.

A baby plays on the carpet. A young woman is cleaning the
refrigerator in the kitchen. An old lady lies under blankets on
the couch watching color TV. The decor is bright red velour
sheathed in plastic. Lots of framed photos.
CONTINUED

Quawi comes bursting in through the door from the hallway, Sherman and Frank each have a hand on his arm. The two women ignore the action. Quawi in angry tears gestures around the room.

QUAWI
Where'd the nigger hide the gun, where'd the nigger hide the gun.
(pointing to a baby on the rug)
Check the diapers, man. Maybe he stashed it on his son, man. Or better still, motherfuckers, check under them textbooks.
(he points to a dinette table which is covered with textbooks, notebooks written in laborious careful script, all having to do with math, engineering)
I think there's a piece under that big physics book there... or that calculus one.

QUAWI pauses, glaring at the cops who seem impassive but are really embarrassed.

QUAWI (cont'd.)
I got six motherfucking months for my goddamn degree. Don't you dare be laying no bullshit rap on my goddamn doorstep.
(almost in tears)
I'm holding down the world here.

CLOSE ON FRANK

deflated; ashamed at his treatment of the kid. He didn't do it. It's maybe back on Helen.

EXT. 57TH STREET - NOON - THE NEXT DAY.

Frank is walking down 57th Street looking for an address. He looks agitated, troubled.

FRANK'S POV

He stares at women, shopping, walking, talking - everybody's a murderer.

Frank stands in front of NICOLE DU BOFF - an elegant shoe store.

FRANK'S POV - through the picture window, he watches Helen at work among the trendy wealthy clientele. He looks grim, alert.
CONTINUED

INT. NICOLE DU BOFF.

Frank enters the lush, plush store and quietly moves to a customer's chair, where unnoticed by Helen, he continues to study her; case out the surroundings. We see the place makes him uncomfortable. He's out of his element.

Helen finally notices him and with a slight but delicious smile slides his way. She crouches down in front of him as if to remove his shoes.

Frank (whispering, hand casually across his mouth)
I need sneakers you sell sneakers?

Helen grins.

Frank (cont'd.) (whispering)
I was in the neighborhood.

Helen (amused)
Why are you whispering?

Frank (embarrassed)
I'm not whispering. Listen, I have to talk to you about something.

Helen rises, raises a finger for him to hold on and walks off. Frank sits there stewing in his own anxiety. Helen returns, kneeling in front of him again. She has a shoe box. She slowly removes his shoes which makes Frank even more awkward.

Helen
What do you want to talk to me about?

Frank
(almost apologetic)
Ah... I have to know who you been seeing, you know... guys... over the last month or so... it's important.

Helen
(smiling removes a velvet shoe bag from the box)
I'd say that's none of your business...

Frank
(awkward)
Well... it is kind of my business.
HELEN
(stops what she's doing)
Oh yeah? How so?

FRANK
(not really ready for this;
backing off)
Forget it. It's stupid. Forget it.

HELEN
(studying him)
What?

FRANK
(cornered)
I said forget about it.

HELEN
I don't sleep around if that's...

FRANK
It's not that.

HELEN
Then I don't understand..

Frank feels totally at a loss how to proceed. He's going crazy.
Two young guys, hip, lean, shades and exquisitely casually
dressed, waltz in -- they could be Euro trash or rock stars
except there's something of the street animal in the way they
walk and talk -- something that doesn't jibe with the threads--
maybe they're dope dealers or young Mafiosi.

GUY #1 (TOMMY)
(holding up boots)
Willie, check it out.

Willie makes a noise of disdain. Frank glares at him, slowly
puts his own shoes back on.

HELEN
What are you doing? Let me try these
shoes on you.

FRANK
(muttering; transferring
his tension)
They're not right.

HELEN
(thinking, he means
the shoes)
You haven't even seen them.

(MORE)
HELEN (cont'd).
(giving up)
You want to come over tonight? Meet my daughter?

FRANK
(still glaring at the hitters)
I'm working.

HELEN
What do you have, a twenty-four-hour printing service?

FRANK
(momentarily confused)
A what?... sometimes.

TOMMY
(to Helen)
Yo... I come in here... like six months ago you had this beautiful boot... Vivoli, Vivolo...

Frank rises, in Tommy's face.

HELEN
(rising, shoes in hand)
The Vivoli... we're out of stock.

TOMMY
(to Frank, pugnacious)
Can I help you with something?

Frank just keeping staring.

TOMMY (cont'd.)
What's your problem.

WILLIE
Tommy, let's blow.

Frank just keeps staring. Tommy, livid, frustrated, does something that shows his roots despite his fine clothing -- he spits on the carpet in the general direction of Frank's feet. Frank doesn't react except to keep staring at Tommy, knowing it's driving him crazy.

HELEN
(to Tommy)
Hey!

WILLIE
Tommy, let's blow... guy's a cop.
TOMMY
Hey, hump... you a cop? If I beat the shit out of you I get nailed for assaulting an officer, right?

Frank maintains his unblinking impassive stare -- his steadiness, his placid contempt totally head fucking. Tommy hesitates. Willie yanks on his arm to split. The moment has passed.

TOMMY (cont'd.)
(having lost his balls)
Piece of shit.

They stalk out.

FRANK
Those guys are not right.

Helen is glaring at him.

FRANK (cont'd.)
What?

HELEN
(irritated)
You're a cop?

FRANK
Yeah... so...
(angry)
so what.
(looks around at the store)
Hey, you let in scum like that and you say that to me?

People in the store stop and stare at him with a mixture of discomfort and distaste. Frank looks back at them -- he feels like an animal suddenly. A male clerk comes up alongside Helen protectively.

CLERK
Is there a problem, Helen?

HELEN
No problem.

FRANK
(glaring at the clerk, then ignoring him, he leans forward to Helen, furtively flashing his gold shield)
Let me tell you something about this.
(the shield)
CONTINUED

FRANK (cont'd)
All these people here with the hair, the rocks, the furs...they get robbed, they get raped, they get mugged...I'm all of a sudden everybody's daddy...
Come the wet-ass hour, I'm everybody's daddy.

He marches for the door, turns, holds up the shield.

FRANK (cont'd)
The great equalizer.

EXT. 57th STREET OUTSIDE THE STORE - DAY.

Frank storming down the block. Helen running from behind, pulls on his arm, turns him around.

HELEN
(furious)
Why did you lie to me?

FRANK
What lie...

HELEN
Why didn't you tell me you were a cop?

FRANK
What...You have a personal problem with that?

FRANK
Don't give me that shit. Why'd you lie to me. Why'd you say you were a printer.

FRANK
(thrown)
Why?

HELEN
(really flipping out; pacing)
I knew there was something off. I mean what else you lying about Frank
(beat)
Is Frank your real name?
I feel like I'm with my freakin' ex-husband again.
FRANK
(alarmed, trying to control
the situation)
Wait a minute. Wait a minute...
Why did I lie. I lied because...
because (inspired) just for once I
wanted to be with a woman who knows
me as Frank...this guy Frank.
I mean...for 20 years of my life the
minute people hear I'm a cop I stop
being a person to them. Why do you
think I put the poem in the paper for?
I just wanted to start out clean with
someone.

HELEN
Terrific, so what..
You were never gonna tell me? That's a real
good way for people to get close, real good
to know each other.

FRANK
I was about to tell you, I swear but I just
wanted to be sure you were into me before the
word cop got put into your head (beat)
Didn't you ever hold back on telling somebody
something about yourself until you felt on solid
ground with them? C'mon..

HELEN
(Hit with her own secrets,
her own withholding)
You didn't have to lie to me. I hate being
lied to.

They stare at each other soberly.

HELEN
It's insulting.

FRANK
(nods, senses the worst is over,
laughs grimly, mocking his own outburst)
The great equalizer...what a schmuck.

HELEN
(accepting this as an apology)
So you're a cop huh?

FRANK
I'm a fucking lunatic is what I am.

HELEN
(thoughtful, secretive)
Hub...a cop.
FRANK
(softly)
I'm Frank.

HELEN
Just don't lie to me anymore...okay?...
Frank.
INT. SQUAD ROOM - LOCKER AREA - 3:45 AFTERNOON.
ANGLE - SERAFINO AND GRUBER.

trail into the room to make coffee. Sherman's already at the pot.

FRANK (OS)

God-damn!

They turn to Frank. He's obscured by his locker. Emerges to put one foot up on the bench to display a leopard-skin shoe.

FRANK (cont'd.)

These things, they's so soft... they feel like feet.

SERAFINO

And they're subtle, too...

CONTINUED
Continued

Serafino walks out.

FRANK
(almost shyly, to Gruber)
Wild, right? My girl... this girl gave 'em to me. You got to wear 'em, right?
What can you do?

Gruber catches the message -- Frank's got a girlfriend -- Frank
wants Gruber and, by extension, Denice, to know that.

GRUBER
(benignly)
Pretty jazzy.

FRANK
(smiling)
Well, this girl... she's...
(laughs)
I mean, look at these things...
she's OK, though... you should meet her... you know, sometime...

Gruber winks, exits, gingerly carrying his tea.

SHERMAN
(cautiously)
Hey Frank? No offense... but ah... you never did get her prints, did you?

FRANK
(hesitates for a beat)
She ain't the shooter.

SHERMAN
(cautiously)
And this we know how...

FRANK
(lying, leaning forward and tapping a spot between his eyes)
I asked her...

INT. STANLEY & LIVINGSTON'S RESTAURANT - THAT NIGHT.

Frank is taking a drink order from a young woman seated with Sherman.

Continued
FRANK
Golden Cadillac?

SASHA
Screaming Golden Cadillac.

FRANK
Screaming Golden Cadillac... What makes it scream?

SHERMAN
(giggling)
Getting attacked by a White Russian.

SASHA
(with sex concentration on Sherman)
That's very clever.

SHERMAN
Waiter? Make that two.

FRANK
You want yours screaming too?

SASHA
(to Sherman, sexy, touching his neck)
You have very tight skin, you know that?

SHERMAN
(losing his cool, getting turned on)
That's 'cause I'm fat, it pushes the skin out. Whomp! Like balloon rubber.

ANGLE - THE YUPPIES

howling with laughter at their table.

ANGLE - SHERMAN'S TABLE.

SHERMAN
(to Frank, agitated, horny)
Did you not get the order, or what?

Frank nods. He's about to cry with laughter.

CONTINUED
CONTINUED

EXT. POLICE VAN IN FRONT OF STANLEY AND LIVINGSTON'S
- MIDNIGHT - THE END OF THE SHIFT - NIGHT.

The rear of the van opens -- Sherman and Frank stagger out.

SHERMAN
What I see, eight ladies? Every one
of them was probably making more money
than me. The blonde one? She was a
high school principal. How come
they're not married.

FRANK
I don't know. How come I'm not married.

Serafino pulls up in an unmarked car.

SERAFINO
Anybody for the Island of Lost Souls?

Frank hesitates, shrugs, enters the car with Sherman.

INT. COP BAR IN WASHINGTON HEIGHTS WE SAW EARLIER -
AN HOUR LATER - FRANK'S POV - NIGHT.

WE SEE the cops and groupies all bottom fishing. WE SEE Serafino
at it with his tattoos again. WE SEE Dawn getting hit on by a
detective. She catches Frank's eye, returns her attention to her
date.

SHERMAN
(sitting next to Frank)
I'm going home... this ain't my thing.

FRANK
See you tomorrow, Chief.

ANGLE - FRANK.

Alone now, surveying the terrain.

Dawn leaves with the detective, bumping Frank's back on her way
out so that he knows she's going.

Frank smiles to himself, playing with his swizzle stick.

MALE VOICE (OS)
(coming from next to Frank
at the bar)
Jesus... It's like a feeding frenzy in here.

CONTINUED
Frank turns briefly to him. The guy's half-ripped, smiling but pugnacious. Frank looks away.

HALF-RIpped GUY (cont'd.)
Do you have to be a cop to get laid in here?

Frank shrugs. He doesn't even turn to him.

HALF-RIpped GUY (cont'd.)
Are you a cop?

Frank doesn't respond.

HALF-RIpped GUY (cont'd.)
(laughing)
I think I'll go out to a toy store buy a badge and a cap pistol come back here and score some tail... what do you think?

Frank continues to ignore him. The guy regards Frank's cold shoulder for a beat, shrugs, smiles and returns to his drink.

FRANK
(to the bartender)
George, can I use your phone?

FRANK (cont'd)
(softly)
Helen... I wake you up... What are you wearing... Take everything off, underwear too... everything. Do you have a long coat? A raincoat? Great... now, can you leave her for ten minutes... well where's your mother? Long Island.

(hisses in frustration)
Well can you drag in a neighbor to watch her... Fantastic... do you have high heels?

(looks at his watch)
This is what I want you to do...

CONTINUED
CONTINUED

INT. KOREAN GROCER'S - 2:00 A.M. - NIGHT.

Helen, in a long thin coat and high heels, strolls the aisles. She's naked underneath. Frank enters. He sees her. He's tense with excitement. They stroll past each other, casual, pretending they're strangers. They pass again, in another aisle, ignoring each other, but heavy with secret turn-on. They pass again in a third aisle. Frank stops next to her. They're both examining produce, facing away from each other. Helen is quivering under her false fascination with tomatoes, as is Frank, with his perusal of gelato. Helen casually slides her coat away from her leg. Her inner thigh gleams like ice under the fluorescents. She closes her coat. Without looking at her, Frank slides a hand inside her coat, stroking her naked belly. Helen almost faints with sexual desire. Frank too.

HELEN'S BEDROOM - 2:50 A.M.

Helen's asleep. Frank staring at the ceiling.

HELEN'S DARKENED LIVING ROOM - 3:00 A.M.

Frank, having risen from Helen's bed, stands in front of a wall unit (books, records, tchatchkes). He turns on a small lamp clamped onto a shelf.

WE SEE: a framed photo of Helen and her daughter; a turntable; some record albums; four old beat up record boxes for 45's.

Frank idly thumbs through some albums. He studies the photo. He opens one of the record boxes. The records are filled with alphabetical dividers. The box goes from A to M. He opens another box; M to Z. Taking a deep breath he pulls out a few records under S. Reading the labels, we see "Summertime". Billy Stewart, "Sincerely". - Harvey and the Moonglows, "Sleepwalk"- Santo and Johnny and SEA OF LOVE - Phil Phillips.

FRANK
(almost shuddering)
Oh Jesus...

CONTINUED
Suddenly -

HELEN
(from behind him)

What...

Frank jumps. She's sleepy, standing behind him, head on his shoulder.

FRANK
(helpless, inarticulate)

Sea of Love.

HELEN
(yawning, half asleep)

Huh... I haven't looked in those boxes in years.

FRANK

You have Sea of Love.

HELEN
(head still on his shoulder)

You like that record?

FRANK
(dumbly)

Do I like it? Yeah... Sure...

HELEN

I'm saving them for my daughter. They're probably worth a lot of money as long as you don't play them. They'd probably fall apart on the turntable.

FRANK

You haven't played them?

HELEN

I don't even know what's in there anymore... You want something to drink?

FRANK

No thanks.

(beat, more to himself, trying to shrug off the coincidence)

A lot of people keep old records...

HELEN
(entering the kitchen, over her shoulder)

They're only old if you keep them.

CLOSE ON
We see him put the record back in its slot carefully close the box, put the box where he found it. Out of sight, out of mind. He stands there, freaked through. That goddamn record. He notices her purse, hesitates for a beat, quickly fishes around comes up with her social security card. He palms it. Suddenly the big living room lights come on.

**HELEN**

(glass of milk in hand)
Frank, you better go home. It's getting close to morning.

**FRANK**
(hiding the card casually)
Yeah...no problem.

Frank starts pulling on his clothes which are strewn over the living room floor.

Helen watches, then suddenly brightens.

**HELEN**

I want you to see something.

**INT. DARKENED BEDROOM - 3:30 A.M.**

The door opening throws light on a child's room.

Helen stands in the doorway as Frank enters almost holding his breath as he looks down at the sleeping three-and-a-half year old surrounded by kid stuff. The "kid" suddenly is disorientingly real to him. He bends down and leans forward, looking at her like he's never seen one before. Suddenly she stirs, turns her sleeping face to him. Totally anxious, he quickly retreats from the room, almost stepping on Helen's bare feet.

**INT. HELEN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT.**

Helen and Frank enter. Frank goes to the refrigerator which is covered with notes and memos, opens the door and downs some orange juice from the carton while standing between the door and the shelves.
FRANK
(whispering)
She's beautiful.

HELEN
(whispery laugh)
You didn't even look at her... you bolted like a rabbit.

FRANK
Nah... I didn't want to wake her up.

HELEN
(studying him)
I wonder what kind of father you'd make?

FRANK
Me? Who the hell needs a policeman for a father? She's got a father right?

Frank stops in his tracks, as he realizes she's thinking of her kid... that Helen is a package deal.

HELEN (OS)
(guarded, fearful)
I just freaked you out, right?

FRANK
(long, thoughtful beat)
Yeah...
\(\text{he shrugs and smiles; he's been freaked out worse}\)
I mean, she's got a father... you know what I mean

Helen is silent, distant for a beat.

HELEN
He's never even seen her... go home.

Helen moves to embrace Frank. Frank hesitates, thinking of the record, the lifted SS card in his pocket, then surrenders to his love for her as we PAN down to the memo collage on the open refrigerator door.
CLOSE ON

We see written out in a woman's hand, Frank's poem; a postcard of a foreign land; "James Mackey 379-3340" a note about a nursery school open house; "Raymond Brown 884-2626".

INT. A LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD BAR - 3:00am

It is deserted except for Frank, nursing a drink as he stares at Helen's Social Security card.

EXT/INT FRANK'S BUILDING ENTRANCE

Frank opens the locked outer door and lets himself into the deserted lobby. The elevator is waiting. Frank enters.

INT. FRANK'S BUILDING - ELEVATOR

Frank stares vacantly at the floor numbers as they light up. As the elevator ascends to his floor, the door opens onto a dark hallway.

INT. FRANK'S BUILDING - HALLWAY

As Frank steps out of the elevator the only illumination in the hallway is the shaft of light from the elevator. Frank senses something. The elevator closes plunging the hall into darkness. A window on the shaftway at the end of the corridor provides the only dim light. A low rumbling sound draws Frank towards the shaftway. He takes his gun out as he cautiously turns the corner. He sees the window is open revealing a fire escape deep in shadows. As Frank reaches the window there is a sudden burst of sound as a flock of frightened pigeons take off, their wings beating loudly. Frank, frightened but relieved, walks back down the hall to his apartment. He stops at the wall sconce that normally lights the hall. He stares at it for a moment then slips his hand under the shade. He gives the bulb a turn and it lights up. Franks looks around puzzled, then lets himself into his apartment.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - NEXT AFTERNOON

Frank at his desk, on the phone. A uniform drops a folder on his desk. Frank hangs up stares at it like it's a biopsy result. Puts his palms on his face like he's praying. Opens it. We see computer printout - "National Criminal Information Center". He turns the page. "Name: Helen Cruger, d.o.b.: 6/7/55, SS#: 168-33-7334. He hesitates, turns the page. "No records of arrests or convictions". We hear Frank sigh with gratitude.

Frank throws the file in the garbage can, stretches in luxurious relief.

INT. PHONE VESTIBULE IN THE RESTAURANT - THAT NIGHT

Frank in his waiter outfit, is on the phone to Helen.
Hey. Is your mother back? Can you stay with me tonight?... I want to have a real date with you, no sex till later, OK? I have something very important to ask you.

INT. THE RESTAURANT - NIGHT.

FRANK'S POV

heading to Sherman's table, Sherman's date with her back to Frank. Sherman and the girl are laughing uproariously. Sherman is having a ball, as usual.

SHERMAN
"Sea of Love", you ever hear that one?

GIRL
Uh uh.
SHERMAN
(singing)
Come with me, my-yy love,

FRANK
How you doing, folks, something from the bar?

Frank looks at the girl, sighs. It's Gina Gallagher, the girl with the mylar balloons who showed up for a date with James Mackey.

GINA
(to Frank)
I know you, you're that cop.

FRANK
Easy, babe.

SHERMAN
(mock-angry)
You're a policeman?

GINA
(with compassion)
Did you get fired?

She looks quickly from Sherman to Frank, figures something's fishy.

GINA (cont'd.)
(almost in tears)
What do you want from me!

She starts to rise, hurt, scared.

ANGLE - THE YUPPIES

across the room, starting to rise. Frank puts a gentle hand on her arm.

FRANK
We don't want anything, honey. Have a drink.
(to Sherman)
This is Gina. She's good people.

Frank nods to Sherman, a wink implying she's not the one but show her a nice time for the half-hour she's scheduled.

CONTINUED
INT. KITCHEN OF STANLEY AND LIVINGSTON'S - 8:00 P.M.

Sherman, Frank and Serafino.

FRANK
(giving Serafino his apron)
I'm gone.

SERAFINO
(putting on the apron)
I feel like Betty Crocker in this...

SHERMAN
(sounding bombed and sleepy)
Jesus... it's only 8:00 and I'm hammered...
I'm gonna stay around here tonight. I go
out on that highway I'm gonna die like a
dog... make a nice headline. I'll call
my wife and crash around here somewhere.
A motel or something.

SERAFINO
Why don't you bunk cut in the Squad Room...

Sherman looks at Serafino with distaste.

SERAFINO (cont'd)
Nice comfortable army cot...
Six week old sheets...

Frank tosses his apartment keys to Sherman.

SHERMAN (cont'd)
What's this?

FRANK
It's an extra set I made up. For my
old man... why don't you crash at my place.
I'm two blocks away.

SHERMAN
(hesitating)
We're gonna sleep together?

FRANK
(very nervous, distracted)
Right... I'm ah, I'm gonna stay with this
Helen... I got us a suite at this hotel.
One of my ex-partners is head of security.
(shrugs)
He owes me. It'll be a nice surprise.

CONTINUED
SHERMAN
(doing Jack Jones, singing)
This guy's in love with you, da da da da da.

CLOSE ON FRANK
Sherman's song is no goddamn joke. Sherman, sensing this, stops singing.

SHERMAN
What...
FRANK
(still tense)
I'm gonna ask her to live with me.

SHERMAN
(rearing back)
You just met her, are you nuts?

Frank takes out a hip flask and downs a long long pull. Wipes his lips.

FRANK
(tapping his jumpy stomach, laughing)
I feel like a fucking teenager...

OMITTED

INT. PLAZA HOTEL DINING ROOM - 9:00 P.M.

FRANK AND HELEN seated. Frank drains his drink. He's half in the bag. The strolling violinist plays directly over his head. It's loud.

FRANK
Guys say, Frank, retire. I say to what?
There's nothing out there after this.
(to the violinist)
Can you get the waiter please?

Frank winks at Helen.

FRANK (cont'd.)
It's like... I'll drop some thief... some sad sack... he had a load on... he's got a family... he had a beef at work... who knows... sometimes I'll let him go.

(shrugs)
You know what that's about? I read something once and never forgot it. Peter the Great was on his death bed, right? The High Priest of the Russian Orthodox Church comes to him, he says, "You want to go to heaven? Make a nice gesture -- why don't you grant clemency to all the criminals condemned to die today". Peter the Great says, I'm gonna go to heaven unleashing a bunch of murders and thieves on the Russian people? You can kiss my ass". I never forgot that.

CONTINUED
HELEN
I don't get it. You tell me you let guys go, he didn't.

FRANK
Yeah, well, the point is, is that me and Peter the Great, we both got jobs where we get to decide... you know what I mean? So, retire to what...

HELEN
What was this important thing you were gonna ask me?

FRANK
(wincing at the loud music)
What? Hold on...

Frank signals a waiter for a refill.

HELEN
(nervous, wanting Frank to propose)
Maybe you should slow down a little.

FRANK
Oh yeah? Well maybe the menu should come sometime this century you know? Anyways I'm trying to tell you something.

Frank's drink comes. He hits it hard.

HELEN
(anxious, dogged)
What's this big question you were gonna ask me?

FRANK
(anxious, playing for time)
Jesus Christ, I feel like I got the London Philharmonic up my ass here.

He rises extants a hand for her to rise.

HELEN
Where are we going?

FRANK
This is not my thing.
CONTINUED

EXT. UPPER WEST SIDE.

FRANK AND HELEN WALKING.

HELEN
I love this neighborhood.

They talk as they stroll past the shops, restaurants, etc.

FRANK
(drunken somewhere)
Oh yeah? Let me tell you about this neighborhood. You see that bench? Three people died on that bench over the last two years...one guy OD'd, another guy got drunk, passed out and froze and something like six weeks ago some old guy had a heart attack -- this is the devil's bench.

HELEN
I never think about that stuff. I feel like the worse thing that could happen around here is that it rains on the day of the street fair.

FRANK
Oh yeah? Nice-Nice around here, right? This one block
(pointing to a side street)
we had three homicides the last year, you see that garage? One in there, one across the street, second floor, two months later same building one on the third floor.

CONTINUED
HELEN
(thoughtful)
Jesus... this whole town must be like a city
of the dead for you.

FRANK
(defensive, uptight)
city of the dead! Why do you say that...
Hey... I love life... I'm trying to share
with you... if you live with a cop... we
have experiences that... a cop's eye...
there's what you see... and that's like
nothing... and... we, our eyes, our life,
what we see.

HELEN
(wading through
the blather)
If you live with a cop.

FRANK
thrown)
What?

HELEN
(pushing it)
You said, "if you live with a cop". You
mean if I live with a cop? Me?
(taking the plunge -- enough
hemming and hawing)
Are you asking me to live with you?
Because you know I'm part of a package...
(hopefully)
You know that, right?

Frank takes a pull, looks away, a deep exhale, he's miserable
with cowardice, finds a last delay.

FRANK
Let me ask you something. The singles'
magazine. The dating... I dunno... How could
you do that shit... go out with guys like that.

HELEN
Hey... you do it. Forget how we met?

FRANK
(loose-tongued, not thinking)
What are you talking about. I was on the
job... that was the job... I was wearin'
a wire. We're trying to drop somebody.
I would never do that for real... I'd
never do that.
HELEN

(mounting quiet fury)
Run that by me again?

CLOSE ON FRANK

He fucked it up royally.

FRANK

Look, you have to understand...

HELEN

Fuck you.

Helen turns on her heel and briskly walks away. (She might be leaving town because Frank's on to her, or she might just be furious at Frank's latest headfuck).

She turns once to shoot him a murderous glare, then vanishes in the crowd.

EXT. GRUBER'S HOME - HOUR LATER.

Frank stands in front of this door, knocking, scanning the quiet street. The door swings open. Gruber, in his pajamas and a bathrobe, stands there, startled by his visitor.

FRANK

(obviously drunk)
Listen, Gruber, how you doing? Listen, I really need to talk to Denice, man. I fucked something up. I gotta talk to her... she knows me, I'm sorry it's late, but this is not like... this is different, I swear.

GRUBER

(unhesitating, calm)

No.

FRANK

(absorbs this, blinking)
I understand... no problem.. no problem... OK... thanks... have a good night... sorry.

Gruber closes the door.

FRANK (cont'd.)

It is late... I know... It's OK.

Frank turns from the door, walks down the path, takes his hip flask and tosses it in Gruber's bushes.

FRANK (cont'd.)

(affably)
Goodnight, cocksucker.
INT. FRANK'S FATHER'S HOUSE - AN HOUR LATER (PAST MIDNIGHT)

They're sitting across from each other in the immaculate living room. The street is silent with the hour. Frank watches his father drink. He's drinking black coffee, trying to sober up.

FRANK'S DAD

(draining his drink)

Yeah well... advice I don't have.

(beat)

I've always been an asshole around the ladies. You probably inherited it, is what this sounds like.

Frank laughs dryly.

FRANK'S DAD (cont'd.)

I dunno... tell her... you know, tell her something... that's what I'd do.

FRANK

That's a good idea, Pop.

FRANK'S DAD

You should probably limit your drinking to social occasions.

FRANK

(laughing)

Social occasions, huh?

FRANK'S DAD

Well, I never could... that's why your mother left me.

Frank smiles into his coffee.

FRANK

Dad... what do you think about kids?

FRANK'S DAD

What about 'em?

FRANK

I dunno. Did you ever have any?
Frank Sr. stares at Frank, incredulously. Frank flushes at the absurdity of his question. He starts to laugh.

FRANK (cont'd.)

(wearily)
Oh... shit...

FRANK'S DAD
(with difficulty)
Do you know something, Frankie?
(painful pause)
Your mother is the only woman I've ever slept with in my entire life.
(beat)
Why do you think that is?

CLOSE ON FRANK

He is both moved and knocked out by this information.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT DOOR - 1:00 A.M

Frank rings the buzzer. Once, twice. The door swings open. He balks as he sees Helen's mother - a real stone face.

FRANK

Hi...is...

HELEN'S MOTHER
It's one o'clock in the morning.

FRANK
Yeah, sorry...I'm Frank...

HELEN'S MOTHER
(cold)
I know who you are.

Helen comes up behind her mother. Frank stares pleadingly at her over her mother's shoulder.

INT. HELEN'S KITCHEN - DARK.

The light goes on. Frank enters then Helen. Frank leans against the kitchen table. Helen leans against the memos on the refrigerator door. Her expression is still icy; arms crossed on her chest, protectively.

FRANK
(fighting for the right words)
Look...my mouth's not working so good tonight...
The wire and all that? All I can say right now is that the circumstances were the circumstances...

CONTINUED
HELEN
No... not good enough.

FRANK
(scrambling, desperate)
OK. OK...
(sighs)
Look the whole thing is horseshit. There was no wire, job, no nothing. I guess I just said that stuff to push you away from me. I wanted to ask you to live with me and ah... I guess I got cold feet.
(beat)
I'm sorry.

Helen says nothing.

FRANK
I'm gonna try to go on the wagon. I did it once a few years ago... I can do it again.

Helen says nothing.

FRANK (cont'd.)
(long beat)
You know you never did tell me your kid's name...

HELEN
Yes I did...

FRANK
Well, tell me again.

HELEN
Sonya.

FRANK
(to himself)
Sonya... you know I delivered a baby once when I was in uniform. And I can't even tell you how many kids I saved... You know, mouth to mouth... over the years.
(beat)
I would like for the three of us to go see a movie or something, OK? We'll take it nice and slow. OK?
(beat)
OK?
Helen doesn't answer. She looks about to cry.

FRANK (cont'd.)
(patient, hopeful)
OK?

Suddenly Helen starts to cry.

HELEN
It's a really hard life sometimes... it really makes me crazy.

Frank watches her from a respectful distance.

FRANK
(ducking and twisting his head to see her averted eyes. Softly, soberly)
Helen... Helen... listen to me... I can't even sleep in my own bed anymore unless you're in it... I need to lay down with you otherwise I'll just walk the streets all night... I'm so tired... you have to come and lay down with me.
(beat)
Helen... Helen... I got these shoes here.

Helen looks torn, battered.

FRANK
(extends his hand to her)
Come home with me... please...

Helen makes no move towards him. She looks wracked with confusion.

HELEN
Why do I keep thinking you're a good person?

Frank stares at her hopefully.

After a long beat.

HELEN
(troubled, weary)
Let me go tell my mother.

She walks out of the kitchen without touching Frank. Frank, alone, he rubs the exhaustion from his face, starts to wander around the kitchen looking, touching, not with intent, though. He absently scans the refrigerator door collage. We see his reaction upon seeing the names and numbers of the dead men - like an icy hand has gripped his guts and is pulling them out his ass. He's paralyzed.
HELEN
(re-entering, in a soft voice)
Listen...Frank? I don't want to wake her.
(beat)
I need some time to think this out. I don't
think tonight...

FRANK
(turning, almost in a
trance; flat-toned)
That's OK
.he starts to leave,
keeping clear of her)
I understand...

Helen looks confused by Frank's change in tone.

FRANK (cont'd.)
(as he said to Ernest Lee)
Well catch you later.

He disappears into the darkness of her hallway.
INT. FRANK'S HALLWAY - NIGHT.

Frank unlocks his door but the chain is on inside and it only opens a few inches before jamming. Frank, startled, remembers that he gave his place to Sherman for the night.

FRANK
(resting his head
on the ajar door)

Shit!

SHERMAN
(peeking from
behind the door)
Frank?

FRANK
Let me in, Sherman.
INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Sherman unbolts the chain. He's nude save for a towel around his waist. He holds his gun at his side.

SHERMAN
(queasy, almost panicky)
You scared the shit out of me...

FRANK
(entering)

Sorry, I'll crash on the couch.

Frank stops short as he sees Gina Gallagher, the balloon girl, standing in his bathrobe at the other end of his apartment. Frank hisses. He's going insane.

SHERMAN
(queasy)
I thought you were going to a hotel.

FRANK

No. It didn't work out.

GINA
(freaked, small-voiced)
What's he doing here?

SHERMAN
(dying)
Frank, I gotta talk to you.

GINA

Is this his place?

FRANK
(quietly)
Hey Sherman, I'll bunk out at the station.

SHERMAN
Frankie, I gotta talk to you.

Gina goes into Frank's bedroom, closes the door.

CONTINUED
SHERMAN (cont'd)

Frank.
(whispering)
I never did anything like this...

FRANK
(as if to leave)
Look, I'll catch you in the morning.

Gina, dressed, comes out of the bedroom guilty, paranoid, goes flying out of the apartment.

SHERMAN
(anguished)
I gotta talk to you about this. None of this was my idea. First Gina there starts hitting on me with rubbing my leg under the table, then you throw me the keys, I told you not to...

FRANK
(cutting him off)

You wanna go get her?

CLOSE ON

Sherman opens his mouth as if to say something, defeated, remains silent.

FRANK
(sadly)
You want me to go get her?

Sherman doesn't answer, he just slowly pulls on his shirt.

FRANK (cont'd)
Sherman, I'm sorry.

CUT TO:

ELEVATOR-FRANK'S APARTMENT HALLWAY

Sherman in the elevator smiles at Frank half-heartedly as the door closes between them.

Frank, in the now silent hallway, turns to his door. Helen steps out of the shadows.

HELEN
We'll catch you later... what does that mean?
CONTINUED

Frank is speechless

HELEN (cont'd)
Is that a brush off?

FRANK
(pale)
No, not at all.
CUT TO:
INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT—MOMENTS LATER

Frank is slouched on his couch lifelessly. Helen is straddling his lap. She takes his upturned face in her hands and lowers her lips to his. Frank is in a posture of total surrender. Helen the conquering ravisher. They remain fully dressed.

HELEN
(lips brushing his)
I almost forgot...

Helen rears upright off Frank, walks across the room, digs in her bag for a small package.

Frank hasn't moved since she got up. It's as if he's waiting for her to do something - as if he's outside it all.

HELEN
You were looking at this like it really rang some bells so...ah...

She moves to his record player.

HELEN
I'd like you to have it.

As "Sea of Love" fills the room, Frank is finally galvanized into some active state for the first time since her kitchen. Enraged, broken-hearted, the song like salt in the wound, slowly rises to his feet holding out his arms to her - the last waltz.

FRANK
Dance?

He holds her tenderly, erotically moving his hands over her back, along her sides. In fact, he's frisking her.

FRANK (cont'd.)
(breathy, in her ear)
You got something for me, babe?

Helen dreamily groans something, lost to Frank's hands.

FRANK (cont'd.)
You got something special for me tonight?

HELEN
(murmuring)
Special...

FRANK
(breathy)
Where it at, mommy?

CONTINUED
CONTINUED

HELEN
Special...
FRANK (breathy)
Where you got it?

Frank abruptly grabs between her legs, not for sexual reasons—it's the only place he hasn't looked.

HELEN
(jerks away, shocked)
Hey!
FRANK (cold)
Where's it at?

Frank grabs her bag, fishes around, dumps it out, checks the starter pistol, flips it away. Helen gapes.

FRANK (cont'd.)
(reaching behind his back, pulling out his gun and extending it but first to Helen)
You forgot the real one. You wanna use mine?

HELEN (backing away)
You're crazy!

FRANK
(still holding it out, stepping forward)
C'mon, get it over with... I don't wanna wait a few more nights... bingo bingo right now.

HELEN
(scared but in control of herself)
Put that away please.

FRANK
What, you want to fuck first? Get me face-down?

HELEN
Please put that gun away.

FRANK
(wheels and paces, ranting)
I'm killed...you fucking killed me.

Frank wheels back to her, forces the gun in her hand, holds it on himself.

FRANK
Pull the fucking trigger.

Helen recoils, backing away.

FRANK
.puts his gun back)
Why'd you do it Helen?
FRANK
(sighing after a beat)
When I went up to James Mackey's place you know what I found there? "Sea of Love". How do you like that.

HELEN
Yeah! So! So what? He had a lot of old records. Just like me... You said it yourself. A lot of people...
(catching on suddenly)
How do you know about James Mackey.

FRANK
Oh I know lots of guys you knew.

HELEN
(scared but angry too)
When did you start following me...

FRANK
(after a beat)
(sad, soft)
Helen, why'd you do it... tell me you did it... tell me why... tell me everything. I know some people... I can swing some things... I can help you... only don't play me for a jerk right now, don't play me for a stranger.
(shifting tone -- straining for a lightness)
I'm still wearing your shoes.
(beat)
Talk to me.

HELEN
(cautious)
I don't know what the hell you're talking about.
(beat)
I'm going home now.

FRANK
(sighing to himself)
Look, the arresting officer was fucking the do-er. It's a joke. It won't even go to trial.

Helen is silent.

FRANK
I'm gonna retire. I don't need this.
(long beat)
Talk to me, Helen.
Helen continues her silence. Frank returns her stare for a very long beat.

HELEN
(gingerly)
Are you really a cop?

FRANK
(in a croak
he loves her)
Get out of here.

HELEN
(rises to take her bag, hesitates)
I had hoped...
(she surveys the room, dazed)
I really wanted us...forget it.

She quickly leaves.

Frank stares at nothing for a beat, rises, rolls his neck. He pours himself a drink, stares at it, doesn't drink though. The doorbell rings. Frank ignores it. Turns for the bedroom then at the last minute decides to go for the door. Frank reaches for the doorknob, says "Helen", he opens the door. The hallway is again dark. Frank steps out into the hallway peering into the darkness. "Helen?" Out of the darkness a body comes hurdling, exploding in his face. Terry the cable man erupts on top of him, booming Frank to the floor, knees on his chest, like a beast.

FRANK
Hey, hey, what are you doing -- what are you doing, I'm a cop, what you you doing!

In one motion that exhibits frightening speed and strength. Terry rises to his feet, lifting Frank up to a standing position at the same time.

FRANK (cont'd.)
(gasping, desperate)
What are you... What's your problem, man...
I'm a cop...
(recognizes him)
Hey... I know you...

He flings Frank into a wall smashing him almost senseless, wrenching him back nose to nose.

FRANK
(almost unconscious)
Hey, I'm a cop, what the fuck...

CONTINUED
TERRY  
(casually)  
All you swingin' dicks... what do you think...  
She throws some court order at me... all of  
a sudden my family's up for grabs.  

He repeats the smashing into the wall. Frank is being held up  
now, eyes almost rolling up in his head.  

TERRY (cont'd.)  
All it is, scumbag, is a freaking piece of paper.  

FRANK  
(slurred)  
Wait a minute.  

TERRY  
That's not your family.  

FRANK  
Please...  

TERRY  
That's not your daughter...  

FRANK  
(slurring)  
Wait a minute.  

TERRY  
(shrieking)  
That's not your wife!
CONTINUED

ANGLE - FRANK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Frank being marched into the bedroom.

TERRY

Lay down.

Frank starts to turn. Terry blocks his turning around with the barrel of his gun against his turning cheek.

TERRY (cont'd.)

Lay down... on your belly.

Frank lies face-down on his face. Terry strokes the back of Frank's head then gently, steadily pulls his hair so that his head is arched back, his throat bulging forward. Frank hoarsely squawks in agony.

TERRY (cont'd.)

(almost guy to guy)

So... did you have a good time with her last night?

FRANK

(voice strained, throttled)

Who you talking about...

TERRY

C'mon man... Helen.

FRANK

(head still painfully arched back)

Who... 

TERRY

Who?... Are you an owl?

Terry lets his head descend to the pillow. He absently strokes Frank's hair.

TERRY

Helen man, my Helen.

FRANK

(trying to control his fear)

I'm a New York City detective, I know you know that.

TERRY

Show me how you did it last night.

FRANK

Did what?

TERRY

Pretend she's under you...

(MORE)
TERRY (cont'd)
(with a flash of rage)
Show me what you did to her.
(imitating sexual
grunts; calmly)
Uh-uh-uh... show me and I'll let you go.

Long agonizing beat.

FRANK
There was nobody here.

He sighs, puts a knee on the top of Frank's spine, grabs his hair
and brutally, slowly pulls his head back again. Frank hoarsely
squeaks in agony again, his throat bulging like a drawn bow.

TERRY
Show me.

He lets Frank's head down again.

FRANK
(drenched with
sweat -- hoarse)
All we did was talk.

Terry says nothing but puts the gun to the back of Frank's head.
Insane, Frank starts humping his bed, gun to his head. Long beat
of Frank making love to his mattress.

TERRY
(with choked anger and sadness
-- all his murderous hurt
and jealousy, to himself more
than to Frank)
All you bastards...

FRANK
(not having heard the guy;
like all the other victims)
How's this? Is this OK? Like this?

We hear the gun cock.

FRANK (cont'd.)
(frantic)
How's this...

TERRY
Take off your clothes.

FRANK
What?
TERRY
(calmly)
I said take your clothes off.

FRANK

Fuck you.

In one great motion he rips Frank's shirt wide open—another act of great strength.
Face down, Frank's hand dangles touching the floor -- he feels something -- it's the trophy he hid the first night with Helen. He grabs it, twists, and swings backwards slashing up and across the guy's face and chest, ripping him with the brass figurine and spilling him off the bed. The gun goes flying. Frank lurches upright, grabs a steel bar from the workout setup at the foot of his bed and belts him alongside of his head twice. Terry gets up, staggering, as if the bar was hollow plastic and back-hands Frank off his feet. Bleeding from the scalp, he calmly, steadily stalks Frank who holds him off with the steel bar. Frank swings and cracks him in the ribs. He buckles for a minute but keeps coming at Frank. Frank slams him across his bicep. Another falter, another recovery. He's like a Golem.

FRANK (cont'd.)
(belting him again
across his broken ribs)
Go down, you bitch bastard!

He stops, stares at Frank curiously and collapses on the floor. Frank stands over him, pokes him hard with the bar; no response. Frank drops the bar across his body. Frank turns, rolls his neck to exercise some pain from his throat, stoops to retrieve the gun and is abruptly propelled head first into the wall. Frank is on his back, gun up in Terry's face. Terry stands over him, the steel bar over his head to strike. He looks twice as huge from Frank's POV.

FRANK (cont'd.)
(bellowing, flat on his back)
Put it down! Put it down! Put it down!

Terry hovers, trembling with arrested motion. He jerks as if to bring the bar down on Frank despite the gun in his face. Frank bellows in terror and rage. He doesn't want to kill a man. Terry bellows back, his face red and teary -- pure fury and frustration. Just as Frank is about to shoot, Terry throws down the bar and walks to the wall, his back to Frank.

TERRY
(to himself, bewildered, hurt)
It's not your family... none of you...

Frank bolts up, shoves the guy into the wall, his gun to the back of his head.

FRANK
(hysterical, adrenalized, almost shrieking)
Police! Don't fucking move!
(beat)
Don't ever fucking move!

CONTINUED
TERRY
(face pushed into the wall,
agitated, distraught, trembling)
What do you think, you're going to drop me
in some hole now, throw away the key? You
think I'm gonna take that?

Frank is desperately trying to reach his phone with his free
hand.

FRA: :
Just stay fucking put, man.

TERRY
(even more distraught,
starting to babble)
You think I'm going to sit there in the dark
while all you bastards go out and do your thing
with my family? I love them man.

FRANK
Just shut the fuck up.

TERRY
You want to see how much I love them?

As Frank continues to struggle to untangle the phone, Terry
calmly twists away from Frank.

FRANK
(freaked)
Where you going?

TERRY
(climbing up on the
windowsill)
You want to see how much?

FRANK
(aims his gun as if to shoot
if he jumps)
Where you going?

TERRY
(on the windowsill, calmly)
Watch...this is for them.

FRANK
(inarticulate, helpless)
Don't... you don't!
CONTINUED

Terry looks at Frank with an expression that registers both his rage and his torment, then casually falls backward out the window to his death.

EXT: TERRY FALLING TO THE COURTYARD - NIGHT

—a dreamy, almost guided fall.

CLOSE ON FRANK - NIGHT

still frozen in his crouching stance, the gun trained on the empty window frame.

CONTINUED
INT. MAIN WAITING ROOM - LOBBY OF THE CITY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE
(First Avenue & 30th Street) - NEXT DAY

CLOSE on FRANK, expressionless, sitting sprawled on a blue formica
chair. He has two coffees by his side. There's a security guard
at a simple desk. A few people seated on chairs around the cold,
bare room.

CLOSE ON DOOR "MORGUE" - "Visitors must be accompanied by authorized
personnel".

HELEN and SHERMAN exit from this door into the lobby.
They have just come from viewing Terry's body for ID purposes.

HELEN
(dull, monotone, shock)
I haven't seen him in over a year.
I thought he was gone for good.

FRANK stands in front of her with a cup of coffee. He can barely meet
her eyes. She stares at him coldly. He averts his eyes.
She clips out of the building into the street.

CONTINUED
SEA OF LOVE (REV. 5/3/89)

EXT. SMALLER ANTEROOM - SOMEWHERE IN THE POLICE STATION

Helen, in shock, sits on the edge of someone's desk. Frank, still holding the coffee cup, is trying to bring her down for a landing, trying to hold on to his own sanity.

FRANK
Are you OK?

HELEN
(dull with shock, staring at nothing)
I thought he was gone for good.
I thought I was finally free.
(long beat).
I feel like I killed all those men.

FRANK
* (emphatic but gentle)
No... you didn't know.

HELEN
It's my fault. It's like I killed them.

FRANK
(cutting her off)
You didn't know... you didn't know.

HELEN
(pulling back, angry)
My god, what were you doing... you thought it was me... all along. All the times we made love, all the times...

FRANK
I knew it wasn't you... I kept telling myself it wasn't you... I love you.

HELEN
(cutting him off)
Love me... You thought I was a killer...
What did you love...

Frank stands up, they're face to face. Frank grabs her arms as if trying to prevent her from bolting.

FRANK
You don't understand... I love you...

MORE...
HELEN
(cutting him off)
Stop it... stop it. It's over,
Frank... it's over.

She walks out of the room. Slams the door.

Close on Frank. Helpless, alone.
EXT. NICOLE DU BOFF ENTRANCE - DUSK - THREE MONTHS LATER

HELEN is looking up. She sees Frank standing awkwardly a few feet away on the bustling sidewalk.

HELEN Implodes. All her reactions to seeing him retreat inside. She looks startled, but in control.

FRANK looks like he's about to die with anxiety.

    FRANK

    Hi.

    HELEN

    Hi.

    FRANK

    How's, ah, how's your daughter?

    HELEN

    Good.

    FRANK

    Good...ah, I'm working out of the One-Nine now. That's you, you know this area. We've been having a good run of break-ins around here...ah (gestures to the store)

    You're okay, right? Your shop's wired into the precinct?

    (Helen doesn't answer)

    FRANK (cont'd)

    Listen the reason I come by...

    I want you to meet somebody.

    HELEN doesn't answer, goes about her business of locking up.

    FRANK

    (imitating Helen's response)

    Oh? Who Frank?

    (answering himself)

    Well, I'll tell you. Me...

    I would like to introduce myself to you

    HELEN

    (finally speaking)

    Oh yeah? Who are you now, a fighter pilot?

    FRANK

    A fighter pilot...look, no more surprises, no more lies...I'm all here now.

    HELEN

    The circumstances are no longer the circumstances, huh?

continued...
FRANK
Hey...I hung fire to be with you all through that...you don't know.

HELEN
Yeah, well, I don't know a lot of things

FRANK
Helen, give me a chance...you never really been with me, you know, me a 100%. The person you got involved with, that was like...half. I think you owe it to yourself to check out the complete guy, don't you?

HELEN
Cut the crap Frank. I'm tired

FRANK
Wait a minute. For two months now I lay in bed at night, alls I do is "talk" to you. How can I get over with you now Helen.

HELEN
(crying)
Get over! What you did to me

FRANK
I couldn't help that (beat) it's killing me not being with you.

HELEN
(exploding)
How do you think I feel!

FRANK
(alert, hopeful)
How...

HELEN
(vulnerable, desperately trying to escape her admission of feeling)
Look...what's the difference. I'm thinking of moving back home, so....

continued...
FRANK (interrupting)
You are...to York? That's incredible...because you know what? Just this morning
I was offered a job with the York, Pennsylvania Police Dept. They want me to head up a flying
squad to bust this huge counterfeit produce ring...What a coincidence, huh? Well, if you're going back
there I guess I should take the job. This is great
When are you going? Let me ask you, are there nice
apartments or houses I can rent? Do you know any of
the guys, are they good guys, the local cops?...
This is so incredible...you can fill me in...
When are you going? Maybe I can put some stuff
in with yours...you know, in the van.

HELEN
(laughing)
Enough...enough.

FRANK
No really, when are you going?

HELEN
Okay...okay...okay...

FRANK
You're not going?

HELEN
Frank...

FRANK
You're staying here right?

HELEN

FRANK
You and FRANK look at each other for a beat. The back of the tension has
been broken.

FRANK
 seriou$,)
I been on the wagon for 7 weeks.

HELEN
Do you still drink coffee?

FRANK
Like it's going out of style

FRANK moves towards her but pulls back. It's not time yet for touching. They
stand side by side waiting for a break in the traffic. Frank touches her back,
lightly, but pulls away. As they move across the street we see that they ease
into holding hands.

THE END