

Frankie

By

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INT. TAXI KIOSK - NIGHT.

A muggy summer night.

The TAXI KIOSK is a small shop with a bench against the window front; it contains a windowed control kiosk - both are sparse and tired.

FRANKIE (52), overweight, wears a vest that needs washing; he is balding and perspiring.

Frankie is in the control kiosk. He places a handset back on its holder and wipes his brow with an old handkerchief. He turns toward the windowed shop-front.

FRANKIE

Gets kinda warm in here, hu?

Frankie continues to stare toward the window.

FRANKIE (CONTD)

So what are you doing here? Getting kinda late isn't it? You got a home to go to?

A car speeds past the window.

FRANKIE (CONTD)

You know you can't keep on coming in here? People got jobs to do. I understand if you want to talk and all.

Frankie tips his head.

FRANKIE (CONTD)

That is, if you want to talk.

The radio crackles, drivers drop bit-part messages over the waves.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Typical GROCERY STORE, bright summer morning. Frankie is at the check-out, and holds assorted goods in his arms.

FRANKIE

A lot of good stuff here. Gotta keep yourself in top tip eh?

BRENDA, (50), large curly redhead.

BRENDA  
 Oh yeah, got to look after  
 yourself. Eighteen forty six,  
 Frankie.

JIM (70) sidles past Frankie, slaps him on the back.

JIM  
 Hey Frankie.

FRANKIE  
 Hey, Jim.

BRENDA  
 One fifty four, Frankie. You take  
 care.

INT. TAXI KIOSK - NIGHT

A clammy summer night

Frankie chews. He is in the control kiosk looking toward the  
 shop front window.

FRANKIE  
 Want to eat?

Frankie throws a Clementine through the control window. We  
 hear an empty thud. He leans forward on the edge of the  
 control kiosk window, and shakes his head.

FRANKIE (CONTD)  
 I know you're pissed. I'd have been  
 pissed. Real pissed. And I know you  
 loved her. She was a great kid.

Frankie thinks a little.

FRANKIE (CONTD)  
 Shouldn't have died like that. Not  
 that young. Not... like that.

INT. DRUG STORE - DAY.

Frankie is at the till of Reggie's Drug Store. A beat up old  
 place, that need a lick of paint.

FRANKIE  
 Gimme some smokes, I got to have my  
 smoke. Go stir crazy without 'em.

REG (64) slim, shoulder length grey hair serves at the cash register.

REG  
(Mumbles)  
Always something to drive a man  
crazy round here.

FRANKIE  
Some people just can't move on, hu?  
What do you think? You got to move  
on from stuff hu?

REG  
Well, you can move on or you can  
stay around, just you ain't staying  
round here, not in my store. You  
can move your ass out. Five eighty  
six.

FRANKIE  
Just what I say, move on or move  
out.

REG  
Fourteen.

INT. TAXI KIOSK - NIGHT.

Another humid evening.

Frankie draws heavily on a cigarette, facing the shop window. Takes a cigarette from the packet, offers it out through the control kiosk window.

FRANKIE  
Smoke? You want a smoke?

Frankie shrugs; he returns the cigarette to the packet, and holds his position.

FRANKIE (CONTD)  
You know we screwed it up. The  
whole thing. From beginning to end.  
We didn't plan enough. They know  
how to protect their stuff.

Frankie laughs to himself and shakes his head.

FRANKIE (CONTD)  
We thought we could just walk in  
and walk out a hell of a lot  
richer. We were dumb.

He looks straight toward the window.

FRANKIE (CONTD)

All of us. We were all pretty dumb.  
We each got to take the blame. We  
went in together and we got screwed  
together.

Frankie sighs.

FRANKIE (CONTD)

I know it was tough when you went  
down. I didn't want that for you.

Shakes his head again.

FRANKIE (CONTD)

Five years is a long time. Hard  
time. Screwed me up to. Could I  
find a job for the life of me? Look  
at me now. I got this. Ain't a  
whole deal.

INT. LAUNDERETTE - DAY.

Frankie is in the launderette, shoving his damp clothes into  
the dryer. MARG (48), plump, moves toward him.

MARG

Okay there Frankie?

Frankie grabs a clump of his clean, damp clothes, humps them  
up to his nose.

FRANKIE

Love the smell of clean.

MARG

(laughs)

Oh my, one of the best smells  
you'll get Frankie, just clean,  
nothing but clean.

Frankie continues shoving clothes into the dryer

FRANKIE

Sometimes you got to just clean  
things up, clean your act up, clean  
out, it's like a new start.

MARG

Kinda deep today Frankie?

FRANKIE

Sometimes, Marg, you have to make decisions. Decided to clean things up today. It was a good decision. Ain't the only decision I'm going to make today, either.

MARG

(shrugging)

I'm leaving it to you.

Marg wanders on, leaving Frankie a smile, but a bemused one.

INT. TAXI KIOSK - MOIST SUMMER NIGHT.

Frankie is in the control kiosk. His back to us, on the handset to the drivers.

FRANKIE

...yeah, yeah, Okay. Then Mulberry, number 21. Okay.

Frankie continues to hold the handset, just below his ear. Thinks. He sits back, and puts the handset back to the holder. Frankie gets up; turns to the kiosk window and gazes out.

FRANKIE

Decision time. Had enough of this crap. I feel for you, but there's a limit.

Frankie slips his hands into his pockets, and pushes his chest out, posturing. Rocks on his heels.

FRANKIE (CONTD)

And I know what they said to you inside.

Frankie jabs his finger through the kiosk window.

FRANKIE (CONTD)

Yeah, I heard, some of them came out and I heard what was said. People saying it was all my fault. People saying I screwed up and got her shot. Crap. Great pile of crap. Also know they said that I fitted you up. Yeah, I heard it all.

Shakes his head.

FRANKIE (CONTD)

You going to believe everything you ever hear? I never got her shot. I never set you up. Wouldn't do that. Couldn't do that.

Frankie put his hands on his hips.

FRANKIE (CONTD)

So it's decision time. You got to make a decision, else I'm going to make the decision for you. You hear me?

Frankie tilts his heads, looking for a response.

FRANKIE (CONTD)

Decision time, like or not. Either you get your sorry ass out my place and out my face or I'm going to make the decision for you. So, what's it going to be? Decision time.

A loud BANG. Bloodied matter spews from the back of Frankie; large specks of blood fly out from Frankie's stomach. He is flung backwards and hits the rear wall of the control kiosk. Falls forwards onto his knees, and slumps forward; eyes open, without focus.

In the seating area in front of the shop-front window sits -

WILL (54), unshaven, scraggy graying hair, and a long trench-coat. He sits perfectly still. His hand is in his trench-coat pocket: and also there is an object, a ragged hole, a whisper of smoke. Will rises, takes a step forward, and halts.

WILL

Decision made, Frankie.

FADE OUT:

THE END