

INT. FRANK AND BETTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A dated, suburban bedroom. BETTY, 70-years-old, is in bed, fidgeting with a small, white slip of paper.

OS is GARGLING then soft SPITTING, FRANK is brushing his teeth.

FRANK (O.S.)

Honey, did you see my glasses? (a beat) Honey?

FRANK, 72-years-old, enters and readies for bed, taking off his slippers and robe and adjusting his pillows and comforter while Betty continues to study the slip of paper. The NARRATOR's VO plays over this action.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Frank was diagnosed last year with Alzheimer's. His doctor has insisted that he cease driving immediately, owing to his diminished and deteriorating cognitive judgment. Frank has no recollection of his physician's directive.

Frank continues to arrange his pillows and comforter.

NARRATOR

Frank's wife, Betty, agrees with Frank's doctor. However, at 70 years of age, Betty has never driven and is an unlikely candidate for learning. She has relied on Frank for all of their transportation needs, including their recent daily outings to a local mall where they meet with other seniors. But she knows she must confront him.

FRANK

Damn blanket. (and then) My glasses, where are they?

BETTY

(distracted)

I'm sorry, dear. No, I -- oh, they're right there, next to the clock.

Frank spots his glasses, puts them on, reaches for the TV remote and turns on the television. Betty stares at the TV for a moment, then turns her attention once more to the slip of paper. She's made a decision: She puts down the note, takes the remote from Frank, and turns off the TV.

FRANK

I was watching that.

BETTY

In a minute.

Betty takes off Frank's glasses and begins stroking his hair. Frank smiles.

FRANK

Why didn't you say something before? I would have taken my pill.

BETTY

No, not that.

She shows the note she's been holding to Frank.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Honey, this is from Dr. Robinson.  
Do you remember? From this morning?

Frank has been through this routine before. He understands his condition and respects that Betty is about to express a related concern. His terse response underlies his frustration and anxiety.

FRANK

No, I do not.

BETTY

Would you read it, please.

Frank glances at the note.

FRANK

(controlled exasperation)  
There's nothing wrong with my driving.

BETTY

(calmly)  
Honey, you almost hit a man yesterday. He was on his bicycle, do you remember?

FRANK

(re: the note) There's no such thing as a prescription to stop driving.

BETTY

It's for you, Frank. To remind you. When we met with him this morning. We met with Dr. Robinson.

This is slowly eating away at Frank. He's struggling to remember and cannot.

A beat.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Frank?

FRANK

I know, I ... OK, I, I sometimes forget where your hair, where you get your hair done. (grasping) On Fridays! Where you get it done on Fridays. But that -

BETTY

(interrupting)  
Frank ... honey.

She takes off his glasses and places them on the nightstand. She strokes his hair.

BETTY (CONT'D)

You always asked me to be honest with you. When this whole thing started, you said no matter how difficult, I needed to be direct.

A beat. Frank looks straight ahead. He's dreading hearing what comes next.

BETTY (CONT'D)

You almost hit a man yesterday, he was riding his bike. Can you imagine, we could never live with ourselves if we hurt someone.

FRANK

We?

BETTY

Honey, we're a team, this is us. We.

A beat.

BETTY (CONT'D)

You've been driving for almost 60 years, you've been a great driver, but things change. We're older, we don't have the judgment. Not anymore.

FRANK

You could drive us.

BETTY

Honey, my eyes. I could never get a license, not now.

FRANK

But, but, our cinnamon rolls. The coffee and cinnamon rolls at the mall. Who's gonna drive us in the morning? That's our group.

BETTY

I've been thinking about that ... Ted and Joan are always asking if they can help.

FRANK

He's a terrible driver.

BETTY

We could carpool with them, we'll buy their coffee and rolls. (off Frank's reaction, gently rolling her eyes) Or just coffee. Oh, Frank, what's the difference?

FRANK

What about your hair, they're not gonna take you to the salon, too.

BETTY

It's so close, we can get a taxi.

FRANK

That's a fortune.

BETTY

We can afford it. Honey, please.

A beat. Frank reaches for the prescription note and studies it for a moment. He lowers his head, MUMBLING, and then:

FRANK

What kind a man am I if I can't  
even drive you to get your hair  
done! Or to the mall! That's not a  
life! That's nothing, that's  
(trailing off) nothing ...

Tears well in his eyes. A beat. Betty kisses his cheek and  
cups his chin in her hand, forcing him to look her in the  
eyes.

BETTY

Frank Riordan, it takes a real man  
to understand change and take the  
responsible steps. You, you Frank,  
you're a real man. I didn't marry a  
chauffeur, I don't need you to  
drive me, to drive us.

A beat as Betty looks deeply into Frank's eyes.

BETTY (CONT'D)

None of that matters. Nothing,  
Frank. Except you. You're all that  
matters to me. You, Frank. Frank  
Riordan.

Betty nestles her head onto Frank's chest.

BETTY (CONT'D)

I love you, Frank.

A beat.

Frank kisses Betty's cheek tenderly.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

A BLACK SCREEN.

(NOTE: The following could be accompanied by still images  
that recount the referenced interactions.)

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Speaking with someone about  
Alzheimer's and driving is a  
sensitive yet crucial event. Here's  
what you can do to ensure the  
safety of your loved one.

SUPER: Reinforce medical diagnoses and directives.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Respecting a doctor's assessment ensures the safety of your loved one and others. Anticipating that Frank would not remember his doctor's instructions, Betty had the physician write on a prescription pad that Frank was to no longer drive. She confronts him with this when he becomes defensive.

SUPER: Demonstrate sympathy and empathy.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Acknowledge the difficulty that relinquishing driving poses. Betty states that she knows Frank has been a good driver for more than 60 years, but she then explains that he no longer possesses the necessary judgment to drive safely.

SUPER: Stress the positive while offering alternatives.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Driving is an empowering activity, especially for seniors. Finding an alternate driving source can help alleviate feelings of helplessness. Betty tells Frank that they can reach out to their friends to carpool to the mall each morning, and that she can take a taxi to her Friday hair appointments.

SUPER: Offer unconditional love and support.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Agreeing to stop driving can be humiliating, leading to feelings of worthlessness. Reassure your loved one of your unconditional support and love, dismissing any significance attached to driving. Betty tells Frank that he was never her chauffeur, that she loves him, Frank Riordan.

FADE TO BLACK.