

I'M SORRY, SAM

Written by

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FADE IN:

TEASER

EXT. BOULDER, COLORADO - NIGHT

We are a bird high in the sky, gliding effortlessly through a quiet majesty of snowcapped mountains. The night sky is bright with the pale light of a FULL MOON.

In the distance a small town is tucked away into the evergreens. As we glide closer, the twinkling lights of a perfect suburban neighborhood open up underneath us.

We descend, lower, lower, creeping past the identical two-story houses like a dense fog, until we reach the end of the street where we come upon a colonial style home with a rainbow-striped flag billowing in the patio light out front.

EXT. SAM & EMMA'S PLACE - CONTINUOUS

The house CREAKS with the wind. The moonlight casts long shadows across the frosted dead grass of the front yard.

A dark silhouette appears in the bright light of the bay window. Muffled SHOUTING comes from the inside, the unmistakable sound of two people fighting.

From somewhere inside we watch a SHOE come flying and SMACK the window, HARD. The glass RATTLES with the force of impact.

There is more INDISTINGUISHABLE SHOUTING and then out comes SAMARA MONTEZ(35), a stubborn woman built like a warrior but dressed in a formal suit. She charges out the front door in a fury.

The angry VOICE of another woman yells from inside the cabin--

EMMA (O.C.)

Sam, I swear to god, if you fucking
leave-

SLAM. Sam shuts the door behind her with fury.

SAM

(to herself)

Fuck you.

Sam SLUSHES her way through the snow, trying her best not to slip along the icy driveway. She makes it to the parked SUV, and wrenches the passenger door open. She reaches inside, and pops open the glove compartment.

After a bit of shuffling, Sam retrieves a small tin from which she pulls out a joint. Hands shaking with anger, she fumbles it.

Sam withdraws a lighter from her pocket and sparks it up, the flame illuminating her face. *She's totally shit-faced drunk.*

As Sam takes a long drag from the joint, the smoke curls into the cold night air. She heaves a SIGH of relief and leans back against the car, watching the night sky as she smokes.

A sudden thought has her pulling out a CRUMPLED ENVELOPE from her pocket. As she tries her best to smooth out the paper, we catch a glimpse.

ON THE ENVELOPE IS WRITTEN:

"TIMOTHY MONTEZ,

832 MARIPOSA LANE,

MIAMI, FLORIDA"

END CLOSE-UP.

Sam stares at the handwriting intensely.

SAM (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Damn it, Timmy. You just couldn't
leave things alone, could you?

Suddenly, there is a RUSTLING noise from somewhere in the darkness of the yard.

SAM (CONT'D)
Who's there?

The bushes RUSTLE again and out saunters an ORANGE CAT. It watches Sam with its sharp eyes, glaring intensely her way.

SAM (CONT'D)
Damn it, Floyd. You scared the shit
out of me. Go home.

The cat continues to glare at her. A BEAT. Sam softens.

SAM (CONT'D)
I know I'm being an asshole, you
don't have to remind me.

The cat MEOWS as if in answer. Sam SMIRKS and takes one last drag of the joint before flicking it. She shuts the car door.

SAM (CONT'D)
I bet you're hungry. Let's go
inside.

Just then, Sam's gaze shifts past the furry beast as she SEES SOMETHING or rather SOMEONE that we don't. She freezes in terror.

SAM (CONT'D)
Why are you here?

A SUDDEN FLASH OF MOVEMENT sends Sam stumbling backwards. The cat lets out a HISS and scurries off to safety.

We catch the paralyzing look of fear on Sam's face as the unseen person creeps closer.

SAM (CONT'D)
Get the fuck away from me.

Takes a gasping breath but before she can SCREAM we--

CUT TO BLACK:

ROLL TITLE SEQUENCE: "IM SORRY, SAM."

FADE TO:

INT. BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

SUPER: "TWO HOURS EARLIER."

We hear the CHATTER of a large gathering as we open onto a spectacular ballroom with a podiumed stage at the front.

Wealthy patrons dressed in their finest attire sit around dozens of white-clothed tables as tuxedoed WAITERS mill about offering appetizers and champagne.

We drift through the glitzy socialite party-goers until we reach Sam with a champagne glass in each hand. She's dressed in a nice fitted suit, though she looks like she's on edge.

EMMA(36), Sam's fiercely overprotective wife, huddles close to her, dressed in a silky vintage dress and strappy heels.

EMMA
Are you sure you're okay?

SAM
I'm fine.

EMMA

I don't know. I haven't seen you
double-fist your alcohol since we
first met.

SAM

I hate these stupid fancy
fundraisers.

Sam straightens out her suit, awkward. Emma reaches out
lovingly and help fix her collar.

EMMA

A vile but necessary evil.

Emma leans in close to Sam and their eyes meet.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I love you. You know that, right?

SAM

Yeah. I know.

Sam takes a big sloppy swig from the glass, finishing it in
one gulp. She catches a WAITER, and swaps out her old glass
for a new one while sipping on the other.

Emma's eyes widen watching her, thinking *this won't end well
at all*.

Suddenly a VOICE booms over the speakers. It is the host of
the evening's event, MERYLL(mid 40's), a handsome woman in an
elegant dress, up on the stage.

MERYLL

(to the crowd)

Tonight's guest of honor needs no
introduction, but I'll give one
anyways.

There's LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE.

SAM

Shit.

Sam stiffens up. Takes another swig.

MERYLL

(to the crowd)

As many of you know, Second Chances Charity has recently celebrated it's ten year anniversary and without all of your endless support and generous donations none of the work we do for the community would be possible.

More APPLAUSE.

Sam tries to wipe the sweat off her brow, glass still in hand. She shoots Emma a panicked glance.

MERYLL (CONT'D)

(to the crowd)

So without further ado, I would like to introduce our *Person of the Year* award to an individual who's been with us from the very beginning, someone who pushes themselves everyday to do more for others than anyone else I know. Our vice-president of programming and my very best friend, Samara Montez. I'm so proud of you. Get on up here.

APPLAUSE breaks out once more. A SPOTLIGHT swings through the room and finds Sam, all eyes on her. She stands rooted to the spot, awkward and painfully uncomfortable.

EMMA

(whisper)

Babe? Are you okay?

Sam ignores Emma and unloads her empty glasses onto a passing WAITER's drink tray. We follow her as she works her way up to the front of the room.

Once on stage, Meryll wraps Sam in a tight hug and hands her the TROPHY.

MERYLL

(off Sam)

Well, go on. Say something.

Sam tries to refuse but the microphone is pushed in front of her before she can do anything to stop it. The crowd awaits eagerly. A BEAT.

SAM
(into the mic)
Um, well first I'd like to thank
all of you here for coming out and
supporting our charity. There are
so many lost souls out there who
are ready to change their lives,
become better people, and help make
the world a kinder place. All they
really need is a second chance, and
you are all giving it to them by
being here tonight.

Sam glances down at the trophy in her hand. It GLISTENS in
the light.

SAM (CONT'D)
(mumbles)
Person of the year, huh?

Sam's face twists as she wrestles with her emotions. A LONG
BEAT. The stage lights beam down hard.

SAM (CONT'D)
(into the mic)
About the award...I don't deserve
this. Not really.

Meryll shoots her a look: *"what are you doing?"*

SAM (CONT'D)
(into the mic)
If you all knew the real me, you'd
be running me off this stage right
now. I can't accept this award. I
won't. I'm not who you think I am.

MURMURS and WHISPERS breakout in the crowd. Emma's face is
worried as she watches helplessly. Meryll jumps in front of
Sam and grabs control of the microphone.

MERYLL
(laughing)
Modest isn't she folks? But
seriously, thank you all for coming
here, enjoy the champagne and the
amazing food. There will be open
bar until midnight so-

Sam leaves the trophy on the podium and walks quickly off the
stage, through the crowd. She practically runs to the exit
door. Emma watches her go.

EXT. SECOND CHANCES CHARITY - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Sam bursts through the door and out into the cold. The sun is setting quick. The street lamps are already on. Sam's breath fogs the night air as she tries to steady herself.

The door behind her opens again and out walks Emma, her heels clicking the floor, the trophy clutched in her hand. She sees Sam lost in thought, and stands next to her.

They both look out into the mountain skyline.

EMMA

Still think you're fine?

Sam says nothing.

EMMA (CONT'D)

If you'd just open up to me instead
of shutting down like you always do-

SAM

Do you ever wish you were a
different person?

EMMA

What? No. And, I don't want you to
be a different person either. I
love you for who you are.

Sam turns now to look at Emma seriously. We think she's finally about to open up then--

Sam hitches forward and THROWS UP on the ground.

Emma watches her heave, puts a caring hand to her back.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I guess it's time for us to go
home.

Just then, the building's door kicks open once more and out comes Meryll, fists clenched and ready to give Sam a piece of her mind.

Meryll recoils when she sees the vomit on the floor.

MERYLL

Sam, what the fuck was that?

EMMA

She's not feeling well. Lay off.

Emma puts an arm around Sam's shoulder and leads her as she stumbles towards their parked car. Meryll follows, annoyed.

MERYLL

Some of our biggest donors were here tonight and witnessed this drunken train wreck of a show. This is so unbelievably selfish.

Emma loads a very drunk Sam into the car, closes the door, and walks around to the driver's side.

MERYLL (CONT'D)

I want to know what's so fucking important that she would up and ruin our biggest fundraiser of the year-

EMMA

No offense, Meryll, but I don't give a fuck about your fundraiser. I'm taking my wife home.

Before stepping into the car, Emma turns to face Meryll one last time.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Some best friend you are.

Meryll is stricken by this comment.

MERYLL

I didn't mean that-

SLAM. Emma shuts the door in her face, starts up the car, and drives off, leaving a stunned Meryll behind.

INT./EXT. EMMA'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

On the drive home, Emma looks over at Sam who is curled up in the passenger seat asleep.

EXT. EMMA & SAM'S PLACE - NIGHT

In the driveway Emma helps Sam out of the car. She walks slowly with her as she stumbles into the house.

INT. EMMA & SAM'S PLACE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Once inside, their dog, SNOOP(9), a stubborn mutt with a mind of his own, welcomes them home with wagging tail.

Emma tries to guide Sam upstairs to their bedroom as Snoop dances at their feet but they don't make it past the couch before Sam drops into it and passes out.

Resigned to let her sleep it off there, Emma begins to untie Sam's shoes, taking them off one by one.

Emma moves gently to pull off Sam's blazer and an ENVELOPE drops from an inner pocket out onto the floor. Emma picks it up. It's already been torn open.

Emma looks to her wife, who's out cold, snoring. She grabs a throw blanket from the shelf and drapes it over Sam before stepping into the other room.

INT. EMMA & SAM'S PLACE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

In the kitchen, Emma examines the envelope. A name and address is scribbled across the front. We see the name again: "TIMOTHY MONTEZ".

Emma turns the envelope over in her hands and before she can think twice about it, pulls the letter out from inside and reads.

CUT TO:

INT. EMMA & SAM'S PLACE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sam is still passed out. Snoop hops up on the couch with her and starts licking her face. She swats him away in her sleep.

BACK TO:

INT. EMMA & SAM'S PLACE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Emma finishes reading the letter like she can't believe what's written right in front of her face.

SAM(O.C.)
What are you doing?

Startled, Emma looks up to see a furious Sam standing over her.

EMMA
I thought you were asleep.

SAM
Did you go through my pockets?

Sam makes a dive for the letter and it's contents, snatches them up and stuffs them back into the envelope.

EMMA
Seriously?

SAM
It's my fucking business.

Emma stands up, furious, and faces off against Sam.

EMMA
I've already seen what's inside.

SAM
So?

EMMA
So, you lied. You said your family had cut all contact with you. You told me they never wanted to see you again.

SAM
That's mostly true.

EMMA
Then why is your brother writing to you, asking you to come home? How many other letters have you hidden from me?

SAM
You've got it all wrong.

EMMA
So, your brother hasn't been writing to you all this time?

SAM
He's written a couple times-

EMMA
So, then what do I have wrong here?

The silence sits hot between them, then finally--

SAM
You don't get it.

EMMA

You're right. I don't get it. I don't understand how you have a family that loves you enough to write to you, begging for you to let them know you're okay and you just act like they don't exist.

SAM

I don't have to explain myself to you.

EMMA

Oh, that's rich. So, what? Does that mean you're just going to wake up one day, decide you're done with me too, and take off without a word.

SAM

Who's saying that?

EMMA

How is it so easy for you to walk away from your family?

SAM

You don't know the first fucking thing about what I've had to leave behind.

The last lines simmer between them.

EMMA

What else are you keeping from me?

SAM

Stop prying into shit that doesn't involve you, Emma.

Emma swoops down and picks up Sam's shoe from the floor. She cocks back her arm and chucks it hard in Sam's direction. It misses, SMACKING the window behind her.

EMMA

You're the worst.

SAM

You have no idea.

Sam steps toward the door.

EMMA

Sam, I swear to god, if you fucking
leave-

SLAM. Sam is out the front door before Emma can finish. We
stay with Emma, tears streaking down her face.

EMMA (CONT'D)

(to the closed door)
Fuck you.

INT. EMMA & SAM'S PLACE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma is alone in bed. The TV lights up the room. She finally
dozes off to sleep.

CUT TO:

INT. EMMA & SAM'S PLACE - BEDROOM - DAY

The sun is up and it's late already. Emma wakes up in bed
where we last left her, the TV still on.

Emma reaches out and pats the bed where Sam should be but
there's no one there. A sudden sinking realization hits her
that Sam must've never come to bed.

INT. EMMA & SAM'S PLACE - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - CONTINUOUS

We follow Emma through the house as she looks for signs of
Sam.

-THE LIVING ROOM: empty.

-THE KITCHEN: Nothing.

-Through the front bay window, Emma sees that Sam's car is
still in the driveway.

-Emma sits on the couch where Sam lay passed out just the
night before. Emma is left to wonder, *where is she?*

Just then the doorbell RINGS. Emma pops up to answer it.

ENTRYWAY

In the foyer, Emma opens the front door, hoping it's Sam but
it's just JAMES(mid 30s), the upbeat gay next door neighbor.

JAMES

You will not believe the news that
I have to share with you.

EMMA

Not today, James. I've had a long
night.

JAMES

Oh, I heard the fight you and Sam
got into last night.

EMMA

You heard that?

JAMES

Darling, I think the whole
neighborhood heard that. I was just
getting back from a very sexy late
night dinner date with my
devilishly handsome tinder date.

EMMA

Aren't you a little old to be on
tinder?

James GASPS.

JAMES

You bitch, I am going to pretend
you didn't just say that.

EMMA

We can catch up later. I was just
getting ready to put up the
Halloween decorations to surprise
Sam when she gets home.

JAMES

Ooh, spooky! Can I help?

EMMA

No.

Emma looks ready to shut the door in his face.

JAMES

I brought wine.

EMMA

Oh, fine.

INT. EMMA & SAM'S PLACE - GARAGE - DAY

Emma and James step into the garage where they are met with a crushing amount of boxes and large bins stacked to one side of the room.

JAMES

Jeez, I feel like I'm in an episode of hoarders.

EMMA

I forgot how much shit is in here.

Emma begins sorting through the stacks, searching. James finds an old camping chair, kicks it open and sits all while balancing a full glass of red wine in one hand.

JAMES

What's inside the boxes?

EMMA

Oh, I don't know. Old photo albums, family knickknacks, mostly stuff we never got around to unpacking.

Emma continues to search through boxes. James eyes a trash bin filled with a dozen plastic pink flamingo yard ornaments.

JAMES

You know I love a good knickknack, but this is literally insane.

EMMA

Sam and I were only dating for a few weeks before she moved all the way to Colorado to be with me.

JAMES

That is some serious U-Haul lesbian energy.

EMMA

I think I found it.

Emma points to a large bin on top of a tall shelf. She's too short to reach up and grab it so she climbs up the metal shelving.

Emma almost reaches the box when the shelf collapses under her weight, sending Emma CRASHING to the ground. She's showered in the contents of the boxes that fell with her.

James jumps up to help her, wine glass in hand.

JAMES

Oh my god, honey. Are you okay?

Emma sits in the pile of spilled boxes, frazzled but otherwise unharmed.

EMMA

I guess I should've known better.

JAMES

Okay, you need to take a break.
Let's get you cleaned up.

EMMA

Wait a second.

Emma looks down to see dozens of SEALED ENVELOPES sitting in her lap, spilling out from a little BLUE SHOEBOX that went down with the fallen shelf.

Emma picks an envelope up and turns it over in her hand.

A NAME IS SCRAWLED ACROSS: "BAY"

Before Emma can ponder for too long, James interrupts.

JAMES

Don't tell me those are love
letters you have saved away. You
two are seriously so sweet it's
disgusting.

EMMA

What? No. These must be Sam's. I
guess she put them in here for safe
keeping.

JAMES

Ooh, who do you think they're from?
I love secrets. We should open them
and find out.

EMMA

I don't know. It's none of my
business really.

Emma stands up and collects the letters, stuffing them back into the blue box. She re-shelves it. James huffs, unsatisfied.

Emma manages to shimmy the Halloween decorations bin down from the top without getting crushed this time. She drags the box over to a chair and sits down.

James pours Emma a big glass of wine and hands it off to her. Emma takes a sip and sifts through the decorations.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I guess in the beginning Sam and I were so busy being happy that we didn't have time to unpack anything. Now this old stuff has been sitting here in the dark all this time, collecting dust.

JAMES

I think its romantic that she gave up her old life to be with you. I wanna throw my whole life away for true love.

EMMA

What about your sexy mystery man from last night?

James pretends like he isn't excited to spill the tea, but then gushes.

JAMES

We met online. Had a super romantic dinner. He's funny, kinda quiet. A total Scorpio, if you know what I mean. He even walked me to my door and kissed me goodnight.

EMMA

Marry him. A man with some common decency and manners is hard to come by.

JAMES

Argh, I would throw it all away for a tasty snack like him. Trust. Except now he's been ghosting me all day. I keep wondering if it's something I said.

EMMA

Don't freak out. Give him some space.

Emma takes a break from sifting through witch hats and pumpkin-shaped decorations to glance down and check her phone for the hundredth time.

JAMES

Like you're giving Sam space.

Emma looks up, caught in the act. She stuffs her phone in her pocket.

EMMA

I'm just worried. She never stays angry this long. We've had a few fights before but nothing like this.

JAMES

You two are end game. Tots OTP energy.

EMMA

OTP?

JAMES

Oh, you know. One True Pairing? A couple that is so perfect for each other that the whole world is rooting for them.

EMMA

Where do you even learn all this stuff?

JAMES

My fifth grade students are high-key keeping me up on all my slang. Bet.

EMMA

What if she doesn't come back, James? What if it's over?

JAMES

Don't let your thoughts go there. I'm here for you, remember that.

James drains the last sip of wine from his glass and stands up to go.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Well, I'm off to my next appointment with a certain backyard hot tub of mine and another bottle of cab. Today's my only day off and I've got a stack of papers I plan to grade drunk.

(a serious beat)

You know Sam better than anyone else, Em. She'll be back.

With that he's gone and we're left with Emma, staring at the small blue box of letters on the shelf.

Emma stops what she's doing and stands up. She crosses the length of the garage and finds herself in front of the blue box.

Emma lifts the lid and opens it to see the nest of envelopes, each one with a hand scribbled name on it and nothing else. No address. No stamp. Just a name.

Emma looks around at the boxes stacked around her in the cramped garage.

FLASHBACK

Another time, many years before. Sam and Emma happily stack boxes into an empty garage. Sam is sweaty from the hard work but Emma doesn't care as she leans in to kiss her passionately.

EMMA

Are you sure this isn't all happening too fast?

SAM

Don't tell me you're having second thoughts about me moving in.

EMMA

No way. I just don't want anything to screw this up. I don't think I've ever been this happy before.

SAM

Oh, don't you worry. I'm not going anywhere.

Sam leans in to kiss her again.

END FLASHBACK

Emma is alone again with the blue shoe box. She closes the lid and re-shelves it.

EXT. EMMA & SAM'S PLACE - NIGHT

We're met with the familiar cabin, transformed into a spooky haunted house, typical Halloween vibes. Emma finishes up the final touches on the house and steps down off the ladder.

Emma walks toward the end of the driveway and takes a look at the house from afar. She half smirks, satisfied with the obscene display of horror.

As she makes her way back toward the house, Emma passes by Sam's SUV. From the corner of her eye she notices something on the ground: THE CRUMBLED UP LETTER FROM THE NIGHT BEFORE.

Emma's heart starts to race as she swoops down to pick it up.

She pulls out her phone and dials. We see Sam's name flash across the screen. We hear it RING as Emma makes her way into the house.

INT. EMMA & SAM'S PLACE - LIVING ROOM

Emma rushes into the house with her phone pressed between her shoulder and ear.

SAM (O.C.)
*Hey, you've reached Sam. I can't
get to the phone right now. Please
leave a message after the tone.*

A BEEP. Emma stops in her tracks alarmed. She looks up at the clock on the wall.

EMMA
(into the phone)
Sam, it's 8 o'clock at night. If
you're not coming home, at least
let me know you're okay.

Emma sinks into the couch and runs a worried hand through her hair.

EMMA (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
About last night. I'm really sorry.
I shouldn't have pushed you. I just
love you so much I-

A BEEP and the line CUTS OFF. Frustrated, Emma types out a text to her.

ON SCREEN: "PLEASE ANSWER."

We see there is a string of UNANSWERED TEXTS from Emma. No sign of life from Sam.

END CLOSE-UP.

Disappointed, Emma sits on the couch, defeated.

INT. EMMA & SAM'S PLACE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma is wide awake in bed. All the lights are on in the house. The spot where Sam usually sleeps is empty. We see fear in Emma's eyes. *Something isn't right.*

INT. BOULDER POLICE STATION - DAY

An empty lobby, two rickety waiting chairs. Emma walks in, urgently, as though she's falling apart at the seams.

Behind the glass window, an OFFICER(50's, male) beckons her forward. He barely looks up from his computer. An awkward BEAT passes.

EMMA

Excuse me.

OFFICER

What can I do for you?

EMMA

I need to report a missing person.
Please.

The officer reaches into a filing cabinet drawer and shuffles through it until he finds the papers he's looking for. He uncaps his pen.

OFFICER

Full name of the missing
individual.

EMMA

Sam. I mean, Samara Montez.

OFFICER

Relation?

EMMA

I'm sorry?

OFFICER

Relationship. What's their
relationship to you?

EMMA

She's my spouse. Partner. Whatever.

The officer peers narrowly at her.

OFFICER

How old is the individual?

EMMA

Uh, thirty-five years old.

OFFICER

Did you try reaching them by phone?

EMMA

What-? Yes, of course I tried calling her. Her phone is off. She isn't answering.

OFFICER

And, how long has the individual been unaccounted for?

EMMA

Like, when did she go missing? Two nights ago. Saturday. Just before midnight.

The officer SIGHS, shakes his head, putting his pen down.

OFFICER

Typically, we like to wait until the individual has been unaccounted for least 72 hours before we file a report-

EMMA

Why do you keep referring to her as "the individual". She has a name. Her name is Sam.

OFFICER

Are you sure she isn't just at a friend's house, or visiting family-

EMMA

She didn't take anything with her. She didn't pack any bags. She just disappeared in the middle of the night.

OFFICER

Is there any reason why she would leave suddenly? Did you have any problems in...the marriage? Were there any recent fights?

EMMA

Problems in the marriage? No. Never. We've been happy. Always. Yes, there was a fight but she wouldn't just leave like that-

OFFICER

Ma'am, I can go ahead and file this report, but we probably won't get around to looking seriously until more time has passed.

EMMA

But-

OFFICER

She might just turn up after she's had some time to cool off.

EMMA

She didn't show up to work this morning. She was supposed to be there and she didn't show up.

OFFICER

We see these kinds of things happen all the time in normal relationships. I'm sure it's the same with you lady folk too. They always turn up.

EMMA

This is my fucking wife we're talking about. Something isn't right and I know it. I can feel it. Something terrible has happened to her and you need to fucking do something about it.

OFFICER

Ma'am, there's nothing more that I can do than file this paperwork here. You'll just have to wait and see-

Emma angrily whips around and makes for the exit, done with the conversation.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

She's probably sitting at home waiting for you now.

EMMA

Thanks for nothing. If you won't do something to help find her than I'll just do it myself. Fucking ASSHOLE!

Emma slams the door hard behind her.

INT./EXT. EMMA'S CAR - STATIONARY - DAY

Inside her car, Emma punches the steering wheel. She lets out a GUTTURAL SCREAM as tears stream down her face.

She pulls out her cellphone and dials out a call. On the screen SAM'S NAME pops up. It doesn't ring though, going straight to voicemail.

SAM (O.S.)

Hey, it's Sam. I'm not able to get to the phone right now...

EMMA

(into the phone)

Sam, where are you? What's going on? Seriously, this isn't funny. I'm really fucking worried. This isn't like you.

Emma hangs up and throws the phone to the side. On the passenger seat sits the CRUMBLED ENVELOPE. Emma stares at it.

She looks in the rearview mirror, catching her red eyes in the reflection. *She knows what to do next.*

EXT. EMMA & SAM'S PLACE - DAY

Emma skids into the driveway, furious.

INT. EMMA & SAM'S PLACE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

She rushes into the house, throwing her keys and purse to the side. She marches through the hallway and into--

INT. EMMA & SAM'S PLACE - GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Emma kicks the door to the garage open and shoves her way through the stacks of boxes. She grabs the blue box from the shelf.

INT. EMMA & SAM'S PLACE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

On the couch Emma opens the blue box and dumps the envelopes onto the coffee table. We see that each one has a name scrawled across.

Emma sifts through the pile and pulls up the envelope she's looking for. On the front it reads: "BAY".

She tears open the sealed envelope and pulls out a lengthy handwritten note written in all capital letters.

EMMA
(to herself)
Well, this is definitely Sam's
handwriting.

Emma begins to read it, her eyes darting side to side as she takes in each word.

Time SPEEDS up.

We CUT TO Emma as she RIPS into another envelope, reading it. Then another. And another. Until finally each one is open and read, scattered across the coffee table in a heaping pile.

Emma slumps back into the couch, exhausted.

Snoop patters up to her and rests his head in her lap,
WHINES.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Don't you worry, Snoop. I'll find
her.

EXT. JAME'S PLACE - DAY

Emma and a leased-up Snoop stand facing a reluctant James perched in his doorway. Emma has a crate with his dog food, a bed, and a few toys in tow.

EMMA
It'll just be for a couple days.

JAMES
This is crazy. You know I don't do
dogs.

EMMA
What does that even mean? You like
Snoop.

JAMES
From afar. Not in my beautiful
perfectly clean house.

EMMA
I wouldn't ask if it wasn't
important.

JAMES

I still don't understand how running off to your wife's old hometown makes any sense. You should be calling the hospitals and the...

EMMA

Go ahead, say it.

JAMES

I mean, do you really think she's in Miami of all places?

EMMA

I don't know, but I've got nothing else to go off of. Something weird is happening and I'm going to get to the bottom of it.

JAMES

Fine. I'll watch the dog, but you better behave or you're out of here.

Snoop wags his tail, oblivious.

EXT. MIAMI - TIM'S PLACE - DAY

A sleek black rental car pulls into the driveway of an old one-story house with a small fenced in yard.

Emma pops out of the car and makes her way to the front. On the patio, she takes a deep breath and then KNOCKS on the door.

RAINE(8), young and oblivious, answers. He stares at Emma with wide eyes.

EMMA

Hey, is your Dad home?

A BEAT. Raine just stares, then--

RAINE

(yelling inside)

Dad, someone's at the door!

He bolts into the house and out of sight. A RUGGISH VOICE huffs from inside.

TIM (O.C.)
(muffled)
Did you tell 'em I'm not here? Damn
it. How many times do I have to go
over this with you, Raine?

Another BEAT, then TIM(40's) with long curly hair, stoner
vibes, and a beer belly gut, appears in the doorway. He looks
at Emma, annoyed.

TIM (CONT'D)
What do you want? This better not
be some fucking sales pitch. I've
got enough shit in this house and
I've already been saved by Jesus.
Now I just want to be left the fuck
alone.

EMMA
Are you Timothy Montez?

Tim goes to answer but stops himself, smiling.

TIM
Mmm...almost got me. I know how
this works. You're here to serve me
papers, right?

EMMA
What? I'm not here to serve you. I
want to know if you've seen or
heard from your sister recently.

TIM
My sister? Who the hell did you say
you are again?

EMMA
My name is Emma. I'm Sam's wife.

TJ (O.C.)
Aunt Sam? Did they find her? Is she
here?

TJ(15), a stocky teenager with a boyish face and goofy grin,
pops his head out the door and spots Emma with
disappointment.

TIM
What are you doing? Get back inside
the house.

TJ
But, I want to know what happened
to Aunt Sam.

TIM
(to TJ)
Go. Now.

TJ storms off. Tim steps outside and closes the door behind him. They have the front porch to themselves now.

EMMA
I'm sorry to bother you. Sam went
missing a couple nights ago. I
don't know where she is. I found
this letter you sent with your
address. Thought maybe I'd track
you down and see if I could find a
lead.

TIM
Well, I wish I could help but Sam
hasn't spoken to me in years.

EMMA
You haven't gotten any phone calls?
Texts? Letters, even?

Tim shakes his head, no.

TIM
You said she's been missing for how
long?

EMMA
Since Saturday, but this isn't like
her at all.

At this Tim scoffs, sneers at the ground.

TIM
Oh, this is exactly like her. You
think she ever said goodbye to any
of us before skipping town forever?

Tim reaches into his pocket and fishes out a cigarette,
lights it, and takes a drag.

TIM (CONT'D)
She's only written to me once in
eight years. It feels like a
lifetime ago.

EMMA

What'd she write?

TIM

Some shit about moving on with her life. Starting over. Told me not to bother coming to look for her.

EMMA

Did you look for her?

TIM

Why would I? Sam didn't want to be found.

(a beat)

Look, I wrote a couple letters here and there to see if maybe she'd change her mind but I never heard back. I assumed she was done with us.

EMMA

I found a box of letters.

TIM

What do you mean a box of letters?

EMMA

I found a bunch of letters that Sam must've written at some point. They're like apology letters or something but I don't think she ever planned on sending them out.

TIM

Who are the letters addressed to?

EMMA

That's the thing. I don't know. I don't recognize any of the names, not a single one.

TIM

Was there one for me?

EMMA

One what?

TIM

An apology letter.

A long BEAT.

EMMA
No. There wasn't.

Tim's face is unreadable. He turns his back on Emma.

TIM
I can't do this. I'm sorry Sam
dipped out on you, but I don't know
anything that'll help you find her.

EMMA
Maybe you could just tell me if you
recognize the other names at least?

Emma pulls out a stack of envelopes she has stashed in her bag.

TIM
I don't think that's a good idea.

EMMA
Colby? No? Okay, Mr. & Mrs. Smee?
Yolanda?

Emma shuffles through the stack, reading the names off each one.

TIM
I don't think I can help you. It
seems to me like Sam doesn't want
to be found.

EMMA
Chico? Someone named Zimmerman?
Please, help me.

TIM
You should go.

Emma is frantic, desperate. Tim opens the front door and slips back into the house.

TIM (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

He looks like he means it. He shuts the door behind him.

EMMA
What about Bay? Just tell me who
Bay is.

It's too late. Emma knows she has to turn around.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Damn it.

Emma makes her way out of the yard, is already at the fence, when TJ comes running through a side gate from the backyard.

TJ

Wait!

Emma stops in her tracks, shocked to see TJ chasing after her.

TJ (CONT'D)

Bay. Aunt Sam's best friend, her name is Bay. I heard my dad talking about her once with my mom.

EMMA

What'd he say?

TJ

He ran into her while she was working at some bar next on ocean drive, in South Beach.

EMMA

What bar?

TJ

How the heck am I supposed to know? I'm not exactly old enough to go bar hopping.

EMMA

Where does your dad like to drink?

TJ

Where doesn't he?

EMMA

I'm serious. Think hard. Maybe there's something you can remember.

TJ

I just remember he came home drunk that night with an empty fishbowl.

EMMA

An empty fishbowl?

TJ

I don't know, dude. You asked me to remember, and I did. There was this big crazy straw coming out of it.

Emma thinks a BEAT but nothing.

EMMA

Well, I should get going before
your dad comes out and chases me
off. Your Sam's nephew?

TJ

TJ.

EMMA

Thanks for your help, TJ. I really
appreciate it.

TJ

Is she okay? Aunt Sam.

EMMA

I don't know yet. You gotta cell
phone?

TJ

Yeah, of course.

EMMA

Gimme your number. Let's keep in
touch, okay? And listen. Don't you
worry about your Aunt Sam. I'm
gonna find her and everything is
going to be okay.

TJ

You think so?

EMMA

When this is all over, we'll go out
together and celebrate. What do you
think of that?

TJ

I'd really like that.

We leave off on TJ's hopeful but gloomy smile as Emma steps
into her car and drives away.

INT./EXT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

As Emma drives, her phone RINGS with a call. She picks it up.

James' voice is shrill as it comes over the Bluetooth.

JAMES (O.S.)

When are you coming home?

EMMA
I told you, James. I need a few
days to figure things out.

INT. JAMES' HOME - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

James stands in a plush robe peering out onto the street
through the blinds of his bay window.

JAMES
We've got a problem.

EMMA
What's going on? Is it Snoop? I'm
kinda busy over here at the moment.

JAMES
No, Snoop is fine.

JAMES POV: through the blinds, there is a POLICE CAR parked
outside Emma's house next door.

EMMA
Then?

JAMES
The police are here.

END POV.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION - CONTINUOUS

EMMA
So, those assholes are finally
doing their job.

Emma turns the steering wheel of the car as she maneuvers
through the streets of Miami. We see palm trees whizzing by.

JAMES
They're asking about you. Where you
are, if I know anything about Sam
going missing.

EMMA
Okay, just talk to them and answer
their questions.

James sits on the couch. Snoop hops up with him.

JAMES
Absolutely not! Get down! These are
my chenille cushions.
(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

(a beat)

Emma, They're asking about the fight you and Sam had the other night.

EMMA

What?

JAMES

I didn't know what to say, so I told them I didn't know anything except that you were looking for her and you were worried.

EMMA

They can't seriously be asking about our fight.

JAMES

Emma, what's going on? Sam is missing. You should be here.

EMMA

You don't have to tell me that. I know. I'm the one looking for her.

JAMES

Seriously, what are you doing on the other side of the country? I don't mind covering for you but you need to tell me what's going on.

INTERCUT - EXT. OCEAN DRIVE / INT. JAME'S PLACE - CONTINUOUS

Emma arrives at the beach. She parks the car and idles. We see beach front shops and tropical colored bars and taverns outside the car windows.

EMMA

I told you. I'm visiting Sam's family, checking to see if she's been here.

JAMES

And?

EMMA

No sign of her. The only clue I'm working off of is she might be in contact with an old friend who works at a bar on the beach somewhere.

JAMES

That sounds conveniently nice.

EMMA

I'm only here to see if I can get any information that will lead me to Sam.

Suddenly, James spots Snoop squatting over his plush velvet floor rug, and he jumps into action.

JAMES

Oh, hell no. You are not shitting on my brand new rug!

(to Emma)

Seriously, Emma. When are you coming home? I'm not sure how long I can do this.

As James rambles, Emma spots a TOURIST stumbling by on the sidewalk outside the car carrying a GIANT FISHBOWL COCKTAIL, drinking from a giant crazy straw.

EMMA

Hey James, I've gotta go.

JAMES

But-

Emma hangs up the phone and steps out of the car. She goes to stop the tourist but ANOTHER TOURIST cuts her off. They too have a FISHBOWL COCKTAIL but it's a different size and shape.

We PULL BACK TO REVEAL the entire block where dozens of fishbowl cocktails float along the street in the hands of roaming TOURISTS.

Emma reaches into her pocket and pulls out her phone. She dials a number and puts the phone to her ear.

EMMA

(into the phone)

Any chance you guys still have that fishbowl lying around the house?

(a beat)

You do? Can you send me a picture?

INT. TIM'S PLACE - OFFICE - DAY

TJ bursts into the room, a tiny office with some old music equipment and a guitar collecting dust in one corner.

On the desk is a FISHBOWL with an actual fish swimming inside the water. TJ traces his finger along the glass where there is a frosted white emblem of a LIZARD.

TJ takes out his cell phone and we see the FLASH go off as he snaps a picture of the fishbowl.

TIM (O.C.)
What are you doing in my office?

Tim stands in the doorframe watching his son. TJ jumps to attention, quickly hiding his phone away.

T.J.
Nothing. I was just bored and
wanted to see the fish.

Tim steps into the room and stares at the fishbowl. The fish swirls its colorful fins.

TIM
I'm sorry about earlier. I
shouldn't have yelled at you.

T.J.
Why don't you talk about Aunt Sam
anymore?

TIM
(a sad beat)
Because I miss her too much.

T.J.
Me too.

TIM
You remember her?

T.J.
Of course I do. Why did she leave?

TIM
I don't know. I guess sometimes
people just disappear on you and
that's just life.

T.J.
No, I think something happened to
her.

TIM
Why do you think that?

T.J.

Because, she loved us too much. She wouldn't just disappear. Family doesn't do that. When you're family, you do everything you can to stay together.

Tim looks at his son, taken aback by his sudden wisdom. But just as quickly, he looks away and the moment is over.

TIM

Let's go. Your mother is probably looking for us to setup the table for dinner.

Off on Tim's face, lost in thought as he ushers TJ out of the room.

EXT. EMMA'S CAR - STATIONARY - DAY

Emma leans against the car watching the crowds of tourists pass by. Her phone BUZZES. She looks and it's a text from TJ.

ON SCREEN: THE PICTURE OF THE FISHBOWL WITH THE LIZARD ON ITS SIDE.

END CLOSE-UP.

EMMA

Gotcha.

EXT. MIAMI BEACH - OCEAN DRIVE - MOVING - DAY

Emma walks down the sidewalk as it cuts through the bustling patio seating of cafes and restaurants.

At the entrance to each place are huge trays with a spectacular spread of food and drinks on display to tempt any tourists strolling along into stopping and staying.

We follow Emma as she holds up her phone with the picture of the FISHBOWL on the screen next to each drink tray display.

There are no signs of any white lizard as she goes from one place to the next.

Emma reaches the end of the block. The strip of restaurants on Ocean Drive has ended. She looks around, not sure where to go next.

A MOTORCYCLE RUMBLES past her, nearly clipping her as she stands on the edge of the street.

EMMA

Hey!

She tracks the motorcycle as it swings around the corner and pulls up to a dirty-looking dive bar around the corner.

The MAN on the bike parks, takes off his helmet, and steps inside.

Above the dive bar, THE SIGN READS: "THE LIZARD LOUNGE". A WHITE LIZARD is curled around the words.

EMMA (CONT'D)

There you are.

Emma tucks her phone away and steps towards the dive bar.

INT. LIZARD LOUNGE - DAY

Emma enters. The bar is dark and seedy. Only a few customers, GRIZZLY OLDER MEN, are sitting at the far end of the old wooden bar.

The BARTENDER(50's), a woman with graying hair and an attitude, wipes down the bar with a dirty rag.

Emma pulls out a rickety bar stool and takes a seat. The bartender GRUNTS to acknowledge her but doesn't say a word.

EMMA

I've got a question for you.

The bartender glares at Emma.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Does someone named Bay work here?

The bartender is quiet again but then a voice comes from behind her.

BAY (O.C)

Who wants to know?

Emma turns to see BAY(32), a wild sight with her fire-red hair, many tattoos, and even more piercings. She stares down Emma who is clearly out of place.

EMMA

I do. My name is Emma. I'm looking for Bay.

Bay walks behind the bar and pours herself a shot of whiskey, shoots it back.

BAY
I'm Bay and I only talk to paying
customers.

Emma smiles.

EMMA
I'll take a Jameson double on the
rocks.

Bay seems to approve as she pours Emma's drink and slides it
in front of her.

BAY
Cheers.

They CLINK their glasses together.

EMMA
Actually, can I get a pickle back
for this?

BAY
Really?

EMMA
Yeah, fuck it. Why not?

BAY
I used to know someone who drank
their whiskey the same way.

Bay pours out the pickle juice in a shot glass.

EMMA
Old friend?

BAY
Not anymore.
(a beat)
Now, what do you want?

Emma fishes into her pocket and pulls out an ENVELOPE.
Written on the front is the name: "BAY". Emma puts it in
front of her.

BAY (CONT'D)
What's this?

EMMA
That's a letter to you. From my
wife.

BAY
Who the fucks your wife?

EMMA
Samara Montez.

Recognition then, sudden anger flashes across Bay's face.

BAY
Sam? Is this some kind of stupid
fucking joke?

EMMA
No.

BAY
Why are you here? Where's Sam? Why
doesn't she deliver this shit
herself?

EMMA
She's missing and I can't find her.

BAY
Yeah, well, join the club. That
bitch has been M.I.A. for a whole
ass decade.
(a beat)
She still owes me a thousand
dollars.

EMMA
This time it's serious. Something
happened to her.

BAY
Like what?

EMMA
I don't know.

BAY
Here, let me help you. You married
someone you obviously know nothing
about but it isn't your fault
because Sam is a fucking liar and a
shitty person.

EMMA
That isn't the Sam I know. The Sam
I know was a really good person.

BAY

Well, she fooled you, buddy because the Sam I know left me high and dry when I needed her most and never looked back. She didn't even say goodbye.

EMMA

She was sorry to hurt you like that.

BAY

How would you know that?

EMMA

Because she wrote it to you here.

Emma gestures to the envelope.

EMMA (CONT'D)

That's your apology. The one you never got but certainly deserved.

BAY

It's too late.

Emma takes the last swig of her drink and stands up to leave.

EMMA

I'm going to be in town for a couple more days. I'm staying at the Mermaid Motel down the street. Do you know it?

BAY

Yeah.

EMMA

Read the letter.

(a beat)

I'm in room 204. Come find me if you change your mind and want to help.

BAY

I don't know what you think I can do to help.

EMMA

You were her best friend. You knew her better than anyone else.

BAY

So? That was the past.

EMMA

Well, I have a box full of those apology letters and you're probably the only person who knows the people Sam was writing to.

BAY

This is fucking crazy, you know that?

EMMA

Help me find her.

BAY

You should go.

EMMA

Alright, but you know where to find me.

With that Emma hits the road, leaving Bay to simmer in her thoughts.

EXT. LIZARD LOUNGE - PARKING LOT - DAY

Tim watches Emma leave the bar from inside his old pickup truck.

He struggles with the decision but cuts off the engine and exits the car.

INT. LIZARD LOUNGE - DAY

Bay is staring at the ENVELOPE in her hand, turning it over. Tim walks into the bar. Bay looks up to see him.

BAY

Oh, what the fuck.

TIM

Bailey Johnson. How long has it been?

BAY

I already told the last woman who came by that I can't help with Sam, nor do I fucking want to.

TIM

So, you met Emma?

BAY

Yeah. I already told her and I'll
tell you too, the past is the past.
I've moved on and so should
everyone else.

TIM

I couldn't agree with you more.

This surprises Bay. She tucks the letter into her back pocket
and grabs a clean pint glass.

BAY

Can I get you a beer?

Tim smiles.

EXT. MERMAID MOTEL - NIGHT

A small motel right off the beach.

A fountain with the statue of a beautiful mermaid is lit up
with blue lights that illuminate a crowd of spring breakers
that have taken over the motel.

INT. MERMAID MOTEL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The hallway is LOUD and CROWDED with young COLLEGE STUDENTS
wearing beach apparel and sunburns. It's a wild party vibe.

Overwhelmed by the commotion, Emma shuffles down the hall.
She finds her door, ROOM 204. Emma swipes her KEYCARD, the
light turns green, and she enters.

INT. MERMAID MOTEL - ROOM 204 - NIGHT

Emma throws down her single duffle bag and sits on the edge
of the bed. She pulls out her phone to check for any updates
but nothing. Emma stares at the lock screen on her phone.

ON SCREEN: A PICTURE OF EMMA AND SAM, HAPPY & CAREFREE.

END CLOSE-UP.

*It feels like a world away as we stay on Emma's face wrung
with sadness.*

FROM OUTSIDE: LOUD MUSIC and SHOUTING comes through the thin
walls.

Aggravated, Emma gets up and peers through the blinds of the motel window.

EMMA'S POV: we see a mob of DRUNK PEOPLE partying in the pool.

Suddenly a THUMPING SOUND shakes the walls. A muffled wail of PASSIONATE MOANING sends Emma standing straight up.

EMMA

(shaking her head)

I can't believe this was the only
motel room left on the island.

She grabs the empty ice bucket off the kitchenette table and exits the room.

INT. LIZARD LOUNGE - NIGHT

Tim sits with Bay at the bar. It is after hours. There is a line of empty pint and shot glasses crowding the bar top around them.

They face a dartboard hanging from the opposite wall and take turns shooting darts and mostly missing.

Bay winds up to throw and misses, splintering the bare wall.

BAY

And, then she ran off with this
'roided up maniac's entire stash of
pills, but not before throwing up
on my brand new fucking shoes.

Tim bellows with LAUGHTER. They're both clearly drunk.

TIM

Reminds of the time she brought
home a stolen motorcycle and then
the real owners turned up at my
place looking for the damn thing.

BAY

No.

TIM

They took the bike in the middle of
the night along with everything
else in my garage as some kind of
revenge. Never apologized to this
day.

Bay shakes her head as it sinks in. Tim takes a swig of beer and shoots another dart.

BAY
Sam was so fucking selfish.

TIM
Never once paid me back.

BAY
She still owes me a thousand dollars.

Tim raises his glass in a toast.

TIM
To leaving the past behind us.

Bay raises her glass to his.

BAY
-and, never looking back.

Their glasses KLINK together and they each take a swig. A silent beat of thought.

TIM
She wasn't always so bad.

BAY
No, she wasn't.

TIM
Used to follow me around everywhere and annoy the shit out of me.

BAY
She was my only friend when I first moved here for middle school. No one else would talk to me or even look my way. But, Sam did. And, she never let anyone talk bad about me. Not once. Fuckin' bitch.

TIM
So, now what?

BAY
Now, nothing.

Another thoughtful BEAT hangs between them.

BAY (CONT'D)
You know what I don't get?

TIM
What?

BAY
I can understand the first time she disappeared. Shit was fucked up. But, now? She's got a wife, a nice life. Why leave?

TIM
That's just what Sam does.

BAY
Maybe something happened.

TIM
Now you sound like everyone else. Nothing happened except that my little sister is a huge fucking disappointment.

BAY
I don't know. Her wife sure seemed certain that something is off.

TIM
Sam's wife...still feels weird hearing it.

Bay pulls out the letter from her back pocket, and stares at her name written across.

TIM (CONT'D)
Have you read it yet?

BAY
No. I can't bring myself to do it.

TIM
Do you think Sam's really changed for the better?

BAY
I don't know. Maybe we should talk to Emma. At least hear her out.

TIM
We already sent her packing. She could be a hundred miles away by now.

BAY
I know where to find her.

INT. MERMAID MOTEL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Emma is returning with a full bucket of ice.

She's almost at the door to her room when she strolls by a neighboring room with it's door propped wide open. A cleaning cart is parked outside.

As she passes, Emma catches a glimpse of something that makes her stop in her tracks.

INTERCUT - INT. HALLWAY / INT. ROOM 202

A group of rowdy YOUNG GUYS are watching the MOTEL MAID, a beautiful but nervous Hispanic woman, change the bedsheets.

As the maid bends over to tuck in the corners of sheet, the guys SNICKER and one of them RICKY(17), lifts the skirt of her uniform with one hand while he SNAPS A PICTURE of her ass on his cellphone with the other.

His idiot buddies, ARMANDO(18) and BRUNO(17), LAUGH HYSTERICALLY. The maid reacts to the laughter and quickly turns around, tears in her eyes, humiliated.

Before she can think better of it, Emma does the unthinkable and takes a step into the room.

EMMA
Hey! What the fuck are you guys
doing?

EXT. MERMAID MOTEL - NIGHT

Bay and Tim walk past the mermaid fountain, the blue shimmering light from the water illuminating their faces.

INT. MERMAID MOTEL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Inside the motel, the lobby is still crowded with YOUNG DRUNK PEOPLE coming and going from the pool to their rooms.

Tim and Bay step inside and observe the chaos of the wet floors and a HORNY COUPLE in bathing suits making out on the lobby couches.

TIM
This is insane.

BAY
(annoyed)
This is spring break in Miami
Beach. It's like the Wild West but
with booze and bikinis.

TIM
Where's the receptionist? Isn't
there anyone working here?

BAY
They're probably all hiding in the
back at this point. Let's see if we
can find her in this mess.

INTERCUT - INT. HALLWAY / INT. ROOM 202

Emma stands, just a step inside the room. Ricky, Armando, and Bruno search for the source of the interruption and turn to see Emma's silhouette framed in the doorway.

The maid, who is frantic and terrified, throws the rest of the clean linens on the mattress and runs out of the room to her cart. As she passes--

EMMA
Are you okay?

MAID
Te juro que no hice nada malo.

A beat passes as Emma tries to understand, concerned.

MAID (CONT'D)
These men are taking pictures.

Emma turns towards the guys, fists clenched.

EMMA
You creeps have some fucking nerve.

The guys erupt into LAUGHTER. Ricky smirks at Emma.

RICKY
Who the fuck are you? This is our
room. Get out.

EMMA
That doesn't give you the right to
harass anyone, you little shitbag.

This makes Armando and Bruno howl with LAUGHTER as they egg Ricky on.

ARMANDO

Bro, Ricky, you're gonna let some chick talk to you like that?

Ricky gets up from his seat and walks up to Emma. They stand in the doorway facing off against each other. Ricky sizes her up with a smirk meant to intimidate. He's easily a foot taller than Emma.

RICKY

Please. This old lady isn't gonna do shit.

EMMA

Oh, yeah?

Emma LAUGHS derisively and KICKS RICKY SQUARE IN THE NUTS, HARD. Ricky crumbles to the tiled floor writhing in pain, dropping his cellphone as he goes down with a THUD.

Emma kneels down to pick it up. Armando and Bruno stand frozen in shock.

ARMANDO

Bro, what the fuck?

RICKY

(in pain)

This bitch just kicked me in the fucking nuts.

Emma takes Ricky's cellphone and SLAMS it on the hard floor. It smashes to pieces, shattering the phone screen.

BRUNO

Are you serious, man? What the hell.

EMMA

That's what you get for being sick little fucks. Grow the fuck up, losers.

Satisfied, Emma walks back out into the hallway, to comfort the maid whose watched all this unfold in distress.

Inside the room, Ricky pulls himself up from the ground. He picks up his SMASHED PHONE and as he turns it over in his hand and sees the damage, Ricky is overcome with RAGE.

In a fury, Ricky cocks back his arm and beams the cellphone out of the room, sending it out into the hallway right at an unsuspecting Emma still checking in with the Maid.

Emma looks up JUST IN TIME to DUCK out of the way. The cellphone hits the wall behind her, WHAM!

RICKY
You're gonna pay for that you
fucking bitch!

Terrified, the maid runs away down the hall to safety, but Emma isn't ready to back down.

Ricky charges out of the room and into the hall, ready to take her down. Emma braces herself for impact.

CUT TO:

OTHER END OF THE HALLWAY

Tim and Bay step off the elevator and head down the hall.

BAY
(to Tim)
What if we can't find her.

Up ahead they see the cart parked outside room 202 and Emma with the frantic maid.

TIM
Is that Emma?

BAY
Well, that was easier than I
thought it would be.

They are about to call out and greet Emma when they see her duck out of the way as a PHONE comes beaming out of the room and WHAM! Hits the wall.

The frightened maid makes a run for it, shoving past Tim and Bay to get to safety.

BAY (CONT'D)
What the fuck? Did someone just
throw that at her?

Tim and Bay look at each other and start charging down the hallway towards Emma.

BACK TO:

INTERCUT - INT. HALLWAY / ROOM 202

Emma is bracing herself to get laid out when all of a sudden, BAM! Tim comes running down the hall and collides with Ricky, tackling him down to the ground before he reaches Emma.

EMMA

Tim? What are you doing here?

TIM

(from the ground)

Is this asshole bothering you?

Bay charges up from behind, ready to jump into the fight.

EMMA

Bay? You're here too?

BAY

You think I'd miss out on a good fight?

Tim grapples with Ricky on the floor but Ricky shoves him off. Ricky gets up ready to keep fighting, but sees that he's out numbered by Emma, Bay, and Tim.

Armando and Bruno pop their heads out the door, unsure of what to do next. Bay turns on them, ready to brawl.

BAY (CONT'D)

Go ahead, motherfuckers. I dare you.

RICKY

Yo, let's get out of here.

Ricky bolts down the hallway, Armando and Bruno following close behind. Tim gets up from the floor.

TIM

That's right, you better run!

Bay goes to chase after them but Emma grabs her by the arm.

EMMA

Let them go.

BAY

Are you sure? Because I'll crush those punks' skulls in if I have to.

EMMA
It's fine. They'll get what's
coming to them.
(a beat)
You're both here. Why?

The adrenaline fading away, Emma looks to Tim and Bay, her unlikely heroes.

TIM
We thought we'd at least talk to
you. Hear you out.

BAY
Sam still owes me money.

Emma smiles at Bay, her first smile in days.

EMMA
A thousand dollars.

BAY
That's right.

Bay throws an arm around Emma and Tim's shoulders.

BAY (CONT'D)
Don't anyone forget it.

TIM
(to Emma)
Well, you certainly know how to
find trouble. You and my sister
have that in common.

We watch the trio get smaller as they make their way down the hallway.

FADE TO:

INT. UNKNOWN CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

It's dark. We're inside a small tight space, the RUMBLE of a car engine shakes the hull of the TRUNK.

A WOMAN is crammed inside, and as we watch her eyes shoot open with fear, we see that IT'S SAM!

As Sam tries to move, she realizes her arms and legs are bound tight, and her mouth duct-taped shut.

Sam's BREATHING HITCHES as she tries not to panic. Tears stream down her face. *Is this really happening?*

Sam tries to SCREAM but its drowned out by the NOISE of the moving car.

EXT. UNKNOWN CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

We watch the tail end of an old Honda civic with a FLORIDA LICENSE PLATE shake and jump as it drives along a dirt road, kicking up dust in its wake.

There's MUSIC PLAYING from a radio up front.

INT. UNKNOWN CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

We're back inside the trunk with a HYPERVENTILLATING Sam, her legs bound together with a nylon rope, effectively immobilizing her.

Sam fights hard against a thick zip-tie restraint cutting into her wrists. She is desperate to escape, but its no use.

SAM

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

Sam tries to calm herself, SLOWING HER BREATHING. Her tear-stained eyes dart around searching through the darkness for a way out.

She spots it, A GLOW IN THE DARK button attached to a level. It's the emergency escape hatch for the trunk. *But how will she escape if she's tied up?*

Though her arms are pinned behind her back, Sam reaches out, using her hands to feel around in the dark. They BUMP into something...something HEAVY.

As Sam feels it up and down her eyes widen with realization. Its a metal CAR JACK.

Sam wriggles closer to the jack. Her hands work their way around finding a SHARP EDGE. She begins to use the jack to cut away at the zip-tie constricting her, but its slow work.

The car suddenly JUMPS and Sam BUMPS and hits her head hard on the ceiling of the trunk. The car jack slams back down with a CLANG, crushing her hands.

Sam CRIES OUT in pain, but its muffled by the DUCT TAPE covering her mouth. *It seems there's no way out.*

EXT. MERMAID MOTEL - POOLSIDE - NIGHT

Emma, Tim, and Bay sit on the outdoor patio lounge chairs that line the motel pool. The party has finally winded down around them and the crowd has diminished to a few stragglers.

It is fairly quiet except for the sound of FAR OFF MUSIC playing from a speaker on the other side of the pool area.

Tim sparks a rolled joint, takes a puff, and passes it around.

TIM

So, you really think she's here in Miami?

EMMA

I'm not sure. After reading all these apologies to people from Sam's past. I'm sure they all had a motive to hurt her.

TIM

So, let's do it.

BAY

Do what?

TIM

Deliver the letters. It'll be the easiest way to get more answers.

BAY

How are we supposed to track down a bunch of people without any full names or addresses?

EMMA

That's where you two come in. You were both a big part of her life before she left Miami. You know the old Sam better than anyone.

BAY

Unfortunately.

EMMA

So, what do you think? Are you in?

TIM

Fuck it, I'm in.

Now its Bay's turn to answer but she stays silent, looking off into the distance to think.

BAY
I don't know. It was all a long
time ago.

EMMA
I understand.

Bay reads the disappointed look on Emma's face and relents.

BAY
Fine. I'll take a look at the
stupid letters.

Emma smiles a little to herself.

Just then, A FAMILIAR SONG starts PLAYING over the speaker.
Tim perks up, shaking his head in disbelief.

TIM
(re: the song)
Shit, I know this. It was one of
Sam's favorite songs.

BAY
Oh god, I remember her playing this
everyday in the seventh grade. On
repeat.

TIM
Fuck man, its been twenty years and
the words are still burned into my
brain.

Tim and Bay LAUGH together and SING ALONG a lighter beat.

EMMA
(quietly)
Yeah, she loved this song.

Bay and Tim's moment of fun is over as they look over to
Emma.

TIM
You're not alone anymore, Emma.
We're going to help you.

EMMA
I'm not stopping until we find her.

The three new friends lay back in their lounge chairs and
stare up at the stars twinkling in the night sky, as the
MUSIC SWELLS.

We're like a bird again as we begin to ascend into the night sky above. Emma, Bay and Tim grow smaller and smaller as we rise up over the rooftops.

FADE TO:

INT. UNKNOWN CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

We're back with Sam where we left her. She finds the strength to push the carjack off her crushed hands.

She gets back to hacking away at the zip-tie with the sharper edge of the jack THWACK, THWACK, and it SNAPS off, freeing her wrists.

Sam works quick to untie the nylon rope from her legs as the car continues its BUMPY ride.

When Sam is finally free she freezes, listening to the DISTANT BUZZ of the car radio.

In the dark Sam feels around and finds the LEVER for the trunk hatch. *She knows what comes next.*

Sam braces herself and pulls it. The lid of the trunk pops open, exposing the night air.

EXT./INT. UNKNOWN CAR - MOVING - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The old civic makes its way down a long stretch of road. The moon lights up the swamp around them, the sawgrass and cypress surrounding them for miles.

We see the lid of the trunk JUMPING up and down with the movement of the car as Sam finally takes her first look out.

She sees the road moving fast underneath her. Sam takes a steadying breath. Then, before she can chicken out, she throws herself out of the trunk.

EXT. EVERGLADES - ALLIGATOR ALLEY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Sam tucks and rolls as she lands on the pavement with a THUD.

She skids out into the tall grass on the side of the road, but she notices too late that one end of the nylon rope is still attached to her ankle.

The rope ripples freely in the air, then becomes taut with a sudden tension as the carjack is ripped out of the trunk and flung onto the road with a loud CRASH.

The backend of the car lights up RED as the driver SLAMS ON THE BRAKES, the tires SCREECHING out into the silent night.

Still stunned from the fall, Sam rushes to free herself as the car starts to reverse.

EXT. UNKNOWN CAR - STATIONARY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The car whips around and parks itself where the carjack has fallen in the middle of the road.

A dark figure steps out of the car. We pull back to reveal a crazed looking man, GRIFF(mid 30's), big like a linebacker, with a menacing look.

Griff walks around to the back of the car where he eyes the empty trunk.

 GRIFF
 (under his breath)
 Shit!

Griff whips around, looking out into the night for any sign of Sam. He spots the car jack in the middle of the road, illuminated by the headlights of the car.

Griff inspects it, sees that a rope is still tethered to it.

The rope TWITCHES suddenly as though something is caught on the other end.

Griff begins to follow the length of it out onto the side of the road, to a cluster of bushes where the rope disappears into the dark wetlands.

He swoops down to grab the length of rope and pulls hard. There is something heavy at the end of it.

He pulls hand over hand. We hear the SICK SOUND of something heavy being dragged through the wet swamp grass.

Griff's breath quickens as he works. He thinks he's finally got her, but then a large rotting cypress branch bursts out of the bushes and we see the end of the rope has been tied around it.

 GRIFF (CONT'D)
 (into the night)
 You've got no where to run but the
 swamp, you stupid girl.

His eyes search the dark but find nothing. A sudden SLAM of a car door, and the REV OF AN ENGINE cause Griff to whip around just in time to see Sam drive off with his car, leaving him stranded in the dark.

The red taillights disappear into the dark.

We begin to rise, higher and higher, into the moonlit sky. Griff becomes nothing more than a small dot swallowed up by the swamp.

Somewhere in this dark expanse, Sam makes a run for her life.

FADE OUT.