

**"I AM SAM"**

Screenplay by  
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**2001**

**SHOOTING DRAFT**

**INT. STARBUCKS - 7:30 A.M.**

We're watching a pair of hands arrange white sugar  
packets,  
blue Equal packets, and pink Sweet and Low into small  
containers. With precision and lightning speed, the mixed  
up  
colors and crumpled packets are transformed into neat  
little  
color-coded rows. Wait, this container has three Equals  
and  
four Sweet 'n' lows. The hand quickly plucks the mutant  
Sweet 'n' Low. There. Symmetry.

We move up those hands and meet SAM DAWSON as he surveys  
his  
domain. Something about him. He's extremely compelling,  
uniquely handsome. But it's more than that. Those eyes,  
they sparkle with the wonder of a child. Life's cynical  
edge  
has not etched it's path across this face. They light on  
a  
COFFEE CUP held by one of the Regulars.

**SAM**

Double double decaf low-fat Cap.

**BRUCE**

You got it, buddy.

**SAM**

Good choice very good choice.

Sweet  
Sam moves along, commenting to CUSTOMERS as he places  
'n Lows on tables, the self-appointed host of Starbucks.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

Mocha rumba Frappuccino no whipped, half low, half non. Excellent choice. Very good choice.

He stops in front of sale mugs and turns them so that the logos all face the same way. His boss GEORGE approaches.

**GEORGE**

Sam, they called. It's time for you to go.

Sam FREEZES, but doesn't turn around.

**GEORGE (CONT'D)**

Sam, did you hear me?

**SAM**

"It's time for you to go."

**GEORGE**

Yes.

**SAM**

It's time.

**GEORGE**

Good luck.

Without another word, Sam walks straight out the door.

**EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - DAY**

Sam, still in his white apron, walks down the busy street. He has a fast, loping gait that doesn't slow or hesitate

for

anyone. A COUPLE argue on the sidewalk. Sam WALKS RIGHT **BETWEEN THEM.**

**SAM**

It's time. It's time.

Sam keeps moving, he crosses the street without stopping. Traffic SCREECHES to a HALT! Cars HONK, a taxi driver

YELLS.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

It's time, it's time for you to go.

**INT. HALLWAY - LATER**

Sam plows down the hall and comes to room 324.

**SAM**

Rebecca!

A Sam pushes the DOOR OPEN. And we REALIZE we are entering:  
**HOSPITAL LABOR DELIVERY ROOM AT LA COUNTY HOSPITAL.**

is REBECCA is in the middle of a major contraction. Her face  
that the opposite of Sam's. Hardened. She lets out a scream  
stops Sam dead in his tracks. GERTIE, a no-nonsense Black  
Nurse, looks up from the monitor.

**GERTIE**

You the one responsible for this?

Sam nods, taking Gertie quite literally.

**SAM**

I'm sorry.

**GERTIE**

Too late for sorries, daddy, get over  
here and hold her hand.

ANOTHER Sam reaches for Rebecca's hand. She pulls it away.  
CONTRACTION - Rebecca screams. Sam SCREAMS.

**NURSE**

You got a live one, Gert.

**INT. LABOR ROOM - LATER**

**DR. JAMISON**

Okay, this is it!

**SAM**

(spins in circles)  
This is it! This is it!

**DR. JAMISON**

And it's a girl...

The BABY lets out her first cry. Sam watches, awestruck.  
Gertie wraps the baby in a blanket and holds her out to  
Rebecca. Rebecca shakes her head - NOT NOW. Gertie walks  
over to Sam.

**GERTIE**

There's someone who's been waitin' an

awful long time to see you, Sam.

She places the BABY into SAM'S ARMS. Suddenly Sam's whole body RELAXES and becomes very still. He looks to Rebecca, but she has turned away. He meets Gertie's eyes. Then in quiet amazement:

**SAM**

This is it.

**GERTIE**

What's her name?

**SAM**

(looks at clock)

Let me see let me see let me see.  
12:17, March 2nd. Lucy in the Sky with  
Diamonds. Recorded March 2nd. 1967.  
Lyrics by John Lennon, music by Paul  
McCartney. Lucy Diamond Dawson.

We hear LIKE A LULLABY, "Picture yourself on a boat in a river with tangerine trees and marmalade skies..."

**EXT. HOSPITAL - NEXT MORNING**

Sam, holding the baby, and Becca, having just checked out, walk down the steps of the hospital holding their complimentary plastic baby bag. Sam is nervous haling the precious cargo and Becca is agitated. They see the bus pulling up and down the street and Sam moves quickly so they can hurry and catch it. As he approaches the bus, he looks around to Becca by his side, but she is not there. He looks and no sign of her. Frantically turning in a full circle, he sees the fabric of her dress disappearing into the crowd down the street. He screams.

**SAM**

Becca! Becca!

The more he screams the faster she moves away. Till there's no trace of her. Sam stands in the middle of the busy block holding Lucy to his chest, devastated.

but We hear, "Look for the girl with the clouds in her eyes,  
she's gone."

**SMASH CUT**

**TO:**

**INT. BUS - NIGHT**

is Sam holds the now sleeping baby to his chest. Next to him  
the plastic bag from the hospital containing diapers, two  
cans of formula and a half empty bottle of milk. Sam is  
underground surrounded by PASSENGERS, the eerie world of the  
at night. Instinctively, Sam holds her even tighter, two  
against the world.

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - DAWN**

folded A marvel of organization. A closet reveals clothes on  
hangers exactly equidistant from each other; precisely

T-shirts, underwear and socks organized by color. A  
carefully systemized record collection fills makeshift  
bookshelves.

Becca's Beatles posters from every era decorate the walls.

things sit in one corner. An island of chaos in an "Hold  
Everything" showroom. The kitchen counter has been  
transformed into a changing table. Bottles and pacifiers  
lined up next to a stack of cloth diapers. Underneath, a  
clothes line of baby clothes.

a The sound of a CRYING BABY breaks the silence. The camera  
follows and finds the CRADLE: a DRAWER tucked snugly into

He blanket hanging like a hammock between two chairs. An  
exhausted SAM POPS up from his bed, behind the hammock.

back swings the hammock, hoping against hope the baby will go  
to sleep.

**SAM**

Didn't you just fall asleep, little  
girl?

(Lucy cries harder)

Okay, if you say it's time to get up,  
then it's time to get up, time to get  
up.

(Sam sniffs the air)  
Oh my, oh my, oh my. Quite a bit of  
business.

He rushes over to the kitchen counter and unsnaps the  
baby's  
pajamas, revealing a cloth diaper held together with  
promotional buttons: one says "Hertz, #1 for Car Rentals",  
Lakers,  
the other a picture of Magic Johnson and reads "Go,  
Go!" Sam undoes it.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God. Let me  
see let me see let me see.

Sam attempts to clean and diaper her. He finally manages  
to  
pin the buttons so that it at least stays on.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

You look very beautiful this morning,  
very beautiful.

He holds her up, and the diaper falls down around her  
ankles.

**CUT**

**TO:**

We pan across a row of diapers on a supermarket shelf:

**HUGGIES, PAMPERS, EXTRA ABSORBENT PAMPERS, LUVS...**

**INT. WALMART - DAY**

Sam stares at the "Great Wall of Diapers", awed. He  
reaches  
for the Pampers, balancing Lucy, then the Luvs, no, the  
Huggies. Sam stops moving, Lucy starts CRYING, so he jogs  
in  
place. Sam decides on one of each. He heads to the  
FORMULA  
AISLE. Gerber, Carnation, Carnation Iron Fortified. He  
stops. Lucy WAILS. WE HEAR THE SONG "HELP, I NEED  
SOMEBODY"

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - 9 P.M.**

Sam paces, carrying Lucy who screams at the top of her  
lungs.

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - 11:25 P.M.**

Sam rocks the CRYING BABY in the hammock. He's exhausted, but she's just getting started. He puts another blanket on her.

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - 1:30 A.M.**

Peace. A punch-drunk Sam lays the sleeping baby into the cradle as if she were a bomb that might detonate. He tiptoes, his FIST raised victoriously - "YES!" He doesn't get two steps before Lucy wakes screaming. Defeated, he picks her up. HELP. The PHONE RINGS. HE PRESSES speaker.

**RASPY WOMAN (O.S.)**

What the hell are you doing to that baby?!

He looks out his window and sees ANNIE CASSELL, his neighbor on the phone, watching him through her window. She is a strange creature with very thick glasses. We sense a uniquely profound intelligence behind all that armor.

**SAM**

Everything's so tiny, tiny. Tiny. Everything. Won't you please come over? Help. I need somebody. Won't you please please help me.

**ANNIE**

You know I can't do that. What does her mother say?

**SAM**

Her mother? Her mother said "This isn't my life. I'm outta here when she comes. It didn't mean anything, Sam. It was just one night. The two of you. That's all I need..." Annie, what if she's sick?

**EXT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

ANNIE has her door open a crack. Annie feels the baby's forehead. Lucy stares up at her, quiet now, fascinated.

**ANNIE**

She's overheated and not eating enough.

How often are you feeding her?

**SAM**

A lot, Gerber, Carnation, Gerber.

**ANNIE**

What's a lot?

**SAM**

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Three squares hot.

**ANNIE**

Babies need food every two hours, Sam.

**SAM**

Oh. I'm sorry Lucy Diamond.

**ANNIE**

What time does the little diamond wake up?

**SAM**

She never really goes to sleep.

**ANNIE**

Okaaaay. Well, let's assume she's up at six. Keep your TV on Nickelodeon. I want you to feed her first while "Bewitched" is on. Then again, when "Hogan's Heroes" starts. After that, well until "Father Knows Best..."

**CUT:**

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - EVENING**

INFAMOUS We are watching "Hogan's Heroes". We hear SHULTZ'S  
a RESPONSE: "I know nothing, absolutely nothing!" Sam feeds  
content Lucy.

**DISSOLVE**

**TO:**

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - LATER**

in "Father Knows Best" on TV. Lucy blissfully falls asleep  
Sam's arms. Euphoric, he tiptoes to the cradle and places



her ever so gently, when suddenly, the FRONT DOOR FLIES  
OPEN.

Sam's BEST FRIENDS DESCEND inside: IFTY, a Pakistani gentlemen with a gentle face and a wide smile, carrying a large stuffed giraffe with a bow on it. BRAD, who sees himself as a real ladies man, in tight jeans and a Farrah Fawcett T-shirt; and ROBERT, highly paranoid, thinks the world's out to get him. Lucy WAILS. Sam RUNS to the  
CRIB.

**SAM**

What are you doing here now?! Her first sound sleep, not a sound, not a sound.

**BRAD**

Eight years every Thursday Video Night and you forgot?!

**SAM**

Oh my god, Video Night. First Thursday of the month. Video night at Sam's house. I'm sorry, I forgot.

**IFTY**

Becca's gone. "Gone with the Wind" is a very sad movie.

**ROBERT**

Oh here we go...Everything changes now. Soon you'll forget about Wednesday night Denny's and Friday night Karaoke. And I got hit by a car today.

**SAM**

You did?

**ROBERT**

It's probably that guy from the V.A.

**BRAD**

What guy?

**ROBERT**

(closing window)  
I can't discuss it. And now this.

Ifty makes ORIGAMI BIRDS out of newspapers. Lucy's rapt.

**SAM**

She looks smart, doesn't she?

**IFTY**

Of course, look. She's already reading the newspaper. I have five smart sisters in Pakistan. I am only brother. "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers" was a wonderful movie I forgot to bring last week for Video Night...

**BRAD**

Did you get "Blade Runner" for tonight?

**ROBERT**

Now it's all my fault?!

**BRUCE**

Don't tell me you forgot again. I broke a date with a daydream to come here.

standing  
There's a knock at the door. Ifty goes to get it. Brad moans when he sees his 65 YEAR OLD MOTHER, ESTELLE, in the doorway.

**BRAD**

Mom! I told you Video Night's over at nine! It's only six-thirty!

**ESTELLE**

(unaware of the baby)  
Sorry. I'll wait in the lobby.

hot  
circles.  
She exits. Lucy begins to CRY. Brad takes her - like a potato, Robert takes her - now Ifty runs around in

**IFTY**

She needs motion. My father drove my sisters in his taxi to get them to go to sleep. Two-fifty surcharge on all taxi's from the airport...

**ROBERT**

I got hit by a taxi on Tuesday.

And it all starts again and we --

**TO:**

**CUT**

**EXT. BUS - NIGHT**

An empty bus makes its way through the city at night.

**INT. BUS - NIGHT**

**BUS DRIVER**

Main and Temple...again. She out yet?

The camera moves along and stops on the long seat at the back. Sam lies with Lucy spooned into the crook of his arm,  
almost asleep.

**SAM**

Almost there, almost there. One more round and she'll be down for the night.

We hear the song "Golden Slumbers". In a SERIES OF DISSOLVES, we see Lucy and Sam in DIFFERENT SLEEPING POSITIONS on the bus seat. Gradually, she GROWS in HIS **PROTECTIVE EMBRACE --**

SIX ONE MONTH, THEN TWO. NOW FIVE. She's BIG AND ROUND at MONTHS. And on and on into the night...

**INT. WALMART'S PHOTO BOOTH - DAY**

We see Sam and Lucy CRAMMED into the booth, wearing birthday hats, taking HER FIRST BIRTHDAY picture. We see the PHOTO STRIP as it comes out of the slot. Sam's shoulder with Lucy's ear - Lucy's nose with Sam's elbow, their faces never made it into the picture.

**INT. STARBUCKS - 8:30 A.M.**

The place is packed. Sam moves from table to table, cleaning.

**SAM**

Double macchiato, low foam, low-fat.  
Good choice, very good choice.

Sam turns and WE SEE LUCY attached to him in a handmade snugly, crocheted by Annie. She faces outward, all hands, all 16 MONTHS of her; too big for the snugly. She grabs a croissant from a customer. George looks confused. Then makes a SWIPE for a customer's coffee, knocking it to the ground. It SPLATTERS all over an anorexic, on-her-fourth double-latte WOMAN in a designer exercise outfit. She begins

shrieking. George looks at Sam, this can't go on.

**INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - MORNING**

Sam, Lucy by his side, has his foot in Annie's door.

**SAM**

Please, Annie! She's too big to take to work.

**ANNIE**

I'm not a baby-sitter. I'm too busy.

**LUCY**

Annie, Annie, Annie...

**ANNIE**

(suspicious)  
Did you teach her that?

**SAM**

It was her first word. Very first word.

Annie opens the door, takes Lucy's hand, and pulls her in.

**ANNIE**

And people worry you're not smart.

**INT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT - ONE WEEK LATER**

The apartment looks like a fallout shelter. The kitchen contains enough canned goods to last a year. Brightly colored crocheted doilies - Annie's hobby - adorn every available surface. The BRIGHTLY COLORED WEB of an **AGORAPHOBE**.

Lucy sits in Annie's lap, getting her first piano lesson.

WE

SEE LUCY'S TINY FINGERS on the keys. In a SERIES OF DISSOLVES, it is joined by Annie's hand tapping out one

note,

now two notes, and as the weeks pass, a chord. Until

finally

the notes merge to become the most unlikely duet of

"Twinkle,

Twinkle, Little Star".

**ANNIE**

This is Mozart. He did twenty-two variations of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star". You smell good. You can tell a lot about a person by their smell. If

they've got too much perfume on they're covering something up. You gotta watch someone who smells like soap. Gotta wonder what their priorities are. Nervous people. People who try too hard. They smell like fish. But you. You smell like milk. Milk and hope.

Lucy leaves the piano and toddles over to Annie's loom and plays with a ball yarn.

**VOICE (O.S.)**

Groceries, Annie.

**ANNIE**

Thanks.

of Annie opens the door to pull in the groceries. The ball yarn ROLLS OUT the door and Lucy chases after it. Annie, terrified, bellows:

**ANNIE (CONT'D)**

Lucy! Come back here! Come back!

It becomes obvious Annie can't walk outside. Trembling:

**ANNIE (CONT'D)**

"Lucy in the sky with diamonds..."

Hearing the familiar tune, Lucy stops and toddles back. Annie sweeps her up, relieved and we --

**INT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT**

to Sam on stage, with Ifty and Brad as his back-up singers, continuing the song in the oddest, most heartfelt version

Lucy who sits on Robert's lap and in heaven.

**EXT. PARK - DAY**

INTO A beautiful blue sky. And "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" continues as Lucy's THREE YEAR OLD laughing face SWINGS

FRAME. FRAME on a swing then DISAPPEARS out THE OTHER END OF

again... Now Lucy SWINGS BACK DOWN and out of the other end

and Sam's FACE, glowing with delight, APPEARS AGAINST THE SKY

then disappears. Sam and Lucy are on swings surrounded by MOTHERS and KIDS at the park.

**LUCY (V.O.)**

Daddy, where does the sky end?

**SAM (V.O.)**

Let me see, let me see. I've never been there but they say it's somewhere near China.

**EXT. PARK - ONE YEAR LATER**

Lucy FLIES INTO FRAME, now FOUR, sitting on Sam's lap, swinging.

**LUCY (V.O.)**

Are lady bugs only girls or are there boys, too. And if there are, what are they called?

**SAM (V.O.)**

The Beatles.

**EXT. PARK - ONE YEAR LATER**

Then Lucy FLIES INTO FRAME, now FIVE, followed by Sam.

**LUCY (V.O.)**

Do I look more like you or Mommy?

**ON SAM'S FACE**

He knew this moment would come.

**INT. DENNY'S - THURSDAY NIGHT DINNER - EVENING**

Lucy and Sam are having a serious talk over breaded Sole.

**LUCY**

If you and Mommy liked each other enough to have me, how come you're not together anymore?

**SAM**

I think she fell out of love with me. Not you, never you. Me, just me.

**LUCY**

When you fall out of love where do you land?

**SAM**

Somewhere in Florida, I think.

**LUCY**

Do you think she'll ever come back?

**SAM**

(long pause)

Paul McCartney lost his mother when he was fourteen. John lost his mother twice. First when Julie gave John to her sister Mimi to raise. And then again when Julia was hit by a car. They say God picks certain people, special people. That's what they say.

Lucy takes this in. Sam begins to shift his tomatoes just so... his potatoes just slightly to the left. Lucy watches.

**LUCY**

Daddy, did God mean for you to be like this or was it an accident?

**SAM**

Do you mean - what do you mean?

**LUCY**

I mean you're different.

**SAM**

What do you mean? I mean, what do you mean?

**LUCY**

You're not like the other daddies.

**SAM**

I'm not am I. I'm sorry.

**LUCY**

Don't be sorry. I'm lucky. Nobody else's daddy ever comes to the park.

**ON SAM'S FACE**

Filled with relief. Bursting with love.

**SAM**

We are very lucky, aren't we?

Grace approaches with two plates of pie, ice cream on the

side.

**GRACE**

Ice cream on the side.

**LUCY**

Not on top. Not on top.

**SAM**

Good choice. Very good choice.

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - THURSDAY NIGHT VIDEO NIGHT**

**SAM**

Brad, I know it was your turn. I'm sure of it.

**BRAD**

I swear to God it was Robert's turn.

**ROBERT**

Why is it always my fault?

**IFTY**

I keep track, last time, I say to myself, I say, write it down... Bank of America give away beautiful calendar, every month a picture of wild animal, look June, an Elk. Elke Sommer...she starred in the remake of "Prisoner of Zenda"... Three stars Leonard Maltin video movie guide.

HER  
  
stares

As they go on, Lucy matter-of-factly PULLS A VIDEO OUT OF  
BACKPACK, and puts it in the VCR. She turns it on. It's  
"Kramer vs. Kramer". Everyone stops their arguing and  
at Lucy.

**LUCY**

Annie let me borrow it.

**INT. CHILDREN'S SHOE STORE - DAY**

tries

A row of brand new children's shoes on display. Lucy  
on dozens of school shoes, surrounded by Sam and her  
"Godfathers": Ifty, Brad and Robert.

**SAM**

You need a good sturdy school shoe.



Arches are very important.

**IFTY**

Sturdy is boring. Red shoes bring good luck.

**BRAD**

But red doesn't got with green.

**IFTY**

Except on Christmas.

**BRAD**

No brown clodhoppers. Everyone will make fun of her.

**SAM**

NO ONE will make fun of Lucy.

**ROBERT**

She might be stupid.

**IFTY**

No she's not --

**ROBERT**

Did they test her?

**BRAD**

You don't know for sure.

**SAM**

Yes I do.

**BRUCE**

But if she is, don't make her go to school.

**ROBERT**

Don't let her in the lunch room. Johnny Marzettie's there.

**BRAD**

And gym. Get her a pass. The rules for volleyball are so hard to remember. "Rotate Rackman Rotate."

**IFTY**

Throw the ball at his forehead and the water on his brain will come out his nose.

Meanwhile, Lucy has been trying on a simple brown shoe.

**LUCY**

I like these.

**SAM**

She know what she likes. She likes these. How much are they?

**SALESMAN**

Forty-nine ninety-nine.

**SAM**

One penny less than fifty. These shoes are one penny less than fifty?

**LUCY**

It's okay, Dad. I don't really like them.

**SAM**

No, no no no no.

**IFTY**

We'll all give ten dollars.

**BRAD**

I've only got three plus five. But I need one for stamps.

**ROBERT**

Don't pull your wad out in front of people.

They all dig in their pockets and begin counting very slowly.

**SAM**

Thank you, thank you. We are rich in friends. That's what our fortune cookie said. 1, 2, 3, 4, quarters that makes one.

**SALESMAN**

I'll count it.

**SAM**

Is it enough?

**SALESMAN**

(exasperated)  
If there's a God.

**BRAD**

Do we get a balloon with these?

**SALESMAN**

Yes.

**ROBERT**

All of us, or just her?

**SMASH CUT**

**TO:**

**EXT. STREET NEAR SHOE STORE - DAY**

Those new little brown shoes walking in between four pairs  
of  
man's shoes. We move up from those shoes to see FIVE PAIR  
OF  
HANDS tightly clasping their balloons as they march  
victoriously down the street. We MOVE IN on Lucy's little  
brown shoes skipping with joy and --

**DISSOLVE**

**TO:**

**EXT. SCHOOL FIELD - DAY**

Those same little shoes in the midst of a mass of black  
soccer cleats. We move up and see Lucy in the middle of a  
fierce kids soccer game.  
Score's tied. The ball comes to Lucy. She kicks and  
misses.  
From the sidelines we hear:

**SAM**

Beautiful kick! Very close!

Lucy looks up at her dad proudly. The ball comes again.  
Nobody could miss this one. But Lucy does.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

Thatta girl! Thatta girl! They're  
getting scared now!

The game continues. The GOALIE'S FATHER, DUNCAN RHODES,  
handsome, commanding and dressed in a suit, calls to his  
son:

**MR. RHODES**

C'mon, Conner! On your toes! They're  
all counting on you!

down  
it!  
Conner tenses up, alert under the pressure. Meanwhile,  
at the other end, the ball heads toward Lucy. She kicks  
Hard. Right into her team's own goal. The crowd GROANS.

**SAM**

Hurray, Lucy! You're getting the hang  
of it now! You've got them scared now!

Lucy's bursting with confidence, plows toward the ball and  
NAILS IT! The ball goes flying. The parents in the stand  
are completely baffled! Sam is completely ecstatic!

**SAM (CONT'D)**

L-u-c-y! That's our battlecry!

The ball heads into the goal, just passing the goalie,  
Conner. Sam runs to embrace Lucy when he hears Duncan  
reaming his son --

**MR. RHODES**

The whole game was right in front of  
your nose! I leave work early to watch  
you blow the whole game!?

away.  
Conner slouches against the fence as his father walks  
Seeing this, Sam whispers to Lucy.

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON**

A child's hand double jumps across a checker board.

**CONNER (O.S.)**

Ha!

dinner.  
Lucy and Conner are playing checkers while Sam cooks

Two carrots cut into ten pieces. Bow Tie Pasta - 35 pieces  
each.

**CONNER (CONT'D)**

What's wrong with your father? Why's he  
acting like a retard?

**LUCY**

He is.

he  
Their hands graze against each other on the check board -

pulls his hand away.

**CONNER**

Are you?

**LUCY**

No.

**CONNER**

Are you sure?

**LUCY**

Yeah.

**CONNER**

How do you know?

**LUCY**

He told me.

**CONNER**

But he's a retard.

**LUCY**

Yeah well it takes one to know one!

the

He crowns her - her eyes shift to Sam in the kitchen, for first time a bit uneasily.

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Sam's reading Lucy her homework book.

**SAM**

"They perched in sisisi..."

**LUCY**

"Silence."

**SAM**

"...silence for a long time." Boy. Your teacher chose a hard book this time. "How can we be so difdifdif..."

**LUCY**

"Different."

book

Sam glances up at Lucy self-consciously. Lucy grabs the from Sam, tosses it on the pile and picks up another.

**LUCY (CONT'D)**

I don't like that book - let's read  
"Green Eggs and Ham".

Relieved, Sam plunges into the book, which is more  
memorized than read.

**SAM**

"I am Sam, Sam I am. Do you like green  
eggs and ham? I do not like them, Sam I  
am!"

They both laugh, delighted. Lucy looks sleepy.

**MATCH**

**DISSOLVE:**

Lucy is getting drowsy. Sam is just getting started.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

"And I will eat them here and there.  
Say I will eat them ANYWHERE. I do so  
like green eggs and ham, thank you thank  
you, Sam I am!" One more time!

**LUCY**

Daddy, I have school tomorrow...I don't  
wanna be too sleepy.

**SAM**

Just the part about the boat and the  
goat in the rain in the train?

**LUCY**

Daddy, Hamburger Hamlet has twelve  
different kinds of hamburgers. Can we  
go there Wednesday instead of Denny's?

**SAM**

But Wednesday night's Denny's,  
Thursday's Video Night, Friday Night  
Karaoke.

Lucy nods, a little deflated.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

How about one more time, just the  
beginning? "I am Sam, Sam I am..."

Lucy sighs and closes her eyes against her father's chest.

**INT. CLASSROOM - DAY**

Lucy draws a picture while everyone reads aloud from "STELLALUNA".

**MISS WRIGHT**

Lucy, your turn. Start where Sara left off...Lucy?

**LUCY**

I can't.

**MISS WRIGHT**

Sure you can.

**LUCY**

"They perched in sisisisi..."

**MISS WRIGHT**

Silence.

**LUCY**

(throws down book)  
There. I told you. It's too hard.

**MISS WRIGHT**

Lucy! I know you can read this!

**LUCY**

No, I can't! And you can't make me!

Lucy runs out of the class.

**EXT. BUS STOP - DUSK**

LILY,  
Sam, in sunglasses, waits for the BUS. A YOUNG WOMAN,  
sits down next to him. The WIND CATCHES her floral dress that's just left of innocent; just right of alluring. She reads a TABLOID.

**LILY**

Look here. "Premature baby claims he's cupid - has the arrow to prove it." Do you believe that?

**SAM**

Well, if he has the arrow.

**LILY**

Yeah. You got a good point.

She crosses her legs. A tuft of pink dress falls on Sam's knee.

**SAM**

You're a good reader.

**LILY**

Yeah, I've always been smart.

**SAM**

You're lucky. I'm looking for a smart, good mother.

**LILY**

I can be a mother. A real good mother.

**SAM**

Oh, good. Good.

**LILY**

I could even spank you.

**SAM**

Oh no no no. I don't believe in that.

**LILY**

Okay okay. I can be very gentle.

**SAM**

Gentle. Gentle. Yes. Do you tell stories?

**LILY**

I got stories up the wazoo. Why don't you come with me. I'll tell you a nice story.

**SAM**

I have to pick up Lucy at Annie's first.

**LILY**

A menage a toi?

**SAM**

French, French the language of France. You could teach my daughter, Lucy.

**LILY**

Your daughter?! Can't you pick her up after?!

**SAM**



After?! No no, Lucy comes too.

**LILY**

Whatever.

She takes Sam's hand, they move to get on the bus JUST AS ANOTHER HAND brusquely lands on theirs.

**COP**

Not so fast. You're under arrest.  
Solicitation.

**LILY**

He wanted to bring his kid, I said no.

A lightbulb flashes and we --

**SMASH CUT**

**TO:**

**INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - THAT NIGHT**

Sam blinks as his MUGSHOT is being taken. Now the profile.

He turns so they can get the back of his head. Now the **FINGERPRINT.**

Now Sam, in the corner of the room, on the phone making thumbprints on the wall. While the COP discusses his case with a social worker, MARGARET BROWN. Over the years she's

seen it all, and to get through it has had to pretend it's just a job.

**COP**

It's the first time in nineteen years I actually believe the guy when he says he didn't know she was a hooker --

**MARGARET BROWN**

You say that like it's a good thing.

**SAM**

...Your teeth don't sound like they were brushed. Do it with me now.

**COP**

Let him go. He says he's never spent a night away from his kid... Come with me - I got a guy who beat the shit out of his two year old. Again.

Her cell phone beeps.

**MARGARET BROWN**

Yes. I am seeing you tomorrow, Mr. Rabins. She's still screaming? No, McDonald's won't help...she's four months old.

**SAM**

Thirteen up...not on the gum line not on the gum line, 1, 2, 3.

Margaret watches Sam as he talks to Lucy on the phone.

**INT. PRINCIPALS OFFICE - DAY**

The WALLS are lined with CHILDREN'S ART. Various interpretations of the family. We stop at one of a very small man and a very big little girl with her arm around him.

**MISS WRIGHT**

It gives us a great deal of insight into what she must be feeling. And in the classroom, it's becoming clear she's holding herself back. It's as if she's literally afraid to learn.

We PULL BACK and see Sam staring at the picture. Mrs. Wright and the principal watch him.

**MISS WRIGHT (CONT'D)**

No one doubts that you love your daughter, Mr. Dawson. But the Department of Social Services contacted us. They shared with us that your records show that your intellectual capacity is around that of a seven year old. Our concern is what happens when Lucy turns eight?

**PRINCIPAL**

Mr. Dawson, do you understand what Miss Wright is trying to tell you about Lucy?

**SAM**

No one wanted The Beatles to break up. But you can hear it on the White Album. They were going in different directions.

**INT. LUCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

It's bedtime. Sam and Lucy are reading from "STELLALUNA".

**LUCY**

How can we be so dif..dif...I don't know that word.

**SAM**

Yes you do. It starts with a "d" --

**LUCY**

I'm tired.

**SAM**

I don't believe you.

**LUCY**

Are you calling me a liar?

**SAM**

Yes. Now read the word.

**LUCY**

(crying)  
No...I'm stupid.

**SAM**

No you're not.

**LUCY**

I don't want to read it if you can't.

**SAM**

It makes me happy. I'm happy hearing you read it.

He holds the book open for Lucy. Now Lucy, pushing through a mountain of resistance, reads. And reads beautifully.

**LUCY**

"Why are we different and so much alike?"

**INT. SCHOOL HALLOWEEN PARADE - AUDITORIUM - DAY**

Two children, dressed as Batman, march followed by CINDERELLA. We see Lucy dressed in NEWSPAPER - an ORIGAMI BIRD. And behind her, marching more proudly than any child, is Sam, dressed as PAUL McCARTNEY, in the black suit era -

is with Beatle boots and guitar strapped to his chest. Sam  
the only adult participating in the parade.

with Music BLASTS over the loudspeaker. Sam begins to dance  
joyous abandon. Lucy joins him. They dance together  
happily.

beginning Suddenly Lucy becomes aware that her classmates are  
to laugh. She slows and watches through their eyes Sam  
pony around the room. Conner pulls up his pants high on his  
waist and begins to imitate Sam. Another kid joins him.

**KID**

I'm a Super Freak!

**CONNER**

And I thought my dad was a dork.

world Lucy's face hardens for the first time. In a corrupt  
the pure can only stay pure for so long.

**INT. HAMBURGER HAMLET - EVENING**

trying. Sam and Lucy sit in a booth. Lucy's ecstatic. Sam's

**LUCY**

They have eleven different kinds of  
hamburgers. This is so great.

**SAM**

A new place. Your choice. I said we'd  
go to a new place. And here we are.

Lucy Sam anxiously rearranges the condiments on the table.  
tries to fold a napkin into an Origami bird.

**LUCY**

You know what else I want for my  
birthday, Daddy? I want a hundred  
birds.

**SAM**

The napkins are much stiffer at Denny's.  
They make better birds. There's not so

much stuff on the tables there either.  
Why do they have two kinds of mustard on  
every table?

**WAITRESS**

Coffee?

**SAM**

No, no coffee. Sam's system can't  
handle coffee.

**WAITRESS**

Okaaay! What can I get you folks?

**LUCY**

I'd like the Benito Bandito burger and a  
chocolate chip milkshake, please.

**SAM**

I'll have the fish special, side of  
potatoes, salad with Thousand Island  
Dressing, cherry pie, and...

**WAITRESS**

I'm sorry, sir. We don't have a fish  
special. There's fish and chips. It  
comes with a dinner salad.

**SAM**

Chips, chips? You mean potato chips? I  
don't want potato chips. I want a side  
of potatoes.

**WAITRESS**

You want french fries?

**SAM**

No, a side of potatoes, like at Denny's.  
A side of potatoes.

**LUCY**

They're little red potatoes.

**WAITRESS**

We don't have new potatoes...

**SAM**

Denny's has new potatoes. Six new  
potatoes parsley garnish parsley  
garnish...

**ON LUCY**

Her smile fades.

**SMASH CUT**

**TO:**

**INT. DENNY'S - HALF-HOUR LATER**

Sam happily eats his fish special with six new potatoes. Lucy's untouched dinner sits in the middle of the table. She doodles on the placement - drawing a man sitting with a pile of new potatoes in front of him; larger than he is.

**SAM**

Fish and chips fish and chips. I will not eat fish and chips.

**LUCY**

(exploding)

I will not eat them here or there! I will not eat them anywhere! I will not eat green eggs and ham! I will not eat them, Sam I am!

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Balloons and a banner reading "Happy Birthday, Lucy!" For Lucy's birthday, Sam has rented a moon bounce - which sits in the center of the apartment and filling the entire place - leaving no room for the few kids and their parents. Brad stands too close to a young attractive mother. Robert shakes all the presents suspiciously.

**SAM**

Now when they come through the door, everybody yell "Surprise!" Do you want to rehearse again?

**CONNER**

No. I bet she already knows.

**ROBERT**

I didn't tell her. Did Brad say I did?

There's a KNOCK at the door.

**SAM**

Is that Lucy? Annie's supposed to call

and warn us. Shhhh, everyone.

yells Brad hits the lights. Sam OPENS THE DOOR and everyone  
"SURPRISE!" But instead of Lucy, it's the Social Worker.

**MARGARET BROWN**

I don't know if you remember me. I'm Margaret Brown from Children's Social Services. We met at the police station.

**SAM**

Put your present over there - Hurry up! Lucy might be on her way.

(the phone rings)

Hello? Annie says she's coming up the stairs. Everyone be quiet. Assume surprise positions!

(Conner keeps talking)

Be quiet! Assume surprise positions!

**CONNER**

Oh brother!

**SAM**

Why are you such a party pooper?! Assume surprise positions!

**CONNER**

Make me!

against Sam puts a hand over Conner's mouth; Conner struggles  
him.

**MR. RHODES**

Hey!

**SAM**

He's gonna ruin the surprise! He's gonna ruin the surprise!

**CONNER**

He touched me! I've got cooties! I've got cooties!

**MR. RHODES**

Get your hands off my boy!

tangled Conner's father hurls Sam across the room - Sam gets  
in the MOON BOUNCE! To get attention, Conner bursts into

SHEDS

tears. We hear FOOTSTEPS outside the door - Brad hits the lights. We hear a CRASH! And in the light, the DOOR

as it opens, Lucy and Ifty see - that MOONBOUNCE, swaying. Then from within the Moonbounce:

**SAM**

Surprise! Happy Birthday!

Lucy stands frozen, holding a red balloon.

**LUCY**

Daddy?!

**CONNER**

You don't have to call him "Daddy".

(in Sam's face)

She says you're not her real father, anyway. She's adopted!

Humiliated, Lucy RUNS AWAY! The Social Worker watches, profoundly concerned, and reaches for her cellular phone.

**EXT. WALMART - DAY**

in  
dangling  
A police car pulls into the parking lot. Sam and Margaret see Lucy's little feet from beneath the curtain of the photo booth.

**SAM**

I'll go get her.

**MARGARET BROWN**

It would be better if you stay here. I'm sorry to say this, Mr. Dawson, it's clear how much you love your daughter, but we're going to have to remove Lucy from your home.

Sam's baffled. One cop places his hand on Sam's shoulder, restraining him. The OTHER heads toward the photo booth.

**SAM**

No, no no no. It's her birthday! It's her birthday!

**MARGARET BROWN**

I know how hard this must be...

(cell phone rings)

...Hello, Betsy. I'm scheduled to come



to your apartment at four. No, not five every two hours. It's two every five hours. She only weighs thirty pounds for chrissakes...

(back to Sam)

The city has given me the difficult task of deciding when to intervene on behalf of the child. Unfortunately, I've learned the hard way that it's better too soon than too late. For now the court will decide what's in Lucy's best interest.

Sam watches the cop's legs meet Lucy's under the curtain. Suddenly, Sam screams from the deepest core of his being.

**SAM**

Run, Lucy, run!

his  
She  
We see LUCY'S FEET KICK the COP'S LEGS and wrestle out of grasp. She flies out the booth, holding that balloon.

runs down the street, the balloon soaring into the sky - a cop follows. Sam struggles.

**ON SAM**

Reeling, devastated, we HEAR A JUDGE speaking:

**JUDGE (O.S.)**

Given the fact that the father was arrested for solicitation, did not cooperate with the police...

**INT. COURTROOM - DAY**

Sam sits ALONE. At another table, Margaret Brown and a lawyer, along with several people from the CPS.

**JUDGE**

...could not control his emotions, endangering other children. Miss Brown also cites Mr. Dawson's mental deficiencies which raise serious questions about his ability to properly parent. I agree to grant petition. The child shall be removed from the home until a forma jurisdictional hearing. Mr. Dawson, is there anything you'd like to add?

**SAM**

Yes. I just wanted it to be a nice surprise party. I had gotten the plates at Pic-N-Save. Pink and yellow, pink and yellow. Like a princess. And the balloons at --

**JUDGE**

(gently)

Mr. Dawson, it sounds like a lovely party, but right now I want to talk to you about your legal rights. I would strongly suggest you get yourself legal counsel and allow your attorney to present your case at the jurisdictional hearing on February 13th. Counsel, are you available?

**COUNSEL**

Ted, I have a trial that day.

**JUDGE**

February 20th. 8:00 a.m.

**SAM**

(panicking)

Twenty-two days? Lucy will come home and you want me to bring Lucy back in twenty-two days?

**JUDGE**

No, Mr. Dawson. You'll have supervised visits twice a week for two hours. Now I'm sorry, we have thirty more cases to see today. Next! Hopkins vs. Clifford.

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Ifty, Sam's on the phone, a teddy bear in his hand. Robert, and Brad all sit with Yellow Pages open in front of them.

**SAM**

Thursday? Today is Monday, Mrs. Brown. That's three days away. That's too long. She can't sleep without Mr. Jeeters. Well if you're not available until Thursday, maybe I could see her without you there... maybe the Judge made a mistake - maybe he doesn't know that for seven years I played with her without you there...No

Mrs. Brown, I'm not trying to violate  
the court...

(the other line hangs up)

Mrs. Brown?

**ROBERT**

I bet they were recording the whole  
conversation. Check your phone. You  
can't make a move. You need a lawyer.

**BRAD**

Call Jerry Spence. He has his own show.  
He must know what he's doing.

**ROBERT**

No. Johnny Cochran. He has his own  
show, too.

**BRAD**

Yeah! He can even get a guilty person  
off.

**SAM**

So you think I'm guilty?

**IFTY**

No. You didn't kill anybody.

**SAM**

But she said I'm not her father.

**IFTY**

She didn't say that. That runty kid  
with the blue shirt and the mean father  
whose voice sounds like the man on the  
Channel Four News who has a toupee.  
Toupees are expensive.

**SAM**

But Ifty. She said it.

**IFTY**

But she didn't mean it. I said I hated  
my mother once. "Once upon a time..."  
is how stories begin.

**ROBERT**

You should get a personal injury lawyer.  
You've been personally injured.

**BRAD**

Here - look at this - "Sebastion

Gibson." He can do anything.  
Pedestrians. Back and neck. Uninsured  
Motorist. Dog attacks.

**SAM**

The Social Worker said it's a custody  
case.

**ROBERT**

Then get a divorce lawyer.

**IFTY**

When Dustin Hoffman was trying to keep  
Billy from going back to Meryl Streep,  
his lawyer said it was going to cost him  
fifteen thousand dollars - and that's if  
we win!

**SAM**

Fifteen thousand dollars!

**BRAD**

Don't worry about money now. Get the  
best. Century City - Here: "Rubel Bly  
Harrison and Williams".

**INT. RITA HARRISON'S CENTURY CITY OFFICE - DAY**

SAM'S A Century City lawyer spins in front of our eyes. It's  
RITA POV as he sits in a chair that spins - in the center of  
Lichtenstein HARRISON'S lavish, penthouse office. Now we see the  
- panoramic of Los Angeles. Now the dots in the  
on the wall WHIRL PAST US. Now the DOOR SWINGS OPEN AND -  
-  
RITA HARRISON and her assistant burst in. Rita moves in  
In opposite circles around the room. Looking for something.  
fact, as we watch Rita, we realize that she never stops  
energy, moving. Period. Ten steps ahead of anyone, too much  
too much caffeine, not enough food. If she slowed down a  
beat she might get vulnerable. Can't have that. Can't be  
if wrong. Can't really look you in the eye. Can't help it  
Any she's smarter than anyone else in the room. Any room.  
time.

**RITA**

Did Fred Kimble call? I'm already  
twenty minutes late.

**PATRICIA**

He --

**RITA**

What'd Michelle Kresge say?

**PATRICIA**

She --

**RITA**

She wasn't defensive, was she?

**PATRICIA**

Well --

**RITA**

That's ridiculous. What happened with  
my car?

**PATRICIA**

They --

**RITA**

Because it wasn't my fault.

**PATRICIA**

I --

**RITA**

Thank you, Patricia.

**PATRICIA**

This is Mr. Dawson. There was some  
confusion with the temp last week and --

**RITA**

Mr. Dawson, it's a pleasure. Since  
somebody made a mistake, unfortunately  
we only have a little time. Hold all my  
calls unless it's my kid - I'll have a  
double cap.

**SAM**

Good choice, very good choice.

**RITA**

Can we get you anything to drink?

**SAM**

Is it free?

**ON RITA**

Hmmmm?

**TEN MINUTES LATER --**

on Sam is in the middle of the beginning of his story. Rita  
her second cappuccino, eyes her computer screen for calls.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

...Lucy had an ice-cream cake with pink  
flowers - pink, not white not  
white...Lucy's favorite is cherry  
vanilla which is pink, too. Cherries  
and vanilla.

**RITA**

Uh huh uh huh -- uh huh uh  
(into Amtel)  
If that's Jake Hiller, put him through.  
(picking up phone)  
Jake. No no no no no no.

**PATRICIA**

(from speaker)  
Your son's on line two.

**RITA**

Jake, did you get that?!  
(to Patricia)  
Tell him to hold for just one second.  
Jake I have to go...he what?

**PATRICIA**

(through speaker)  
Deborah Chapman on line three --

**RITA**

Hold on Jake.  
(she punches another line)  
No no no no no no no. Have a nice  
weekend.  
(punches another button)  
Jake?!

We HEAR MUSIC coming from the other end of the phone --

**SAM**

Burt Bacharach shared billing with The Beatles and Jose Jimenez on the Ed Sullivan Show June 5th, 1968.

**RITA**

Really?

(then)

Jake, what'd you say you tell him yes I am.

(yelling; re: coffee)

This tastes like low, are you sure it's non? Okay okay okay. I think there's been a little mistake here --

**SAM**

Yes. A little one. Your son's on line two.

**RITA**

Oh my God.

(pushes another line)

Danny?

(Danny's hung up)

Patricia? Get Danny back. Well keep trying.

her She unconsciously digs through the bowl of jelly beans on desk sorting out all the yellow ones.

**RITA (CONT'D)**

Mr. Dawson, what I'm trying to say is I'm a divorce lawyer and as much as I'd like to, I don't handle cases like yours --

**SAM**

Since you would like to, why don't you talk to your boss. Maybe he would let you.

She pours the bowl of jelly beans onto her desk, now frantically sorting through them.

**RITA**

(into phone)

Then keep dialing --

(to Sam)

What I mean is that at this point in my career, I can't afford to.

**SAM**

I earn eight dollars an hour at Starbucks. I can pay your hourly rate, rate by the hour, hourly --

Rita stands up, ushering him to the door.

**RITA**

Mr. Dawson, I'm sorry, I have to be in court in eight minutes with the Kresges. You understand, good luck to you and don't give up.

She turns, ahhhh! He's gone! She begins searching the room.

**RITA (CONT'D)**

Patricia?! Where are my keys? Where the hell are my keys?! Alright alright.  
(replaying)

I walked into the room - I went over here - I looked at my desk - I put my coat down - Patricia?! Where's my coat?

**SAM (O.S.)**

Is there a child involved in Mr. Kresges' case?

Stunned, Rita looks up and sees Sam holding up a strip of photos taken at the birthday booth.

**RITA**

No.

**SAM**

This is Lucy. One year old. First word, "apple". December third. 3:16 p.m. December third.

Out of his pocket he pulls another photo strip.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

Here's Lucy two years old. First merry go-round ride. June 6th. 4:13 p.m. June 6th. Here's Lucy. Seven years old. The day the police took her away.

Rita looks at the photo strip of Lucy's birthday. In the first three we see Lucy's sad face. The fourth has a face smashed into the frame with her.

**SAM (CONT'D)**



Thank you for telling me not to give up.  
I won't give up.

**PATRICIA**

(through the phone)  
Danny on Line 2.

Rita LUNGES FOR THE PHONE.

**RITA**

Danny? Hi. Could we possibly talk  
about this when I get home. Danny?  
Danny? C'mon. You're not gonna talk to  
me? I bought you a bag of your favorite  
lemonade jelly beans. Danny?

(Rita starts singing)

"One little bird in one little tree,  
we're all alone and we don't want to  
be... So they flew far away over the  
trees..." I said "Over the sea..." I  
know the words, I said "Over the sea..."  
Since when don't you like that song?  
Danny?

She checks her watch, puts him on the SPEAKER PHONE, and  
frantically searches the room for her keys.

**RITA (CONT'D)**

Danny?

Silence. We hear SIX LOUD THUDS - the sound of a  
basketball  
bouncing against the floor.

**RITA (CONT'D)**

Danny?

CLICK! The LINE GOES DEAD. Rita trips over the coffee  
table, completely losing it.

**RITA (CONT'D)**

I hate this stupid coffee table - how  
many times have I asked you to get rid  
of this crappy coffee table?

Then,  
She kicks it, sending the lemonade jelly beans FLYING.  
after a beat.

**SAM**

(from the doorway)  
You did say "over the trees" instead of

"over the sea." It's hard to remember all the words to all the songs. There's so many.

(Rita almost stops)

you have a child Rita rubel Bly Harrison Williams. If they took him away wouldn't you hire the fastest talking four-named lawyer you could?

**RITA**

Yes, I would. I went to college with a friend who does these kinds of cases. Leave your number. I'll see if she can help you.

**PATRICIA**

(through your phone)

Your therapist on Line 1.

**RITA**

Tell him you can't find me.

**INT. STARBUCKS - DAY**

Sam is face to face with George.

**SAM**

I'm ready.

**GEORGE**

Let's not add more stress to your life.

**SAM**

I'm ready. I'm ready to make coffee. Lo-fat decaf latte. Coffee up to here. Add steamed milk up to here. No foam, no foam. Cinnamon or chocolate sprinkles.

**GEORGE**

That's pretty good Sam. I'll think about it.

**SAM**

I know what that means. I stock shelves at Lucky Supermarkets. I want to bag groceries, Miss Losey says "I'll think about it." Randy Brenner gets the job. I was the janitor at the La Reina Theater, I wanted to take tickets. Mr. Jenkins said he'd think about it. Larry Peters gets the job. Lets his friends

in for free...

**GEORGE**

I promise you, Sam. I'll honestly think about it. You have my word.

**SAM**

Words, words, words. I need more than that. I need to pay my lawyer. I need to make coffee.

**INT. RUBEL BLY HARRISON AND WILLIAMS - 8:15 P.M.**

Rita  
A group of Rita's colleagues are celebrating a big win.  
is backing out of the room with her glass of champagne.

**RITA**

I am celebrating congratulations to us these are the moments good night.

She stops, stunned, as she sees Sam, sitting in the lobby holding out a Starbucks Cappuccino.

**SAM**

Non-fat vente cap. I'm sorry to bother you, but did you call your friend?  
(Rita's confused)  
Your friend from college, your friend who does this kind of work?

**RITA**

(there never was a friend)  
I don't have her number anymore, Sam.  
We lost touch.

**SAM**

(devastated)  
Oh, that happens. That happens. People lose touch. Will you call me if you find it? If you get back in touch?

**RITA**

Yes, I'm just in the middle..it's a special..I'll call you.

down  
To avoid any further interaction, she heads back to the employee party she previously escaped from. Sam walks  
the hall.

**COLLEAGUE**

Is that the new janitor?

**RITA**

No, it's a case. Sort of a pro-bono thing.

Her assistant Patricia clears her throat.

**RITA (CONT'D)**

What's that supposed to mean?

**PATRICIA**

Nothing. A cracker went down the wrong pipe.

Muffled laughter from her colleagues.

**RITA**

You think I don't pro-bono?..I can do pro-bono.. I can do Goddamn pro-bono.. where the hell are my keys..hold the door!

Rita runs to the open elevator and comes face to face with Sam who's been holding the door open for her.

**INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS**

The door closes. Rita is trapped with Sam. She stares forward trying to will him not there. Rita gulps her champagne.

**SAM**

32nd floor. 32 floors more. 31st floor. 31 floors more...

And on and on and on. Rita is about to spontaneously combust. Finally, "G" - Rita bolts out the elevator doors,  
then just as suddenly turns around.

**RITA**

Alright, alright I'll take you.  
Alright, Goddammit, I'll take you.

**SAM**

Oh my God oh my God! Rubel Bly Harrison and Williams!

Sam, shaking with relief, pulls out his wallet just as the elevator door starts closing.

**RITA**

No, no no. Pro-bono. Alright? Pro bono.

again: The doors close. We hear from within, as Sam goes up

**SAM (O.S.)**

Yes! Alright! I liked Sonny Bono too!

**INT. BUS - MORNING**

On Sam stares out the window at an unfamiliar neighborhood.  
Lucy's his lap, the pink box, now ripped, allowing us to see  
birthday cake. It's lopsided from having been thawed and  
refrozen.

**EXT. BUS STOP - NOON**

written Sam waits for his transfer. He sets the cake down on the  
paper bench and takes out a piece of paper with directions  
on it. The number 43 bus pull sup and Sam consults his  
once more before jumping on, forgetting the cake.

Sam The bus goes half a block before it SCREECHES to a halt.  
continues jumps off and runs back for the cake, but the bus  
on its way. Moments later, the NUMBER 34 bus pulls up.  
Flustered and worried about being late, Sam jumps on. He  
feels something cold on his hand, looks down, the box is  
starting to leak ice cream.

**INT. SOCIAL WORKERS OFFICE - DAY**

for Lucy, Margaret, a therapist and a child psychologist wait  
Sam.

**MARGARET BROWN**

Lucy, I'm sorry. But it doesn't look like he's going to make it.

**LUCY**

(staring forward)  
He'll be here. You smell like soap.

**MARGARET BROWN**

Lucy, he's an hour and 45 minutes late.  
You'll only have a few minutes left.

Suddenly through the door comes Sam CARRYING THE MELTED,  
DRIPPING birthday cake. Lucy runs to him.

**LUCY**

Daddy! I told you I told you!

**CUT**

**TO:**

**INT. THE SOCIAL WORKER'S SMALL GREY OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

Margaret, the therapist (Ms. Geller), and the Child  
Pscyhologist all write voraciously into note pads as they  
observe Sam and Lucy who sit in the center of the room,  
nervous under their scrutiny.

**SAM**

...and she's a Century City lawyer - a  
very famous lawyer. Guess what her name  
is? Rita Harrison.

**LUCY**

(jaw drops)  
Lovely Rita Meter Maid.

**SAM**

Harrison. Just like George.

They move to hug each other. EVERYONE REACHES for their  
pens. Sam pulls back self-consciously. Everyone writes  
even harder.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

You've grown.

**LUCY**

Have I?

**SAM**

Your ears are larger. And your eyes are  
older.

He's right. Her eyes are older. He hugs her - ALL THE  
PENS  
**GO UP.**

**SAM (CONT'D)**

I'm gonna get a phone machine. Next

paycheck. If I'm not home, you can leave a message. "Hi, This is Lucy."

**LUCY**

You can't afford a phone machine.

The writing starts again.

**SAM**

Yes we can. I'm in line for a promotion. Big promotion. A promotion that's big.

**LUCY**

They're gonna let you make coffee?!

**SAM**

Set your dreams high, Lucy.

Lucy looks at her father lovingly.

**LUCY**

I'm sorry, Daddy. It was all my fault.

**SAM**

No, Lucy. Don't say that.

**LUCY**

I wouldn't want any Daddy but you.

She looks around to see if anybody's writing. NOBODY IS. She suddenly screams at them:

**LUCY (CONT'D)**

I said I was sorry! I said I didn't want any Daddy but him! Why don't you write that down?!

**INT. RITA'S OFFICE - DAY**

We hear sobbing and see Rita sitting across from a very rich, very angry COUPLE. Rita's foot is twitching furiously.

**RITA**

...are you telling me that neither of you want custody of your child?

**WOMAN**

He's created a monster. He's exactly like him. He...he...

as

The woman is distracted by a loud thumping on Rita's glass wall - it's SAM. Holding an envelope. Very distressed, the Secretary attempts to corral him back into the lobby.

**RITA**

I am right here with you, excuse me.  
(she unlocks door)  
Sam? Didn't I tell you that you have to call?

**SAM**

I -

**RITA**

You know how to make an appointment.

**SAM**

It's -

**RITA**

That's ridiculous you can always get Patricia.

**SAM**

They -

**RITA**

Good. I'll see you next week.

**SAM**

But it's an emergency - lots of three syllable words urgent open at once.

He hands the letter to Rita. Rita looks through the glass wall at her clients who are getting impatient.

**RITA**

They want to have you and Lucy evaluated by a shrink. The appointment is today at three. Today. Now. Today!

**SAM**

I know and I want you to object.

**RITA**

Sam I can't object. It's court ordered.

Sam notices that the woman in Rita's office is crying. He walks in and hands her a handkerchief from his pocket.

**SAM**



Here. Don't be sad.

her  
She looks at him as if he's from Mars. Rita, now outside  
office, watches Sam now inside the office.

**RITA**

Patricia, I'm in the middle - get him  
out of there -

past  
She quickly gets up but Rita's too impatient and pushes  
her into the office.

**RITA (CONT'D)**

Sam. Sam come with me.

(to the Couple)

We're gonna get through this excuse  
us...

(to Sam)

Sam this is their turn now. Not yours.  
Theirs. If you leave now you'll never  
make it and you have to make it.

**SAM**

Okay okay I know I take the #34 bus and  
transfer to the #13...than the Downtown  
Express to Wilshire then -

Rita looks at the Couple leaving her office.

**INT. RITA'S PORSCHE - DAY**

to  
Redefining road rage, Rita's slamming the horn. Sam next  
her.

**RITA**

Go! Go! GO! for chrissakes! Green means  
**GO!**

**SAM**

Red means stop yellow in the middle  
means no no no...I don't like shrinks.  
I've seen too many shrinks.

**RITA**

Yeah. You and me both. Right or left  
which will it be you IDIOT!?

**SAM**

Your mother sent you to shrinks, too?

**RITA**

No. Well, sort of. I talk about her the whole time I'm there.

**SAM**

That's nice. Did you notice that everyone else is driving slower. I noticed that did you?

**RITA**

(on the horn)

Go for Chrissakes! How about your mother? Maybe she can help you -

**SAM**

She's gone. She's at the Park Lane Mortuary. Two from the left. Under the big tree.

**RITA**

Oh. I'm sorry. The light is green!  
**WOULD YOU MOVE MOVE MOVE!?**

and

She cuts around the car in front of her; flips him off, in a split second that her head is turned, almost SMASHES into the car in front of her! She slams on the brakes.

**SAM**

Too many shrinks...I'm sorry Mrs. Dawson, if I were you I wouldn't waste any more time. I'm sorry Mrs. Dawson it must be a tremendous disappointment. I'm sorry Mrs. Dawson I think you'd both be happier if Sam was in a home.

Rita looks over at Sam, forced to stop.

**INT. PSYCHOLOGIST OFFICE - DAY**

Sam sits across from a shrink, MS. GELLER, nervously straightening her desk.

**PSYCHOLOGIST**

Mr. Dawson, you do understand, that since I am a court appointed psychologist, the traditional client therapist confidentiality will be waived.

(Sam looks confused)

Mr. Dawson, do you understand that the

confidentiality will be waived?

Sam nods nervously and waves. With that she begins.

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Sam, Ifty, Brad and Robert hover over a used answering machine. Ifty pours over the instructions.

**IFTY**

Before you read your message press the red button for record, when you finish, press the yellow button. If you press the green button, it will play it back you. Let's start with the "ogm".

**SAM**

Okay, okay. I'm ready. Hello, I am Sam.

**IFTY**

No, no. I didn't press the red button.

**SAM**

Oh, yes. False start, false start.

**IFTY**

It's not working. That's what you get for buying a used machine. Used means broken. You're asking for other people's problems, you have enough of your own, not that everyone doesn't have problems.

**BRAD**

It's not used. It's pre-owned. Guy bought it for his auto shop and then he got a secretary.

**IFTY**

Testing, one two three.

**SAM**

That's a good code. I'll remember that. One, two, three.

**IFTY**

(pressing button)  
Quick, you're recording.

**SAM**

I'm hi. I am Sam. I'm not home.

**ROBERT**

No, you don't want to say that. you  
don't want them to know you're not home.

**SAM**

But then I'm lying.

**ROBERT**

Everybody's lying.

**SAM**

I'm not a liar. It will send a mixed  
message to Lucy.

**IFTY**

(pressing the button)  
You're on the air!

**SAM**

Let me see, let me see, let me see. Hi,  
how are you?

BEEP! the tape runs out.

**IFTY**

That was pretty good. That was natural.

**SAM**

Did I sound like a good father?

**IFTY**

It's the outgoing message. You need to  
sound more outgoing. Let's start again.

**INT. GROUP HOME - NIGHT**

phone  
Mrs. Kerry unlocks the phone and dials. She hands the  
to Lucy who waits eagerly in her pj's. Sam's answering  
machine clicks on; as if on slow speed.

**ANSWERING MACHINE**

Hi, it's Len's Auto Body Shop. We'd  
love to show you our body work, but it's  
invisible. Leave it at the beep.

**LUCY**

Try again. You must have dialed the  
wrong number.

**INT. RITA'S OFFICE - DAY**

Rita and Sam walk through the lobby at Rita's Olympic  
pace.

She passes the elevator and heads for the stairs.

**RITA**

Look, we've got a lot to go over and  
I've got five minutes.

**SAM**

(pointing to elevator)  
Rubel Bly Harrison and Williams thirty  
second floor, thirty-two floors up.

Rita heads up the stairs. We hear a BEEP. Then another.  
Rita checks her heart rate watch. Starts walking up the  
stairs.

**RITA**

One-twenty. Gotta get to one-twenty  
five to make it count. Okay okay okay.  
I'm gonna need that list of people who  
can testify that you're a good father  
despite your handicap. I didn't mean  
your handicap I meant your disability -  
I mean the fact that you're retarded.  
That's not the right word. I mean...  
What do I call you?

**SAM**

Sam. I am Sam.

Rita looks at Sam as she bounds up the fourth floor.

**RITA**

Yes you are.

(he hands her a list - her CELL

**PHONE RINGS)**

Hello Ted how you doing/ Whattaya mean  
what's that supposed to mean?

(her heart beep rate goes up)

Put Danny on... You're supposed to be  
taking him to karate. No it is not my  
day it's your day. I took your day last  
Wednesday - are you eating no I will not  
hold. Go pick him up! What? I can't  
hear you I'm in the car - they put you  
through to me here...I'm losing you --

(clicks off phone)

I get paid for this memory - I know I  
took him last.

and

A look of horror falls across her face. She does a 180 starts RUNNING down the stairs reading the list.

**RITA (CONT'D)**

We're making progress. Three character witnesses. That's a good start. What does Ifty Bhutto do?

**SAM**

He works in a bank.

**RITA**

(tripping down the stairs)  
Excellent.

**INT. RITA'S OFFICE - THE VERY NEXT DAY**

Ifty sits across from Rita who attempts to take notes.

**IFTY**

Sam is a very concerned father. He always saves his money at Bank of America. Last year there was a lion on the calendar. This year a gazelle. The gazelle is national bird of Tunisia. We have clients, not customers. At Bank of America. Bank on us.

He looks up at her, lost. So is she.

**IFTY (CONT'D)**

What was the question again, please?

**CUT**

**TO:**

**INT. RITA'S OFFICE - DAY**

**ON BRAD**

Who sits across from Rita. She tape records him.

**BRAD**

He always made a point of feeding her breakfast when "Bewitched" was on and lunch when "Jeopardy" was on so she'd be smart. Is that Wonderbra you're wearing? Because you look wonderful.

**CUT**

**TO:**

**INT. RITA'S OFFICE - DAY**

Robert sits across from Rita, who records him.

**RITA**

How long have you and Sam -

**ROBERT**

Why are you recording this? Who's listening?

**RITA**

It's often necessary -

**ROBERT**

Who are you really?

**RITA**

I'm -

**ROBERT**

What's that supposed to mean?

**RITA**

Let's -

**ROBERT**

I need to talk to my lawyer.

**CUT**

**TO:**

**INT. RITA'S OFFICE - LATER**

Rita maniacally picks the frosting off a donut.

**RITA**

Patricia, get Mr. Dawson on the line.

Over her INTERCOM, we hear SAM'S ANSWERING MACHINE.

**ANSWERING MACHINE (O.S.)**

Hi, it's Len's Auto Body Shop -

**RITA**

I need this like a - call him at Starbucks - no I don't know which Starbucks. There's forty two between here and the end of the block.

**EXT. STREETS - DAY**

Rita stands next to her Porsche. There are Starbucks in every direction she looks.

**INT. STARBUCKS - DAY**

Sam is straightening Sweet and Lows. Rita barrels in.

**RITA**

Look I don't think you understand what you're up against we have to be in court in three days and we don't have a decent witness. Now you've gotta know someone who can testify who's been to college - or has a degree of some kind - or some sort of way of expressing themselves that's gonna make the court believe that you deserve to get your daughter back I need a coffee. Big. Tall.

**SAM**

Tall's the smallest.

**RITA**

Of course. Of course, whatever. Okay okay okay. Damn! I forgot to call back no I did and once you think of this person and there has to be one person - I want you to call me at work - because I'm going back there now to my seven other cases --

(her cellphone RINGS)

What? Mrs. Robeck? I'm on my way, the traffic's horrible on the 405. Dorothy, we put in five months lets not let a three car pile up..I know it's been enormously stressful.. Your Esczema? Oh, honey, nobody notices..AH! They opened a lane!

**SAM**

(too loudly)

Do you want it here or to go?

**RITA**

(dial tone)

Dorothy? Dorothy? No no no I didn't stare at the eczema for five months for -

She takes out her car beeper, clicks it towards the window and realizes that they're towing her car!



**RITA (CONT'D)**

Sonuvabitch!

**INT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT - EVENING**

Annie is at the piano, lost in a Beethoven concerto.

**SAM**

Annie, it's one day. One hour. Maybe only 53 minutes. Lucy needs you.

(Annie keeps playing)

You went to college. You can give the right answers.

Annie plays even harder. Frustrated, he POUNDS the piano.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

We can't lose her.

**ANNIE**

I can't. I'd make it worse for you. I can't do it. Don't you think I would if I could?

**CUT**

**TO:**

**INT. COURTROOM - DAY**

We HEAR A VOICE:

**VOICE (O.S.)**

All rise for the Honorable Judge Phillip McNeily.

Sam. Sam stands along with others in the courtroom. The Judge enters and sits. Everyone else sits now, too. Except

Who continues to stand until Rita pulls him down. Now we see:

Ifty, Robert, Brad - and Brad's MOTHER, who sits several seats behind Brad knitting. Robert holds up a handmade

sign

from the back of the courtroom "Free Lucy Dawson".

**INT. COURTROOM - ONE HOUR LATER**

witness. Turner, the prosecuting attorney, examines his first

He's disheveled, but don't let the rumpled suit fool you.

is  
the  
SLIDE

This man is razor-sharp. The THERAPIST who evaluated Sam on the stand. Sam anxiously rearranges all the pens on the desk he sits at with Rita. Projected on a SCREEN is a of the drawing Lucy made in school.

**THERAPIST**

...there is an unhealthy reversal of roles here.  
As you can see from her drawings, she has an exaggerated sense of responsibility. Lucy feels she has to take care of her father. Although at her birthday party her true feelings about her father were revealed.

**RITA**

Objection. "True feelings revealed"?!

**TURNER**

The state is paying Miss Geller for her opinions -

**RITA**

Then every child who rages because they didn't get to stay up for that extra hour of TV -

**TURNER**

Objection your honor -

Sam TUGS at Rita's sleeve. She ignores it.

**RITA**

...in fact any child who said they hated their parents because they didn't want to take a bath would be a prime candidate for Foster Care.

**TURNER**

Objection.

**SAM**

I think they want you to stop.

**RITA**

Really?! Thank you, Sam.

**JUDGE MCNEILY**

We all appreciate your assistance Mr.

Dawson - continue with your witness, Mr. Turner.

**TURNER**

Now Ms. Geller, I assume in your therapy session, Mr. Dawson extolled his parenting abilities.

**THERAPIST**

On the contrary, Mr. Dawson admitted he felt profoundly inadequate - that he was terrified he'd made and would continue to make - and I quote: "Huge mistakes, huge mistakes, mistakes that are huge."

**TURNER**

No further questions.

Rita starts to scribble notes furiously. So does Sam. Turner smugly sits down. Rita confidently strides toward the witness.

**RITA**

You're a mother, aren't you Ms. Geller?

**THERAPIST**

Yes.

**RITA**

Would it be fair to say that as a parent, you've felt confused from time to time, possibly overwhelmed on occasion, even though you're a wonderful mother?

**TURNER**

Objection. It's Mr. Dawson's parenting. Not Ms. Geller's that's at question here.

**RITA**

But if Ms. Geller has never had a moment where she felt confused as a mother it would bias her opinion. And it is her expert opinion we're all after, isn't it, Mr. Turner?

**JUDGE MCNEILY**

Overruled. I'll allow it.

**RITA**

Thank you, your Honor. Ms. Geller, I know there have been many moments as a parent where I've felt I've made huge mistakes - mistakes that are huge. And I've had to admit them to myself. My husband. But most importantly, to my therapist. Which is the guise Mr. Dawson thought he was seeing you under, isn't that right, Ms. Geller?

**TURNER**

Objection.

**JUDGE MCNEILY**

Get to the point, Ms. Harrison.

**RITA**

The point is you've never had those moments, have you Ms. Geller? Moments that every parent I've ever spoken to has - moments when you've felt the task is so unbelievably challenging that you feel retarded, disabled in some way. Moments when you feel everyone has the key but you. But you've never had those moments, have you Ms. Geller?

**THERAPIST**

I -

**RITA**

Yes or no?

**THERAPIST**

I -

**RITA**

Let me rephrase the question. When your son od'ed -

**TURNER**

Objection!

**RITA**

But if Ms. Geller didn't feel she had made mistakes - mistakes that were huge it might bias her opinion toward Mr. Dawson.

**JUDGE MCNEILY**

I will -

**RITA**

Thank you. So Ms. Geller - yes or no - when your son od'ed, did you feel you might have made mistakes, mistakes that were huge?

**THERAPIST**

(tearfully)

Yes.

**INT. COURTROOM CAFETERIA - DAY**

Sam and Rita go down the cafeteria line.

**SAM**

You made her cry.

**RITA**

You got lucky.

**SAM**

That's not nice. Not very nice.

**RITA**

Only in there.

**SAM**

Your secretary too. Yellow and green in one bowl.

(Sam stares at a bowl of Lima beans and corn)

You separate the Lima beans from the corn please?

The CAFETERIA WORKER stares at him. Yeah. Sure he will.

**RITA**

Sam, don't be impossible.

(then to Worker)

Can I have the spinach omelet - only egg whites no fat no oil no butter and extra mushrooms.

**CAFETERIA WORKER**

Absolutely.

Sam is anxiously separating his Lima beans and corn into separate piles. They arrive at the cashier. Rita pulls

out

her billfold. Sam reaches for his wallet.

**SAM**

My treat. My treat.

**RITA**

Don't be ridiculous. I'll get it.

**SAM**

I said it's my treat. That means I'll get it.

**RITA**

Sam, do you really want to get it or are you just trying to --

**SAM**

Trying to what?

**RITA**

You know, trying to act like a -

**SAM**

Like a what?

**RITA**

Like a...a...

**SAM**

A real man?

**RITA**

I didn't say that.

**SAM**

You're my lawyer and you think what they think. I don't have a chance. No chance at all. Even with an expert witness.

Rita looks at him. He's right. She chooses her words carefully.

**RITA**

I think...you deserve...a fair trial.

**SAM**

Answer the question.

**RITA**

Okay okay okay. What was the question again?

**SAM**

Do you think what they think? Sam can't

order food. Sam can't pay a check. Sam can't take care of Lucy?

**RITA**

It doesn't matter what I think - it matters that we win.

**SAM**

You're my lawyer it matters what you think.

**RITA**

Hey, it doesn't matter to them what I think.

**SAM**

Me. It matters to me.

He reaches for the receipt, and faces the CASHIER defiantly.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

Fourteen thirty three. That's 5 ones, 2 quarters and 16 cents less than twenty.

He slowly counts his money, takes his tray and walks away. Rita watches him, with a trace of remorse and a hint of admiration.

**INT. COURTROOM - DAY**

DR. DONOVAN, an attractive soft-spoken woman is on the stand.

Rita is working the room. Sam, having a hard time concentrating, is following a crack up the wall and onto the ceiling.

**RITA**

Dr. Donovan, the American Medical Journal named you one of the country's leading oncologists. Isn't that correct?

**DR. DONOVAN**

Yes.

**RITA**

What kept you going the twelve years you were in medical school?

**DR. DONOVAN**

Caffeine. Sugar. And my mother's confidence in me.

**RITA**

I wish I had a mother like that. She must have been smart.

**DR. DONOVAN**

She had great instincts.

**RITA**

Do you have any idea what her IQ was?

**DR. DONOVAN**

In the lower ranges. About eighty.

**RITA**

So your mother, this woman with the IQ of a nine-year old had the wisdom to recognize that you would be a great doctor. I guess her disability didn't seem to hold you back in life.

**DR. DONOVAN**

No. My mother's condition taught me what they can't teach you; compassion and patience.

**RITA**

Traits most doctors have in spades. Thank you, no further questions.

him Sam runs to hug Dr. Donovan, bumping into Rita who sits down.

**TURNER**

How'd you get through medical school? Where'd you live?

**DR. DONOVAN**

We lived with my mother's parents.

**TURNER**

Oh, Grandma and Grandpa. Would it be fair to say your grandparents were of normal intelligence?

**DR. DONOVAN**

Yes.

**TURNER**



And didn't these people - your grandparents - with normal intelligence - have the real responsibilities?

**RITA**

(relishing this)  
Objection! I hear Mr. Turner's mother in-law lives with him! She must help out. Does that mean he doesn't have the real -

**TURNER**

Motion to strike that from the record. Irrelevant, immaterial and immature -

**RITA**

Irrelevant?! Any parent has a right to a support system.

**TURNER**

I'm not talking about the rights of the parent, I'm talking about the rights of a child.

(the gavel bangs)

I'm talking about entrusting an eight year old's welfare in the hands of someone whose records show he was diagnosed with infantile autism, mental retardation...

**RITA**

Objection! Motion to strike that from the record. It's clear that one's intellectual capacity has no bearing on their ability to love. You Honor, would you please instruct council to proceed with a modicum of sensitivity?

**TURNER**

Oh, I'm sensitive. I'm real sensitive when I see people like you --

(the gavel BANGS!)

come here and try to give meaning to your life by screwing up somebody else's!

**JUDGE MCNEILY**

That's enough. Both lawyers approach the bench!

**RITA**

(both approach)

And I suppose tearing apart a family is truly noble work, Mr. Turner.

**JUDGE MCNEILY**

That's it. I fine you both for contempt. Two-hundred fifty dollars.

**TURNER**

What's that to her? She gets that for picking up the phone.

**RITA**

Oh, that's what this is about.

**TURNER**

I'll tell you what this is about. See this is an award for you at some luncheon. But I'm here everyday.

(gavel POUNDS AGAIN)

You win, you're out the door. But guess who I see come back? The kid. Most of the time, in less than a year. Only now it's too late. So you're right. I'm real sensitive. You can't even touch that area.

**ON SAM**

Devastated.

**CUT**

**TO:**

**INT. INSTITUTIONAL GRAY SOCIAL WORKERS OFFICE - DAY**

Margaret Brown observes Sam and Lucy.

**LUCY**

But how did he prove it?

**SAM**

Columbus had to sail around the world to prove it was round.

**LUCY**

You're so smart, Daddy.

nice  
eyes.

Sam shoots a look at Margaret. He hasn't heard anything about himself in so long. Lucy looks into her father's

**LUCY (CONT'D)**

Are we winning, Daddy?

Sam shoots ANOTHER look. He doesn't want to lie. Lucy catches the look between Sam and Margaret.

**MARGARET BROWN**

Excuse me, time's up.

**LUCY**

Please. Just a little more.

**MARGARET BROWN**

I have another client at two-thirty. You need to put your shoes on and get ready to go.

**LUCY**

Oh no! There's a knot. A really big knot.

Sam attempts to undo it. Lucy and he work very slowly, cherishing each moment together.

**MARGARET BROWN**

I'll help you.

She undoes it quickly. Hands it back.

**LUCY**

I need to go to the bathroom.

**INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

sturdy  
and  
toes

Lucy's feet dangle from under the stall. Margaret's shoes from under another. Suddenly, Lucy's head pops out now she quietly wriggles out from under the stall, tip across the room and out the door. Locking it with a key.

**INT. SOCIAL WORKERS ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Lucy runs up to her father.

**LUCY**

Daddy, she said we could go to the park.

**SAM**

What's going on? What made her change her mind?

**LUCY**

I started crying in the bathroom. She thought we needed more time.

**SAM**

That was so nice of her. Very nice.

**INT. BUS - DAY**

Sam and Lucy hold hands and look out the window. Sam sees Echo Park approaching and gets up. Lucy pulls him back to the seat. She looks Daddy in the eye and in a furtive whisper:

**LUCY**

Let's not get off. Let's keep going.

**SAM**

No, Lucy.

**LUCY**

Please.

**SAM**

That would be wrong.

**LUCY**

Tamara's Mommy lost her case and Tamara hasn't seen her in six years. She's had five different mommies and one of them hit her.

**SAM**

I won't let that happen.

**LUCY**

That's what her real mommy said. And now they won't even let her talk to her.

Sam reels with confusion. Lucy buries herself in his chest.

**LUCY (CONT'D)**

Daddy, it's the only way to be together. We'll start a new life, get new names. We'll live in a new apartment. They'll never find us.

The bus has stopped. Passengers for the park have exited. Sam doesn't move. As the BUSDRIVER closes the door and heads

on, he holds Lucy protectively to his chest.

**SAM**

I love you Lucy. I love you.

**LUCY**

My name isn't Lucy anymore, it's  
Michelle.

**INT. BUS - NIGHT**

Lucy sleeps cuddled close to Sam, who is wide awake, as he gazes out at the passing highway, far from home. We hear the song "Michelle".

**EXT. PARK - 4 A.M.**

Sam, totally disoriented, walks in circles around the plastic tunnels and jungle gym. A flashlight shines in Sam's face.

**COP**

Hey, buddy. No loitering. Move it.

**SAM**

Not yet not yet not yet.

**COP**

You want me to get a black and white  
down here?

He moves toward Sam. SUDDENLY THE SPRINKLER SYSTEM goes on. The cop backs off, but Sam doesn't move, standing in the middle of the park and getting totally wet.

**SAM**

Not yet not yet not yet.

He shines the flashlight in Sam's face and we see INSIDE THE PLASTIC TUNNEL where LUCY SLEEPS PEACEFULLY on a bed of coats, holding a discarded stuffed animal.

**COP**

Jesus Christ.

**SAM**

She hasn't been sleeping well. She needs a good night's rest. Let her

sleep, let her sleep.  
(the cop moves toward Sam)  
**NO!**

**COP**  
What are you, crazy?

circles All the cop sees is a lunatic walking in protective  
in the downpour of the sprinklers with a kid in a plastic  
tunnel.

**SMASH CUT**

**TO:**

**INT. POLICE STATION - DAWN**

with Police doors swing open as Rita, coat over pj's, a sleepy  
DANNY by her side, storm inside. Lucy lies on a bench  
her head in Sam's lap.

**RITA**  
What were you thinking what were you  
possibly thinking?!

**SAM**  
I -

**RITA**  
That's ridiculous! Danny stay with me -  
(he moves away)  
What could you possibly gain by  
kidnapping your kid in the middle of a  
custody hearing?!

**SAM**  
She -

**RITA**  
I don't wanna hear it! Can you possibly  
explain this to me?!

**SAM**  
But Lucy said -

**RITA**  
Who's the parent here? Who's the  
goddamned parent here? Danny! Stay in  
the hallway -

Danny turns the corner just as Margaret Brown rushes in.

Rita turns to her - her expression changes on a dime.

**RITA (CONT'D)**

Miss Brown, I can imagine what you're thinking.

**MARGARET BROWN**

I'm -

**RITA**

But I ask you what parent in their right mind seeing their child in pain --

**MARGARET BROWN**

I have seen -

**RITA**

Their yearning for contact - wouldn't take them in an attempt to comfort them? Where the hell is Danny?

**MARGARET BROWN**

You -

**RITA**

He -

**MARGARET BROWN**

There's -

**RITA**

Oh yes there is! And if I were you I'd look at my conscience you do have one don't you long and hard before I tried to use this in court.

**MARGARET BROWN**

Is that a threat?

**RITA**

No. It's a plea. Give'm a break. Give'm one goddman break.

Margaret's cell phone RINGS.

**MARGARET BROWN**

What?! No, Mrs. Sloan. His temperature couldn't be 117, no not even 107. Okay, okay, I'll come...Come on Lucy, I'll take you back.

**RITA**

C'mon, Danny. We're going home.  
Danny!? Danny!?!?

The FIRE ALARM GOES OFF and --

**RITA (CONT'D)**

Goddamn it, Danny!

off  
but  
Rita

Rita avoids Margaret's look. Margaret's cell phone goes again. She doesn't answer. Now Rita looks at Margaret, this time Margaret avoids looking at her. Lucy runs to and throws her arms around her waist.

**LUCY**

Please don't fire us. It was all my idea. Please don't. Please. Please.

moved.

Rita is disarmed. She's moved and not used to being

**INT. COURTROOM - DAY**

**BAILIFF**

...the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Lucy's in her best dress, being sworn in. One hand in the air.

**LUCY**

So help me God...

HIDING

And now CAMERA MOVES AROUND HER AND WE SEE THAT SHE'S  
**HER OTHER HAND BEHIND HER BACK - FINGERS CROSSED.**

**INT. COURTROOM - LATER**

Lucy is on the stand, Turner is cross-examining her.

**TURNER**

I heard you turned seven this year.  
That's pretty exciting.

**LUCY**

Everybody gets older. It's not that big a deal.

**TURNER**



What'd you get for your birthday?

**LUCY**

I haven't opened my presents yet.

**TURNER**

Really? That's odd. Why not?

Lucy looks to her father and Rita.

**LUCY**

I opened my presents. I got the HELP album - limited edition.

**ON RITA AND SAM**

What is she doing?

**TURNER**

Oh, I'm sorry. I was confused. I thought you didn't open your birthday presents because you ran away from your own party when your best friend told everyone that you were adopted.

**LUCY**

I never said that; why would I say that?

**TURNER**

Why would your friends say it if you hadn't said it?

**LUCY**

Kids lie all the time.

Next to her skirt, we see her fingers are crossed so hard they're practically turning purple.

**TURNER**

May I remind you Lucy that you're under oath?

**LUCY**

You may.

**TURNER**

And do you know that means if you lie you could be in serious trouble?

**LUCY**

I do.

**TURNER**

So now that you and I have agreed to tell the truth, where did you sleep last night?

Rita glares at Margaret. Thanks a lot.

**LUCY**

In my bed at the Foster home.

**TURNER**

All right, Lucy. If you're not going to tell the truth, I am. Your dad kidnapped you last night and the police found you sleeping in a seedy park a hundred miles from here. You're lying right now because you're afraid. Afraid that everyone will see how scared and frustrated you really are. You're afraid of hurting him, but now we need to tell the truth. The truth is deep inside you know you're not getting what you need from your father. Isn't that right, Lucy?

A LONG SILENCE. She stares at Turner defiantly.

**LUCY**

"All you need is love."

**INT. COURTROOM CORRIDOR - DAY**

WE HEAR THAT SONG as Sam and Rita walk out of the courtroom.

Rita is breaking pieces off a candy bar she has stuffed in her purse. They see Lucy running down the corridor toward Sam, Margaret Brown behind her.

**LUCY**

Daddy! I did great, didn't I?

**SAM**

No, Lucy, you lied.

**LUCY**

Shhh! Don't tell anyone.

Rita watches Sam. Moved by his concern as a parent.

**MARGARET BROWN**

Lucy, Mrs. Kerry's here to take you back.

**LUCY**

I thought you'd be proud of me. Jo Jo's mom told him to lie on the stand and say he never saw a needle in the house; and he did, and now they're back together.

**SAM**

Jo Jo isn't us. The truth, the truth, when the judge hears the truth, he'll know, he'll know we should be together.

**LUCY**

(bursting)

Nobody's interested in the truth, Daddy. Nobody cares!

They lead her down the hallway toward Mrs. Kerry - Sam's voice gets louder and louder - determined to make her hear.

**SAM**

**I CARE! DO YOU HEAR ME? THE TRUTH.  
THE WHOLE TRUTH! SO HELP ME GOD!!**

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The darkness of Sam's apartment. We see him on his knees. Saying his prayers by his bedside.

**SAM**

Help me, God. Help me, God. Help me, God...

We see ANNIE'S SILHOUETTE from the window of her apartment as it moves across the frame.

**INT. COURTROOM - DAY**

Turner cross examines George, the manager of Starbucks.

**GEORGE**

Sam's my most reliable employee. He's never missed a day of work in eight years. Always warm, always friendly.

**TURNER**

Admirable qualities for a single father. Mr. Walker, in these eight years, have Mr. Dawson's responsibilities, which...let me see...would include

bussing tables, replenishing Sweet 'n  
Lows, and sweeping up the place...  
increased?

**GEORGE**

No. Not really.

**TURNER**

And isn't that because he's mentally  
incapable of learning management skills  
or working the cash register or even  
making a cup of coffee?

**RITA**

Objection. Leading the witness.

**JUDGE MCNEILY**

You may answer the question.

George searches for a way to tell the truth.

**GEORGE**

Well as a matter of fact, Sam and I have  
been discussing a promotion that I was  
planning on putting into effect at the  
end of the week.

Sam leaps to his feet.

**SAM**

Oh boy! Thank you, George!

Rita pulls him down. Turner seizes the moment.

**TURNER**

Yes. Thank you, George. Now, after  
eight years, Sam can finally measure out  
a teaspoon of coffee and cup of water.  
Now, he must certainly be able to help  
Lucy with her geometry.

**RITA**

Objection -

**TURNER**

No further questions.

**INT. COURTROOM CORRIDOR - LATER**

Rita prepares Ifty.

**RITA**

...and when I ask another question?

**IFTY**

I answer in one sentence.

**RITA**

Yes. Short and sweet.

**IFTY**

Yes. One sentence. Short and sweet.  
My aunt was short and sweet. But her  
cooking was too spicy she...

Rita's twitching foot knocks over her purse. Out spill  
several Snickers Bars with the chocolate picked off them.  
Embarrassed, she kneels to pick them up when she and Sam

see

something that stops them both, awestruck. In the corner

of

the corridor, huddled on a bench in dark sunglasses, sits  
ANNIE IN A PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS SUIT. Sam runs to her.

**SAM**

Annie! I can't believe it!

**ANNIE**

(visibly trembling)

Tell them to take me quickly.

**RITA**

Give me one minute with the judge.

**INT. COURTROOM - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER**

Annie, wearing her dark glasses, is being questioned by

Rita.

**RITA**

Besides being Lucy's godmother, aren't  
you also Lucy's piano teacher?

**ANNIE**

Yes.

**RITA**

Lucy's very lucky. Didn't you graduate  
Magna Cum Laud from the Julliard School  
of Music?

**ANNIE**

Summa Cum Laud.

**RITA**

(delighted)

Excuse me. Now Ms. Cassell, in all the time you've known them, have you ever questioned Sam's ability as a father?

**ANNIE**

Never.

**RITA**

Never?

**ANNIE**

Never. Look at Lucy. She's strong, she's able to display true empathy for people, all kinds of people. I know you all think she's as bright as she is despite him. But it's because of him.

**DISSOLVE**

**TO:**

**INT. COURTROOM - LATER**

Turner stands where Rita did.

**TURNER**

Can Sam add?

**ANNIE**

Yes.

**TURNER**

How about multiplication?

**ANNIE**

He's learning.

**TURNER**

So what you're saying is that Sam can not even multiply two times two?

**ANNIE**

I don't know about you, Mr. Turner, but my fondest memories of my parents have nothing to do with times tables or state capitals.

**TURNER**

I bet he's knocking on your door all the time with questions.

**ANNIE**

Yes. All the time. The last question was whether to use Biz or Clorox to get the grass stains out of Lucy's soccer uniform.

**ON RITA AND SAM**

This is too good to be true.

**TURNER**

So let's see..he doesn't know math...he can't even wash her clothes. How about puberty? I can only imagine how much insight he'll bring to approaching the sensitive issues of a young girl's development.

**ANNIE**

Mr. Turner, show me a father, any father, who knows how to do that and I'll give them the Parent of the Year award.

**TURNER**

And you've had plenty of opportunity to observe fathers, haven't you?

**RITA**

Objection!

**TURNER**

But the fact that Ms. Cassell hasn't come out of her room in years might have some effect on her perception.

**JUDGE MCNEILY**

I'll allow it.

**ANNIE**

I had twenty eight years in the world to observe all kinds of fathers.

**TURNER**

What about your father, Ms. Cassell? Since you appear to be an expert on father-daughter relationships.

A long pause. Sam watches as Annie visibly tightens.

**TURNER (CONT'D)**

Excuse me, Ms. Cassell, I didn't hear

your response. What about your father?

Annie reaches for her water glass. We see her hand SHAKE. It knocks over the glass, shattering it on the floor.

**SAM**

Objection! No further questions!

**TURNER**

Excuse me, Mr. Dawson?

**SAM**

I said that's enough! I will not allow it! Overruled! Overruled!!

Rita doesn't stop him. The Judge hesitates, incredulous, then pounds the gavel as the courtroom erupts.

**EXT. SAM'S APARTMENT - DUSK**

curled  
into  
with

Rita sits in her Porsche with Annie and Sam. Annie is curled into a tight ball in the passenger seat. Sam is tucked the shelf in the back. His legs kick Rita in the face every gear shift.

**RITA**

Thank you again, Annie. You were truly extraordinary.

**SAM**

Extraordinary. Truly extraordinary.

Annie doesn't move.

**RITA**

Okay okay okay okay. Well, Sam has his big day on the stand tomorrow and we need to work a little bit so that he's as effective as you were.

**SAM**

Effective. Very effective.

**RITA**

On a Porsche, the, uh, the door handle is a little hidden by that thingamajig, so if you're having a hard time finding it I'll just --



Rita reaches across to open Annie's door when she SCREAMS!

**ANNIE**

Noooooooooo!

**SAM**

Annie's not quite ready to go outside yet.

**RITA**

Okay, we'll just take our time.

**INT. PORSCHE - TWO HOURS LATER**

car  
It's dark now. Annie is still catatonic. Rita's on the phone, the kind that voice activates and she's yelling.

**RITA**

Home! Home! HOME GODDAMNIT! Juanita, help Danny with his English assignment. Ayude Danny un story...story...STORIO!

**ANNIE**

(rising from the dead)  
I'm ready now.

**RITA**

(gently)  
Good, fine, Sam? Annie's ready.

Sam's fallen asleep.

**EXT. RITA'S LAVISH BEL AIR HOME - NIGHT**

Rita and Sam enter.

**INT. RITA'S BEL AIR HOME - NIGHT**

Sam is awestruck at the magnificent home.

**RITA**

Okay okay okay okay. We'll work in the library. It's down the hall and to the left.

They pass another room and see Danny zoned out in front of the wide-screen TV watching MUTANT NINJA TURTLES.

**RITA (CONT'D)**

Hey, Danny.  
(no answer)

Where's your father?

**DANNY**

(staring at TV)

Guess.

**RITA**

I don't want to guess. Where is he?

(Sam watches Rita)

I told you I don't want to guess.

**DANNY**

Well where was he last night?

**RITA**

Working late.

**DANNY**

There you guessed it.

**RITA**

He said he was working late?

**DANNY**

That's what he said.

**RITA**

Well who did he say was taking care of you?

**DANNY**

You. But you said you were working late.

**RITA**

I am working late.

**DANNY**

Then go work.

**RITA**

How was your day?

**DANNY**

You have to work. Go work.

**RITA**

No. How was your -

Her CELL PHONE goes off. Rita moves into the hallway to answer her phone. Sam moves into the den, sits on the

couch,

the sound of Rita arguing with her husband drifts into the room. Sam looks sideways at Danny who remains stonefaced.

**SAM**

This is my favorite part. Hey Dommy, this one looks like he's suffering from shell shock.

**DANNY**

Boy I guess we can shell it out... It was a shell of a good hit.

Rita stands in the doorway watching Sam have a longer conversation with her son than she's had in months. She retreats.

**INT. RITA'S DEN - LATER**

Danny and Sam eat popcorn watching the movie.

**SAM**

(bellowing)

"Turtles in the half-shell, turtle power!" Rita! Come this is the best part.

He heads towards Rita.

**INT. PANTRY - CONTINUOUS**

in In the half-light Sam catches a glimpse of Rita standing the pantry unconsciously stuffing marshmallows into her mouth. Their eyes lock for a moment.

**SAM**

You eat too fast. Come watch the movie.

**RITA**

It's getting late. We have to get to work.

(handing him a suit)

This is my husband's. He won't notice. He's got ten more just like it. Try it on.

**INT. RITA'S LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER**

stares Sam comes out of the bathroom in the new suit. Rita at him astonished. He looks incredibly handsome. Rita, attempting to stifle her reaction, turns away from Sam.

**SAM**

Bad?

**RITA**

No. Very, very good. But your tie's crooked.

Rita stands behind Sam with her hand around his neck showing him how to do his tie properly. Their images are reflected in the mirror.

**RITA (CONT'D)**

Cross over once. Loop it around on the inside of your neck.

(her hand grazes his neck)

Slide the other side through the loop, then tighten.

Rita comes around to the front and straightens and tightens the tie. They are both nervous. The room is charged.

**RITA (CONT'D)**

Okay okay okay okay. Our strategy is that we're aggressively pursuing a support system. I'm going to ask you how are you prepared to help Lucy in school?

**SAM**

Let me see let me see let me see.

**RITA**

Sam! I told you you have to stop that! It makes you look stupid! Okay okay okay. Try again.

(endless pause)

You say you will find her a tutor. Then I say, "How will you pay for it?"

**SAM**

Could you slow down? Why do you eat so fast?

**RITA**

(ignoring him)

We've gone over this a million times. You've found a free tutoring service for her at the YMCA.

**SAM**

But I didn't. You did.

**RITA**

Can't you grasp the concept of  
manipulating the truth? Not lying.  
Just a little tweak here and there.

**SAM**

No...You're so lucky. You get to play  
with Danny all the time.

**RITA**

He doesn't want to play with me.

**SAM**

Yes he does. He does he does. He  
thinks you don't want to.

**RITA**

Oh that's ridiculous of course I want  
to.

**SAM**

Tweak, tweak.

**RITA**

(exploding)

I drove around after work yesterday 'til  
9:30 looking for a goddman razor  
scooter!

**SAM**

(in his own world)

Tweak, squeak, peek peek...

Rita shifts uneasily, embarrassed by her overreaction.

**INT. RITA'S LIBRARY - LATER**

**RITA**

Okay, why did you harass that young boy  
at your home?

**SAM**

You know I didn't harass him, Rita. You  
know that, you know that!

**RITA**

Sam, I'm pretending to be Mr. Turner,  
remember? Okay?

**SAM**

Oh yeah yeah yeah yeah. I didn't harass him, Mr. Turner. Mr. Turner -  
(Sam can't keep a straight face)  
You don't look like him.

**RITA**

That's a blessing.

**SAM**

You're so much prettier.

**RITA**

(suddenly shy)  
Thank you. Now.  
What makes you think you can take care of a woman - I mean a young child - when you have a hard time taking care of yourself?

**INT. RITA'S LIBRARY - TWO HOURS LATER**

Rita is relentless. Sam is exhausted but determined.

**RITA**

But who are you kidding? Isn't Lucy already smarter than you?

**SAM**

In some ways. But in other ways, she's not, I think.

**RITA**

You think?

**SAM**

I think.

**RITA**

Sam. You've got to be firm on this.

**SAM**

I think in other ways I'm smarter than her. Smarter than you are, Mr. Turner. In fact, in some ways I'm smarter than you, Judge McNeilly.

**RITA**

Whoa! Bring it down.

**SAM**

What parent doesn't want more for their child? To be more than the sum of the parts of the whole of them.

**RITA**

Yeah yeah yeah, but it's one thing for a little girl to love her daddy when she's a baby, but once she loses respect for you, what will you do?

**SAM**

(fierce)

I won't let that happen. I won't.

**RITA**

How can you say that?

**SAM**

Respect is not just about how smart someone is. Smart is not just about how smart someone is.

**RITA**

But what about Lucy? Aren't you being selfish? Doesn't she deserve a better life? Don't you think she's just pretending she's happy to not hurt your feelings?

Sam jumps up from the table, trembling with anger.

**SAM**

Lucy is happy! We have fun! We go to Denny's, we go to video night. I know how to love her. I know I'm not going to be able to go to law school and learn how to be a mean person, but I know how to love. I know how to be her father, Mr. Turner!

By this time he is face to face with Rita, breathing hard, overcome with emotion. Rita is unexpectedly near tears. Suddenly before she knows it, she is HOLDING SAM. The

room

boy/man.

charged. She speaks tenderly, moved by this awkward

**RITA**

I know you do, Sam. I know you do.

**INT. STARBUCKS - MORNING**

Sam rushes into the coffee shop in his new suit.

**GEORGE**

You look great, Sam. What time do you have to be in court?

**SAM**

Half day, half day. I take the stand at two.

George leads him behind the counter. THE STAFF BEAMS. Euphorically, Sam approaches the huge espresso machines.

**GEORGE**

Okay, we need two grande cappucinos, non fat.

**SAM**

Sprinkles or Cinnamon?

**INT. STARBUCKS - 11:00 A.M.**

Sam is doing great. He's humming as he prepares a triple latte with the precision of a Swiss watchmaker.

**INT. STARBUCKS - 12:00 P.M.**

TOURISTS. The place is packed, including a GROUP OF JAPANESE

Sam zips around, trying to juggle between the blender, the espresso machine, steamed milk, icemaker, all the while glancing up at the clock. Sam hands three cups to

customers,

the foam overflowing, coffee spilling out.

A CUSTOMER takes a sip and SPITS IT OUT.

**GUY**

What is this? I ordered an Americano, not a latte.

**SAM**

Americano, Americano, not a latte.

Working as fast as he can but still NOT FAST ENOUGH, Sam unconsciously drinks the latte.

**INT. STARBUCKS - 12:45 P.M.**

Hyped on coffee, Sam is zooming around and he's a mess. Shirt hangs out, coffee stains on it, his hair wild.



turns  
face.  
Frazzled, he forgets to put the lid on the blender and  
it ON. A mint mocha frappuccino SPLATTERS HIM in the  
At that moment, George comes out of his office.

**SAM**

I'm going to be late! I'm going to be  
late!

**GEORGE**

I'll call a taxi.

**SAM**

No, no, I can't wait. I can't wait.  
I've got to go right now.

face.  
Sam heads out, the coffee drink still dripping from his

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

street  
a  
Walking a hundred miles an hour, Sam barrels down the  
out of his mind. Cars are jammed up. He walks over them,  
man possessed.

**INT. COURTROOM - DAY**

Everyone is in their places, waiting.

**TURNER**

Your Honor, if the defendant doesn't  
have enough interest in his daughter to  
even show up -

**RITA**

Your Honor, I'm sure he'll be here any  
moment. This is an extremely important  
day to Mr. Dawson.

stained,  
At THAT MOMENT, Sam bursts through the doors. Suit  
hair sticky with frappuccino. Rita's jaw drops.

**RITA (CONT'D)**

Your Honor, may I have a moment with my  
client?

**JUDGE MCNEILY**

Make it brief, Ms. Harrison.

Rita heads towards Sam. Up close, he looks even worse.

**RITA**

What the hell happened?  
(sniffing the air)  
What is that smell? Mint?

Sam, determined, heads for the stand. Rita grabs Sam's shoulders and tries to focus him. Looks deep into his eyes.

**RITA (CONT'D)**

Sam, look at me. Look at me!  
(he does)  
I will guide you like last night.  
(Sam hugs her)  
Not that part of last night, the other part. Now you can do it. I know you can. Lucy needs you.

**SAM**

(a mile a minute)  
Lucy needs me.

**RITA**

Yes, slow down because Lucy needs you.

**SAM**

Lucy needs you.

**JUDGE MCNEILLY**

Ms. Harrison. We need you!

**INT. COURTROOM - LATER**

Sam, on the stand, talks a mile a minute from the coffee.

**RITA**

How will you be able to pay for private tutoring?

**SAM**

There's a free program at the YMCA.  
Lucy can go there.

**RITA**

But don't you ever think it would be better for Lucy if she lived with a permanent foster family and you could visit whenever you wanted?

**SAM**

The Fosters don't know her. Why can't she live with me and they can come visit if they want to. I'm firm on this. And I'm getting firmer. Lucy belongs with me.

**RITA**

Why?

Sam puts his finger to his chin and starts his "Let me see..." Rita gives him a look; he lowers his finger and starts talking very fast from the coffee. The

STENOGRAPHER

desperately tries to keep pace.

**SAM**

Paul wrote the first part of the song "Michelle". He said to John, "Where do I go from here?" John had been listening to Nina Simone. There was a line in it that went something like, "I love you, I love you, I love you..." They put that into the song. It wouldn't be the same song without that. It made the song complete. That's why the whole world cried when they broke up on April 10, 1970.

**ON RITA**

Well, he has some kind of point.

MARY, the Stenographer, is still typing.

**JUDGE MCNEILY**

Did you get that, Mary?

**INT. COURTROOM - LATER**

Turner fires questions at Sam - a mile a minute.

**TURNER**

When you were Lucy's age, were you living at home?

**SAM**

No.

**TURNER**

Were you living with your mother and father?

**SAM**

No.

**TURNER**

Well then where were you living?

**SAM**

(very quietly)

In an institution.

**TURNER**

So your parents put you in an institution?

**SAM**

Only after my mom got sick.

**TURNER**

What about your father? Where was he?

**SAM**

Gone with the wind when Sam was born.

**TURNER**

So, you weren't raised by your mother?

**SAM**

I saw her I saw her.

**TURNER**

When?

**SAM**

Christmas, Easter and my birthday.

**TURNER**

Oh, once a year on your birthday. So in a way, the people at the institution were your parents. Were they nice to you?

**SAM**

Some yes. Some on. Some yes.

**TURNER**

Did they hit you?

**SAM**

Sometimes. Sometimes they did sometimes.

**TURNER**

Like when you hit Lucy's friend at her birthday party?

**RITA**

Objection! Nobody hit anybody!

**TURNER**

Let me rephrase that, strong-armed. So what role model do you call upon as a father when you're parenting Lucy? The head of the institution? The Principal the warden?

**SAM**

No. Not Mr. Whitehead. Not him.

**TURNER**

Then who?

**SAM**

Myself.

**TURNER**

you have the mental capacity of a seven year old. So you ask yourself, a seven year old -

**SAM**

I am not a seven-year old.

**TURNER**

How to parent a fellow seven-year old?

**SAM**

Yes. No. What was the question?

**TURNER**

The question is: what makes you think you can be a parent? Your background? Your IQ? Your friends who can't even testify for you?

**RITA**

Objection -

**SAM**

My friends -

**RITA**

Objection -

**SAM**

My friends love Lucy even if Rita thought they weren't smart enough to testify. Even if she said you'd wipe the floor with them.

**ON RITA**

Trying to telepathically reach Sam.

**TURNER**

Excuse me, Mr. Dawson, your lawyer just objected; that means you didn't have to answer the question. You can't even follow the simple rules you've watched here day after day. You really think you can raise a seven-year old? A ten year old? A thirteen-year old?

(in his face)

That means she'll be six years more advanced than you.

Sweat pours down Sam's coffee stained collar. He searches for words. Then from the clearest place inside himself:

**SAM**

I've had a lot of time to think about whatever it is that makes somebody a good parent. It has to do with constancy. It has to do with patience. It has to do with listening. To pretending to listen when you can't even listen anymore.

The court is riveted by Sam's eloquence. Rita's amazed.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

It has to do with love, like she says...

Rita's antenna goes up: who's "she?"

**SAM (CONT'D)**

And I don't know where it's written that a woman has a corner on that market, that a man has any less of those emotions than a woman. Billy has a home with me! It's not perfect! I'm not a perfect parent! Sometimes I forget he's just a little kid...

(whispers from the courtroom)

We built a life together and we love each other and if you destroy that, it

may be irrep, irrep, irrep...

**IFTY**

Irreparable.

trying

All eyes TURN to the back of the room. Ifty is there with all his might to help his friend.

**IFTY (CONT'D)**

Joanne, don't do that, please. Don't do it twice, not to him. Then Meryl Streep can't even look at Dustin Hoffman after that.

**TURNER**

Right, "Kramer vs. Kramer." Thank you for the commentary, Mr. Bhutto. It's hard to find words isn't it, Mr. Dawson. It's confusing. It's confusing to know what to say to Lucy half the time, isn't it?

everything

Mortified, so uncomfortable in this strange world, so at a loss how to swim through it, beginning to believe

courtroom.

Turner's saying, Sam looks out at the faces in the

in

Rita, stunned and incredulous; Turner and his associate smirking at him; Ifty, shaking his head; Robert, his face

Expert,

his hands; Miss Wright, Margaret Brown, the State's

almost willing him to fail. Are they right? Are they?

**SAM**

No, yes, no.

**TURNER**

No what?

**SAM**

Let me see let me see let me see.

**TURNER**

You don't know what?

**SAM**

Yes.

**TURNER**

Yes. You're right, you don't know. You

don't know enough to really raise your daughter?

**RITA**

Objection. These aren't questions, these are attacks.

**SAM**

(frantic)

I am Lucy's father.

**TURNER**

Are you? Are you really? I'm not talking about the fact that you got some homeless woman pregnant.

**RITA**

Objection your Honor. I motion a recess.

**JUDGE MCNEILY**

Denied. Get to the question, Mr. Turner.

**TURNER**

The question is if you love your daughter as much as they say you do don't you think she deserves more?! Don't you? In your heart of hearts, secretly question yourself every day? Don't you?!

**SAM**

Yes.

**TURNER**

Was that a "yes?"

**RITA**

Objection.

**SAM**

Yes. She does. She deserves everything. In my heart of hearts.

**TURNER**

Yes she does. And you agree with everyone, you can't give her that?

**SAM**

(in unbearable pain)

Maybe. Maybe everybody's right.



**ON TURNER**

There. He got it.

**ON RITA**

starts

Anguished. Watching Sam unravel as he stands up and walking around in a circle in the witness box.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

No more no more! Let it stop! No more!  
No more! No more!

The Judge watches Sam, sad and stunned. The verdict is obvious. Sam has passed judgement on himself.

**EXT. CHILD AND FAMILY PROTECTIVE SERVICES - HALLWAY**

Sam

Sam, broken, walks down the long hallway with Rita toward Margaret Brown's office. Suddenly, Rita stops as she and both see -

**LUCY**

for

Sitting, hopeful on the bench. She searches Sam's face the verdict. The minute she sees sorrow in his eyes, she knows. She runs to him, gluing herself to his chest.

**LUCY**

No Daddy! No Daddy! No Daddy!

The

In a SERIES OF WORDLESS DISSOLVES, they hold each other in the hallway through the entire forty five minute visit.

the

only thing moving is the hands of a large wall clock in background. Pained, Margaret reaches for Lucy.

**MARGARET BROWN**

C'mon, Lucy. It's time to say goodbye.

**LUCY**

NOOOO! Don't let go don't let go don't  
let go -

Sam's tears mix with Lucy's as they sob, clinging to each other. With such fierce love; a parent and a child.

**LUCY (CONT'D)**

Don't let them Daddy don't let them!  
Don't ever let me go!

done  
He can't let her go. That he can't do. Margaret, steel herself, turns to Rita, no matter how many times she's this.

**MARGARET BROWN**

Please help me.

wrench  
Rita, aching from a place she thought she buried long ago, shakes her head, NO. Now, Margaret literally has to Lucy away from her father's arms. Lucy bellowing as she pulls her down the hallway. Sam is frozen in incalculable pain.

**EXT. SAM'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT**

LIQUID  
pile  
STRAWBERRY  
wall.  
We hear "Fool on the Hill". We follow a trail of PINK melting down the hall and come to Annie's door where a of grocery bags and newspapers sit in a PUDDLE OF ICE CREAM. Suddenly, the needle SCRAPES LOUDLY across the record, followed by a mysterious POUNDING against the

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

dim.  
a  
The CAMERA MOVES to the WINDOW. Inside, the lights are Lucy's HAMMOCK SWINGS EMPTY, ghostlike. Sam, curled into a ball in Lucy's bare corner, bangs his head over and over again against the wall, overcome with grief.

**INT. DANNY'S ROOM - RITA'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

boy,  
them  
The POUNDING CONTINUES as we see Rita standing in the doorway, watching her sleeping child. This stranger that she's raised. She moves to cover him, this tough little when she sees POOH BEAR tucked under his arm. She tucks both in, tenderly.

**EXT. CARPENTER HOUSE - DAY**

in Saturday in idyllic suburbia. Sam, directions and a map  
of his hands, tentatively rounds the corner. A small bouquet  
flowers in his hands when he stops - STARING AHEAD AT --

**REVERSE ANGLE**

She Lucy looking absolutely radiant in a new spring dress.  
smock stands on the front porch with RANDY, who wears a red  
and is setting up TWO EASELS AND PAINTS. There's a tiny  
chair for Lucy and a tiny chair for her.

**CLOSE ON LUCY AND RANDY**

with The tension in Lucy's face, Randy straining to connect  
her.

**RANDY**

Your teacher told me you were an artist.

**LUCY**

You wear too much perfume. You're  
trying too hard.

**RANDY**

I am, aren't I. Maybe you could teach  
me how to paint.

**LUCY**

My daddy's coming today. We're going to  
open my birthday presents. Why don't  
you just go do something.

**BACK TO SAM**

everything From where he stands, all he sees is Lucy getting  
hand - she deserves. He looks down at the tiny bouquet in his  
feeling profoundly inadequate, he reaches for some flowers  
from a garden he's passing. Puts them in his bouquet.  
Then stops. Feels guilty. Tries to put the flowers BACK. He  
stares up at Lucy on the porch a few houses away.

Lucy sits on the steps. Randy sits right next to her.

**BACK ON SAM**

in Where he WAS standing, but is now GONE. The flowers lay  
the dirt. From the porch, Lucy looks out and waits. And  
waits. And waits.

**INT. STARBUCKS - DAY**

cleans It's Saturday. The place is buzzing. Sam listlessly  
his the tables, without the usual energy and verve. A TODDLER  
marches around a table, playing under the adoring gaze of  
parents.

**MAN**

Excuse me, my kid knocked over a coffee,  
could you clean this up?

Sam sees a FAMILY at a table covered with spilled coffee.

**MAN (CONT'D)**

I said I need a refill and a towel over  
here.

**SAM**

(snapping)

You need a towel? A refill? A glass of  
water? You need more than you already  
have? You have everything -

(all his fury and frustration)

Everything. But it's not enough. Take  
my daughter, too!

Sam's out of control, the whole shop stares at him as he  
backs into a shelf of MUGS he so carefully arranged. They  
CRASH onto the floor.

**SMASH CUT**

**TO:**

**EXT. CARPENTER PORCH - DAY**

KNOCKS Paints and brushes go FLYING across the porch as Lucy  
THEM OVER. Totally out of control.

**LUCY**

You gave him the wrong address! You're  
hiding me from him!

As Randy reaches for her, Lucy pours black paint on her.

**EXT. CARPENTER HOUSE - DUSK**

Lucy sits in a ball on the corner of the porch. Her eyes swollen from crying. Finally, she gets up and moves to the tiny chair that Randy put out for her. Straightens the easel and begins to paint.

The front door opens and Randy comes out having washed her face and hair. Without speaking, Randy straightens her easel and sits down next to Lucy and begins to paint. Randy and Lucy paint in silence for a long time. Then -

**LUCY**

You're going to send me away now, aren't you?

**RANDY**

(tenderly)

No.

We hear what sounds like a child's hand playing the song "Here, There and Everywhere..."

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - EVENING**

We see SAM sitting at Lucy's miniature toy piano as he plays with one finger. IN A SERIES OF DISSOLVES, as DAYS and WEEKS PASS, we see SAM'S HANDS at the PIANO -

**INTERCUT:**

**EXT. CARPENTER HOUSE - DAY**

With Lucy and Randy's hands as they PAINT side by side to Sam's sad melody. Lucy's pictures start ANGRY, angular with blacks and blues, then GRADUALLY soften and the dark figures recede. By the END, there is a BRUSHSTROKE of the red of Randy's smock peeking into the corner of Lucy's picture.

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - DAY**

We come back to Sam, having withdrawn completely into himself

serenading no one.

**INT. LUCY'S BEDROOM - DAY**

almost  
Sam's  
We see Lucy and Randy sitting on her bed unwrapping the birthday presents. TIME HAS PASSED. They look close, like a mother and daughter. Lucy finishes unwrapping present and we see a stack of ONE HUNDRED DENNY'S NAPKINS.

**RANDY**

Oh, he must've forgotten to put the gift in.

wall.  
Randy picks up one of Lucy's pictures and moves to the

**RANDY (CONT'D)**

You know, this wall really needs something special on it.

the  
Then  
Lucy half-smiles and unconsciously begins to fold one of Denny's napkins into an origami bird. Then crushes it. cautiously:

**LUCY**

What's the longest any one of those kids stayed with you?

**RANDY**

Megan stayed a little over a year.

**LUCY**

(averting her eyes)  
Did you ever want any of them to stay longer?

**ON RANDY**

Moved herself. Understanding how huge a question this is coming from this bruised little heart.

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - WEEKS LATER - DAY**

into  
Sam sits in a dark corner; maniacally folding newspaper an odd origami pattern. There's a knock at the door - Sam doesn't move, he just continues folding his paper.

**RITA (O.S.)**

Sam it's me! Open up!

He doesn't answer it, just methodically folds.

**EXT. SAM'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS**

Rita stands there impatiently.

**RITA**

I don't have time for this! You were supposed to show up for your first evaluation. And I leave work early to get there and where the hell are you?! Open the door! Sam! Open the goddamn door!

(nothing)

Alright. If you don't care enough to open the goddamn door I'm outta here! I've ruined my practice, I've alienated my colleagues - I sent my kid off on a fishing trip with his father so I could work with you and you won't open your goddamn door for me?! Fine! THAT'S IT! I've had enough!

with  
door  
She starts down the hall when suddenly she turns and -  
the mastery of a karate black belt - RUNS AND KICKS the  
down.

**INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS**

created  
on  
Rita bursts through the door and then stops. Sam has  
an origami wall of newspapers, intricately woven together.  
A fortress against the world. He keeps folding - doesn't  
even look at Rita. He's more far gone than she could  
imagine, she walks gingerly to the wall and knocks gently  
it.

**RITA**

Sam, it's Rita. Can I come in?

**SAM**

No room. No room.

**RITA**

Hey. I lived in the East Village. I don't need a lot of room.

**SAM**

Sam makes life too hard. Sam makes life too hard on everyone.

**RITA**

Sam, I can go at least nine more rounds. But you gotta let me in. Please Sam. Please.

He pulls out one small brick of origami, opening a window.

**RITA (CONT'D)**

Thank you. Now I can see your kind eyes...George told me you needed a break from work.

**SAM**

I don't want to work there anymore. Too many people.

**RITA**

Maybe we could find you a quieter job. Because remember one of the judges conditions is you have to earn more money; you've got to keep earning more money for when we get you Lucy back.

**SAM**

Lucy doesn't need me anymore. She has a new family. She doesn't need me anymore.

**RITA**

Is that what she said?

**SAM**

She didn't have to say it. I may be stupid, but I know. I know.

**RITA**

Well that's the first stupid thing I've ever heard you say.

Sam looks at her through the window. A CHINK in the wall.

**RITA (CONT'D)**

Sam, Sam you can get her back. The court favors reunification. The only thing that can block you is if the foster family petitions to adopt. And from what I've heard, Lucy's making



their life miserable - that's our girl.  
Sam, fight for her.

**SAM**

I tried. I tried.

**RITA**

Try harder.

**SAM**

You don't know. You don't know.

**RITA**

I don't know?

**SAM**

You don't know what it is to try and try  
and never get there. You were born  
perfect, perfect.

**RITA**

Is that right? Everyone else is perfect  
but only Sam feels loss and pain?

**SAM**

That's right. People like you don't  
know.

**RITA**

People like me?

**SAM**

People like you don't know, don't know  
what hurt feels like, people like you  
don't feel, don't feel anything.

She slaps him. STUNNED, he slaps her back. STUNNED, she  
slaps him again. HE SLAPS HER. She rips the newspaper

wall

down.

**RITA**

You think you got the market cornered on  
human suffering? Well let me tell you  
something about "People like me."  
People like me feel little and lost and  
ugly and dispensable. People like me  
have perfect husbands screwing someone  
far more perfect than me and my son, my  
son hates me, I try too hard and I push  
and he knows it and I talk in that  
voice, that voice I promised I'd never

use, and I've screamed, I've screamed horrible things to him, a five year-old because he doesn't want to get in the car at the end of a day and he stares at me with such anger and I hate him then. I know I'm failing you, I know I'm disappointing you, I know you deserve better but get in the fucking car! It's like every morning I wake up and fail, and I look around and anybody, anybody can pull it off, but somehow I can't. And I know, I know I have everything, and I'm still miserable and it's pathetic. I know it's pathetic. No matter how hard I try, something about me will never be enough.

She's crying too hard to continue. He pulls her to him. Before she realizes what's happening, she's holding him tightly. He whispers in her ear.

**SAM**

You're enough. You're so much more than enough.

He looks her straight in the eye - she's undone by the intimacy of the moment, by the strength of his purity.

And

staring into his eyes, she begins to sob, walls crumbling. He kisses her elbow, her shoulder, her forehead, her eyes, her tears. And something ignites between them - something confused and scary and deep and filled with a passionate ache.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

Lovely Rita...

On a bed of newspaper that was once a wall they come together, whole again.

**EXT. RANDY'S NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY**

SIX

Sam rounds the corner walking - or rather being walked by

door

DOGS, all shapes, all sizes. He heads up the walkway to Randy's house. She comes out of the house and shuts the

door behind her, stopping him.

**RANDY**

You're early.

**SAM**

All the lights were green.

**RANDY**

There's a reason for the court schedule. You stopped showing up. Lucy has had to rebuild her life.

**SAM**

I want her back. I can do it. I know I can.

**RANDY**

That's not up to me, but I'm telling you, I will do everything in my power to prevent Lucy from getting hurt again.

Sam hangs his head. A dog barks at Randy.

**RANDY (CONT'D)**

Whose dogs are these?

**SAM**

Supplemental income supplemental income - bathe, walk and feed. Sam Dawson meets your canine needs.  
(to dogs)  
Sit! Sit! Sit! Sit! Sit! Sit!

the  
her.  
pent  
All the dogs sit but a BIG BLACK LAB. Randy heads into house. The front door opens and Lucy comes out. She runs down the stairs to Sam. Thrilled, Sam opens his arms to She leaps into them and begins slugging his chest with up fury.

**LUCY**

You never came! You never even called! You forgot about me! How could you forget me!

**SAM**

I never forgot you. I forgot me.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

I hate you I hate you I hate you!

to  
Lucy pulls away. A long charged silence. Lucy refusing even look at her father.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

Lucy, I tried to write you a letter last night...

**A BASSET HOUND SNEEZES.**

**SAM (CONT'D)**

Gesundheit, Buster. Buster has a cold. But the letter had too many big words. Pokey, sit.

The black lab has begun eating Randy's flowers. Lucy stares forward. Sam speaks tentatively, carefully:

**SAM (CONT'D)**

Dear Lucy. Pokey sit. Dear Lucy, I'm sorry that I hurt you. Every moment of the day I thought about you. Lucy in the hammock, Lucy at school. Lucy in the sky...XXOO. Daddy. P.S. I love you, recorded September 11th, the day you took your first step.

Lucy raises her head and looks at Sam for the first time.

**INT. DENNY'S - DAY**

**ON SALAD BAR**

Rows of carrots, tomatoes, cucumbers and - uh-oh, a tomato's in the peas. A hand comes into frame and carefully places the tomato just so, in the tomato bin. Now it moves to the olives. Shouldn't all the pimentos be facing up?

**PULL BACK**

To reveal Sam, in white apron and hat, deftly filling the containers of the elaborate salad bar as people fill their plates.

**SAM**

Napa cabbage, excellent choice. Purple and green, purple and green. Very rich in Vitamin C. Good choice. Very good choice.

**INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY**

approaching Sam walks toward the courtroom when we see Rita  
from the other end of the hall. They both slow down when  
they see each other. Rita unconsciously fixes her hair.  
Sam adjusts his tie.

**RITA**

Hello, Sam. Mr. Dawson. Sam. Dawson.

**SAM**

Hello, lawyer.

They almost shake hands - realize that means touching each other and don't. Rita motions toward the door.

**RITA**

Shall we?

**SAM**

No. We already did. Don't tell anybody.

They nervously walk through the door, bumping into each other.

**INT. SMALL COURT ROOM - LATER**

She's very aware of Sam. He looks away, over compensating obviously. Throughout the scene, Rita's hair falls in her eyes. She attempts to put it in place.

**RITA**

Furthermore, my client has found a new job, and is making every effort to find a bigger apartment so that -

Rita's hair falls in her eyes again. Sam stands up, pulls HER BARRETTE from his pocket, the one she left at his house.

**SAM**

Here.

Rita stares at the barrette as if it were the murder weapon.

**RITA**

Oh, thank you. What a...a lovely barrette, Mr. Dawson. It will look great on Lucy. Who I'm sure you bought it for. Furthermore, so that...there

will be more room for Lucy as she grows up.

**MARGARET BROWN**

All of that is well and good but the fact that Mr. Dawson quite his job, missed his hearing, and did not even show up for his visits with his daughter...

**RITA**

The fact that my client went through profound depression is the most natural reaction any parent could have.

**MARGARET BROWN**

But once again he had no idea how his behavior during that depression impacted on his daughter.

**RITA**

In these next months, Mr. Dawson will be expanding his support system to include Social Service programs, tutors --

**MARGARET BROWN**

It's too late! The foster family is petitioning the court for sole custody of Lucy and I fully support their request.

Sam turns to Rita. This can't be happening.

**INT. DENNY'S - NIGHT**

Sam, Rita, Ifty, Robert and Brad sit in a booth. With one extra person, it's a little tight. Rita picks at her Salisbury Steak special, trying to deal with the business

at

hand.

**IFTY**

Isn't it illegal? It's illegal to go through stop signs. It's illegal to cross on the red.

**RITA**

It's not illegal. It's very complicated. When a strong foster parent lobbies for a child it changes the equation.

**ROBERT**

They're reaching right through Sam as if he doesn't exist. As if he's a ghost.

**RITA**

There's one option we've never talked about, Sam.

(very carefully)

I know what you went through the last time you took the stand. We could settle out of court, ask for the most incredible visitation rights - it would almost seem like joint custody.

**SAM**

You're saying I don't have a chance. That's what you're saying.

**RITA**

I'm not saying you don't have a chance.

**ROBERT**

That's what you said last time and look where he is now.

**SAM**

Stop. Rita's not saying I don't have a chance. Are you? Tell me I have a chance.

Too long a pause. Ifty looks at the clock.

**IFTY**

Oh my God! 6:35 is Video Night at my house and I'm not even there!

**ROBERT**

If we get there before you do we'll wait for you - check!

**BRAD**

Sam get your dessert to go.

**SAM**

This is very hard to say. I'm having my dessert here. With Rita. I'm not coming to video night.

Devastated, Ifty, Robert and Brad solemnly gather their things.

**RITA**

Sam - if you want to go...

**SAM**

I said no, Rita.

**RITA**

I know, but if you -

**SAM**

What? Do you want me to go?

**RITA**

I didn't say that. But do you want to go?

**SAM**

Where?

**RITA**

Nevermind.

**SAM**

Fine.

**RITA**

Fine.

**IFTY, ROBERT & BRAD**

Fine.

with They leave in a huff. The WAITRESS delivers the check  
dessert and coffee.

**RITA**

I've got it.

**SAM**

I've got it.

Long pause. Rita slowly eats her pie.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

It's good to chew. You're eating more slowly.

Rita laughs and nods.

**SAM (CONT'D)**

Coconut Rhubarb. Sidebar, we need to talk. Sidebar.



**RITA**

(carefully)

Yes we do.

**SAM**

I need to get Lucy back. We need, we need - to be professional.

**RITA**

Do you know what that means?

**SAM**

When dealing with Starbucks' customers, be friendly but not familiar. I can be your friend.

**RITA**

(oddly touched)

Thank you, Sam.

**SAM**

You need to leave your husband.

**RITA**

(her armor up again)

Oh, my marriage isn't so bad.

**SAM**

'Life is very short and there's no time for fussing and fighting, my friend.'

**RITA**

(undone)

It's just...it's just that...I've never lost anything.

**EXT. SCHOOL - DAY**

LANDS

-

walks

up

They

Randy kisses Lucy goodbye as she heads toward school. We follow Lucy - suddenly a BIRD SAILS THROUGH THE SKY and IN FRONT OF LUCY. It's an ORIGAMI BIRD. She looks around but doesn't see Sam anywhere. But she feels him. She toward school, clutching the bird, past a tree and we move that tree and see Sam nestled in the branches. There. made contact.

**EXT. RANDY'S NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY**

in  
side,  
It's later that week. Lucy walks proudly down the street  
a GIRL SCOUT UNIFORM, selling cookies. Randy is by her  
beaming.

**LUCY**

We've made \$22.36. That's seven  
dollars, 64 cents less than thirty.

**RANDY**

Well that's one way of looking at it.

**EXT. RANDY'S NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER**

we  
DISSOLVE as they move through the neighborhood. Finally  
see her bound up the steps to an apartment building. She  
knocks on the door. It opens - and Lucy and Randy's JAW  
**DROPS.**

**REVERSE ANGLE**

Sam stands there. Holding three kittens. WE see various  
dogs in arm chairs, the couch...

**LUCY**

Daddy?!

**RANDY**

What are you doing here?

**SAM**

I live here. This is where I live.

**LUCY**

This is where you live? So close to me?

**SAM**

I wanted to be close to you. I wanted  
to be closer. Look at my apartment  
number.

(it's number 9)

John was born on October 9th. His son  
was born on October 9th.

**LUCY**

John met Yoko on November 9th.

**SAM**

His mother lived at 9 Newcastle,

Liverpool.

**LUCY**

Newcastle. 9 letters. Liverpool - 9 letters...

**RANDY**

Lucy, give me one minute with your father. Sam, I consider myself an understanding person but I don't understand this. You can't close the distance between you and Lucy with a new address. We go to court in a week -

**SAM**

I don't want to spend half my visit with Lucy on the bus getting to Lucy. I don't want to waste one more minute.

Buster sneezes.

**LUCY**

(from the doorway)

Does Buster still have his cold?

**SAM**

He's better, much better. Now I'll have one box of mint chocolate cookies.

**LUCY**

That'll be three-eighty six.

**LUCY & SAM**

(in unison)

Let me see let me see let me see...

That's one dollar and 14 cents less than five.

Randy watches with a mixture of jealousy and fear as Lucy effortlessly enters her and Sam's universe.

**EXT. CARPENTER HOUSE - DAY**

leashes  
dogs.  
From the window, Randy watches as Sam hands Lucy four  
and the two of them get pulled down the street by the

**INT. LUCY'S BEDROOM - 2 A.M.**

Lucy lies in her hammock, unable to sleep. Staring at the

opens little origami bird on her window sill. She moves it,  
the window wide, quickly takes Mr. Jeeters - and within a  
moment she's out the window and onto the limb of the tree.

**EXT. MAIN THOROUGHFARE - NIGHT**

a "The night grows teeth..." stray dogs fight over garbage -  
Lucy wino talks to himself and in the midst of it all walks  
crosses in her pj's. Mr. Jeeters tucked under her arm. Lucy  
the street. HONK! the screeching of tires...

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER**

suddenly We're looking at an old fashioned fire escape when  
Lucy. we make out a figure climbing higher and higher. It's  
sign We catch glimpses of her and then lose her as the neon  
across the street blinks on and off.

**INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Sam's asleep. Suddenly his eyes open wide. And like an  
animal sensing danger, he gets up. We HEAR THE SOUND of  
something THUMPING AGAINST RUNG AFTER RUNG OF THE FIRE  
ESCAPE. He rushes to his window and looks to see --

**EXT. SAM'S APARTMENT**

Lucy climbing the fire escape! Sam opens the window and  
reaches for her.

**SAM**

Lucy Lucy. What are you doing?! You  
could have really hurt yourself. What  
are you doing?

**LUCY**

I couldn't sleep. Daddy, did you know  
that Warren G. Harding was the twenty  
ninth President of the United States?

**SAM**

No.

**LUCY**

Remember - the twenty-ninth President.

In case the Judge asks.

**EXT. RANDY'S STREET - NIGHT**

He Sam, in his pajamas, holds a sleeping Lucy in his arms.  
He turns a corner and heads up the walkway to Randy's house.  
Randy knocks on the door. Finally the door opens and we see  
and Bill in their pajamas SHOCKED at seeing Sam and Lucy.

**SAM**

She couldn't sleep.

**RANDY**

Give me my daugh -  
(she stops herself)  
Give me - I'll take Lucy.

**SAM**

Maybe if you rub her tummy twenty-three  
times, tell her two stories and give her  
half a Denny's blueberry muffin and a  
third of a glass of milk she'll sleep.  
Good night.

on Randy and BILL, her husband, watch as Sam turns and walks  
purposely down the walkway - his houseslippers scuffling  
the quiet street.

**SERIES OF SHOTS AT 3:00 A.M. --**

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

Lucy in her pj's walks down the middle of the street.

**EXT. SAM'S WINDOW - NIGHT**

Lucy knocks on Sam's window.

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

Lucy and Sam walk back down the street to Randy's house.

**EXT. SAM'S WINDOW - NIGHT**

Lucy lugs encyclopedias to Sam's windowsill.

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

house. Lucy in a blanket being carried by Sam toward Randy's

**INT. LUCY'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Until FINALLY, we see Lucy in her hammock at Randy's house looking out the windows, which have now been completely covered with BARS. Her room is filled with origami birds from the 100 Denny's napkins, her birthday gift. Lucy gets out of her hammock and tiptoes across her room - quietly opening the door.

**INT. CARPENTER HOUSE - STAIRS TO LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

We follow her through the dark house as she creeps down the stairs. She gets to the front door. It's been DEAD BOLTED where she cannot reach it. From the darkness we hear --

**RANDY**

(tenderly)

Lucy. Come here.

Randy sits in the darkness, next to a THIRD OF A GLASS OF MILK and a HALF A DENNY'S BLUEBERRY MUFFIN.

**RANDY (CONT'D)**

I made us a midnight snack.

Lucy stares at the muffin and milk. Torn.

**RANDY (CONT'D)**

I understand that you want to see your daddy. And I don't want to keep you from him. I honestly don't. So you tell me when you want to see him. You can see him anytime you want. But we have to arrange it first. Do you understand?

(Lucy nods)

Now would you like a snack?

Lucy nods. Elated, Randy makes room for her on the couch. But Lucy just reaches for the milk and muffin and heads up the stairs then turns back and speaks gently to Randy.

**LUCY**

Thank you. Goodnight.

**RANDY**

(words caught in her throat)  
Goodnight, Lucy.

**INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - DAY**

We PAN ACROSS THE ROOM and see Sam's shoes, his tie, and a **YELLOW PAD WITH ALL THE PRESIDENTS LISTED IN ORDER.** **A**

**KNOCK**

at the door - Sam opens it to see Rita standing there, looking intensely vulnerable, holding her husband's suit.

**RITA**

My husband left this when he moved out.

**SAM**

Oh, lovely Rita, meter maid.

**RITA**

(entering)

Nice place. I worry. I worry sometimes...

**SAM**

You worry you did the wrong thing?

**RITA**

I worry that I've gotten more out of this relationship than you.

**SAM**

No no no. I'm the lucky one. I have the lawyer that never loses.

**RITA**

(covering)

That's me...okay, let me see, let me see, let me see.

(pulls out notes)

They're going to put Bill and Randy on the stand first and then you.

**SAM**

Them first, then me. They're a nice couple. They have a nice house. She's pretty. She's smart, too. I can tell. The manager of the salad bar is gonna testify, isn't he? That will help us.

For a moment, Rita's mask drops and her fear for Sam overwhelms her.

**RITA**

Absolutely.

**SAM**

Nobody believed that George Harrison could really be a song writer. But he wrote "Here Comes the Sun". John and Paul said it was one of the best songs on ABBEY ROAD.

**RITA**

(tenderly)  
George was always my favorite Beatle.

**SAM**

Lucy's was Paul.

**INT. RANDY AND BILL'S BEDROOM - 2 A.M.**

She Randy and Bill are asleep when Randy senses something.  
opens her eyes and sees Lucy staring at her.

**LUCY**

Now.

**RANDY**

What honey?

**LUCY**

Now. I want to see him now.

**INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - 3:30 A.M.**

door We see Sam sleeping in bed. There's a KNOCK at the door.  
her Sam wakes with a start, throws down the covers.  
to see Randy standing there, holding a sleeping Lucy in  
arms. We see that he's wearing the Armani suit. Sam opens the

**RANDY**

She fell asleep on the car ride over. I was gonna turn back and tuck her in to her bed...with the pink canopy...and the quilt I made...But I was afraid she'd wake up at our house...

(fighting the ache in her soul)  
...and want to come home.

Sam looks at Randy with profound compassion.



**RANDY (CONT'D)**

I was gonna tell the judge that I could give Lucy the kind of love she never had. But I would be lying.

**SAM**

I hope I hope I hope that you're saying what I think you're saying even though you're not saying it.

the  
to  
Randy nods and hands the sleeping Lucy into Sam's strong arms. For a moment they BOTH HOLD LUCY between them in most unique embrace. Randy finally lets go and struggles to say goodbye.

**RANDY**

Goodnight. I'll see you in court. Save me a seat...on your side.

in  
Randy walks away. Stunned, Sam watches her, holding Lucy in his arms. Then, from a very brave place:

**SAM**

Randy! If I tell you I can't do it alone, will you tell the judge?

**RANDY**

(turns gently)  
No.

**SAM**

Promise?

**RANDY**

Promise...

**SAM**

I've looked and looked for a mother for Lucy.  
Help, I need someone, help, not just anyone. You're the red in Lucy's painting.

**ON RANDY**

So unexpectedly bonded to them both.

**EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY**

of A glorious sunny day. Lucy and her team are in the middle  
a fierce game. A foul is called when we hear -

**SAM**

Penalty! Rules broken. Penalty,  
please!

walking Sam, wearing a UNIFORM and whistle around his neck,  
his inimitable walk, races up the field, COACHING THE  
TEAM.

Ifty, Robert and Brad sit in the bleachers. Robert, in  
sunglasses, paranoid, looking behind him. Brad follows  
around an attractive YOUNG WOMAN as close as he can get to  
her. Sam runs by the water stand, manned by Randy and  
Bill.

Lucy They share a look - a moment of intense parental pride.  
and a kid named PHILLIP go after the ball.

**OBNOXIOUS MOM**

Get her! Phillip, you get her!

**ROBERT**

I saw that! You gave him a secret  
signal! Didn't you?

**IFTY**

Keep both eyes on the ball, Lucy - balls  
are round - on sale at Kmart. The earth  
is a ball, too...

he Phillip steps in front of Lucy and shoves her as hard as  
can. Sam blows his whistle repeatedly and races over.

**SAM**

Penalty! Repeat! Rules broken!  
Penalty!

**RITA (O.S.)**

Penalty?! Sue him! Kick his ass outta  
the game!

It's RITA! With Danny - hollering from the stands.

**ON LUCY**

gesture, Looks over at her father. Sam does every coaching  
and referee hand signal from every sport known to man. It  
looks like a bizarre TWYLA THARP DANCE.

**ON LUCY**

code She does it right back at him. Their secret code. The  
that will bind them for the rest of their lives.

**ON THE CROWD AND PLAYERS**

All watching. What the hell was that? Sam blows his  
whistle.

**SAM**

Play ball! Play ball!

headed The game heats up. Lucy's team gets the ball and is  
toward the goal. Sam is running right alongside them, so  
excited, until he can't hold himself back anymore and  
intercepts the ball! Sam runs valiantly down the field

with it! We hear "Here Comes the Sun"...

Little darlin', it's been a long, cold lonely winter.

darlin', it feels like years since you've been here. Here  
comes the Sun...Here comes the sun...And I say, "It's  
alright..."

And the CREDITS ROLL.

FADE TO

BLACK.