

CHANCES

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. BOURBON STREET - NIGHT

We see a house, two floors up and a mundane looking little garden upfront, neatly cornered by a small picket fence.

We see SAM BADRAM (three day old beard, messy face) entering the frame. He looks frightened. Skittish he inspects his surroundings. Is he alone or...

The sound of a car passing by - a few blocks away - interrupts his inspection, directing his attention to the whereabouts of the sound.

It startles the man.

We see sweat appearing on his forehead. With the palm of his hand he wipes it off, nervously.

One last look around and he swiftly exits the frame.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

A nice luxurious car drives down a lonely country road.

INT. LUXURIOUS CAR - NIGHT

We see CLAIRE DABRIA (20s, brownish hair, fair complexion, pretty). Gently she moves the steering wheel in the directions the road ahead dictates.

The car radio is playing an anonymous jazz song, until...

A news item flicks on.

REPORTER

"This is a special news bulletin. The (LOCAL) police is urgent looking for witnesses of a brutal murder. Both man and woman are killed. According to the police their daughter is still missing, so if you got any tips that can lead to the apprehension of..."

The woman, startled by the sudden change, reaches for the radio. Her uplifting smile changes in a frown when she looks for a new station again.

Jazz tunes enter the car when she finds a new music station.

Her face lights up again.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

The car turns a few times.

The head lights blind us.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOURBON STREET - NIGHT

The house, seen earlier, but this time we see the pompous car of Claire parked outside.

Two of the house windows downstairs hold a faded light behind them hinting someone is home.

On the second floor a light behind the right window is turned on. Beat.

The light behind the left window is turned on. Beat.

The light behind the left window is turned off, followed by the right window.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A figure standing behind the sink. Running water can be heard.

As we close in, we see a woman's hand putting liquid soap on her hands, rubbing it intensively.

The water stops.

A big knife is firmly placed on the sink, position not synced.

The thin hand moves it a few times until the position of the knife is just right.

CUT TO:

Claire sitting at the kitchen table, eating a peanut butter sandwich.

On the table a big jar of peanut butter - closed.

Next to it a jar of red jam - lid half removed, balancing on top.

Next to her plate the previous cleaned knife, now covered with bits of blood RED jam.

The woman chews carefully.

She checks out the kitchen, smiling.

After finishing the sandwich, she reaches for a bottle of fine wine, hand ready to pour it into a wine glass.

Outside a dog barks and the sound of a car driving up a lane.

Claire looks up, smiles, fills up the glass and stands up. One hand she holds the wine and in the other the bottle, as she moves to the kitchen door.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

A wall covered with various pictures in different frames, partly covering a screaming wallpaper. In every frame a smiling woman, a smiling man and a little girl, most likely their daughter.

One picture stands out: a diploma for outstanding performances by a Dr. James Altman, psychiatrist, nicely captured in a wooden frame.

Another picture is slightly out of place. It is not centered.

Claire notices it and corrects it.

She walks up to the front door. She stops with a jolt near the desk, releasing a small scream, placing her hand firmly on her chest. With a startled look she notices her own reflection in the mirror. This triggers a big laugh.

The woman leans forward, focusing on her face. She gently touches her cheeks as if checking her make-up. On her chin a small REDDISH peck can be see. With care she removes it.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOURBON STREET - NIGHT

Claire walks up to the back of her car, pressing the hood as if she checks it's closed.

She opens the front car door at the drivers side.

The car starts, lights flicker on and the car moves out of sight, into BLUR.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Sam walks at the side of a deserted road.

As Sam turns his head we see civilization in the form of a few country houses basking in city lights behind him.

Sam looks troubled as searches his pockets for a phone.

Trembling fingers as he dials a number we cannot see.

We hear the dialing tone.

SAM
(annoyed)
Pick up, pick up.

The phone answers: a voice mail.

EMILY
You've reached the home of Emily Darwin. I'm not home right now, so you can either try again or leave a message. In both cases I'll talk...
(giggling)
- stop it -
(tries to concentrate)
We'll talk to you later.

Emily giggles again and the message stops.

Sam looks at the phone, puzzled.

SAM
Damn it.

He puts the phone against his ear again.

SAM (cont'd)
Hi. Yeah.
(MORE)

SAM (cont'd)
(angry)
Why are you not there?

Sam rubs a small necklace around his neck. It's a cross.

SAM (cont'd)
(calms down)
Sorry, Sorry. I know I can't call you anymore. But I did something stupid. Something I've never should have done. But I was desperate. It was either him or me.
(beat)
I,... I need to talk about it. I only trust you. Really. And...

Sam looks at the houses behind him.

A dog barks.

Sam takes bigger steps, as he's in a hurry now.

SAM (cont'd)
I really need to go now. I just wanted to tell you I'm sorry. For everything. You know. I just wanted to let you know that I know I screwed up, but it's not your fault. It really isn't. I... I...

Sam looks behind him again, afraid.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

A soft smile on her face, Claire conducts the car through the night.

She reaches for the radio. Classical music fills the cabin. With a horrid look she seeks a different jazz station.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

MONTAGE

- The car passes by.

- We see the road ahead basking in car lights.

- Claire bopping her head on the music.
- The car entering a rural area.

BACK TO SCENE

On the radio another news item starts. Claire, startled by the sudden change, reaches for the radio, not focusing on the road ahead. Her uplifting smile changes in a frown when she looks for a new station again.

After finding a nice tune, she lifts up her head realizing she drifted away from the road, now heading towards a person walking next to it.

She immediately hits the brakes. With a jolt the car stops.

CLAIRE
(exhales)
Phew!

She catches her breath.

KNOCK KNOCK.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

With a jolt Claire sits up straight. She jerks her head towards the noise.

It's a man knocking on the car window.

Claire hesitates, taking a deep breath, then opening the window.

She examines him as he introduces himself as being SAM.

SAM
(raised voice)
You almost hit me there, Missy.

CLAIRE
Yes, shit, sorry, I wasn't looking.
I...

Sam looks angry.

SAM
You got that right. Dammit.

His face cracks up in a smile.

SAM (cont'd)
But I'm glad I've found you though.

His smile reveals stained and crooked teeth.

SAM (cont'd)
I need a ride. I've been walking here
for hours now. Those damn people. I'm
telling you.

Sam fingers his necklace, looking skittish to the left and
to the right of the road.

SAM (cont'd)
But since you almost hit me, I figure
you own me.

Without hesitation he pushes the door handle down and enters
the car.

Claire looks puzzled when he straps himself in.

SAM (cont'd)
Drive. Just drive. I tell you when to
stop.

He looks over his shoulder as if someone is following him.

SAM (cont'd)
Just drive. Dammit!

With a small delay Claire shifts gear.

SAM (cont'd)
Go, GO!

Claire steps on the gas.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The car speeds off into the darkness of the night.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Sam looks at the road ahead, then turning to Claire.

SAM
It is a nice night isn't it?

Claire nods.

Sam leans towards her. The woman shifts gear.

SAM
I am so glad you picked me up. No one
does nowadays.

Claire turns her head towards him.

CLAIRE
Why?

Sam shrugs.

SAM
They look at me and decide I'm not
someone they can trust I guess. I
dunno.

CLAIRE
Are you?

SAM
What?

CLAIRE
Bad news I mean.

SAM
(grinning)
I might be.

Sam reaches for the uncovered knee of the woman.

She reacts by pulling her leg back.

Sam grins.

SAM
I'm kidding, love. But I can tell you
that a pretty thing like yourself
better not be picking up strangers
off the road.

Claire reaches in her pocket and takes out a baby wipe.

She cleans her recently touched knee.

Sam noticed, frowns, but doesn't react.

CLAIRE
I owed you.

Sam waves her answer away with his hand.

SAM

Oh that. Sorry for that. I really need to go somewhere urgently. Normally I'm not into forcing myself on people. Unless they want to of course. Some people...

Sam grins.

SAM (cont'd)

You know, in this world anyone can be a criminal. Your neighbor, that sweet lady crossing your streets everyday, smiling. Yes, even the mailman.

Sam points at Claire.

SAM (cont'd)

I would never trust the mailman. They always bring bad news. I'm telling you, those papers are ugly, filled with lies. It can ruin your life, believe me. One article and you be out of a job, thrown on the streets like an outcast - all credits gone and chased by the IRS as being a pest. And then the wife...

(sighs)

I did only one wrong thing.

Sam hits his knees.

SAM (cont'd)

(shouting)

Bloody leaches. They forced me.

He wipes some sweat of his forehead.

SAM (cont'd)

(a bit calmer)

Point being, you cannot trust anyone anymore. I could even be a murderer who gets off by chopping up good - god fearing - people into little bits and pieces, and having them for lunch. Given the right motivation, anyone can be.

Sam looks nervous as he eyes his back view mirror.

SAM (cont'd)
And that motivation can be just
around the corner.

Sam laughs, then gasping for air, followed by coughing.

SAM (cont'd)
I can even be a serial killer.

Claire nods slightly.

A unwanted movement of the car by a pothole.

SAM (cont'd)
Hey, watch it. Are you trying to kill
me?

The sudden movement reveals the shoe of a child underneath
his seat.

Sam picks it up.

SAM (cont'd)
What is this?

He then notices a bloodstain on the blue fabric of the shoe.

SAM (cont'd)
What?

A big grin - showing pearly teeth - appears on Claire's
face.

CLAIRE
I can't help it, as it's my nature.
She was dirty.
(looking at Sam's
clothes)
And so are you.

Claire grabs the shoe out of his hands.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
(grinning)
To answer your previous question: I
trust you. The chances of two serial
killers being caught together in the
same car would be astronomical,
wouldn't it?

A surprised look on the face of Sam.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The car stops with a jolt.

As we take distance, we see the car shaking as something terrible is going on inside.

When the shaking stops, the car starts moving again.

EXT. CANAL STREET - NIGHT

In front of a nice house we see Claire's car, slightly out of place compared to the statue of the house.

Claire fingers a small necklace with a cross as she presses her finger on the doorbell.

Three times.

The door opens.

Claire smiles.

FADE OUT.