

UNLIKELY

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(or One in a Trillion)

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CW - Strong Language

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAWN

Sam is in the middle of cooking breakfast, at a slow-pace.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

- two eggs sunny side up join a thick slice of sizzling into a cast-iron skillet.

- Sam grinds a tad of salt over them, then a lot of black pepper.

- only visible utensils are a knife, spatula, and tongs, poking out of a flower vase.

- she turns on her TV, full focus still on her meal.

END MONTAGE

In the background, the local news announces the Lucky Day Lotto winning numbers. Every wall holds a carefully centered framed painting as if nothing in the room has ever been allowed to drift out of place.

One frame is emerald green with a battleworn tone wrapped in plastic, still has the level on the top and the bubble perfectly center.

The stove flipped off, and with a worn wash rag as a mitt, she plops down in a lone chair, eating out of the skillet.

A gentleman's voice is heard on the TV:

ANNOUNCER

We'll announce the winning numbers
again momentarily folks, they're
only verifying upstairs.

With a mouthful, She places her fork in the pan, to search in a pocket of her laptop bag, pulling out a crumbled up ticket.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Let's hear those winning numbers
again: 31, 34, 35, 38, and 39!

Sam's eyes begin darting between the screen and her ticket. A beat. She raises her eyebrows.

She lets out a drawn-out:

SAM

Fuck.

CUT TO:

INT. LOTTERY PRIZE CLAIM CENTER - MORNING

A friendly yet confused face greets Sam at the Lottery Prize Claim Center.

CLERK

Are you looking for the Fresh Market? It's the next building over.

Sam looks around. It's just them two.

SAM

No, no. I have a... I have a ticket. Wanted to possibly-

CLERK

(over)

Verify? Absolutely, I've been needing an excuse to go upstairs for a cup of coffee. Follow me, miss.

Up a wide spiral staircase, Sam expects to enter someone's office.

INT. LOTTERY PRIZE CLAIM CENTER - 2ND FLOOR - LATER

Upstairs, there's no one. It's a completely empty floor, stripped down to the wooden studs - except for...

A giant cubed machine resembling a 'big iron' mainframe.

Sam tugs on her jacket for the lack of insulation feels almost like outside.

CLERK

Wait here.

The clerk saunters over to the machine, taking her time.

Sam mumbles to herself:

SAM

Why'd you bring me up here then?

Then, she feeds in Sam's ticket like a vending machine.

It spits out a large receipt, she reads it and skips back over to Sam with the biggest smile.

CLERK

You're a winner! Here's your invoice. You want deposit or installments?

SAM

What?

CLERK

It's real! How do you want your money?

CUT TO:

INT. LOTTERY PRIZE CLAIM CENTER - FRONT DESK - MOMENTS LATER

They are finishing up all the details back at the front desk.

SAM

Is there... any way I can get the ticket? I'd like to frame it.

CLERK

Aw, that's so cool. Really cool. Unfortunately, all winners have to be destroyed.

SAM

That's alright, I guess.

CUT TO:

INT. REHAB HOSPITAL - PATIENT'S ROOM - LATER

In a cramped, beige-toned patient's room, Sam knocks gently before entering. She introduces herself.

PATIENT

And who are you?

SAM

My name is Samantha, I'm your Patient Care Technician.

PATIENT

My what-what-what?

SAM

Your patient-

PATIENT

Can I go home?

CUT TO:

INT. FRESH MARKET - SUNDOWN

Sam's about to grab a quick-to-make meal for dinner when she picks up a bone-in rib-eye to look at the price. She rolls her eyes, and sticks it in her basket next to a sports drink.

While in line, she notices a lit-up sign stating: "LOTTO TICKETS SOLD HERE".

The cashier at the check-out line flirts with Sam who's unaware.

CASHIER

Hey beautiful, how's your morning?

Sam freezes; looks outside at the setting sun. Then, looks behind her. She's the only one in line, all the other cashiers' lines are crowded.

SAM

Are- are you talking to me?

CASHIER

Of course I am. Where'd you get so good looking, I'll have to go sometime.

Sam laughs, thinking she's joking.

SAM

I- uhm... I don't... know.

The cashier finally scans the two items - never breaking eye contact, shooting a smirk. She struggles with the drink, needing to look down to find the barcode.

SAM (CONT'D)

I did...

The cashier immediately brightens up.

CASHIER

Yes?

SAM

... I was going to grab a ticket.
A... the daily one.

CASHIER
(defeated)
Oh. Right. The Lucky Day Lotto...
again. What numbers?

On her way out, Sam begins to take notice of doors held open, a constant stream of 'hello's and 'how are ya's from customers.

INT. PARENT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sam's sitting alone on a sofa in a beige living room. Behind her is a full-sized replica of Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper". She is facing her parents, both in their early 60s, eyes wide open.

MOM
How much, dear?!

SAM
Half a million... I don't even
remember buying the ticket.

DAD
Well, you better invest some of
that. Do you know how much will be
taken out for taxes?

MOM
Oh, hun, who cares! It's free
money.

He turns his attention to his wife.

DAD
I'm just trying to help with
forming a budget.

(to Sam)

Why don't you buy your place?

MOM
She already has an apartment.

DAD
I said buy her place - as in buy in
full, instead of renting.

Sam has a exhausted look on her face, then whimpers out a
reply:

SAM
Okay. That's not a bad idea.

DAD
It's the best move. A good
investment.

SAM
Well, I'll be sure to give you two
some.

(laughing)

And if I die you'll get my
inheritance.

MOM
Oh, Sam don't even say that.

DAD
(giggling)
Pistols at dawn.

Her mom hits him on the shoulder.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Sam wakes up, right before her alarm goes off. There's barely any light seeping past shut blinds - her cracked phone illuminates her whole bedroom. Only the white noise from her building's HVAC.

Unable to sleep, she rolls over on her stomach to use her phone. Convinced yesterday was a dream, she loads the Lucky Day Lotto web page.

She rises out of bed slowly with a slight smirk on her face.

Checking her phone, her name sits alone under the headline:

"YESTERDAY'S WINNER"

She remembers her second ticket and gets up out of bed.

Aligning it against the various framed paintings on her wall, sizing it up if it will fit. They're all way too big. She sits back down on her bed to look up smaller frames for the ticket.

Sam's eyes begin darting between the phone and her ticket.

A beat. She raises her eyebrows.

She lets out a quick:

SAM
Fuck!

CUT TO:

INT. LOTTERY PRIZE CLAIM CENTER - MORNING

Passing by the asleep security guard. The same clerk is dumbfounded when Sam shows up in the morning. She stares her down.

Longer this time.

CLERK

You're back... something wrong with the deposit?

Sam holds up the second ticket like it's nothing.

SAM

Yeah. I- uh... I think something's wrong with your system.

The Clerk doesn't laugh this time.

She forces a smile.

CLERK

Of course. Let's... verify that.

She doesn't move. Just stares.

Then -

CLERK (CONT'D)

Excuse me for one moment.

She exits into a office where a silhouette of a man can be seen talking to her.

Sam is left alone in front of the clerk's desk for a solid minute.

A GOVERNMENT MAN in a collared shirt sits behind a desk. Doesn't introduce himself. A lanyard holding police identification hangs from his collar reading: ILLINOIS STATE POLICE.

He slides the ticket off the desk.

Standing up revealing a holstered pistol on his right hip. His badge on a chain hangs behind the lanyard.

He scans it.

A beat.

Scans it again.

Silence.

He looks up at Sam.

INVESTIGATOR
Where did you get this?

SAM
Same place I got the first one.

INVESTIGATOR
Which is?

SAM
The grocery store.

INVESTIGATOR
Hm.

The clerk slowly pokes her head out the office to peek.

SAM
Is... something wrong?

He scans it one last time.

A beat.

INVESTIGATOR
No.

(beat)

This is a real ticket. Deposit or
check?

Silence.

SAM
It is?

The clerk can be heard from the office:

CLERK
What?!

INVESTIGATOR
Yes, you want to do the same
payment plan as previously.

Sam gives a shrug saying 'I don't know'.

INVESTIGATOR (CONT'D)
We'll need to hold onto the ticket.

SAM
(light chuckle)
No, problem.

INT. REHAB HOSPITAL - BOARD ROOM - NOON

Sam sits across from her SUPERVISOR.

A folder is open. Notes being taken.

SUPERVISOR
We've had... complaints.

SAM
About what? About me? From who?

SUPERVISOR
Patients. Staff.

SAM
About what?

SUPERVISOR
People find you difficult to...
warm up to.

(beat)
It's been mentioned quite often.

SAM
But no one ever said anything.

SUPERVISOR
Exactly. No one seems to like you.

That lands.

SAM
So I'm being fired for... not being
likeable?

SUPERVISOR
Give or take. Look - We're letting
you go for patterns of behavior.

SAM
What patterns?

SUPERVISOR
I'm trying to give you the
opportunity to resign so it isn't
on your record.

Beat.

SAM
(heated)
Is this about the lottery?

SUPERVISOR
What else would you like to
discuss?

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Sam gets on her motorcycle.

Hands shaking.

She starts it.

A LOUD REV cuts through the silence.

She speeds off—

Too fast.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Traffic thickens around her as if the road has suddenly
narrowed.

Cars glide close enough that she can see the drivers
watching her.

A truck veers into her lane—

She swerves. HONKS!

No one gives space. It feels deliberate.

Then suddenly —

Empty road. Dead quiet.

INT. GROCERY STORE - SUNSET

Same store. Same lights.

Two men walking out point at her not-so discretely and murmur her name.

SAM

What?

No reply, they keep walking.

Inside, it's a different feeling. No greetings or even smiles.

She grabs a plastic basket. People are already gawking at her like, with no shame in it either.

CASHIER watches her every move. No flirting, just staring.

Sam, out of breath, sweating, and heated. She can't even remember her list

Doesn't even look. Just grabs items off the shelf. She has the money after all.

An aisle ahead-

A man steps into her path.

Stops.

Doesn't move.

SAM (CONT'D)

(politely)

Excuse me.

Nothing.

Another person appears behind her, Sam leaves enough space in the aisle to go around - instead they ram their cart into her backside.

SAM (CONT'D)

Excuse you! What are you four?

CUSTOMER

(politely)

You really shouldn't take what isn't yours.

Then another. And another begin to close space.

No one speaks.

They creep closer down the aisle like a fence. Knowing she has no escape.

SAM

This is not even funny.

More carts roll into the aisle.

People stand quietly, waiting.

No one smiles. Sam realizes they are not shopping.

Someone bumps her shoulder.

Hard. She shoves back.

That's all that it takes. She throws a left hook into the man's eye, breaking her finger and his socket.

Hands grab at her.

She swings again.

Chaos erupts.

People shouting -

ANOTHER CUSTOMER

We don't want you stealing from us
anymore!

Just noise.

Sam breaks free and begins to climb the shelves, kicking and scraping food items into the sea of arms extending to grab a hold of her.

EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

A CROWD spills out after her.

Growing by the dozens.

She runs-

Trips out the door, glancing back at a wire tied

As she's getting up, a hand grabs her jacket-

She rips free from the wave of claws - nails ripping off skin from Sam's fore arms.

SIRENS abruptly sound, loud and close.

Police cruisers pull in. The crowd disperses instantly.

Two coordinated, calm OFFICERS approach her, smiling.

OFFICER

Hey, hey. You're alright.

SAM

They - they were-

OFFICER

(over)

We know. You're fine, just... take a breather.

(beat)

Let's get you somewhere safe.

SAM

My parents place, I'll tell you where.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Sam is sliding back-and-forth in the plastic backseat. No cage or belts.

She watches the road. Something feels off.

SAM

This isn't the way.

OFFICER

Detour.

They don't look back at her. There's a navigation system but nothing inputted.

INT. PARENT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Her parents greet her at the door - waiting.

MOM

Oh, sweetheart...

They hug her tightly.

DAD

You okay?

SAM

No. No, I'm not. Obviously not!

They guide her inside and sit her down.

Silence.

SAM (CONT'D)
Something's wrong.

Her parents exchange a look. Sam sits across from them under a oil painting of cats chasing rabbits.

Not much concern considering what happened. They don't know what's exactly going on other than their daughter was dropped off by police.

SAM (CONT'D)
Why is everyone acting like this?

DAD
But, you must admit... it doesn't make sense.

SAM
What doesn't?

MOM
Did you cheat? You can tell us the truth we're not the authorities.

Beat.

SAM
You think I cheated?

No answer. Just staring. Sam stands up frustrated. She notices her parents' framed painting was crooked.

Fixing it, she sees that there is something behind the frame, a metal safe.

MOM
People don't just... win twice.

(beat)

People are wondering something, sweetheart.

(gently)

Did you do something you shouldn't have? People like us don't win things like that.

SAM

What is that supposed to mean?

Silence.

Then - a click.

Sam turns-

Her father is holding a pump-action Mossberg. Her mother pointing a polished chrome .357 magnum at the floor, her finger hovering the trigger guard. They deftly load their weapons and know how to use them.

SAM (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

MOM

We're fixing it, sweetie. Just close-

SAM

Fixing what?!

DAD

The mistake. You better run or-

He misfires - smoke and pulverized drywall fill the room.

The ceiling breaks apart, it appears like a detonation in a mine.

INT./EXT. PARENT'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Chunks of wood explodes near Sam's head.

She ducks and runs - crashes through the screen door-

EXT. DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

She fumbles with her bike-

Her ignition splutters alive.

Another SHOT-

The front fork of her bike shatters - almost toppling her.

She runs barefoot down the asphalt.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Glowing fluorescent lights appear from houses.

A porch light clicks on somewhere.

Someone laughs hard inside a house.

She moves as fast as she can limp down the middle of the street.

Taking notice of neighbors who've come out onto their own porches, to watch the debacle.

Some smile, others shake their heads.

EXT. STREET - FARTHER OUT

She slows, breathing hard, bloodied.

Then — HEADLIGHTS. A minivan tearing down the middle of the street toward her.

SAM

I can't-

The 20-ton cat chasing a 120-pound mouse doesn't slow, only swerves to meet Sam head on.

She tries to move out of the way last second. The headlights so close they're blinding her.

The van clips her leg—

SNAP. She hits the ground screaming.

Her right leg is hanging on by tendon, the bone sheared and extended outwards.

The van continues a few yards before quietly striking a tree.

No one gets out. The driver's door has come off its hinges, the driver's motionless body folded into the foot well.

Sam drags herself up, in the most pain she's ever felt.

Her leg is barely attached, yet she limps forward, fearing what's next.

A woman with a stroller stands frozen under a streetlamp.

Sam passes right by her. Staring at the woman, watching her every move.

The woman says nothing, doesn't move a muscle. Her baby isn't crying.

Sam keeps going

She looks back without stopping, almost tripping over her own partially-amputated foot.

The entire neighborhood is outside their front doors, watching each with a different reaction but none had any sympathy for her. Only disgust, disapproval, and teasing.

They slowly make their way to the end of their property lines.

They leisurely saunter past the bordering sidewalk. Every time Sam glances behind her, the crooked winding sidewalk and the string of crowds closing in seemed like a track to freedom.

Nobody chases her. Instead, they are bringing their kids and family dogs on leashes behaving fine.

Beat.

She turns forward, keeps limping – the indicator blinking as her only light.

She limps down the road until the streetlights run out past a stop sign, tripping into an intersection, mumbling and sobbing to herself:

SAM (CONT'D)
I should've stayed home.

Sam is swallowed by the unlit night, past where the blinker will shine.

The parade route, crowd and families return to their homes quickly, no longer interested.

Only the minivan lodged into the tree remains, its indicator still blinking.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END