

INT. LUXURY CAR - HIGHLAND PARK STREETS - DAY

THE CAR IS IN MOTION.

SAMMI (17) a pretty, punkish girl, sits in the passenger seat of her parents car. She's over-caffeinated.

She wears a private school uniform. MARIA (40's) a wide, Latino woman, drives the car.

Sammi talks fast and uses her body for emphasis.

SAMMI

I'm telling you. I looked in their fridge. Nothing but cobwebs and gin.

She shoots her mom a look and waits for a response that doesn't come. Maria is too preoccupied.

Sammi rolls the hem of her skirt above her knees.

SAMMI

The house was baller, though.

Maria pulls over across the street from a Private School. Sammi applies a dark lipstick.

MARIA

Remember you have to get the train home tonight. Your father and I have that work dinner. For my promotion.

SAMMI

That's tonight?

MARIA

You know it's tonight.

SAMMI

Yeah. I know. Are you sure I can't change schools? Having my mom as principal would be pretty clutch.

MARIA

I wouldn't be too sure of that.

She leans over Sammi and opens the passenger side door.

MARIA

Scoot.

SAMMI

Wait. Can I pick out your dress, at least? You want to look flash.

Maria sighs.

MARIA

Fine. I'll text you pictures. Look at them between classes.

Sammi claps her hands together, grabs a skateboard, and hops out of the car. Maria calls after her.

MARIA

Go right to the train after school. I don't want you hanging out down by the river. With those hooligans.

Sammi is already gone.

INT. LUXURY CAR - HIGHLAND PARK - NIGHT

THE CAR IS PARKED.

EDWARD (60's) a fit man with a stern look, flips through his phone. His seat is back. He's been waiting a while.

He's alert but, none the less, a Grandpa-Dad. His hair has more white than black. His face has deep lines.

Sammi slips in the passenger side door. She wears a hoodie over a somewhat adult outfit.

She pops a handful of mints in to her mouth. Her eyes are slightly bloodshot. She's stoned but hides it well.

SAMMI

Daddy!

She gives him a sideways hug. He barely responds.

SAMMI

Wait, wait. Can I drive?

He starts the car.

EDWARD

Of course not.

SAMMI

Poo.

She slumps back and crosses her arms in a faux-pout.

EDWARD
How was the party?

SAMMI
It was OK. It was weird, though. I looked in their fridge. Nothing but cobwebs and gin.

She throws him a side-eye. Nothing. He adjusts the rearview.

EDWARD
You didn't get tangled up in the gin, did you?

SAMMI
No. Dad, you know I don't do that stuff. I'm straight edge.

She holds up her hands to show him the two "X's" drawn on top of them in magic marker.

EDWARD
Good, good. Your mother would be mortified if her daughter got tangled up in that mess. You're our daughter. You speak for us when you're out in the world. Not just yourself.

She looks out the window.

SAMMI
Yeah. I know.

He glances at her when he stops at a red light.

EDWARD
You look very fetching tonight, by the way. I think it's good you're showing off your figure. If you drop a few pounds you'll really razzle-dazzle them.

He smiles. He thinks he paid her a compliment. She chews on the drawstring of her hoodie.

INT. LUXURY CAR - HIGHLAND PARK STREETS - DAY

THE CAR IS IN MOTION.

Maria drives. Sammi leans her face toward the open window.

MARIA

I'm so glad you're reconnecting with old friends. I always liked Olivia. She was so responsible.

SAMMI

She's a huge tennis nerd, is what she is. Good writer, though.

MARIA

I hope you have her over for your birthday. Invite her mother, too. We always got along.

SAMMI

Speaking of my birthday...

MARIA

Samantha. Your father and I can't take any more hints. The camera you want is just too expensive. What are you even going to do with it?

SAMMI

OK, good. Great. Grand. I'm glad you asked. Do you want to hear my pitch? Because I have a pitch. A great photo makes you wish you were there. I can't do that with drawing. I'm not good enough.

MARIA

You don't try hard enough, you mean.

SAMMI

You're right. Maybe I don't. But I'm already trying harder with photography. I've watched tons of tutorials online. I've read the manual like a thousand times. I know all about the ISO and lenses and everything. I know it's super expensive, but you can hold back half my allowance if it helps. I torrented all the software, so it's just the camera. I swear it will be worth it.

She makes her face as earnest as possible. Maria lets a pause go on as long as she can.

MARIA

We'll see.

Sammi basically high fives herself. She leans back. Maria rolls up the windows when she pulls on to a Freeway.

She sniffs the air.

MARIA
Were you smoking?

Sammi doesn't sweat it.

SAMMI
No way. Olivia lit one for a few drags but I made her put it out. She does things out of spite sometimes. She can be really irresponsible.

She looks out the window. Satisfied.

INT. LUXURY CAR - HIGHLAND PARK - NIGHT

THE CAR IS IN MOTION.

Edward grips the steering wheel until his knuckles go white. Sammi sits with an expensive DSLR camera in her lap.

She HICCUPS. She's wasted. Mascara stains run down her cheeks with her tears.

Long bursts of silence follow Sammi's drunken explanations.

SAMMI
Daddy, I'm so sorry. I didn't know how strong the drinks were. It was Olivia. She said it would be fun to get a little drunk. I didn't know.

She looks at him. He steps on the gas. Silence.

SAMMI
I didn't know her mom was coming home. I know that's no excuse, but Olivia told me she would be out all night and that we could sober up before she got back.

Silence.

SAMMI
I wasn't going to hang out with her anymore anyway. She's all talk. I know I messed up. Please.

Silence.

SAMMI

We studied for our midterms first, I swear. When we finished she gave me a coke that had rum in it. I really didn't know. She didn't tell me.

Silence.

SAMMI

Daddy, I feel really sick. Pull over, pull over. Please pull over.

He keeps driving. Sammi covers her mouth and GULPS down a mouthful of spit-up. Her eyes water.

She sways as Edward drives aggressively.

SAMMI

It won't happen -

She covers her mouth. GULP.

SAMMI

I'll never -

She covers her mouth. GULP.

SAMMI

I'm going to throw up.

He pulls the car into their driveway and slams on the brakes. Sammi jolts forward. Her hand covers her mouth.

Edward leaves the car on. She tries the door. Locked. She tries the power window. Child-locked. It won't go down.

She BURPS UP a few sips of fluid into her cupped hands. Edward won't look at her.

He turns off the car. His door opens. He snatches the camera and gets out. SLAM.

Sammi looks at the spit-up in her cupped hands.

INT. LUXURY CAR - HIGHLAND PARK - DAY

THE CAR IS PARKED.

Sammi sits alone in the passenger seat. All the windows are down. She looks all around. No one in sight.

She slips a mini-bottle of gin out of her hoodie pocket and chugs it and tightens the cap on the empty bottle.

She sprays glade and pops a handful of mints in her mouth. She looks all around. Her posture stiffens.

A WOMAN'S FORM changes the light that spills through the windshield. The light ripples as the form gets closer.

Maria gets in the car in a huff. Sammi sits rigid. Maria looks at her with a very un-parental contempt.

She waits to angrily start the car.

MARIA

My own daughter. Do you have anything to say for yourself?

SAMMI

Mom. I.

MARIA

I don't want to hear it.

She drives.

MARIA

You know what this means to me. You know how hard I've been trying to push a zero tolerance policy at my school? My own daughter.

She tuts and shakes her head.

MARIA

Well that's the end of your camera. And of any free time you thought you might have had. And boys! Forget about boys.

Sammi chews on the drawstring of her hoodie.

MARIA

Take that out of your mouth. And sit up straight for gods sake.

Sammi obeys.

MARIA

Why Olivia? Can you answer me that? Of all your friends to treat so badly. Why her? She was good for you, Samantha. She was an example.

SAMMI

She's a liar and a fraud and she's only nice to her friends when parents are around.

Maria's hand lifts slightly off the steering wheel. It doesn't move for Sammi, but she flinches anyway.

MARIA

If you tried to be more like her maybe your father and I wouldn't be so embarrassed all the time. What am I supposed to tell my co-workers?

SAMMI

(Under her breath)

Tell one of them to stop making out with their students.

MARIA

Samantha. If you don't want me to hear something then don't say anything at all. Understood?

Sammi nods. She pops the drawstring back in her mouth.

MARIA

You are to go into school, take your tests, and wait for your father to pick you up at two on the dot. He's leaving work early to get you. Which is yet another thing he has to explain to the people he works with.

Sammi lowers her head.

MARIA

My own daughter.

Maria is lost in her anger. It's as though Sammi isn't in the car. Sammi knows it.

She squeezes the empty mini-bottle in her pocket.

INT. LUXURY CAR - HIGHLAND PARK - DAY

THE CAR PULLS TO A STOP.

Sammi's school uniform is unkempt. Her expression vacant. Edward sits with his hands on the steering wheel.

EDWARD

Your mother and I spoke on the phone earlier this afternoon. Are you listening to me?

SAMMI

Yes.

EDWARD

You are to text us a schedule of your plans and activities every morning, along with all of the contacts in your phone. We want to know who you're spending time with and when.

SAMMI

But -

She stops herself before he can.

SAMMI

Yeah, OK.

He gives her the once over.

EDWARD

There will be no after dinner snacks up in your room anymore. You're mother and I demand that you take care of yourself and put your best foot forward in the world. It's best for you and what's most fair to us.

SAMMI

OK. Yeah.

He turns the car off.

EDWARD

I won't be more than half an hour or so. Do you think you can manage to stay out of trouble for half an hour? Or do I have to take you with me?

SAMMI

No. I'll be good.

She looks away from him. He gathers a few things from the back seat and turns to her. She keeps looking away.

He pats her shoulder. Stiffly.

EDWARD

Your mother and I love you very much
and we know you love us. We just wish
you'd try to show it in a more
meaningful way sometimes.

SAMMI

OK, dad. I'll try.

He nods, satisfied. As soon as he's out of the car Sammi
turns to watch him go.

When he's out of sight she whips off her school polo.
Underneath is a PUNK TANK TOP.

She lights a cigarette and slides to the drivers seat. A
spare key appears in her hand. She turns it in the ignition.

She situates herself just the way she wants - seat at the
perfect angle, stereo connected to her phone - and smiles.

She presses play on a LOUD POST PUNK SONG and grips the
wheel. Her foot presses down on the gas.

The car drives off, leaving an empty parking spot behind.

CUT TO BLACK: