

EXT. SECLUDED NEW ENGLAND HOME - DAWN

Fall is heading toward winter. It is a crisp New England morning on the fringe of Thanksgiving. Leaves rustle along the dirt driveway of a modest one story Craftsman style home off the beaten path outside Vergennes, Vermont.

BEGIN CREDITS.

Parked in a shady spot sits a 2000 Silver Freightliner Classic XL diesel with 13 foot chrome exhaust stacks, shiny, with its engine purring at idle.

INT. MEYERS RESIDENCE - CONTINUING

SAM MORRIS, early 70s, weathered with friendly lines upon his face, admires his truck from the window over the kitchen sink, ever present coffee cup in hand. He runs his fingers through his hair, smiles and nods in acceptance of a day long in the making. It's time to go. He finishes off his coffee, rinses and racks his cup on the sideboard, and takes a long last look around. A knock on the door is answered and there stands MAE, early 80s.

SAM
There she is! Come in. Come in.

MAE
I knew if I was gonna catch you
that I'd better start early today.
I appreciate you cleaning up and
stripping the beds, Sam.

Sam waves off her comment.

SAM
No bother, Ms. Mae. I appreciate
you letting me stay here. A
couple of months turned into more
than a couple of years.

MAE
We were both a lot younger once.

Smiles from both.

MAE
(continuing)
I just came in to say...uh,
goodbye.

SAM
I'm gonna miss this place.

Mae doesn't know what to say to her long term tenant. She moves Sam's way and he stands to offer a hug. They embrace.

SAM
(continuing)
And I'm gonna miss these hugs, Ms.
Mae.

MAE
You know where to find 'em,
mister. Any old time.

The two regard each other.

MAE
(continuing)
Don't suppose I can talk you out
of it?

SAM
No, ma'am. It's time.

MAE
You remember to check the shed
like I told you to? Seems there's
a box or two of yours out there.

Sams shakes his head "no."

SAM
What would I do without you, Ms.
Mae?

MAE
I guess we're gettin' ready to
find out.

SAM
Thanks for the reminder...and for
all the good times.

Mae regards Sam fondly and starts to tear up. She catches
herself.

MAE
All right, you. I've enjoyed
having you and your truck all
these years. Gonna miss her
growl...and yours, too, for that
matter.

Smiles from both. Mae does a familiar imitation of Mae West
for Sam.

MAE
(continuing)
"Come up and see me sometime."

Sam nods.

SAM
You got it.

Mae nods back and ducks out of the room before her tears are
spotted.

MAE
You're a good man, Sam Morris.

Sam goes over and straightens the yarn owl on his way down
the hall. He is pensive.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUING

Sam looks over his empty bedroom a final time and collects a small moving box with a few award plaques, coffee mugs and framed photos - his truck and one of him and a petite brunette lady in front of a diner. One final glance around, a knowing smile, and he turns out the light and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEYERS RESIDENCE - CONTINUING

Sam exits the house, gently closing the door. Chloe, his diesel truck, offers a growl of her exhaust.

SAM
I know, girl. It's time.

He opens the passenger door and stows the box on the floor, looks around the place, remembers the shed and starts toward it.

SAM
(continuing)
Be right back.

Sam walks to the shed, opens it up and spies a dusty box labelled "Sam" on a lower shelf. He looks inside. Old home movies, cassettes, an old tape player. A woman's voice sounds in his head.

CHLOE (V.O.)
Lord, a cassette tape. What're you
doing with this old relic?

RAPID FLASHBACK TO A YOUNG, BEAUTIFUL WOMAN SMILING AT SAM FROM THE PASSENGER SEAT OF HIS TRUCK, THE SAME WOMAN FROM THE FRAMED PHOTO, THE LOVE OF HIS LIFE, CHLOE DUNNAM.

Sam smiles a half smile and slowly pokes loosely through the stack.

SAM
(to the air)
Bet you wondered that a time or
two yourself, Princess.

A loud exhale as he closes the box. Beside it is a small, covered movie projector. Sam stacks the projector on the box and heads back to the truck, opens the passenger door and stows the box beside the other one, then begins his customary pre-trip walk around, inspecting and assessing the machine's worthiness for today's journey, tugging, probing. He backs away to take in the entire truck and speaks to his long time team mate.

SAM
(continuing)
Mud flaps. I know. You've been
patient. We'll get 'er done this
trip, I promise.

Sam looks at the house and fights an unexpected wave of emotion. This has been the only home he's known aside from his truck for over fifteen years.

SAM
 (continuing; to
 himself)
 All right, girl. You ready?
 (nods)
 Let's do this.

Sam makes his way to the driver's side, mounts the side rail, gives a final nod to the Meyers house, and settles behind the wheel.

INT. SAM'S TRUCK CAB - CONTINUING

Sam reaches into the box on the passenger floorboard and retrieves the framed photo. Smiles as he rubs the edge of the picture frame. There is a longing in his eyes.

SAM
 Allright, Chloe.

He places the photo reverently on the seat beside him. The woman of his dreams, CHLOE, 35, trim brunette, appears in the seat, all smiles.

CHLOE
 Another day, another adventure.

Sam regards the apparition. She has long been his road companion.

SAM
 One last good one.

CHLOE
 You want me to laugh now or wait
 'til we get underway?

SAM
 It's time, Princess. One final run
 east to west.

CHLOE
 Yes, it is. And time for you to
 start living in the present, Sam
 Morris.

SAM
 Time to leave the dispatches -

CHLOE
 (interrupting)
 "to the younger drivers." Will you
 stop saying that crap already?
 It's time you stopped hidin' out
 in this rig is what it's time for.

SAM
 Hidin' out?

CHLOE
 You heard me.
 (beat)
 Now, c'mon. Slap it in gear and
 let's go. Daylight's a wastin' and
 we've got a lot of ground to cover.

SAM

Sounds like somebody's in a hurry.

Chloe studies Sam intently before offering a stern rebuke.

CHLOE

Don't it, though?

Sam shakes his head as the vision of Chloe fades away. He pats the dash where a St. Christopher medallion is fixed in place, closes his eyes in a quick, silent prayer then reaches for the stereo.

SAM

Pick a good one, Lord.

The singing voice of John Stewart fills the cab. *"But you can't look back, when you're moving on. But you can't look back. Buddy, you got to go and sing your song."* He smiles as he buckles up and puts the truck gently into gear. He speaks to the air.

SAM

(continuing)

No fair gangin' up on me.

Sam guides the truck down the sleepy lane and out into the world, already teeming with people bustling about.

MONTAGE OF SCENES SHOWING THE RAPID PACE OF A NEW DAY IN VERGENNES, VERMONT: A MAN SPEEDS BY TOSSING NEWSPAPERS ONTO DRIVEWAYS AS FAST AS HE CAN; A MOTHER HURRIEDLY SHOVS HER CHILDREN OUT THE DOOR TO A WAITING SCHOOL BUS; A TEENAGER FRANTICALLY SCRAMBLES AFTER A DOG THAT HAS ESCAPED HIS LEASH; A PREDICTABLE LINE IS ALREADY LOOPING AROUND THE DRIVE-IN COFFEE SHOP.

Sam takes it all in a final time. He makes it a point to drive past Vergennes Falls and nods at the overwhelming beauty.

SAM

(continuing)

Gonna miss you, Vermont.

END MONTAGE.

The CB radio comes to life.

SANDY (V.O.)

Sam the Man, are you out there?

Sam glances to the passenger seat and Chloe is there.

CHLOE

The one woman you don't hide from.

Sam huffs at Chloe, turns his radio down, puts the CB mic to his lips and answers the shout out with a smile.

SAM

Talk to me, beautiful. I'm all yours.

SANDY (V.O.)
Well, somebody's in a good mood today.

SAM
Today and every day that starts with you, my queen.

CHLOE
Pretty lame, but y'gotta start somewhere.

SANDY (V.O.)
Oh, queen is it now?

Sam smiles big.

SAM
All day, every day. How's life in Bristol?

CUT TO:

INT. SANDY'S OFFICE - CONTINUING

Tight shot on an attractive, middle aged, slender woman speaking into a desk-mounted microphone. We see her from the mouth down, the rest hidden from view. This is SANDY, late 60s, Sam's loyal dispatcher, and her red lipstick is all we have to remember her by, for now.

SANDY
Sunshine and flurries. Cozy and quiet. It's good to hear your voice, Sam. I could use your help today. I have a load going to Nashville out of Rochester.
(sweeter)
Can you do that for me?

SAM (V.O.)
When you talk that way, darlin', I can do anything. Leaving the hive now.

SANDY
Buzz on over to Kimball's, honey bee. Dock 17. I'll give you more details enroute.

SAM (V.O.)
I'll await your call, Sandy.

SANDY
Thanks, Sam. By the way, the Scott brothers wanted me to thank you for off-loading them so early yesterday. They hadn't expected you until after five.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S TRUCK - CONTINUING

SAM
It's what I do, darlin'.

SANDY (V.O.)
So, when are you gonna buzz by and see me?

SAM
Real soon. I promise.

SANDY (V.O.)
You've been sayin' that for fifteen years, Sam!

SAM
And I've been meaning it!

Chloe reacts emphatically.

CHLOE
PUH!!

SANDY (V.O.)
Whatever. Get to work. Your queen bee has better things to do.

SAM
Yes, ma'am. I'm on it. Sam the Man out.

Sam racks the CB mic, notes Chloe's apparition is back. She resumes her lecture.

CHLOE
Fifteen years, Sam.

SAM
I've been busy.

CHLOE
You've been hidin'.

SAM
Not my type.

CHLOE
You've never met.

SAM
Well, maybe we'll just see about that.

CHLOE
You're driving the wrong way.

SAM
You heard her. "Get to work."

Sam checks his watch as he pulls his rig onto I-87 South toward Albany for the run over to Rochester. Coming north on the interstate is a convoy of National Guard 2.5 ton troop transport trucks.

SAM
(continuing)
Ah, the old reliable deuce and a half. That'll get you to hell and back. Been there, done that.
(more)

SAM (cont'd)
Don't want the t-shirt.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. COAST ROAD OUTSIDE QUY NHON, VIETNAM - DAY

Summer of 1971. Coastal Vietnam, scenic yet highly volatile, caught in the grip of a protracted war. Steep barren cliffs protrude toward the ocean and jungle palms crowd a rocky beach. Private Sam Morris stands beside his sergeant in front of a mud caked deuce and a half truck, tired but eager to serve. An afternoon storm is fast approaching monsoon status. Waves crash into the rocks, adding their spray to the sideways torrent. The sergeant shouts over the wind and rain to be heard.

SERGEANT
You ever drive one of these,
Morris?

SAM
Sir, no, sir!

SERGEANT
Well, today's your lucky day! I'm
short a man and this load needs to
make Supply Base by nightfall.

SAM
Sir, yes, sir! I'm your man.

SERGEANT
That remains to be seen, Private!
Eyes open all the time. No need
to set any land speed records. I
need you and this truck to arrive
alive. Are we clear?!

SAM
Sir, yes, sir!

SERGEANT
Take Baker with you.

The wind picks up, thrashing nearby trees and giving both men pause for concern.

SERGEANT
(continuing)
Get oudda here!

Sam runs off to find Baker, offering a hasty salute as the storm rages on.

CUT TO:

INT. DEUCE AND A HALF TRUCK - LATER

Sam is intent behind the wheel. A tree snaps and falls over the left edge of the road in a dangerous heap.

BAKER
Watch out!

Sam grabs the hand brake and gives it a slight tug, sending the rear end of the truck in a controlled fishtail around the downed tree and he steers into the slide and just keeps going like it was no big deal. Baker is dumbfounded.

BAKER
(continuing)
Where the hell you learn that?!

Sam looks over at Baker and smirks.

SAM
Pasture roads back home. Gets the girl every time if you do it right.

BAKER
Best you gonna get here is a seated ovation.

SAM
I'll settle for a safe delivery.

Baker starts to applaud.

BAKER
"Sam the Man", ladies and gentlemen!

Sam smiles big at the nickname, but echoes his sergeant's words.

SAM
(imitating)
"That remains to be seen, Private!"

He fights on in the storm.

END FLASHBACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAM'S TRUCK CAB - CONTINUING

Match cut to Sam smiling at the memory.

SAM
Another lifetime ago.

Sam takes a final look at the military truck convoy retreating in his side mirror.

SAM
(continuing)
Different kind of jungle out there nowadays.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. DARK BAR - NIGHT

1973. Sam and Jerry Baker are having a beer in a dimly lit bar, celebrating the end of their military stints.

BAKER
I'm serious, man! You NEED to get
your chauffeur's license and come
drive steel trucks. Easy runs
from the plant to the city. You
could do it in your sleep, Sam.

SAM
What about in a monsoon?

BAKER
Asleep IN a monsoon!

The two share a laugh.

BAKER
(continuing)
Look me up, bro. You've got a
gift. I'm tellin' ya.

SAM
This something you see yourself
doin', Jerry?

BAKER
Aww, hell naw! I'd jackknife on
the first day. Uncle Ray's gonna
set me up in the office with a
nice view of the secretaries.

SAM
NOW you're speaking my language!

The two toast a bright future.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. KIMBALL LOADING DOCK - DAY

Sam's truck is parked in Bay 17, trailer affixed. A man,
PHIL, late 40s, approaches with the paperwork.

PHIL
You're all set to go, Sam. Hop,
skip and a jump to Nashville.

Smiles.

SAM
(sarcastically)
Oh, yeah. Hardly time to warm up
the tires.

The two men shake hands.

SAM
(continuing)
Where's your boy, Lucas, Phil?
Sleeping in today?

PHIL
Quit. Gone.

SAM
What?! Y'gotta be kidding me!

PHIL

Wish I was. Bought a rig with his savings, put in his two weeks, and is making runs up into Canada, from what I hear. And I've got YOU to thank for it!

SAM

Me?! How you figure?

PHIL

Seriously? All those stories from the road. You oversold him, Sam. Every time you'd come through here, he'd be all lit up for days...planning, dreaming, boasting of the day when he would be able to get out there like you. Well, that day finally arrived last month. Thanks a lot.

Phil offers a kind smile. Sam is truly astonished.

SAM

Y'gotta believe me, Phil. I had no idea. But, hey, you've still got Kenny.

PHIL

You stay away from him, Morris!

The two smile.

PHIL

(continuing)

Seriously, I'd appreciate it if you listen out for the kid. Goes by "El Hombré."

SAM

El Hombré, huh? Nice humble name...

(laughs)

Will do, Phil -

Sam cuts himself off when he realizes he won't be around to keep that promise. He stalls.

PHIL

You alright?

Sam snaps out of it.

SAM

Yeah, yeah.

(beat)

Hey, good to see you, Phil. As ever. Just time to be gettin' on down the road.

Sam nods and climbs up into his rig.

PHIL

Sure thing. Be safe out there, Sam.

SAM

I'll do my best.

PHIL
Good enough.

SAM
See ya, Phil.

Sam puts the truck in gear, gives a trucker's honk and drives away.

MONTAGE OF SCENES SHOWCASING THE BEAUTY OF UPSTATE NEW YORK. AS WITH ALL VISTA SCENES IN THIS MOVIE, THE BACKDROP SAYS "AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL" WITH PICTURESQUE MOUNTAINS, LAKES AND STREAMS.

END MONTAGE.

SAM
(to the air)
Gonna look a whole lot different
from seven feet down.

Sam looks to the passenger seat but the apparition of Chloe is not there. He sees an exit for a scenic overlook coming up, signals, and takes the exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCENIC OVERLOOK - CONTINUING

Sam sits in his truck admiring the view. He opens his thermos of coffee, pours a cup and sips from it. Time slows. He reflects back on his mentorship of young LUCAS, 22.

VIGNETTES OF LUCAS DOING A WALK AROUND OF SAM'S TRUCK, PAUSING TO POLISH A FENDER; TALKING ANIMATEDLY OF DRIVING A RIG, HANDS GRIPPING AN IMAGINARY WHEEL; LIGHTING UP AND RUNNING TOWARDS SAM'S TRUCK WHENEVER HE PULLS INTO THE LOADING DOCK.

Sam cracks a window and lets the cold air pour into the truck. He picks up the mic of his CB radio and gives a shout out.

SAM
(into CB mic)
Break One Nine for El Hombré. You
out there, Lucas? Come back.

Sam waits but there is no response.

FADE OUT:

EXT. I-90 WEST - CONTINUING

Snow begins to fall and Sam reacts by slowing down, a cautious look on his face.

SAM
Okay, here we go, girl.

Sam checks his mirrors, assesses his surroundings.

SAM
 (continuing)
 Don't know that I'm gonna miss the
 snowstorms. Don't imagine you
 will either.

QUICK FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. I-465 LOOP AROUND INDIANAPOLIS - NIGHT

The flashing lights of a police car illuminate Sam's driver's side mirror as an officer approaches his truck in a violent snowstorm, stepping carefully on the slick surface.

INT. SAM'S TRUCK CAB - CONTINUING

Sam rolls down his window and is berated by the officer who shouts over the wind.

TROOPER FRANKLIN
 What are you doing, driver?! Are
 you trying to make both of our
 nights a memorable one?!

END FLASHBACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAM'S TRUCK CAB - CONTINUING

Back in the present moment, Sam takes note of a good-sized buck making his way down the rocky slope to his left. Construction ahead is going to require a merge. Sam is wary as he quietly cautions the deer.

SAM
 Easy now.

Chloe appears in the passenger seat.

CHLOE
 Watch for the deer.

SAM
 I see him.

Sam's concern increases. He coaches the deer in low tones.

SAM
 (continuing)
 Don't do it. Stay put, fella.

The buck continues his descent and appears panicked by something. He makes ground level and starts to bound across the opposite lanes of the interstate, narrowly evading oncoming traffic.

SAM
 (continuing)
 Don't...
 (beat)
 C'mon...Turn back...
 (beat)
 Turn...

CHLOE
Watch out!

Sam checks his mirrors, takes his foot off the throttle. He is on high alert. The buck is headed right for his rig. He loses sight of the animal as he pulls alongside it then, out of the darkness, the deer suddenly springs into view, arching over the truck's hood in a terrified attempt to escape. Instinctively, Sam jams on the brakes and the truck starts to jackknife. Sam braces for impact as his eyes go wide. Hard cut to black.

EXT. I-90 WEST - LATER

Sam's rig is pulled off the road, flashers on. He finishes inspecting his load and closes the doors on the truck, one of which squeaks loudly.

SAM
That ain't gonna cut it.

Sam takes a can of spray oil and oils the door, working it back and forth until the squeak disappears. His cell phone rings. He studies it and punches in.

SAM
(continuing)
Hey, Sandy.

INT. SANDY'S OFFICE - CONTINUING

Sandy speaks into her cell phone, camera keyed on those red lips, still hiding her full reveal from the audience.

SANDY
Oh, thank God! Are you all right, Sam?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

SAM
Yeah, I'm fine. Truck could stand a good hood buffing, but no other issues I can see. Scattered a few traffic cones but I put 'em back good enough.

SANDY
I found out about it from Southern Shaker who got it from Tumbleweed. Why am I always the last to know?

Sam squirms a bit.

SAM
Tumbleweed. Never could keep it zipped.

SANDY
Oh, this was supposed to be a secret?

Sam is busted. He looks around and runs his fingers through his head, obviously uncomfortable.

SAM
Yeah...about that.

Sandy offers a clipped response.

SANDY
No, it's fine. Why does your
dispatcher need to know?
(beat)
You go and do, Sam. Just get the
load delivered in one piece,
y'hear?

SAM
The furniture's fine. Phil's guys
loaded it right.

SANDY
At least I've still got Toby...as
far as I know, anyway.

SAM
Sandy, look...

Sandy is pacing, body language indicating impatience and worry. She can't handle any more of this call.

SANDY
I gotta go, Sam. Got some
scheduling to do. Glad you're
okay. Let me hear from you after
you off load in Nashville
(beat)
If you're not too busy. Drive safe.

Sandy abruptly ends the call. Sam stares at his phone and makes a face. He starts to climb up into his cab but pauses, looks down at his chrome gas tank where the remains of a heart with initials in pink nail polish can still be seen. "C.D.+S.M". He takes a rag from his back pocket and gently and reverently polishes the area then absently traces the letters with his finger as he breaks into a soft smile.

INT. SAM'S TRUCK CAB - CONTINUING

Sam climbs back into his truck and sits, relieved, glad to be alive. He touches the St. Christopher medallion on the dash and speaks to it.

SAM
Just a few more days. Hang with
me.

Sam is melancholy. He exhales and stares at the passenger side of his cab willing the vision of Chloe to return but no success. He speaks to the empty space.

SAM
(continuing)
She's not you.

Sam glances to the framed photo on the seat, reflects, then reaches into the back and brings forward a well-worn cassette tape case and opens it.

He finds and selects "The Captain & Me" by the Doobie Brothers and drifts into a pleasant memory of Chloe.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. CHLOE'S DINER, ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI - DAY

It is 1993. Sam is seated at the end of the counter working his way through a chicken fried steak dinner. A waitress refills his coffee.

SAM
Thank you, Sherry. So...where's
the boss lady at today? Hiding in
the back?

SHERRY
And doin' what, countin' all the
money?!
(smiles)
You know she's usually all up in
everybody's business, Sam, and
would never miss lunch for
anything.

Sam looks to Sherry and waits for the explanation.

SHERRY
(continuing)
Today...I don't know. Took off
after breakfast. Said she had
something to do, and hasn't been
back. Your guess is as good as
mine.
(beat)
You ready for that pie?

Sam nods as he sops the last of the cream gravy with a biscuit.

SAM
Bring it on.

Just then, Chloe opens the front door of the diner and proceeds slowly toward the back. Sam takes note as his slice of pie is placed before him.

SAM
(continuing)
There she is! Hey, beautiful...

Chloe has been crying, eyes hidden with dark sunglasses. Her expression is blank, hollow. She goes to the stereo and turns it up, filling the restaurant with "South City Midnight Lady" by the Doobie Brothers, right at the start of the extended instrumental break. Chloe walks straight to Sam and puts out her hands.

SAM
(continuing)
Well, hello Beautiful.

CHLOE
Dance with me.

Sam smiles at the invitation, indicates his dessert.

SAM
Soon as I finish up my pie.

Chloe sniffles as she wipes tears from the corner of her eyes.

CHLOE
Please...
(beat)
I need to feel...something.

She chokes up.

CHLOE
(continuing)
Anything but this...

Sam immediately rises.

SAM
Hey...hey, now. It's okay. It's
gonna be okay.

They settle in to a slow dance in place, and Chloe tries to lose herself by melting into Sam. She places her head on his shoulder and the music dissolves out with the scene.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SAM'S VINTAGE TRUCK - DAY

A half-hour later. Establishing shot of Sam's prior truck, a 1977 Freightliner 800. Chloe runs to the truck, a small cloth bag slung over her shoulder. She mounts the side rail, opens the passenger door and slips inside.

INT. SAM'S VINTAGE TRUCK - CONTINUING

Sam looks over as Chloe gets in.

CHLOE
Where we headed, Cap'n?

Sam is amazed but wary.

SAM
You sure about this, Chloe?

CHLOE
I'm fresh out of Calgon, so that leaves you, Sam. Take me away. I don't care where, just bring me back "on the flip-flop", as you truckers say.

SAM
What about the diner?

CHLOE
I got good people workin' for me. They can handle it a few days.

SAM
You pack a toothbrush?

CHLOE
You forget how to drive? C'mon!
Let's go!

Sam studies Chloe a moment, shakes his head and puts his truck in gear.

SAM
I got a load of paper products to grab in Omaha and take up to Minneapolis. Swing by Chicago on the return. That work for you?

Chloe's mind is already occupied. She offers a half smile as she stares blankly out the window.

CHLOE
Perfect.

SAM
You ever ridden in a rig before?

CHLOE
What do you take me for?

SAM
I'd just like to know what I'm getting myself into.

Chloe regards Sam a long moment, then speaks quietly.

CHLOE
No.

Sam offers a slow nod.

CHLOE
(continuing)
Can we just go, please?

SAM
Yes, ma'am.

CHLOE
You got any tunes?

SAM
Box of cassettes on the floor behind the console. Knock yourself out.

END FLASHBACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAM'S TRUCK CAB - CONTINUING

The music of "South City Midnight Lady" returns in time for the final chorus, and Sam listens to the song from the cassette while clutching the photo of him with Chloe, taken in front of her diner.

"South city midnight lady, I'm much obliged indeed. You sure have saved this man whose soul was in need."

Sam is emotional. He joins in the final verse, half whispering the lyrics.

SAM
I thought there was no reason for
all these things I do.
(slow; struggling)
But the smile that I sent out
returned with you.

MONTAGE OF SCENES SHOWING SAM DRIVING I-90 ALONGSIDE LAKE ERIE WITH THE SUN GLINTING OFF THE WATER; HIS TRUCK PARKED AT A LAKESIDE PARK WITH HIM BUFFING THE HOOD; AND SAM WALKING THE SHORELINE, LOST IN THOUGHTS OF CHLOE, SKIPPING STONES AND WATCHING THE BIRDS DART AROUND.

FADE OUT: