

COPYCAT

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INT. APARTMENT - STUDY - EVENING

Twenty-something SAM is engrossed by his computer, the only source of light in the room. The RADIO is on quietly in the background.

Sam scrolls through an online newspaper article.

INSERT: COMPUTER

The article headline is clear: "THE SUBURB STRANGLER: THE STORY SO FAR"

Sam hits PRINT.

BACK TO THE ROOM

Sam collects the article from his printer. Sits back down - starts to cut out excerpts with a pair of scissors.

Opens a draw beside him and pulls out his SCRAPBOOK.

Handling with care and pride, he slowly flicks through the book--

--Pages upon pages of collages made up of newspaper clippings of various articles about 'The Suburb Strangler'.

He finds a fresh page. Starts to glue down his new clippings.

THE RADIO (V.O)

Breaking news.

Sam instantly drops his items and darts to the radio, urgently turning up the volume. Listens intently.

THE RADIO (V.O)

A body has been discovered in the River Vivian, believed to be that of nineteen year old Melissa James. It is feared Miss James was another victim of 'The Suburb Strangler', who has allegedly murdered between five and seven women over a three month period. The police have launched further appeals for anyone with evidence concerning the murders to come forward.

Sam turns back into his computer and hastily types 'Melissa James' into a search engine -- comes up with a missing persons report. He prints it out.

Collects the report and cuts out the picture of MELISSA, gluing it down in the middle of the page in his scrapbook.

INT. THE PUB - NIGHT

Sam sits at a table in conversation with a friend of similar age, TRAVIS. The table is littered with a few empty pint glasses.

TRAVIS

Anyway, I better get going. I've been so busy with work I've barely seen Francesca all week.

SAM

Oh, that reminds me. I've got this fancy dress party tomorrow, and I forgot to sort out a costume. Can I borrow your work clothes for the party?

TRAVIS

You want to go to a fancy dress party as a guy who checks gas meters?

SAM

It would save me a lot of time.

TRAVIS

Well, that's the spirit.

SAM

Is that a yes, then?

TRAVIS

Come get 'em now, they're in my car. Just make sure you don't lose anything.

SAM

You got the badge, too?

TRAVIS

Why? In case they don't recognize your iconic character? Yeah, I've got the badge.

SAM

You're a lifesaver.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Sam, now carrying a plastic bag full of Travis' work clothes, walks up the stairs to his apartment door.

As he opens his door, he hears footsteps. He freezes.

Slowly turns around - a female resident, ALISON, walks past, dressed for a night out.

ALISON

Hello.

His eyes follow her. Fixated.

Suddenly he SPRINGS forward, grabbing Alison. Thrusts one of his hands in front of her mouth to muffle her screams.

Violently DRAGS her towards his door and THROWS her inside his apartment.

He closes the door behind him as he steps in.

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

Back to Sam - his eyes fixed on Alison as she walks past.

He watches her, but does nothing. Steps inside his apartment and closes the door behind him.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sam, fidgeting in his bed. Unable to sleep. Frustrated.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Sam pulls on the shirt from Travis' work clothes. He's now fully dressed in the outfit.

Places the badge around his neck, the finishing touch.

He studies himself in the reflection of his mirror.

Turns and picks his SCRAPBOOK up from his bed. He flicks through the book.

Slowly puts the book down, straightens his posture - composes himself.

He grabs a briefcase and picks his car keys up on his way out of the room.

INT. CAR

Sam, driving. He's focused, no radio on.

EXT. CAR

Sam parks his car down a long street surrounded by houses.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Sam surveys the street.

He spots an attractive WOMAN, walking alone, who walks up to a house, unlocks the door and steps inside.

EXT. STREET 1 - CONTINUOUS

Sam gets out of his car and walks up to the same door. He knocks.

BEAT.

The door opens.

Standing in the frame, looking up at him with wide eyes, is a five year old BOY.

SAM

Wrong house.

Sam hurriedly retreats from the house and gets back into his car. Drives off.

EXT. STREET 2

Sam pulls up at another similar street with a number of houses.

INT. CAR

Sam, once again, surveys the street.

Something catches Sam's attention -- a YOUNG MAN leaving a house. He notices an attractive YOUNG WOMAN who waves the young man off as he gets in his car and drives away.

She goes back into the house.

EXT. STREET 2 - CONTINUOUS

More cautiously than before, Sam gets out of his car and walks up to the door. Knocks.

The young woman opens the door.

YOUNG WOMAN
Can I help you?

Sam tries to hide his nerves.

SAM
I'm here to check you meter, m'am.

YOUNG WOMAN
Oh, okay. Come in.

INT. HOUSE

Nicely decorated house. Very homely.

YOUNG WOMAN
It's just this way.

She directs him to their destination. Steps aside.

YOUNG WOMAN
This won't be long, will it?

Sam shakes his head. He goes to inspect the meter. The young woman wanders off.

Sam, aware of his surroundings, carefully opens his brief case and pulls out a thick piece of rope.

He composes himself.

INT. HOUSE - MINUTES LATER

The young woman lies on the floor, gagged, hands tied behind her back, STRUGGLING.

Sam stands tall over her.

Her protests are muffled.

He starts to lean down towards her, she desperately tries to move away -- but it's no help.

As he leans down, they make eye contact.

Her eyes are sore with tears, PLEADING.

He freezes. He can't take his eyes off of hers.

BEAT.

SAM

I'm sorry. I'm so, so sorry.

Suddenly, he darts out of the room, SHAKEN.

EXT. HOUSE

Sam rushes out of the house and instantly THROWS UP on the pavement. He doesn't linger. Coughing, he sprints to his car.

INT. CAR

Shaking uncontrollably, Sam struggles to put the keys into the ignition.

Finally, manages. He speeds off.

INT. APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Sam bursts through the doors of his apartment. Tears in his eyes, still shaking.

He lashes out, THROWING a PICTURE across the room. The shatter of the glass doesn't phase him.

In a fit of rage, he KICKS a door and continues to throw anything he can find.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He storms into his bedroom - spots his SCRAPBOOK.

Flicks through it. Faster and faster.

He starts to TEAR pages out. Pages upon pages.

Then, without waning, violently chucks the scrapbook at the wall.

He collapses on his bed, surrounded by discarded scrapbook pages.

Breathing heavily, and unable to hold back the tears, he begins to sob.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Sam lays on his bed, vacant expression. The radio is on in the background again.

RADIO (V.O)
Breaking news. It is believed the
Suburb Stranger has killed again.

He picks up pieces of his former scrapbook and studies them, without any real indication of how he's feeling.

RADIO (V.O)
The police are appealing directly
to the killer to turn himself in,
so they can do their best to get
him the medical help he clearly
needs.

Eureka. His eyes light up.

He moves instantly, snatching his car keys off of the table and walks out of his apartment. He doesn't even bother to lock it.

INT. CAR

Sam drives in his car.

SAM'S FACE--

--There's something different in his eyes. A man possessed.

EXT. POLICE STATION

Sam pulls up outside the police station.

Without hesitation, he gets out of his car.

We follow Sam as he walks with a sense of purpose towards the station.

INT. POLICE STATION

Opening the doors with confidence, Sam strolls inside.

There's little activity inside the actual station, with a few civilians dotted about and one officer at his desk, doing paper works.

Sam's expression hasn't changed since the moment he got in the car.

He holds his arms out beside him. Takes a deep breath.

SAM

I am the suburb strangler.

His mouth twitches with a smile.