



## TREATMENT

### ACT 1

The first image: the beautiful pristine Rocky Mountains. Suddenly, sounds of city streets rise. This sets up the contrasting, clashing contradictions about to occur. Track down to the foot of the Rocky Mountains – the small city of Aurora, Colorado. A small working-class city, where rural and urban lifestyles clash. City images flash, conflicting with the surrounding nature.

We meet AMBER, a 19-yr-old white girl working at a rundown Mexican restaurant. A photo of the Rocky Mountains on the wall, behind an oily frame, confirms that customers is what this business needs. Her frustrated boss, SALLY, tells Amber she needs to start making “*big changes around here*” to get business going again. But these “*changes*” sound more like threats.

Close in on Amber’s fist... tightening, tighter... a sign of what’s about to come. The CLOSE UPS of Amber’s fist will be important to show her pain, frustration, confusion with life and the world.

Back at home, Amber lives alone with her mother, BETH. Beth has dementia, she’s forgetting things. There’s good news though, Beth qualifies for better medicine. But bad news, Amber has to pay half the cost out-of-pocket. As the sole income provider of her household, Amber is already behind on rent. Before falling asleep, Amber sings Happy Birthday to herself. It’s her birthday, no one remembered, including her mom who has Dementia. Amber plants a tiny birthday candle on a cupcake. She clearly can’t afford a real cake. Plus, even if she could, there’s no one to share it with. She blows out the candle. The first Black Out happens here.

The next day at work, Sally cuts Amber’s work hours in half. Amber tries pleading with Sally. But Sally makes it clear the decision is final. Close up on Amber’s fist again, rage building more.

Needing financial aid for her mom’s new medicine, Amber calls the insurance. But it takes a while to make any progress, and Amber hangs up frustrated. That’s when her best-friend JUAN (19 years old, Latino) enters the restaurant. The energy changes here. It’s the first time we see Amber genuinely smile. Finally, someone who brightens up her day. Juan is a childhood friend who arrives to surprise her with a belated birthday gift, 12 graffiti markers.

Amber is just happy anyone even remembered it was her birthday.

But Juan confesses he needs a favor. His mother kicked him out of the house, and Juan wants Amber to talk to the “*Fortune Teller*”. He needs a reading for his future. Yet, for some reason, Juan can’t go see the Fortune Teller. Amber has to do it, but she’s hesitant to go. After some back and forth, Amber agrees to do it. Juan gives her fifty dollars – and slaps five with her. A theme is presented here, Juan says to Amber: “*Ni pa’tras, ni para coger impulso*”. Which he translates to English: “*Don’t take a step back, not even to gain momentum.*” And he playfully adds: “*It’s lost in translation. Learn Spanish.*” They both laugh. Their friendship is real.



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As she's leaving work, Amber and Sally get into another tense exchange. The tension building more at work... something's about to burst.

Amber visits the fortune teller, MADAME BOVARY -- who sees "7" and a fork in the road in Amber's future. Madame Bovary portentously adds, Amber, "*you can stay the current path*" you're on, "*or fight for change.*" Once the reading's over, Amber reveals why she's truly there.

She hands Bovary the fifty dollars from Juan – orders SUPER BOOF, BUBBLE HASH. It becomes evident, the Fortune Teller Shop is a drug smuggling front. Amber used to work with Madame Bovary – but she stopped a year ago after her mom got sick. For the past year, Amber has been trying to do the right thing. But doing right, working a regular job, is costing Amber.

Amber meets up with Juan as he does graffiti. She gives him the drugs. As Juan does graffiti, this is the first moment that colors pop alive. Juan represents vibrancy. But Amber complains about being broke and struggling at 19 years old. Juan says: "*You don't get what you deserve. You get what you fight for.*" These words remind her of Madame Bovary: "*Stay the current path you're on, or fight for change.*" Amber looks at her palm, and makes a choice. The camera gets intimate for a beat... Amber decisively tells Juan that she wants to work with his crew (The Sevens). But as Juan ponders her comment, they're quickly interrupted by a rival street gang (the Threes). The pacing of the film picks up. Adrenaline. A dangerous street-fight ensues.

Amber jumps in to defend Juan. As they fight, 2 other men appear. OMAR (19 years old, black male) and T (the leader of Juan's gang, THE SEVENS). Outnumbered, the rival gang runs away. After the fight, Juan's gang throws a party. All on her own, Amber invites herself to the party.

But Juan tells her to go home. That's when Amber reveals what the Fortune Teller said, this is supposed to be her future. The "*number 7 and fighting for change*". It's happening like Bovary predicted. Juan calls Bovary a "*bruja*" – Spanish for a witch, and lets Amber into the party with his gang. Once in the gang's house, she meets JADA and LIL D' – other members of the crew. But Jada (the only other girl there) gives Amber a cold shoulder. A new obstacle in Amber's life.

However, T (the leader of the Sevens) likes the SUPER BOOF BUBBLE HASH (a high grade weed extract that has 90% THC levels). So, he asks Amber if she can get more Bubble for him. Knowing an opportunity when she sees one, Amber says yes to T's request... and, for good measure, she adds... but "*my delivery fee*" is on top of the price of the drugs.

## ACT 2

With an opportunity to make extra money on the side, things are looking up for Amber. But Amber arrives late to work. Sally fires her. Just as one window opens, a door closes. Amber no longer has her regular job, and the side hustle with Juan is too new to fully rely on.



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She meets up with Juan, who gives her a pep talk. *"You got knocked down. Get up, fight back."* Juan tells Amber again... *"Ni pa'tras, ni para coger impulso"*. This is his life philosophy. After the pep talk, Amber dives deeper into dealing with the Sevens full time. After all, this is Colorado. Legal weed is everywhere. And since weed is still illegal in Texas, new underground markets have cropped up. You can transport drugs to Texas, sell it there for triple the price.

Before long, T wants to meet Madame Bovary. He wants to order bigger amounts of Bubble. In fact, thousands of dollars of it to sell. But he wants to meet Bovary to be sure this will really work. Amber hesitates. After some quick back and forth, she agrees to introduce T to Bovary.

Bovary agrees to sell thousands of dollars of Bubble to T, but on one condition. Only Amber (the white girl) can pick up the Bubble, no one else – she *"helps avoid unwanted attention"*. This is why Juan was not able to buy from Madame Bovary before. The whole gang looks like, acts like, and smells like gangsters. Amber is the perfect decoy. T agrees to Bovary's terms. He also agrees to pay Amber for doing deliveries. The pacing of the film shifts gears here.

When the cops pull Amber over, and the whole gang is in the car with her, Amber doesn't snitch. She uses her *"assets"* (the innocent white girl), and the cops buy it. They let her and the gang go home scot-free. Her whiteness is a *"hall pass"* for the gang to get way with things.

But back at the gang's home, Jada prods Amber's street-credibility. Faces off with her, accuses her of being a liability. Jada also makes it clear she doesn't want a *"white bitch"* in the crew.

But being a fighter, Amber won't give up. And she proves herself to the gang. First, she does an armed robbery with them. They decide to rob the Mexican restaurant Amber used to work at. Juan points out, there's no going back from here. Amber dives in, robs Sally at gun point with the gang. Secondly, she does an initiation where she's *"jumped in"*. As part of the initiation Amber has to pick up 7 pennies, all while defending herself in a fist fight against Jada. This hearkens the future Madame Bovary predicted for her: *"fight for change"*. The world is getting more dangerous, stakes are getting higher and higher... and everything is moving fast. Too fast.

After doing the armed robbery and winning the initiation fight, the Sevens welcome Amber into the gang as an official member. Amber is now family; she's formally one of the crew.

As a member of the gang, Amber starts making even more money than before, and she can now even afford better medicine for her mother. But when Amber goes to pick up more Bubble, Bovary sees the bruises from the fight/initiation on Amber's face. Madame Bovary tells Amber she's taking the palm readings too literally.

Amber brushes Madame Bovary off, tells her she knows what she's doing. It's the first time Amber doesn't want or need anyone's advice. Plus, she's already in deep. No going back.



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Amber dives deeper into street-life. As she dives deeper, she also gets to know Omar more. She discovers Omar is gentle, smart, caring. And he always has her back. The love subplot between Omar and Amber gives us time to get to know him, and to see another side of Amber. A girl who is looking for family and love... in the midst of all the confusion.

Things are finally looking up for Amber. She's making money, her mom's health is improving, and she's in love with Omar. And Omar is also in love with her. Life is finally perfect.

But the Threes show up again and steal all the Bubble (drugs) from Amber. The pacing picks up again... stakes get higher and extremely dangerous. The reality of her choices is now starting to catch up. The consequences. A deadly shootout ensues. People are left dead on the streets. Everyone is arrested. Juan gets 4 years in prison, Omar (the man she loves) gets 16 years. But Amber only gets 7 months on house arrest. This is the impact of race. An important theme.

## ACT 3

Feeling lost and confused, Amber visits Madame Bovary. Madame Bovary tells her fighting for change isn't literal. Fight for change is *"between you and yourself! And the best side of you has to win."* But Amber did the opposite, including getting people killed. This important theme was lost on Amber. Now her life is a mess.

After 7 months have passed, she gets a job. Juan calls Amber from prison. He's taking art classes, and he wants to be a Graphic Designer. He also tells Amber she's lucky she didn't end up in prison. But Amber isn't dumb, she tells him it wasn't luck. He knows that too. Except, he was trying to be nice saying that to her. They both know her white privilege helped her avoid prison. After completing her house arrest, Amber can finally visit Omar in prison. But in prison Omar seems changed. He's not the warm boy she fell in love with. He's a hardened man.

When Amber tells him she will wait for him, Omar says it's over between them. After all, Amber got away. She only got seven months on house arrest... and he got sixteen years in prison. *"You get to go home. You get a second chance, but I'm in here. That's the truth."* This hits on an important theme... there is a difference between class and race.

The film ends with Amber watching Omar escorted by the Correctional Officers through the prison's courtyard. As he walks through the courtyard, a sunset appears. It envelops them all.

It feels like beautiful nature is everywhere, hope is everywhere. But it also feels far away. The dichotomy of good and bad forces constantly present everywhere. The film's last image is the Colorado sunset. There is hope, even if it feels far away. It's there.

Inspired by true events. **THE END.**