The concept of love is universal and personal. Love appears in many forms from relationship to relationship. In the film, *I Am Sam*, love is the recurring theme that ripples beneath the surface of a mentally handicapped father attempting to regain custody of his seven-year old daughter. Sam’s love for his daughter and his determination to get her back are recurring motifs throughout the film; however, at one point, Sam shows weakness and begins to believe that everybody around him is right when they say he should not remain his daughter’s sole parent. In the scene with his lawyer, Rita and his self-built wall of paper boxes, Sam displays his weakness of self-doubt.

Sam has reached rock bottom and has actually given up his fight to win custody of his daughter. He begins to doubt his abilities as a parent and encloses himself in with a wall of newspaper cubes. In this scene, the lighting is varying and contrasting with strong, stark shadows juxtaposed by piquant specks of diamond (a reference to his daughter Lucy “diamond”) shaped lights sporadically placed on the wall as well as on his and Rita’s faces. The strong light shows that it is obviously afternoon; however, Sam is embedded in his self-created darkness. The lighting changes when Rita breaks down his wall, and light is flooded into the room, however it shifts only towards a single light source from the window, casting half of the room in shadow.

The sound in the room also creates a very palpable mood of surrender. Sam’s voice is soft, while Rita’s voice is loud and stressed, showing her frustration with his weakness. The contrast between their volumes re-emphasizes how different they are. However, the lighting brings them together once the wall is broken, and Sam is willing to respond to her in the same frustrated tone. The background music is also soft and slow in pace, creating a feeling of forced stativity, as oppose to the usually upbeat soundtrack of the film.
Each character is so realistic that the viewer feels he/she know them both completely. The camera creates this feeling by always zooming in at close range and remaining level with their faces. However, the camera is always slightly moving, whether zooming in a fraction of a distance, or even slightly shaking up and down. This motion makes the viewer feel somewhat out of control, which helps he/she to connect with Sam and his feeling of helpless in his plight.

The scene begins slightly slowly as a result of Sam’s depressed mood; however, he hits Rita’s soft spot by telling her that she is perfect and cannot understand what he is going through. These words have a strong effect on her, which is apparent when she tears down the wall, loses her patience and her self-control and exposes all of her problems with her son, her husband, and her life. She proves that it is not only people with born disabilities that have problems and insecurities concerning their decisions. She verifies that nobody is perfect, and that everyone makes mistakes no matter how perfect he/she may seem. Her extreme emotion and her incredible weakness, portrayed for the first time since her first appearance, automatically earns her the sympathy of the viewer. The effects of this conversation between the two create a much more relaxed, open, and successful union between lawyer and client, as well as making a once professional relationship quite personal.

The tone of the scene is very dramatic, by beginning with tension and anger, than leading into depression and disinterest, and finally breaking down into complete and utter emotional release. This scene is an excellent example of the entire film, for it follows the same plot scheme as the entire movie; and all turns out well in the end.