All You Need is love, and a Good Director

In movies, the only way directors can get through to the viewer is with their use of camera techniques and other things they can control. In the movie, *I am Sam*, a mentally handicapped man holds the enormous responsibility of taking care of a newborn baby and raising her. This movie shows how anything is possible and how all you need is love. During *I am Sam*, the director uses close-ups, music, and lens tinting in the opening scene to convey the ideas and feelings of the main characters.

The scene starts out with many close-up shots that frame only the hands of an unknown character. The character fixes all of the sugars and cups at a Starbucks. There is no face shown for the first minute or so and there is loud sound as well as music over actions. This music sounds very elementary, which alerts us to the fact that this person might be child-like in nature. The fascination with perfection will be prevalent throughout the movie. It shows that the main character wants to do the best at whatever he does. Shortly after this, we find out that this man’s name is Sam. The camera pans from Sam to the other customers faces and then back to him. The camera then pulls to a wide shot so you can see everyone in the coffee shop. Sam’s boss tells him that it is time, and throughout this encounter, the camera seems to move back and forth in a hurried motion, this is trying to show how the main character is feeling at the time. It takes Sam a while to realize what his boss is telling him, but when he comprehends his boss, he seems worried. The music changes to a faster pace and this shows how the tempo of the movie might be speeding up also.

Next, we see Sam running and we hear the sounds of the city and only see him. We do not know where he is going because it is just a full body shot throughout the running. Sam arrives at a hospital and we feel a sense of urgency that is shown through the motion of the
When Sam reaches his destination, we see that he is going to be a father. The mother looks very disgusted and the doctor tells Sam, “This is it.” We are well aware by this time that Sam is mentally handicapped by the things that he has said and done. Sam begins to spin around and with this; the camera begins to do the same. Sam chants, “This is it, this is it, this is it” as he spins. The camera moves from Sam to the mother and back again. This is a camera technique called a shot reverse shot and is used to show the actions and the expressions of both of the people. When Sam stops spinning, him and the camera focuses in on his new daughter. While Sam spins, it makes you feel disoriented and conveys a sense of urgency, much like the way Sam was feeling.

When the baby is born, we find out that it is a girl and that the mother will not even hold her. Sam takes her into his arms and you can see the love in between them. This is shown through the camera framing both of them in the shot and it seems that nothing else matters when it is the two of them. Music is a major part throughout this movie. When words are not spoken sometimes the music in this film conveys what the characters are thinking or doing. When the doctors ask Sam what the baby’s name is, he replies, “Lucy diamond Dawson,” Sam had named his daughter after a Beatles song. This shows how much of an impact that music makes on the literal part of the movie as well as the production side. The camera movements in this film are very hard to follow sometimes and this is what the director must have been looking for. They wanted this movie to seem very much like real life in the fact that you might be looking at many
different things and having different feelings towards them all. This movie is full of close-ups that accentuate what we need to be looking at and full body shots and shots from very far away so we get a sense of the surroundings.

The disorienting feeling of the camera represents the feelings of many of the moments Sam encounters. The music, tinting, and close-ups play an important role in this film, these film elements convey the feelings of the main characters and give the viewer a glimpse into the kind of people that they are all within the first four and a half minutes of the film. Relationships in this movie are set very early and the director conveys this through their use of the technical elements.