Miami, then home

Two days of shooting linen in the heat, one early flight, and New York being cold on purpose.

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4 MIN READ

Quick work trip to Miami this week. Shoot for a client, two long days, a lot of standing around in the sun pretending it's not ninety degrees. It was ninety degrees.

I almost didn't go. Moro's been here barely a week and leaving her felt wrong. But it was booked before she came home, and Linda downstairs basically took the leash out of my hand and told me to get in the car. She had a whole plan written on an index card. Feeding times, nap times, a list of songs she was going to play her. I didn't ask about the songs.

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The shoot was a summer linen thing for a menswear brand. Which is funny, shooting summer clothes in November, but that's how it works, everything's shot months ahead. Call time was 5:30 the first morning so we could catch the light before it got harsh. We were on the beach off Ocean Drive, and it was so humid my shirt was sticking to me before we even started.

The photographer was this guy named Mike who talked the entire time. Not in a bad way. He just narrates. "Okay, that's good, that's really good, now look at the water like it owes you money." I don't know what that face is supposed to be but apparently I did it right, because he kept the shot.

There was a stylist who spent most of the day steaming the same three shirts, and a girl from the brand who held a tiny fan up to my face between takes. I felt kind of ridiculous. Grateful, but ridiculous.

At one point a wave came up further than anyone expected and soaked my pants to the knee, and Mike said "don't move, don't move" and shot like thirty frames. That might end up being the one they use. Wet pants. Very editorial.

Lunch both days was from this little Cuban window place a couple streets back from the beach. Pressed sandwiches, those tiny cups of coffee that are like ninety percent sugar. I had three the first day and my hands were shaking through the whole afternoon setup. Didn't learn. Had three the second day too.

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Best part was the second night. Everyone went out and I just walked down to the water by myself and sat there for a while. Warm wind, palm trees doing their thing, somebody's music coming from a balcony. I don't know. Sometimes you need to sit somewhere and not be useful.

I sat there long enough that the sand got cold under me. There were a couple people walking dogs along the edge of the water, and I caught myself watching them way too closely. Like a weird dog dad tourist. I texted Linda for an update and she sent back a picture of Moro asleep on her couch with her face pressed into a pillow. No message. Just the picture. That was enough.

I wrote a little bit on my phone out there too. Nothing I'll show anyone, probably. Just some lines about the light on the water at night and how it moves differently than the river back home. I'm always more awake at night, wherever I am. Miami just makes it louder.

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Flight home was at six in the morning, which should be illegal. I slept with my face on the window and woke up over Jersey with a crease on my cheek.

The guy next to me was eating a full breakfast burrito at 6:15am, which I respect. He offered me half. I said no, then thought about it for the rest of the flight. I should've said yes.

Landed and it was forty-one degrees and grey. I walked out of JFK in a linen shirt, because of course my jacket was in the bottom of the bag, and the wind came straight through it like the city wanted to remind me who I am. Took the AirTrain, then the subway, and I stood the whole way because I was scared I'd fall asleep and end up in Far Rockaway.

Picked up Moro from my neighbor, and she lost her mind like I'd been gone a year. Best welcome I've had in a long time.

Like, full body. Her whole back half was wagging. She did this little spin, then tripped over her own feet, then peed a little on Linda's doormat out of pure excitement. Linda just laughed and said "that's love." I'm buying her a new doormat. And probably flowers.

She also told me Moro learned to sit while I was gone. I didn't believe her. Then she held up a treat and Moro sat down immediately, perfectly, and looked at me like she'd been doing it her whole life. Two days. I leave for two days and she gets a skill. I don't know how to feel about that.

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That night I made soup, because it was cold and grey and I was still wearing summer clothes from the airport. Just something with whatever was in the fridge. Carrots, an onion, some beans. Moro sat at my feet the whole time I was cooking and every time something fell she was on it. She does not like carrots, it turns out. She picked one up, looked at me, and put it back down on the floor very carefully. Like a review.

I didn't sleep much. Normal for me. But it was the good kind of not sleeping, the kind where you're tired and warm and there's a dog snoring in the crate across the room and the radiator is making that clanking noise. Miami was beautiful. I'd go back. But I kept thinking about the sky over the river that night and how I'd missed it.

Home's home. Even when it's cold.

— Shay

Thanks for reading. There are more of these on my site, one every couple of weeks.