

MASS KARMA

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Street lights reveal modest dwellings and aging cars, side by side, in a rundown country town.

SUPER: MASSACHUSETTS 2001

INT. LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Old stylish furniture looks out of place in this small room.

Framed photos of a happy man and woman, hang on a wall near the front door, above a side table.

GARTH (41), from the photos. Burly, average looks, unshaven, thick dark carefree hair, sits on a recliner, sipping on a whiskey.

He's worried, as he stares into the distance.

Headlights beam through the front window.

Garth's face becomes even more distressed. He takes another sip, sighs, before praying to the ceiling.

EXT. HOME - CONTINUOUS

JANEY (35), from the photos. Slight, cute, hair in a ponytail, dressed in high visual warehouse attire, carries a bag inside.

INT. LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Janey steps inside and places her bag on the side table.

She drops the car keys in a bowl, looks at Garth, frustrated.

JANEY

How did the job hunting go?

She already knows the answer, as she walks into the kitchen.

Garth climbs to his feet and stares out the window. He takes another sip.

GARTH

Janey. We need to talk.

There's a slight pause, as Janey slowly reappears in the lounge. She senses something's wrong.

JANEY
What is it, Garth?

Garth can't face her.

GARTH
I'm leaving.

There's silence, as Janey struggles to take it in.

Garth continues to stare out the window.

GARTH (CONT'D)
I fucked up. I know I fucked up.
But I can't keep going on like
this.

Janey snaps.

JANEY
What? What is it, Garth? Is it the
fact that you refuse to get a job?
Hey? It that what it is?

Garth finally turns around.

GARTH
Listen--

JANEY
--No. No I won't listen.

GARTH
Janey!

JANEY
Does it even bother you that your
wife works two jobs, so you can sit
on the couch all day, drinking?

GARTH
It's hard for me. Alright.

Janey's staggered at Garth's response. She raises her voice.

JANEY
You had a high paying job in
Boston. And you lost it because of
that slut. But I stood by you.

GARTH

Yes. I--

JANEY

--Then, in the spate of ten months, you gambled away our home in a beautiful suburb, where we'll gonna raise kids and live happily ever after. But I stood by you.

GARTH

Janey--

JANEY

--But that's not all. You go and borrow two hundred grand from a well known gangster, on a crazy interest rate, without consulting me. But I stood by you.

GARTH

You don't understand--

JANEY

--You gambled all that away. And here we are, living in fucking Shits-ville. Broke, and hiding from the mob. You selfish son of a bitch. It's all about YOU. It's always been about YOU.

Garth hangs his head in shame.

GARTH

Janey. Listen to me.

Janey struggles to hold back the tears.

GARTH (CONT'D)

This is hard for me to say, but I've met someone else.

Janey is completely shocked. She bursts into tears and falls onto the couch.

Garth throws his fingers through his hair, as he leans down to comfort her.

Janey angrily responds by throwing punches into Garth's chest.

JANEY

Get away from me. Get away.

Garth stands up. He takes a deep breath.

GARTH

Janey. I'm flying to Los Angeles tomorrow morning to start a new life. I'm sorry.

Garth leaves the lounge, walks to a bedroom and closes the door.

Janey continues to sob on the couch.

BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: LATER IN THE NIGHT

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Janey sits on the couch in a dressing gown, defeated.

Garth kneels on the carpet. There's a coffee table full of papers between them.

GARTH

..so you can have the car, my mountain bike and all the furniture.

Garth sifts through more paperwork. He picks up a document.

GARTH (CONT'D)

The insurance for the car is due next month. I promise I'll send you some money.

Janey just stares at the carpet.

JANEY

Yup.

He grabs another document.

GARTH

Our life insurance policies are due in two days.

(beat)

With the year we've had, I take it we're not renewing them?

Again, Janey just stares at the carpet.

JANEY

Yup.

GARTH

We can't afford it anyway.

(beat)

About the two hundred thousand grand loan. I'll contact them when I settle in L.A and make arrangements. I don't think they'll come after you because it's in my name. But..

JANEY

Yup.

MOMENTS LATER

Janey has the home phone to her ear.

JANEY (CONT'D)

..Pete, something's come up. I won't be in tomorrow morning.

(beat)

No. I'll tell you when I see you. Can you get Terry to cover me?

(beat)

Appreciate your help, Pete. Thank you. Bye.

BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: NEXT MORNING

INT. LOUNGE - MORNING

The sound of a car horn from outside.

Garth walks through from the kitchen and walks over to the window, where he notices a yellow cab outside.

He walks over to the coffee table and straightens a note that he's left for Janey. He walks over to the front door, opens it and carries out two suitcases. He closes the door behind him.

Janey walks out from the bedroom and looks out the window.

JANEY'S POV

Garth places his suitcases in the trunk. He turns around to the window, but doesn't wave. He opens the rear door and climbs in. The cab pulls away.

Janey's angry, as she sticks her finger up.

JANEY

Asshole.

She turns around and notices the note on the table. She picks it up and reads it.

GARTH (V.O.)

I couldn't tell you last night, but the girl I've met and fell in love with, is your best friend, Stephanie. We're sorry that it's worked out for you this way. All the best. Garth.

Janey sits down in shock. She looks at the carpet with that familiar stare.

BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: DECEMBER 16, 2001

INT. HOTEL LOBBY LOUNGE - DAY

Janey, well dressed, wearing makeup and hair styled, sits across a round glass coffee table from journalist, GABE HENRY (52), slight, bald, large black brimmed spectacles, wearing a jacket with elbow patches.

A tape recorder sits on the table.

HENRY

I've asked this question to a lot of the victim's partners.

He leans forward.

HENRY (CONT'D)

If Garth knew the plane was deliberately going to crash into the Twin Towers, do you think he may have tried to overtake the Terrorists?

Janey pauses before she answers.

JANEY

He had a solid build. I guess his self preservation would have set in.

HENRY

And why was he flying to L.A on that fateful morning?

JANEY

Leisure.

HENRY

Leisure? Without you?

JANEY

I had to work.

HENRY

I see. Fair enough.

Henry looks down at his notes.

HENRY (CONT'D)

One last question.

JANEY

Sure.

HENRY

What about you? Word is, Garth had a life insurance policy valued at two point eight million dollars.

JANEY

I don't think that's any of your business.

Henry puts his hands up in retreat.

HENRY

No. No. Please don't take that the wrong way--

JANEY

--I don't think any sort of money will bring Garth back.

HENRY

Totally agree. I was alluding to the fact that, out of all the carnage of Nine Eleven, Garth left you with a parting gift.

JANEY

If you look at it that way. Yes.

HENRY

Clearly, he loved you. What a thoughtful man!

Janey doesn't respond. She gives Henry a wry smile.

HENRY (CONT'D)
That's it. Thanks for your time.

Henry leans forward and grabs the tape recorder.

CLICK

FADE OUT