

Outline for *Instant Karma* (first 3 pages)

Below (starting on page 2), you'll find the first 3 pages for the outline for *Instant Karma* (2021), which was directed by Mitesh Kumar Patel and written by Scott Gore & Matt Midgette.

Synopsis: After a ride-share driver is kind to a homeless man, the driver is rewarded multiple times over. But to keep this wave of newfound good luck going, he needs to figure out what's causing it.

Watch the trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLfrmUW3Uwc>

Through the outline, you'll be able to see how, more or less, the first half of the film is structured. Once you watch the movie, you'll also see how the beats of the outline were translated into scenes.

In addition to writing *Instant Karma*, Scott is Vice President of the Board of the Phoenix Screenwriters Association (PSA), a non-profit that aims to help screenwriters and filmmakers break into the industry by providing them with a variety of training events and networking opportunities.

In a March 2022 interview with Scribe Meets World, Scott and Jessica Brown (a fellow screenwriter and Secretary of the Board of PSA) share how they broke into the film industry (as well as other valuable insights!).

Watch the interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKs8iAaJWWo>

Download the interview audio:

<https://download.filekitcdn.com/d/ft8YzjjV45bqBSn8RXa6dn/9yDu1dV6MeG59KdSFos4F2>

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FOR MORE SCREENWRITING RESOURCES, PLEASE VISIT:

Phoenix Screenwriters Association (you can also sign up for the PSA newsletter that features craft articles and digests of Hollywood happenings): <https://phoenixscreenwriters.org>

Scribe Meets World (you'll find a free story structure worksheet along with practical writing tips): <http://scribemeetsworld.com/story-structure-worksheet/>

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Scroll down to page 2 for the outline, and enjoy!

OUTLINE FOR INSTANT KARMA (first 3 pages)

We open with a drone shot of a person getting into a car and leaving their house and driving through side streets. Inside the car we see Jeff listening to loud music and singing along at the top of his voice. From the drone we see him pull into a nice neighborhood and someone comes out of a nice house with a suitcase and puts it in the trunk and gets in the back seat. In the car the music is turned down now and Jeff tries to make small talk, but the rider is consumed on his phone. Jeff drops him at his destination and then drives to a coffee shop and enters.

This story is about a guy named Jeff who lives in Chandler, Arizona with his girlfriend Samantha (Sam). Jeff has had a string of bad luck including losing his job and is behind on all his bills and about to be evicted and Sam is contemplating leaving him. Jeff also has a concerned, meddling mother who is concerned about his string of bad luck who visits him and they meet in her favorite coffee shop. She chides him to work harder, have faith and tells him things will get better, but he's losing hope in things ever getting better. He tells his mother he must go because he is a U-Lift driver now and he needs to get back to work.

She follows him to his car offering well wishes and encourages him to hang in there and once again, things will get better. He gets his next ride and is taking them to their destination when a homeless guy comes to his car window asking for a donation. He rolls his window up, ignores him and then his car conks out and won't restart. "So much for things getting better." He says. He needs to move his car out of traffic so he asks the homeless guy and his rider. They move the car and the homeless guy asks for money, but he says he has no cash.

His rider is pissed and Jeff knows if the rider reports this he won't be able to do U-Lift anymore so he offers \$40 cash to cover his next ride and get a good rating. The rider takes the money and walks off. The homeless guy notices him giving money away and walks up and asks for some. Jeff knows he is busted and has \$20 left in his wallet, but still is unwilling to give any money to the homeless guy.

Jeff meets Samantha at the coffee shop, tells her what happened and says he doesn't know what to do – he has no car and he's down to his last \$20, says he can't even pay for the coffee. He prepares for the worst, for her to leave, but she surprises him. She says she has some good news, says a coworker just went to visit his village of Baroda in India for 6 months and gave her the keys to his car and said use it however she wants. It's a really cool car and Jeff can use it to do U-Lift. Maybe his luck is turning.

Next day Jeff is back at work driving his fancy new car. The interior is impeccable and maybe a little over decorated for his taste, but he's not complaining. He's driving someone when he passes the homeless guy who stares at him and then laughs. The rider notices and asks about it. Jeff pulls over opens his wallet in front of the guy, shows him the \$20, says he's sorry and hands it to him. He smiles at Jeff. Thanks man, I'm used to people lying to me, but no one has ever come back and apologized. Jeff gets to the destination, drops off his rider and immediately sees that there is \$200 on the floor where she'd been sitting. Jeff grabs it and calls to her. He gets out and tries to hand her the money. You left this. I don't know what you're talking about, that's not mine and he should keep it.

That night Jeff tells Sam about finding the money and being able to keep it. She says maybe your luck has finally changed. He says it's about time and smiles and kisses her.

The next day he picks up a rider who asks him to pop the trunk. He does and they put something inside and get into the car. He takes them toward their desired location and on the way he sees the same homeless guy on another street corner. He pulls over, says hi, asks if he's hungry and gives him a granola bar and a bottle of water, and then he continues on his way. When he gets to the destination, he gets out and pops the trunk so the rider can get their stuff. They pull out a suitcase and there are 4 bags of groceries in the trunk. Jeff starts to pick them up to help, but the rider says they are not his. Jeff looks very confused. The rider walks away and Jeff calls Sam to see if she knows about the food and she has no idea what he's talking about.

Jeff drives home, bring the groceries in and Sam is there. He tells her what happened and they sit down and discuss theories about his newfound good luck. They decide it must be the homeless guy who is his lucky charm and celebrate with some wine that was in one of the grocery bags.

They also decide to experiment with this theory and (Montage) every day Jeff starts giving more stuff and money to the homeless guy and every time he gets 10x more back of whatever he gives him (money, clothing, a watch, etc.)

Jeff loves these results and Samantha loves them even more. Their house is filling up with all these nice things and everything seems to be going great. They are convinced that the homeless guy is their lucky charm and discuss giving \$\$\$ to the homeless guy.

The next day Jeff goes in search of the homeless guy, but he can't find him. He's frantic and drives all over town looking for him and thinks he finds him a few times, but it's not him. He searches for him for a few days, but still no homeless guy and no surprise gifts from any of his riders. Samantha keeps calling to see how the search is going, but Jeff is afraid to answer since he can't find their lucky charm.

One day Jeff's mom nags him to meet for coffee. He stops and gets to the door, but doesn't want to go in. She sees him and then he has no choice. His mom buys Jeff a coffee. He doesn't want to talk, but she pulls it out of him what's been happening and how now he's lost his lucky charm. She explains it's not luck, but instant karma. That he can do good deeds for anyone and the law of karma will bring blessings to him. He's not convinced, but he's willing to try.

Jeff starts helping other random people and the blessings start to flow again. All is well in his world, but Sam wants more. She threatens Jeff that she'll take the car away so Jeff gets his old car repaired and decides to start using it instead of the fancy loaner from Sam' friend. She tells him to sleep on the couch until he's willing to do more.