

MISERY LOVES COMPANY

by

James McClung

jwmcclung@hotmail.com

FADE IN:

INT. MISERY'S CAR - NIGHT

MISERY (30s) sits in the driver's seat and assembles a surveillance microphone from a box in her lap. She wears sunglasses and a black veil around her head.

She completes the device, inserts earphones into her ears and looks out across a motel parking lot.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A car pulls into a space on the other side of the lot. TODD and JOYCE (30s) emerge, both dressed in office attire.

INT. MISERY'S CAR - NIGHT

Misery perks up. She opens the driver side door. She picks up the microphone, ducks behind the door and exits the car.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Todd and Joyce disappear around the corner of the building.

Misery disappears into a darkened grove of trees behind the parking lot.

LATER

The couple reappears from around the corner.

Misery stands across the lot behind a patch of shrubs, enshrouded in shadows, and aims her microphone at them.

Todd hands Joyce a room card. His tinny voice emits from Misery's headphones.

INTERCUT between Misery and the couple.

TODD

You can head over to the room.
I'll be there in five minutes.

Todd slips his hand into his pocket. Joyce notices.

JOYCE

That's not fair. This is our time.

TODD

I have to call her.

JOYCE

You said things had settled down.

TODD

Why take a chance?

JOYCE

How long is this supposed to go on?

TODD

What do you want me to do, Joyce?
I think you should just come out
and say it.

Joyce opens her mouth to speak but hesitates.

TODD

If the shoe were on the other foot,
do you think it'd be fair of me to
ask you the same thing?

JOYCE

I can't ask you to leave your wife,
Todd. I don't have the right. But
that's not what I meant.

Todd sighs.

JOYCE

I don't see why we can't go to my
place. I know you don't want to be
conspicuous but...

TODD

You don't like the hotel.

JOYCE

I don't like the implications.

TODD

You know what we have, Joyce. If you can trust that, you don't have to worry about what the surface looks like.

JOYCE

Sometimes you don't have to look much further than the surface.

TODD

Give me five minutes. We'll talk about this in the room.

The couple parts. Todd, around the corner. Joyce, toward a nearby room.

Misery follows Joyce alongside the trees. Joyce stops and enters the room. Misery continues to her car.

INT. MISERY'S CAR - NIGHT

Misery enters. She tosses the microphone onto the passenger seat and opens the glove box. She fishes around and removes a ball peen hammer.

Misery shuts the glove box, the door and disappears O.S.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

A lone car speeds down the twisting road.

INT. MARION'S CAR - DAY

MARION (30s) drives. A TITLE SEQUENCE plays out as she navigates through the forest.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Misery's car sits in a clearing. Marion's car pulls up next to it from a dirt path.

INT. MARION'S CAR - DAY

Marion turns off the car. Her eyes flick toward Misery. Misery turns her head. Marion meets her gaze.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Marion exits her car and enters the passenger's seat of Misery's. She carries a folder in her hand.

INT. MISERY'S CAR - DAY

Misery holds the open folder in front of her. Marion smokes a cigarette.

MARION

We've been in couple's counseling for over a year now. We haven't made much progress. On the contrary, things have been falling apart for a long time. But I've worked hard to find a way out, even when it seemed useless. What he's doing isn't fair. I don't think either of us had any prospects this would end well but it wasn't supposed to end this way.

Marion turns to Misery.

MARION

I'm going to a dinner meeting on Friday night. He'll be back late. Alone. If there's one shred of decency left in him, it's that he won't bring his dirty secrets home.

Misery sifts through a series of photos inside the folder. A portrait photo of NEAL (30s) lies among several others of him in bed with an unidentified woman in a darkened room.

EXT. MARION'S HOUSE, TERRACE - NIGHT

Misery creeps onto the darkened stone, dressed in black with a hood and rubber gloves. She approaches a window with a door beside it. A darkened bathroom lies beyond.

INT. MARION'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT (FANTASY)

Misery sprays Freon on the glass and smashes it with her elbow. She reaches in, unlocks the window and climbs in.

INT. MARION'S HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT (FANTASY)

Misery emerges from a door into the darkened hallway and turns. A candlelit living room lies at the end. Neal sits in an armchair. Misery raises a silenced pistol and shoots him in the head. He tilts and falls out of the chair.

BACK TO SCENE

Misery creeps from the window to the back door.

FANTASY

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- 1) Misery sprays Freon into the lock.
- 2) Misery unlocks the door with a lock pick.
- 3) Misery breaks the lock with a knife.
- 4) Misery retracts the Freon can and smashes the lock with a hammer.

INT. MARION'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FANTASY)

Misery shoots Neal multiple times in the chest from the darkened hallway. He collapses back into the chair, dead.

BACK TO SCENE

Misery vanishes from the door.

INT. MARION'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Misery creeps around the side of the house. She peers through one of the windows. Marion sits in the chair in the living room. She nurses a glass of wine. Candles abound.

FANTASY

Neal sits in the chair. Misery places a strip of tape over the window and fires through it at Neal. He slumps dead in the chair. A single crack runs across the hole in the tape.

BACK TO SCENE

Misery glances from the window to a smaller window level with the ground. She crouches down and peers through it.

Headlights flicker from around the corner. Misery looks up. She sees a second window to the living room. It's open.

INT. MARION'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A door opens O.S. Marion looks up. Neal enters.

MARION

What are you doing here so early?

NEAL

I came to talk to you, believe it or not.

MARION

(unenthused)

I'm all ears.

EXT. MARION'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Misery crouches underneath the open window.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Neal takes a seat across from Marion. He opens his mouth to speak but hesitates. Marion raises an eyebrow. Neal takes a deep breath.

NEAL

I have a confession to make, Marion. Maybe you already suspected something. But I have to come out with it, whatever the risks.

Neal sighs.

NEAL

I've been having an affair.

EXT. MARION'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Misery furrows her brow.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Misery traverses the parking lot toward the couple's room. She conceals the hammer with her inner forearm.

A cell phone buzzes O.S. Misery stiffens and stops several feet from the door. She retrieves a phone from her pocket. The caller is TODD.

Misery utters a quiet groan. She shoves the phone back in her pocket, walks up to the door and raps upon it.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Joyce lies on a single bed. She hears Misery knock and turns toward the door.

INT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Misery prepares to knock again. She stops as her cell phone goes silent. She stiffens and looks to the corner then to her car.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Joyce slips off the bed.

INT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Misery's cell phone buzzes again. She sighs in relief and returns her attention to the door.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Joyce opens the door. Misery's hammer collides with her skull. She collapses against the wall.

Misery shuts the door.

Joyce regains herself and brings a hand to her head. Blood streams down her face and forearm. She whimpers.

Misery follows Joyce as she stumbles in a daze toward the back of the room. Misery steps up and smashes Joyce's eye socket. Blood sprays the wall.

Joyce drops to her knees. Misery strikes her chin. A sickening crack rings out. Joyce slumps behind the bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Neal looks at Marion as he speaks. Her gaze is elsewhere.

NEAL

It's been a long and painful road we've been on. I had to get away somehow. But it never made happy. In fact, the longer it went on, the more miserable I became. I never thought I was capable of doing something like this. But you surprise yourself in the worst ways when you're down. I never knew how deep down could be either and I've no intention to find out how much deeper it can go. So I ended it and now here we are.

MARION

I don't know what you want me to say.

NEAL

You can say whatever you want. I don't expect you to forgive me. I don't even expect you to sympathize. I just wanted to put everything on the table so that something could change.

MARION

You've completely blindsided me. Damn right I suspected something. But I never expected you'd come out with it.

NEAL

How does that make you feel?

MARION

I don't know. I need time to think.

EXT. MARION'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Misery vanishes from under the window.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Misery and Marion's cars sit side by side.

INT. MISERY'S CAR - DAY

Marion sits beside Misery. She reaches down and hands Misery a suitcase.

MARION

I brought the money. I think it's
only right I still give it to you.
It's all there. You can count it if
you want.

Misery opens the suitcase and looks inside.

MARION

I'm sorry if I've wasted your time.

Misery shuts the suitcase. Marion flinches. Misery pauses for a moment then nods for Marion to leave.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Marion's car starts, pulls out of the clearing and drives off into the distance.

INT. MARION'S CAR - DAY

Marion gasps in relief. It takes her a moment to regain her breath.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Todd paces back and forth along the side of the motel with his phone held to his ear. He groans, hangs up and drops it in his pocket.

He slumps against the wall and sighs. With that, his phone buzzes. He retrieves it and brings it to his ear.

TODD

Sorry to blow up your phone. I ju-

MISERY (V.O.)

I'm here with Joyce.

Todd stammers.

MISERY (V.O.)

I think you should join us.

Todd opens his mouth to speak. The call ends.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Todd enters. His eyes fall on a blood-splattered wall. A discarded high heel. Joyce's bare foot protrudes from behind the bed.

Misery appears behind Todd. He whirls around. She pulls away her veil to reveal her face smeared with blood. Her white knuckles clutch a dripping hammer.

The two stare at each other for a moment.

Misery steps forward. Todd throws up his hand. Misery strikes his wrist. He drops it and stumbles back, wounded.

Misery strikes him in the side. He falls to the floor.

Misery takes a seat on the bed. She watches Todd writhe in torment on the floor.

MISERY

I gave you an out. To come clean.
Why didn't you take it?

TODD

I don't know.

MISERY

I think it's because even though
you slipped up, you still thought
you had a chance to get away with
it. Or worse. You thought you could
end it and act like nothing ever
happened if I thought to ask again.

Misery glances at Joyce then back at Todd.

MISERY

Why were you unfaithful to me?

TODD

Why does anyone do these things.

MISERY

Your life is in my hands and you
answer my question with a question?

Todd sighs in defeat.

TODD

I don't know. I don't think any
reason would be good enough for
you. But I never wanted to hurt
you. I don't think I deserve to die
for this.

Misery climbs off the bed and kneels beside Todd. She takes
his cheek in her hand.

TODD

Please.

Misery lifts up the hammer and brings it down on Todd's
chest. His body locks up in pain.

Misery strikes him again. Blood spurts from his mouth. He
wheezes, his eyes filled with agony.

Misery sits back on the bed. Todd stares at her. He
struggles to draw each breath into his crushed lungs.

Misery watches him suffocate.

INT. MARION'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Marion stands before a mirror in dinner party dress and
touches up her makeup.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Neal sits in a chair and smokes a cigar.

Leaves rustle outside. Neal glances at the window. The
noise stops. He returns his attention to the cigar.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Misery slips through a window into the darkened room,
dressed in black with safety goggles. She reaches out of
window and grabs a suitcase with a gloved hand.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marion enters in full regalia. Neal puts out his cigar.

MARION

How do I look?

Neal smiles.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Misery removes her black clothes to reveal a white hazmat suit underneath. She collects her clothes and stuffs them out the window.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marion places a hand on Neal's shoulder.

MARION

We'll talk when I get back. I
promise.

NEAL

Good luck tonight.

Marion turns and proceeds to a far doorway.

Neal turns. Misery emerges from the darkened hallway and shoots him in the head with a silenced pistol. He falls out of the chair.

Marion turns at the sound of his fallen body and screams. Misery shoots her in the thigh. She falls to the ground and cries out in pain.

Misery steps forward with her eyes fixed on Marion. She stops beside Neal's body and fires two more shots into his head without breaking eye contact. Blood paints the leg of her suit. Marion's tears intensify.

Misery walks over to Marion and crouches in front of her.

MISERY

You know why they cheat?

Marion shakes her head.

MISERY

Because weak women like you let them.

MARION

You don't know I was going to forgive him.

MISERY

You spared him his life. I think you forgave him enough.

Misery leans in.

MISERY

Do you really think he wouldn't hurt you again?

MARION

It doesn't matter now.

Misery trembles with frustration.

MISERY

I need you to tell me.

Misery looks into Marion's eyes and pleads with her own.

MARION

I don't know. But it was my chance to take.

Misery raises her pistol and shoots Marion in the heart. Marion's mouth falls open in surprise. She stares at Misery for a moment then lets her head fall. She dies with grace.

Misery sighs.

After a moment, she stands and proceeds over to Neal's corpse. She sets down her suitcase and opens it. Its interior is lined with plastic. Misery removes a separate plastic sheet and lays it down beside Neal.

Misery removes two plastic containers from the suitcase and lays them on the sheet.

She removes a hand drill and turns toward Neal. She inserts it into one of the entry wounds in his head and turns the crank. Blood and cerebral grume travels up the spiral bit.

LATER

Misery deposits a handful of grume into one of the containers.

She reaches into the excavated wound and digs around inside Neal's skull. After a moment, she removes a bullet and drops it into the other container.

SERIES OF SHOTS as more bullets are added to the container.

LATER

Misery sits beside Marion's body. Her bullet wounds have all been cleaned out. Misery's tools lie on the plastic sheet beside her body.

Misery drops a final bullet into its container and proceeds to pack up. First the containers, then the drill, then the plastic sheet.

She swaps her bloody gloves for clean ones then shuts the suitcase and exits through the hallway. She passes Neal's body, all three bullets removed from his head.

EXT. TERRACE - NIGHT

Misery emerges from the house in a blood-soaked suit. She carries her suitcase and a garbage bag. She proceeds onto the grass and removes her suit. She stuffs it into the garbage bag and stuffs the bag into her suitcase.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

M.O.S.

Misery drives through a darkened forest, dressed in black again. Tears well up in her eyes and stream down her expressionless face. Little by little, her face contorts in grief until it shows full on.

INT. FOREST - NIGHT

Misery stands before a fire. She removes the hazmat suit from the garbage bag and tosses it in the flames. She watches it burn.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Misery lies on the floor with her arms around Todd's corpse. Her damp red eyes stare out into nothingness.

FADE OUT.