

STAMP MACHINE

By

GOOGLE BOY IN COOMPANY THREE

(c) 2023

FADE UP

EXT PLAYGROUND-SCHOOL-DAY

Elementary age children playing volleyball, tag, tetherball, dodge ball, kickball etc.

A school bell RINGS (oc). Children begin heading to class.

SYLVIA 30, her age showing in the stress lines drawn across her tired face stands next to the school yard fence. She is writing frantically in a small notebook.

DISSOLVE:

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

A very busy post office with customers buying stamps, money orders, mailing letters, retrieving parcels and packages.

Momentarily CHARLES, 40, a rather shabbily dressed man enters the lobby of the post office. He carries two very noisy bird cages, one with pigeons and one filled with starlings.

Charles places the bird cages on the floor of the lobby, opens the doors to both cages and lets the birds out.

EXT. BEHIND THE COUNTERS - SAME

The birds are flying throughout the post office, interfering with both tellers and customers. The birds are leaving droppings everywhere.

Patrons and postal employees screaming and yelling.

INT. LOBBY - SAME

Charles pulls out a small cloth bag, empties a pile of seeds onto the floor and watches as the birds gather in a feeding frenzy.

A postal employee JANET, 23, approaches Charles angrily.

JANET

(pissed)

I thought we had an understanding
the last time you did this?

CHARLES

I know. But I couldn't help
myself.

JANET

Bullshit you couldn't. Now get these goddamn birds outta here.

CHARLES

(pleading)

But they haven't finished feeding yet.

JANET

Just because your shrink says you have an itch, you don't have to scratch it here. Now get these goddamn birds outta here.

CHARLES

But they haven't finished feeding.

JANET

I'm gonna count to ten -- You don't have them back in those cages, I'm calling SCPA on you.

CHARLES

(a long beat)

Does Sylvia still work here?

JANET

Sylvia. Your Sylvia? No. She hasn't worked here in over a year. I can see why she bailed on you. And it wasn't Alfred Hitchcock.

CHARLES

No. It was something much worse.

DISSOLVE:

INT. CHARLES - HOUSE - TWO WEEKS LATER - SAME

A small two bedroom house in a lower income neighborhood. Charles is feeding the birds in the two cages.

A doorbell RINGS oc. Charles opens the door to...

Two federal authorities; MASON, 35, CREW CUT hair, trendy clothes; and BILLY, 30, long hair, trendy clothes. Both men flash badges that read: DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME.

BILLY

You Charles West?

CHARLES

Yes.

MASON

We're from Fish and Game. Got your name from a Janet Self. Works at the Post Office...?

CHARLES

Yes, I know her.

BILLY

There was an incident last week at the post office, about some birds...?

CHARLES

What about them?

MASON

We'd like to talk with you about what happened. Get your side of the story. Can we come in?

INT. CHARLES - HOUSE - CONTINUING

Mason and Billy enter Charles house. Charles continues feeding the birds in the two cages.

BILLY

You say you're from Fish and Game?

MASON

That's right. We have to investigate all incidents that take place on federal property.

CHARLES

Fish and Game, huh? Let me show you something.

Charles goes to an antique desk, pulls out a large folder and hands it Mason.

CHARLES (CONT)

I have been writing to you guys for over three years. But you never got back to me.

Mason and Billy are reviewing the file folder of letters.

MASON

Who's Sylvia Jones?

CHARLES

My ex-girlfriend. She worked at the post office. That's how we met.

BILLY

You worked there too?

CHARLES

No indeed. I have a PO box where they put my mail.

MASON

The Janet girl told us that you and this Sylvia woman were pretty hot and heavy until she broke it off and moved away.

CHARLES

Its all right there in the letters.

BILLY

Yes, I can see that. But according to these letters you were requesting that we bring her up on a charge of murder.

CHARLES

Yes. She was planning to kill all the children at the school.

MASON

At what school?

CHARLES

At the school adjacent to the post office.

BILLY

Any idea why she would want to kill the children in that particular school?

CHARLES

She was butchered by a back alley abortionist and could never have children again. She was very bitter toward children.

MASON

But why did you tell us about it?
That would be something for the
local police to handle?

CHARLES

Because she liked birds same as me.
I figured you guys would be the
ones to contact.

BILLY

(sarcastic)

Well I don't think there's ever
been been a case of murder for
killing a bird. Maybe for bringing
exotic birds into the country.

MASON

You need to bring this to the
attention of local detectives.

CHARLES

Well its too late for that now.
I've handled it myself.

MASON

Oh?

CHARLES

I tracked her down. Convinced her
to come back. Told her I had a new
aviary she would like.

BILLY

And did she come back?

CHARLES

See for your self. Follow me.

EXT. CHARLES HOUSE - BACKYARD - SAME

Charles' backyard had been his private aviary.

Thousands upon thousands of dead birds litter the floor.

In one corner the corpse of Sylvia is covered by dead birds.

CHARLES

I had to make sure she didn't act
on her hostile intent to kill the
children.

MASON
You did that for sure.

BILLY
But how did you kill this many
birds? There must be thousands?

CHARLES
It hurt to lose their friendship.
But I had to make a choice. The
birds or dead children...
(mournful)
I'll have to start over.

BILLY
Yeah, but how did you kill all the
birds?

CHARLES
I put out a call.

MASON
(whispers to Billy)
Put out a call...

BILLY
(whispers)
Psycho. I'm outta here.

MASON
(sarcastic)
Contact the local cops in this area
about the girl. I don't know who to
tell you to call about the birds,
Charles. Ghostbusters maybe.

Billy and Mason leave the aviary. A dejected Charles stays
behind in the aviary mourning the loss his feathered family.

THE END