

The Forgotten Christmas Tape

by

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FADE IN:

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

MARKUS ANDERSON (7), lies in his bed, asleep. His eyelids flicker open slowly.

He jolts awake, bounces up from the bed as fast as he can, runs out to the...

HALLWAY

He slows down to walking pace, looks into the door up ahead. Christmas decorations. Fancy lights.

He smiles, quickens his pace again as he enters the...

SITTING ROOM

Many wrapped-up presents sit under the beautifully decorated Christmas tree, which provides the only source of light to the room. Excited, Markus runs towards the tree.

He grabs a present, rips off the wrapping paper. It's an expensive action figure. He smiles, reaches for the next present.

His eyes catch something at the other side of the room. Someone sits on the sofa.

He walks slowly towards the sofa, the action figure still in hand. As he gets closer, it's obvious the figure is not moving.

MARKUS

Daddy?

He drops the action figure to the floor, stares on open-mouthed at the sofa.

ON THE SOFA, is the body of EDWARD ANDERSON (32). His now yellow skin looks even scarier with every flash of the nearby Christmas lights.

Markus SCREAMS, backs off. He trips over something, falls onto his back.

ON THE FLOOR, is the body of SHARON ANDERSON (30). Her eyelids and mouth still wide open in terror.

Markus SCREAMS, breaks down into floods of tears.

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - LATER

The rest of the presents under the tree remain untouched.

TWO BODY BAGS are wheeled away as COPS and FORENSIC EXPERTS crowd the scene. Crime scene tape corners off the area around the sofa.

DETECTIVE NOLAN (44) and DETECTIVE WRIGHT (35) look at the chalk outlines of where the bodies once were.

NOLAN

What you thinking, detective?

WRIGHT

It's Christmas day. That's what I'm thinking. I have a family I need to be with.

NOLAN

We all have families. Spare a thought for him. He's gonna be the loneliest boy in the world this Christmas.

They both look at Markus, who sits in the corner, clutches the action figure as tightly as he can.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

SUPER: 23rd DECEMBER. TWO DAYS AGO...

Markus looks excited. He stands with his parents at the front of a huge queue which leads into SANTA'S GROTTTO.

EDWARD

Are you excited yet, huh?

Markus nods 'yes', jumps up and down on the spot.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

That's what I like to hear!

Sharon leans down, fixes Markus' hair.

SHARON

Remember and tell Santa all of the good presents you want so he doesn't forget any.

MARKUS

I will, Mommy.

The dressed-up ELF approaches, takes down the velvet rope.

ELF

Next, please.

Edward pats Markus on the back.

EDWARD  
Go get em', Markus.

Markus smiles, holds the Elf's hands as he leads him into...

SANTA'S GROTTO

A typical MALL SANTA, looks fake to everyone unless you're seven years or under. The Elf leads Markus up to him, helps sit him on Mall Santa's lap.

The smile is no longer on Markus' face. No longer excited, he just stares through Mall Santa.

MALL SANTA  
Ho ho ho! What's your name, son?

No answer from Markus. He looks into Mall Santa's eyes.

MALL SANTA (CONT'D)  
Santa can't bring you any presents if he doesn't know your name.

More silence from Markus. Mall Santa is unsure what to do.

MALL SANTA (CONT'D)  
Okay then...have you been a good boy or a bad--

MARKUS  
You've been a bad man.

Mall Santa look at him, stunned. He tries to remain in character.

MALL SANTA  
Ho ho! Good one. Santa likes a boy who tells jokes.

The Elf approaches with a Polaroid camera.

ELF  
Say cheese!

The camera FLASHES as Markus continues to stare through him with his cold look.

MARKUS  
You hurt her.

Mall Santa slips from character.

MALL SANTA

Look, kid--

MARKUS

You hurt my Mommy!

Mall Santa shouts to the Elf.

MALL SANTA

Hey, get this kid outta my sight.

Mall Santa pushes Markus off his lap.

The Elf hands Markus the picture but he continues to stare up at Mall Santa, tears form in his eyes.

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - PRESENT

Detective Wright scans the bedroom. He seems content, turns to leave but stops when his eyes catch something on a table top.

It's a picture. He holds it up. There's a circular hole cut out in the middle.

WRIGHT

Nolan. You've gotta see this.

Detective Nolan appears in the doorway. He takes the photo from Detective Wright, looks at it.

ON THE PICTURE, Markus sits next to someone in a Santa outfit with their head cut out.

NOLAN

What the--

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - DAY

SUPER: 22nd DECEMBER, THREE DAYS AGO...

SHARON

(shouts)

Fuck!

Sharon stands on the sofa, her eyes scan the floor frantically.

Edward and Markus enter, both worried.

EDWARD

What's wrong, honey?

Sharon's eyes nearly bulge out of her head.

SHARON

A mouse! There's a mouse in here!

Edward looks around. There's nothing there. He laughs.

SHARON (CONT'D)

It was over there! I saw it!

Sharon points to the corner of the room. Edward turns to Markus.

EDWARD

Go grab a DVD, go to your room  
until I say it's safe, okay?

Markus nods 'okay', runs to the DVD rack, pulls out a "SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS" DVD. He opens the case, the disk isn't there. He searches the rack with no luck.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Markus, hurry up.  
(mockingly)  
Your mother's scared.

Markus grabs a single disk without a case and runs from the sitting room as fast as he can.

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Sharon can be heard SCREAMING in the background.

Markus looks at the disk. It's unmarked. He slips it into the DVD player, looks at the screen.

ON THE TV, Sharon appears, dressed in a very revealing Sexy Santa outfit. She laughs directly into the camera. It's grainy footage but Markus recognizes her.

MARKUS

Mommy?

ON THE TV, Sharon turns at the sound of a familiar voice.

SANTA CLAUS (V.O.)

Ho ho ho! Merry Christmas!

A very convincingly dressed-up Santa Claus enters the picture, carries a large sack over his shoulder.

MARKUS

Santa?

Markus' face lights up at the sight of Santa and his mother on the same screen.

ON THE TV, Santa forcefully throws Sharon down on the bed.

SANTA CLAUS (V.O.)  
I've heard you've been a very naughty girl this year. Do you know what Santa does to naughty girls?

Sharon licks her finger seductively.

SHARON (V.O.)  
What do you do to naughty girls?

Santa reaches into his sack, pulls out a frilly whip. Sharon flashes a cheeky grin. Santa pulls her dress up, reveals her bare bum, lashes the whip.

Sharon lets out a YELP as the whip makes contact. He lashes her again. She lets out another scream followed by a smirk.

ON MARKUS, as he looks on open mouthed at the sound of more lashes of the whip.

SANTA CLAUS (V.O.)  
I've got another present for you, dear.

SHARON (V.O.)  
Oh, good! Is it in your sack, Santa?

SANTA CLAUS (V.O.)  
No...it's in my pants.

Markus closes his eyes, holds his hands over his ears as the badly acted porno continues with Sharon screaming in the background.

Markus opens one of his eyes, looks at the TV. He runs, hits 'STOP' on the DVD player, sits with his back against the wall, his mind trying to process what exactly he just saw.

Sharon SCREAMS from the other room. Markus covers his ears again, traumatized.

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - PRESENT

The detectives scan Markus' room for more evidence.

Detective Wright picks up the DVD case of "SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS" from the desk, looks at it.

WRIGHT  
My kid loves this show.

Detective Nolan looks at him like he's from another planet. Detective Wright hits 'PLAY' on the DVD player.

A SCREAM from the TV! Detective Wright drops the DVD case, stares on in shock. Detective Nolan turns, watches on.

NOLAN  
What the fuck?

ON THE TV, Sharon is bent over the desk, Santa, trousers down, thrusting away behind her. She SCREAMS again.

NOLAN (CONT'D)  
What's this, some low budget porn  
crap? Turn it off already, will  
ya?

SANTA CLAUS (V.O.)  
(out of character)  
Shoot, my beard.

WRIGHT  
You know what? I've seen this  
Santa before.

NOLAN  
Let me guess, you've seen the  
sequel? Was the reindeer  
involved?

WRIGHT  
He's in the next room.

Nolan turns, walks towards the TV for a closer look.

ON THE TV, Santa picks up his fallen stick-on beard. He turns towards the camera. It's Edward.

NOLAN  
I'll be damned.

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: CHRISTMAS EVE, TWELVE HOURS AGO...

Edward jumps about like an excited kid.

EDWARD  
I got it! Honey! I told you it  
would work.

Sharon runs into the room. Edward holds up a dead mouse by the tail.

EDWARD (CONT'D)  
We will be spending Christmas  
alone. Just the three of us.

Edward smiles proudly but Sharon looks frightened.



Markus enters the room, looks up at the dead mouse in Edward's hands in wonder and amazement.

SHARON

Don't just stand there with it,  
get rid of it!

Edward grins, shakes the dead mouse about by the tail, runs towards Sharon. She SCREAMS, runs out of the room.

Edward turns back, looks at Markus.

EDWARD

Go and get some cookies and a  
glass of milk for Santa. You want  
your presents, don't you?

Markus nods 'yes'. Edward runs with the mouse out of the room in pursuit of Sharon.

Markus stands alone, looks towards something on the table.

ON THE TABLE, a small bottle. The label reads: "STRONG RODENT POISON - KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN". Markus picks up the bottle, walks towards the kitchen.

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - PRESENT

ON THE BOTTLE OF RODENT POISON.

Nolan picks it up, looks inside. It's empty.

Nolan and Wright exchange glances. They both look out of the door to the next room.

Markus still sits in the corner, clutching the action figure as tight as he can.

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: CHRISTMAS EVE, EIGHT HOURS AGO...

Edward sits on the sofa. Sharon enters the room, sits next to him.

EDWARD

Asleep yet?

SHARON

Like a baby.

EDWARD

Then it's time for celebration.  
Another Christmas...

SHARON  
Another five hundred bucks spent  
on useless toys.

EDWARD  
Cheers to that.

Sharon laughs.

EDWARD (CONT'D)  
Milk or cookies?

Sharon grabs the plate of cookies from the table.

SHARON  
You know you don't get to choose.

Edward laughs, picks up the glass of milk.

EDWARD  
But I killed the mouse.

SHARON  
Good for you. Merry Christmas.

Sharon smiles. Edward returns the favor.

EDWARD  
Merry Christmas.

FADE OUT: