

"THE PACKAGE"

by
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Cast of Characters:

Terry.....Manager of "Mail Etcetera" (peppy personality)

Jon.....Businessman in his forties. (dark and somewhat gloomy)

Tina.....Employee of "Mail Etcetera"

INT. PACKAGING STORE - AFTERNOON

A man (Terry) in his thirties is behind the counter watching Spongebob on a laptop. Above the counter, a banner reads: "Mail Etcetera Grand Opening" (big letters) America's fastest growing franchise" (small letters).

Terry laughs.

A woman come in from the back room(Tina).

TINA

I'm going on break. You want anything?

He laughs at the show.

TERRY

This is my favorite episode! I just love slide whistles...

Tina rolls her eyes and exits.

Terry laughs again at the show.

A man (Jon) wearing business clothes walks in. He is breathing heavily, his hair is a mess. He looks paranoid.

Terry frantically turns off the DVD, causing papers to go flying and he slips and falls.

His face quickly appears above the counter.

TERRY

May I help you?

JON

Yeah. (beat) I need to get something out of the country.

TERRY

Of course! (Pointing to the banner above his head) See the sign? MAIL Etcetera! That's what we do! We mail things! And - Etcetera!

JON

(Very unenthusiastically) Wonderful. Can you get it off today?

TERRY

(Looking at watch and hesitating) Of course! Of course! No problem!

JON

You sure? It's almost five...

TERRY

Five o'clock? (Chuckles) Our day is just beginning! You see, sir, WE at Mail Etcetera are on the move 24 hours a day, 365 days a year! We deliver any time, any where! Satisfaction guarantee!

JON

(To self) Any time, anywhere...

TERRY

Satisfaction guaranteed!

Terry has a frozen grin on his face.

The men stare at each other for a beat.

JON

I'll be right back.

Jon exits and Terry watches him go. He shrugs, thinking Jon isn't returning.

He starts to watch Spongebob again when Jon walks in with what is obviously a dead body wrapped in a yellow sheet.

TERRY

Oh my god!

Terry looks panicked.

Jon drops the package down on the floor, face up.

Terry rushes out from behind the counter.

TERRY

(Louder) Oh my god!

Terry looks over the package and seems frantic.

Jon is calmly glaring at terry.

TERRY

Oh! This is bad! This is very bad!

JON

(Annoyed) What?

TERRY

I can't do this! There's just no way!

JON

(Angry)Why not?

TERRY

Just look at it! It's a mess! (Pointing at various points on the package) The wrapping material is COMPLETELY wrong!

JON

I don't see anything wrong with it.

TERRY

Sir, I'm a professional. I can tell by just looking at it that it's not water resistant! Look! It's practically falling off as we speak! (Shaking the head in the sheet) There's no proper stabilization, no handles - and these!(Bending down and grabbing on large breasts) They're all over the place! It might get caught in one of the conveyor belts! This is just unacceptable!

JON

Yeah. Tell me about it.

TERRY

I don't even see an adequate place to stick the label!

JON

(Pointing to an area near bloodstain)What about there?

TERRY

(bends down and feels the stained area with two fingers) What is that, blood?

JON

(Moving eyes suspiciously)I think it might be.

TERRY

Oh no! No! The anticoagulants in blood make it impossible for any adhesive to stabilize. The label will come right off god-knows-where and we'll have to do the whole thing over again. (Getting up) No! I can't send this off without implementing a few creative packaging techniques. Absolutely not!

JON

Creative packaging? What's that?

TERRY

Creative packaging is a science devoted to discovering the most space-efficient, aerodynamic, cost-effective, environmentally-friendly, attractive and practical modes of subroutines with related functionality.

JON

Jesus! How long is this going to take?

TERRY

Not to worry! I'm a trained professional! I'll have it done in no time!

JON

Fine. Just go ahead and do what you have to do. I just need to get out of here.

Terry goes to the back and grabs a roll of tape, scissors and a box of materials.

Jon is fumbling in his pocket, takes out a passport.

TERRY

Going on a trip?

JON

You could say that.

Terry puts his equipment down and grabs for the body.

TERRY

I'll just get the sheet off and -

JON

NO!

Terry stops.

TERRY

But...

JON

No! You can't take the sheet off! It's - it's very sensitive to sunlight, you see. You can't just - (Suddenly very stern) Look, you're just going to have to do what you do without unrolling it, you got it? Just leave it the way it is!

TERRY

In the sheet?

JON

Yes. In the sheet.

TERRY

Fine.

Good.

JON

Terry stares at the package for a beat.

In the sheet.

TERRY

In the sheet.

JON

Got it.

TERRY

Good.

JON

Terry contemplates.

TERRY

Well, I'll just put a layer of wrap over the whole thing and tape it up a bit, just to stabilize it.

That's fine.

JON

Terry tries to shove the body covered sheet in a large plastic bag. It doesn't quite fit and so he spends time bending and fumbling with it. He finally gets it in and then begins taping.

In the process of taping, he drops the head on the ground and it makes a cracking sound.

TERRY

Oopsy. (to Jon) It'll cost extra, but I think you'll want some bubble wrap.

Bubble wrap?

JON

TERRY

Yes. Some of it seems to be a bit - fragile.

Jon looks at the item, sullen.

JON

Fragile? Yeah. You could say that.

Terry gets the bubble wrap and tapes.

JON

(Mumbling to self) Fragile. You better believe it. She was so fucking fragile I felt like I was walking on eggshells my whole fucking life!

Jon turns away from the body and lights a cigarette while Terry fumbles with the body and bubble wrap.

Jon looks into the audience and begins a soliloquy, of sorts.

JON

Do you know what it's like, not to be able to say a word or do anything without having someone tell you how stupid and horrible you are?

As Terry fumbles with the wrap, the body suddenly begins choking Terry and they wrestle.

Throughout the rest of Jon's speech, Terry struggles with the body and bubble wrap.

JON

I could come home and say that I just made a million dollars on some real estate deal and you know what I'd get? (Puts up his hands like a puppet and talking in a whiny voice) Nya! Nya! Nya! Why did you do this? Why did you do that? You're so fucking stupid! (beat) Yeah! I'm stupid! I'm stupid for putting up with that shit for almost twenty years!

Terry is on top the body but it is choking him.

Terry grabs a large bag of Styrofoam peanuts and pushes in on the head of the body, suffocating it.

The body eventually goes limp, again.

Terry pops up, hair and clothes now disheveled.

TERRY

Peanuts?

JON

What?

TERRY

Styrofoam peanuts. To prevent it from moving in the box.

JON

Look, forget the box. Just slap a label on it and throw it in the truck, OK?

TERRY

Are you sure? I can't guarantee that it won't get damaged in transit.

JON

I don't think it's possible to damage it any more than it already is.

TERRY

Well all right.

Terry goes behind the counter and grabs sheets of paper and a pencil.

TERRY

Where's it going? Have you got the address?

JON

You said you deliver anywhere?

TERRY

Anytime. Anywhere.

JON

I don't know the address...

TERRY

You said it's international, right? Wait! I'll get the book.

Terry grabs a large book and begins flipping.

TERRY

O.K. What is the name of the location?

JON

Nevado Del Ruiz.

TERRY

Hmmm. Is that a resort?

JON

(Shaking head) A volcano.

Terry stops flipping and looks up.

TERRY

(Outraged) Oh my god! We can't do that!

JON

Why not?

TERRY

Not without having you sign a damage waiver form, first! God knows what the heat will do to the wrapping! It's not made of kryptonite, you know!

Terry takes out a form and hands it to Jon, who initials it.

JON

That's fine. Is that it?

Terry continues looking in the book.

TERRY

I can't seem to find it here. But not to worry! I'll Google it! Let me ring you up.

Terry faces the computer screen to get total price.

TERRY

Would you like it certified?

JON

No.

TERRY

Any insurance?

JON

No thank you.

TERRY

How about a greeting sticker? (Terry grins) They're very popular, especially with the ladies!

JON

I'll pass.

TERRY

All right...

TERRY

Oh! Because it's going out of the country, we'll just need your initials here and here, which basically says that the parcel doesn't contain anything, you know, illegal.

JON

(Suspicious) What do you mean, illegal?

TERRY

You know, invasive plants, poisonous snakes, piranhas, the usual.

JON

Oh.

Jon initials and hands it back to Terry, who begins punching on a computer to get the total.

TERRY

Let's see...you have the extra large international parcel rate, wrapping fee, no extras... (beat) That'll be seven hundred twenty two dollars and sixty five cents.

JON

What? That's outrageous!

TERRY

It's the live volcano fee. Tacks on an extra four hundred dollars in helicopter insurance.

He takes out his wallet and counts his money.

JON

I don't have enough cash.

TERRY

We take Visa and Mastercard!

JON

American Express?

Terry makes a mocking face.

JON

How about a check?

TERRY

(Shaking head) We've had too many problems with personal checks. Sorry.

JON

(Angry) I can't believe this! Can't you make an exception? After all this?

TERRY

Sorry. Company policy. Too many bad people out there trying to do bad things. (Looking around as if he is about to say something confidential) The other day, a woman tried to pay me with - (whispering) Canadian money.

JON

(Interrupting, very angry) Well this is outrageous! Why the fuck didn't you tell me this in the first place!

TERRY

There's a sign right here on the register.

JON

(Angry) You-

Jon suddenly contains himself.

JON

Fine! You know what? (Looking at package) You keep it, then!

TERRY

Wait! You can't -

Jon grabs a box labeled "fragile" from the counter and throws it next to the package (body). It makes a shattering noise.

Jon walks to the exit.

TERRY

Why did you do that? Wha- (panicked) For god's sake, Man! It wasn't insured!

Jon exits.

Terry is outraged, and runs out from behind the counter and looks out the door.

JON

Oh my god! What a nutcase!

Tina enters.

TINA

I'm back!

TERRY

Call the police!

What? Why?
TINA

That guy! He's crazy!
TERRY

What happened?
TINA

He threw down one of our parcels and broke the damned thing!
I can't be responsible for that!
TERRY

Oh my god! I'll call 911 right now!
TINA

Tina goes behind the counter and calls.

Terry is standing there, fretting over the fallen box, which is right next to the package (body).

(Shaking his head) What is WRONG with people nowadays?
TERRY

He picks up the box and shakes it and we hear a shattering sound.

Isn't there any human decency left in the world?
TERRY

THE END.

