



IT'S JUST A BOX

By

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FADE IN:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

A large changing room. Rows of lockers. Benches in front of them. The sound of showers. Toilets flushing.

TAMMY, 30, strides in. Exhausted. Her hair in a ponytail. Purple scrubs with teddy bears and cute storks with babies. She opens one of the lockers.

A cell phone plays SpongeBob laughing.

She pulls her phone out of her pocket, answers without looking at the screen.

TAMMY
What's up, Mark?

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

MARK, 28, a mop of curly hair, edgy urban clothes, paces back and forth with a phone to his ear on the quiet street in front of a house with an estate sale sign by the curb.

MARK
Hey Tammy. You working today?

INTERCUT

Tammy undresses, keeps the phone tucked under her chin.

TAMMY
Yeah, just finished another 48 hour shift. What's up?

Mark watches a few people stroll up the driveway to the house with the sale.

MARK
Listen, Jimmy and I stumbled on this estate sale on our way to the beach.

Tammy sighs along with a half annoyed eye roll.

MARK
You're rolling your eyes, aren't you?

Tammy straightens up, pretends to listen carefully.

TAMMY

Go on.

MARK

So, this sale was lit; they had some killer stuff.

TAMMY

And...

MARK

Well, we bought some stuff. Oh my God, we got some amazing deals. Deals to die for, seriously! The most expensive thing we bought was just 25 bucks!

Tammy's bored and annoyed.

TAMMY

And...

MARK

Well, since we're heading to the beach, your place is on our way, so we were thinking we could store this stuff at your house until we drive back home on Sunday.

Tammy's relieved.

TAMMY

Sure. No problem. You know where the key is.

Mark's turn to be relieved.

MARK

You're the best, Tam!

TAMMY

Yeah, yeah. I gotta go. Enjoy the beach.

MARK

Love you, sis!

He makes kissing sounds into the phone.

Tammy smiles, ends the call, then continues to strip down.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A cute house in an older neighborhood with full grown trees, cracked driveways.

A car rolls up the drive, parks in front of the garage. Tammy gets out, grabs her purse and a couple of grocery bags, then heads to the front door.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dark inside with just a few shadows cast by the streetlight outside.

The front door opens. Tammy steps in, shuts the door, then locks it. She flips the lights on, turns around, and --

-- GASPS.

On the floor in the middle of her cozy living room is a casket. A black wood casket.

Tammy's shock shifts to anger. She drops her bags on the floor, pulls her phone out of her pocket, hits a button.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Mark sits at a table in a trendy beach side bar. JIMMY, 28, distressed jeans, statement T-shirt, sits across from him. Beer bottles and nachos in front of them.

A cheerful voice is heard.

TAMMY'S RING TONE
Hey, it's the stork calling.

Followed by a baby's crying.

Mark picks up his phone, answers it.

MARK
Hi Tam.

INTERCUT

Tammy stands staring at the coffin.

TAMMY
What the fuck is this? Are you kidding me? A goddamn casket? In my living room?

Mark holds the phone a foot away from his ear. Jimmy cringes.

MARK

You mean the garage. We could barely get it in because of --

TAMMY

Don't be cute with me. I'm gonna shove this thing out to the curb!

Mark tries to calm Tammy.

MARK

It's just a box. A --

TAMMY

Just a box?! It's a fucking coffin. A second hand coffin! Only a psycho would buy a used coffin.

MARK

It was only 25 bucks...

TAMMY

I don't give a shit if it was free!

Tammy ends the call, slams the phone down on the table.

Mark stares at his phone.

JIMMY

Why be so pissed about a casket in her garage? Like you said, it's just a box.

MARK

She must have got off a bad shift.

Mark shrugs, then they both, swig their beers.

END INTERCUT

Tammy's mad. With her hands on her hips, she glowers at the casket. Thinks for a beat.

She heads over to the front door, opens it, then bends down to push the coffin towards it.

It's heavy, won't move.

She pushes as hard as she can. The damn thing won't budge.

Surprised, she studies the coffin. Grips the edge of the lid, tries to open it. It's locked or stuck.

Tammy moves back away from the coffin. Looks at it with distaste. Then she leans forward, sniffs along the lid.

A flicker of unease crosses her face. She kicks the coffin in frustration, then picks up her bags on her way to the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Tammy puts away her groceries when there's a faint knocking from the living room. Still annoyed, she shoves the refrigerator door shut, heads into the --

LIVING ROOM

Tammy marches past the casket to the front door, opens it.

INT/EXT HOUSE - NIGHT

Tammy sticks her head out. No one's there. She looks around. Scans the yard. The street. Puzzled, she closes the door.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tammy casts a glance at the casket as she walks by into the --

KITCHEN

A little calmer now, she pours a glass of wine, puts it on a tray along with some cheese and crackers, then carries it into the --

LIVING ROOM

She sits down on the sofa, turns on the TV, then settles in.

Indistinct shows on the TV as she scrolls through the programs between sips of wine.

SCRATCH. SCRATCH. SCRATCH.

Faint scratching from the... coffin?

Tammy stares at the ominous coffin, mutes the TV. All quiet. After a beat, she turns the volume back on.

SCRATCH. SCRATCH. SCRATCH.

She whips her head towards the coffin, mutes the TV. Quiet.

She gets up, pads up to the eerie intruder in her home. She hesitates, then knocks on the lid. Listens intently, but there's only silence.

TAMMY

Hello?

She tries pushing the coffin again, but it's still too heavy.

Perplexed, Tammy eyes it, grabs her wine glass, then leaves.

BATHROOM

Tammy's in the shower. When finished, she turns the water off. She reaches for a towel, then steps out.

When dried off, she drains the rest of the wine.

A SHUFFLING sound from the living room.

With eyes wide, she wraps the towel tight around her, grabs her phone.

LIVING ROOM

Tammy peers through the doorway into the room.

The coffin has moved. Not much, but most definitely.

Her eyes widen even more. Cautious, on high alert, she enters. She circles around the casket, stares at it.

She looks at her phone, ponders, then dials a number.

911 OPERATOR

(on phone)

911, what's your emergency?

Tammy hesitates, unsure what to say.

TAMMY

Uhm... I have a casket in my living room and...

911 OPERATOR

Is this an emergency?

TAMMY

Not really. I guess. I just need help moving it outside.

911 OPERATOR
 Ma'am, this line is for
 emergencies. Maybe try a moving
 company?

TAMMY
 Right. Sorry... never mind.

Embarrassed, she ends the call, turns around and leaves.

BEDROOM

Tammy enters from the bathroom now dressed in a sleep shirt.
 She crawls into bed.

The open bedroom door, a dark gaping hole into the unknown.

Tammy peers at it, closes her eyes. Opens them again, focused
 on the doorway. She closes her eyes, squeezes them shut.

After a moment, they pop open again. She gets out of bed,
 closes the door, then climbs back in bed, turns off the
 light.

SCRATCH. SCRATCH. SCRATCH.

Tammy pulls the blanket over her head. Mumbles to herself.

TAMMY
 There's nothing there. You're
 stupid. There's nothing there.
 Stupid. Stupid. Stup...

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. DARK TIGHT SPACE

Heavy frantic breathing. Slight body movement.

A cell phone screen lights up.

Tammy's inside this tight coffin-like space. She shines the
 light around. The walls are made of red satin. Her panicked
 face lit by the screen.

TAMMY
 Where am I? Somebody? Help.

She feels the walls with her hand.

TAMMY
 Please. Where am I? Somebody?

Whispers echo, fading in and out.

"The cord was wrapped around her neck." "The cord was wrapped around her neck."

TAMMY

No. Stop! Please.

Her breaths more shallow now. Labored.

"You should have known." "You should've known."

TAMMY

No. Stop!

"She couldn't breathe." "She couldn't breathe." "She couldn't breathe."

TAMMY

Stop! Please! I can't breathe.
Somebody. Please help! Get me out!
Get me out!

The red walls squeezes in tighter on her her.

SMASH CUT:

BEDROOM

Tammy bolts up sitting with a gasp, clutches her throat. She fumbles for her phone, turns on the flashlight.

AHHHHH! She screams.

Next to her bed is that fucking coffin with the lid wide open.

Terrified, she stares at the gaping black hole as a black opaque smoke unfurls from within twisting into tendrils that creep into her bed.

AHHHHH! Tammy screams.

Then the smoke snakes around her. Yanks her into the casket. The lid slams shut.

Silence.

Then --

SCRATCH. SCRATCH. SCRATCH.

FADE OUT: