

SCRIPT TITLE

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## **"LOOSE ENDS"**

By Michael Weller

Paul walks in and hands Susan a present.

SUSAN

Would you leave us alone, please.  
All of you. Please.

PAUL

You mean you don't like it after  
all that?

SUSAN

Paul, is this for real?

PAUL

Is what for real?

SUSAN

(the horse)  
This.

PAUL

Oh, yes. *That's* for real...I  
thought you meant the embryo and I  
was going to ask you about that  
because it seems to have slipped  
your mind.

SUSAN

Is that what this is all about?

PAUL

I just thought it might be worth  
bringing up.

SUSAN

Who told you? Selina?

PAUL

Oh, is that what's important? Who  
told me? It wasn't you, that's for  
sure. And it's a pretty god damn  
weird thing to find out about from  
someone else. That your wife had an  
abortion six months ago and didn't  
bother to tell you about it. I  
guess I must just be one of those  
naturally curious people because  
when I found out it made me want to  
know all kinds of things, Susan.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

Like just what the fuck has been going on in our life? All these wonderful little human dramas going on under my nose and I didn't know a thing about it. Was it mine?

SUSAN

Yes.

PAUL

Why didn't you tell me?

SUSAN

Paul, I don't know. I really don't know. I meant to. I wanted to.

PAUL

I see. Anything else, or is that sort of the full explanation?

SUSAN

I don't know anything else. I didn't mean not to tell you.

PAUL

That's very illuminating. That really makes me feel like this is something we can work out. I mean what are we, Susan? Remind me because it's getting kind of vague in my mind. Are we married? Something like that? Is there some kind of unique relationship here? Something that might be worth looking into? Are you saying you didn't tell me because it isn't an interesting fact, or it's just not a very important thing for me to know about? Or it's an unpleasant topic of conversation or it's none of my business? I mean, what is this shit???

SUSAN

Stop it...

PAUL

SUSAN!!!!

Ben enters.

BEN

Hey, is everything...

PAUL  
GET OUT!!!

BEN  
I'm just inside if...

PAUL  
GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE!!!! It hurts, Susan. It just hurts. All this silence between us. All this unknown stuff. You know how much I want a kid. You know that. I mean what've I been doing for the past three years? Running my ass off building up a business--working 12-hour days? Am I supposed to have been doing that for the deep satisfaction it gave me? Do you think I'm a mental defective or something? I mean at the very worst, i thought this was all some kind of weird ritual to prove I was worthy of fertilizing your eggs. That was the only way I could look at it and still feel marginally sane...

SUSAN  
I don't believe this. Are you saying you did everything you did so I'd let you make a baby? Is that what you're saying? Because if it is...well,nice to know what you're keeping me around for. Thank you.

PAUL  
Susan, you know that's not what I meant

SUSAN  
All i know is it's a pretty shitty thing to lay on me. Nobody forced you to do anything you didn't want to do. So what's this thing like it's all been some kind of terrible ordeal? Jesus, Paul, what's the matter with you? You are allowed to enjoy it, you know. There's no law that says you have to feel terrible about it. You earned it, for god sake. You deserve it. And I'm proud of you, babe. I really am. I just want to see you be happy with it.

PAUL

Ah, so that's why you had the abortion. That's why you didn't tell me--because you wanted me to be happy. You were doing it all for me. Gee, why didn't I see it that way? We really are wonderful people, aren't we Susan? We just do everything for each other.

SUSAN

All right. I didn't tell you. I was wrong--*mea culpa*. What can I say, Paul? I'm sorry? Because I am. But that doesn't have very much to do with anything right now, does it?

PAUL

But why? Why?

SUSAN

Babe, you don't get a whole lot of time to think about what you should do when there's this thing growing inside you. And it's not getting smaller. And the more you think things over the less small it's getting. It's not like I just popped down to the friendly neighborhood abortionist. I did think it over just a little bit before I went through with it.

PAUL

But why didn't you say anything?

Pause.

SUSAN

Paul. I like what we have. I guess i just don't want anything to change it all.

PAUL

And telling me would have changed it all.

SUSAN

I don't know. Wouldn't it?

PAUL

Well, if it would then what the hell is it we have that's so great?

SUSAN

Oh, so now we have nothing...

PAUL

Well tell me, Susan, what do we have? Tell me what we have...

SUSAN

Everything you've done. Everything I've done. Everything we've got. It's all nothing? None of it means anything to you? My god, Paul, how you must be suffering.

PAUL

We really hate each other, don't we?

SUSAN

Babe, I don't hate you. I just don't understand why we always make everything so complicated for each other. Hasn't this been a good time? I mean, I was under the impression we were more or less happy. In fact, I was even thing if Greg and Francine get divorced we'll be the longest couple of all our friends.

PAUL

Except for Doug and Maraya.

SUSAN

That doesn't count. They're not married. Shit!

PAUL

What?

SUSAN

I'm smoking.

They smile.

PAUL

I don't know what it is, Susan. I mean, yes, I want all this. Sometimes. Sometimes I'm really amazed it's me doing all this. There's been whole weeks when I went around thinking, "hey, this is pretty good deal. I'm happy." I mean, this is it, right?

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

This must be it. I must be ahppy. But then one day I'll come home, I'll go in there and try to get comfortable, read or something and for some reason I just can't concentrate. Try to watch TV, can't even manage that. So I start walking around the apartment and I see all the stuff we have. All this stuff. And I start thinking about what we do to get it. You pick up a little box and go click. I tape together pieces of film. Presto. We have everything we want. We're so good at doing these little things that make us able to have all this stuff, but we can't get it together to have one stupid little baby. Us. The two of us. Together. Doesn't that ever seem strange to you? You know, sort of intuitively wrong? Absurd. Something like that?

SUSAN

No, Paul. I'm sorry, it doesn't. The only thing I find strange is the way I keep feeling like I have to have a baby to be enough for you. I mean, what if I decide a baby isn't as important to me as a lot of other things? What happens if I decide that all I want is you? And our life together? And our work? I mean, couldn't that be enough? Paul.

Pause.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Paul. Paul, answer me. Am I enough for you without a baby?

Pause.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

I see. And you wanted to know why I couldn't tell you.

PAUL

I don't know. I don't know. Why didn't you say something before this?

SUSAN

Maybe I didn't want to know what I just found out. Well, Paul, I'm sorry. I'm sorry you feel so badly about your accomplishments because I'm feeling pretty good about mine and I can't see any reason why I shouldn't. Doug starts doing well, you laugh about it. You think it's funny. You do well and all ways, babe. We're not children any more. You have what you have. If you want it, keep it and stop making excuses for it. And if you want to be a saint, go back and dig outhouses for the Nglele.

PAUL

Oh boy.

SUSAN

What?

PAUL

We're in a lot of trouble, aren't we?

SUSAN

I guess we are.

PAUL

So now what?

SUSAN

I don't know. Should we be talking about this now?

PAUL

No. I want to go out and have a great time with Ben and Janice and Phil.

SUSAN

All right. We'll talk about it now. What are we going to do?

PAUL

I don't know.

SUSAN

Well, we're going to have to do something, aren't we?

PAUL  
Like a divorce, you mean?

SUSAN  
Is that what you want?

PAUL  
Do you?

SUSAN  
Well, I hadn't exactly been  
thinking about it a whole lot. Not  
today. Are you serious?

PAUL  
Isn't that what's going on here?  
Can you think of anything else we  
could do?

SUSAN  
Well, well, happy birthday.

PAUL  
I meant it to hurt, Susan.

SUSAN  
Yes. We'll call a lawyer in the  
morning.

PAUL  
Lawyer? (pause) O.K.

SUSAN  
Fine.

PAUL  
Jesus.