

## Susie Doll

by

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FADE IN -

## 1. INT. THE DOLLY SHOW TELEVISION SET

The final crazed moments before taping as the exuberant doll appraiser BILL BERTRAND is first introduced to a YOUNG WOMAN and her cherished doll at a carpeted display table. They barely nod hellos before...

DIRECTOR O.S.

ACTION!

BILL

...And who have you brought with you today?

YOUNG WOMAN

This is Lilac. She was originally my great- great- grandmother's. And I love her dearly...

BILL

That's wonderful. Well what you have is an early American example of a ...

As Bill describes the particulars of the doll in colorful detail...

CUT TO:

## 2. INT. PHILIP FAISS APARTMENT

And a couch crowded with dolls of all kinds and sizes awash in the harsh light of a television. Sitting amongst the dolls, PHILIP FAISS watches "The Dolly Show" with great interest--

BILL O.S.

Oh no...

Bill's demeanor deteriorates rapidly.

ELIZABETH O.S.

What?

BILL O.S.

I'm sorry but...

(calling to producers off camera)

...is there someone of authority close by?  
I'm going to have to ask for the  
authorities..

ELIZABETH O.S.

Authorities? I don't understand?

Philip pulls a nearby doll to his chest.

BILL O.S.

There are clear signs of neglect.

ELIZABETH

Nuh-uh.

BILL O.S.

This baby should be in foster care.

A PRODUCTION ASSISTANT enters and under Bill's direction, takes Elizabeth in hand.

ELIZABETH O.S.

But I'd never hurt my doll. I love my  
doll. It's a doll!

As the p.a. leads Elizabeth away, Bill turns back to the camera

BILL BERTRAND O.S.

People. Dolls are not playthings. They  
need loving too.

Philip takes the whole couch of dolls into a protective hug.

CUT TO:

3. OPENING CREDITS

And a surreal, animated sequence of "Suzy" doll moving around screen.

DISSOLVE TO:

4. INT. HOME OFFICE -- DAY

It's noon and from behind we see a BIG BLONDE straightening her desk  
before lunch.

JUSTIN COOPER enters the office thumbing through a handful of mail. He has something tucked under his arm, but it isn't immediately clear what.

As he walks past her desk with his nose still buried in the mail ...

JUSTIN  
Any calls while I was out?

BLONDE  
(in a coarser than expected voice)  
Only your fiancée...

And she holds out a post-it.

A step or two beyond the blonde's desk Justin stops and turns.

ANGLE ON THE BLONDE

Revealing it's Philip in a wig. He self-consciously drags the wig from his head and drops it into a paper bag beside his desk.

PHILIP  
(pointing to the package under  
Justin's arm.)  
What's that?

JUSTIN  
Huh?  
(remembering the doll)  
Apparently my mother's cleaning out the  
attic this week.

PHILIP  
If I'm not mistaken that's a "Suzy" doll  
- and worth a lot of money too.

JUSTIN  
You collect dolls, don't you...

Justin firmly tucks the doll under his arm and hands Philip an envelope.

JUSTIN  
Get this into the computer before lunch.

PHILIP  
But I...

Justin walks off towards his office with the phone number.

ANGLE ON PHILIP

At his desk TYPING. In the background you can hear Justin on the telephone with his fiancée.

Philip pauses and leans over in his chair to see Justin with his feet kicked up on his desk swinging the doll recklessly in the air over his head while talking to his fiancée on the telephone.

Philip bites down.

CUT TO:

5. EXT. CAFE - DAY

Philip runs down the street and into neighborhood hangout with a big "Sandwiches" sign in the front window ...

CUT TO:

6. INT. CAFE

A b-movie actress obviously past her prime but clutching to her dreams of stardom with arthritic fingers, berating a BUSBOY about the condition of her table...

ACTRESS

... I will reach down your throat and pull out the first organ I find with my bare hands, stapling it your forehead for all to see.

Mortified, the busboy backs away. The actress eyes him out meeting Philip as he enters. Her personality turns on a dime as she throws her arms around him in a grand gesture.

ACTRESS

Philip, darling...

This is Philip's aunt, DEBORA ROVENTINI. He hands her the paper bag while trying to catch his breathe.

PHILIP

Sorry I'm late...

DEBORA

I hardly noticed with all the other distractions...

She pulls out the blonde wig and begins fitting it on her head.

DEBORA

As long as I make my "audition".

PHILIP

I just read someone was cast in an major  
Hollywood film after appearing on the  
dolly show.

DEBORA

Great, now I suppose I'll have to go out  
and buy a collectible...

PHILIP

I know someone with a doll good enough to  
get on the show, only they'd never give  
it to me.

DEBORA

Why not?

PHILIP

Because he thinks I like him, which I  
don't.

DEBORA

Set up an introduction and I'll get that  
doll if it could mean a juicy part for  
me...

The wig in place, Debora cocks her head and flashes Philip a crooked  
smile. Philip chokes on his sandwich at the sight.

PHILIP

You look great?

She grabs up her stuff and starts to run out.

DEBORA

Remember what I said.

Philip watches after his larger than life woman.

CUT TO:

7. INT. HOME OFFICE - LATER THAT SAME DAY

Justin drops a stack of papers down in front of Philip.

JUSTIN

These are all wrong.

PHILIP

What? I did exactly what you said...

JUSTIN

...Do them again.

PHILIP

Sure... (beat) Any thoughts about what you're going to do with your "Suzy"?

JUSTIN

My what?

PHILIP

The doll. I was just wondering since you don't really have a need for her and I'm...

Justin just turns away shaking his head.

PHILIP

Did I mention I had lunch with my aunt today - Debora Roventini.

JUSTIN

Debora Roventini is your aunt? Why didn't you say something before. You know how much of a fan I am...

He sweeps his hand across the room, directing Philip's attention to an until now unseen corner of the office and a shrine for Debora Roventini constructed from her movie memorabilia.

PHILIP

I guess I didn't want it to get in the way of work.

JUSTIN

I've got to meet her.

PHILIP

She doesn't meet fans.

JUSTIN

There must be a way? I would do anything. Talk to her.

Philip glances at the doll.

CUT TO:

8. EXT. BATHROOM -- DEBORA S BUNGALOW -- DAY

Debora is putting the finishing touches of make-up on while singing in mirror. The doorbell RINGS. Not unexpected, she incorporates it into her song

CUT TO:

9. INT. HALLWAY -- DEBORA S BUNGALOW -- CONTINUOUS

She sweeps out of the bathroom and walks through the bungalow to the front door.

She looks out window to see...

CUT TO:

10. EXT. PORCH -- DEBORA S BUNGALOW -- DAY

Justin checks his appearance, smoothing down his hair while shifting the antique doll between arms.

Debora's stark figure appears in the window.

FADE OUT.

11. INT. PHILIP S APARTMENT -- A FEW DAYS LATER

Philip's rehearsing his "Drag Queen's Lament" in front of his couch of dolls. The telephone RINGS.

PHILIP

Hello?

WOMAN'S VOICE

(SCREAMING)

Get out of the way you goddamn idiot.  
Before I run this shining chrome bumper  
up your ass and hit the brights --

PHILIP

Aunt Debbie? Is that you? Where are  
you?

CUT TO:

12. INT. CAR -- DAY

Landscape flying by as Debora's putting on make-up eating lunch and talking on the cellphone while negotiating the Santa Monica Freeway -

DEBORA

Somewhere on the 10 heading towards the airport.

INTERCUT BETWEEN APARTMENT AND CAR

PHILIP

The airport?

DEBORA

Another "audition". This time in San Francisco. I need someone to look after my babies.

PHILIP

Gee, I don't know...

DEBORA

Philip!

PHILIP

How long will you be gone?

DEBORA

Two days tops as... the DOLLY SHOW tapes on Saturday.

PHILIP

The dolly show - you got it. But how?

DEBORA

Let's just say I have my ways. And he was a fan.

PHILIP

Of course I'll housesit. Will Suzy be there?

DEBORA

Philip, listen to me. If anything happens to that doll before the taping will personally...(static).

PHILIP

I promise.

CUT TO:

13. EXT. DEBORA S BUNGALOW – EVENING

Establishing shot of a rundown North Hollywood flat which, like its renter, has seen brighter days.

ANGLE ON PHILIP

walking up the narrow drive. He hesitates, eyeing the flat with some trepidation. Philip starts singing...

PHILIP

*(singing)*

*Why do I look like a failure?  
I look like I live in a trailer.  
When will I ever get straighter?  
Oh, forget it. Hello, sailor!*

14. INT. DEBORA S BUNGALO – ENTRANCE

Philip's song and entry into the flat is suddenly stopped by a large basset hound barking wildly at his feet.

He looks past the swirling noise into the interior of his aunt's apartment. It's dark... but harmless enough...

He pulls a leash off a nearby table and the dog runs through Philip's legs and out the door.

CUT TO:

15. INT. DEBORA S BUNGALO – KITCHEN – LATER

After dinner and Berry's circling Philip's feet again.

He hands her a cookie and she dashes from the room. Philip follows her...

PHILIP

*(singing)*

*This test should be a no brainer  
This dog could sure use a trainer.  
Why can't my aunt be more saner?  
Aw, darn it, who could blame her?*

16. INT. DEBORA S BUNGALO – DINING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

...as far as the bird cages where he slides fresh food into the cages.

Philip turns away from the birds chirping happily and glances around the room.

PHILIP

*(singing)*

*The goal of the show, wouldn't you know  
is a ruse just to choose a new star.  
But in the end, I pretend  
that my ex-boyfriend--OH WAIT!  
There's his car!*

17. INT. DEBORA S BUNGALO – LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Philip emerges from a dark recess of the flat with the "Suzy" doll clutched to his chest.

PHILIP

*(singing)*

*Oh wait! Here you are!  
The BAIT! The best doll by far!*

Sitting on the couch, Philip places the baby doll on his lap and fusses with her hair.

PHILIP

Thanks to your great- great-great- aunt  
Debbie, we're together again --

As if on cue, there's a LOUD CRASH from the kitchen. Philip's eyes roll back in his head.

PHILIP

Berry-Marie, as God is my witness --

When he looks down again, the doll is gone. Puzzled, Philip searches the floor around the couch.

ANGLE ON SUZY DOLL

As she pokes her head out from around a nearby doorframe.

BACK TO SCENE

He looks around the room with growing alarm, then relief.

PHILIP

There you are - how'd you get over there.

As he stoops to pick her up, she pulls away, and Philip finds himself in a tug-of-war with the doll. For a brief moment they are locked in a struggle, but Philip loses his grip on "Suzy" doll's tiny hands and the ensuing momentum sends them both crashing to the floor.

Philip sits up -

PHILIP

Wha...

He looks over in the direction of the "Suzy" doll to see her slowly lift off the floor and levitate three or four feet off the ground -

-- she slowly starts moving towards him --

PHILIP

...oh shit!

-- and he starts crawling back -

-- And the doll is coming at him faster --

PHILIP

Yeaooh!

18. INT. DEBORA S BUNGALO - CONTINUOUS

The levitating doll chases Philip through the house.

PHILIP

*(singing)*

*What a ball! It's the doll!  
I won't dare take the fall  
when Suzy is in my own grasp*

19. INT. DEBORA S BUNGALO -- CONTINUOUS

Reaching a dead end, Philip slams against the cupboards at the end of the hallway -

With the bump, a top cupboard pops open and something falls into Philip's lap. He looks down to see a severed hand in his lap. Philip wipes the bloodied hand from his lap and turns away...

...coming face to face with Sean's head revealed in another cupboard...

Philip rockets up and away from the horror -

--right into the tiny hands of the "Suzy" doll.

Philip spins wildly around the room trying to pry the doll's hands from his neck.

PHILIP

*(singing)*

*Think of the joy  
for this girl and this boy.  
OH SHIT! She is kicking my ass!  
Suzy Doll, she is kicking my ass!  
Think fast!*

He manages to break her grip and throw her free. He falls to one knee, trying to catch his breath.

The "Suzy" doll levitates before Philip egging him on...

PHILIP  
Justin - I didn't know, really -

Philip stands up to the doll -

PHILIP  
All right, then, take this -

He swings wildly at the hovering doll. The doll ducks easily out of the way and Philip's punch lands on one of his aunt's cherished tiffany lamps which sails off an end table and crashes onto the floor.

PHILIP  
Ohhh.

Rubbing a bruised hand, Philip surveys the unintended consequences of his actions with dread. DISEMBODIED LAUGHTER brings him back to the scene...

He takes another swing at the doll, knocking a second lamp off its perch, and without missing a beat, attempts a round-house spin kick, wiping most of his aunt's tchotckes off the piano onto the floor at his feet.

Suddenly cuffed by the broken memorabilia, Philip loses his balance and falls forward. He grabs at the levitating doll and pulls her down with him behind the couch.

ANGLE ON COUCH

as arms and legs flail wildly in horrible commotion. At one point, Philip's head bobs up out of the fray, then disappears again. At another, the "Suzy" doll appears only to be pulled back down by Philip.

And then silence -

A long beat and Philip's head slowly rises up from behind the couch. He looks for the "Suzy" doll to his right and then his left. Finally, he spins all the way around to revealing to us the "Suzy" doll clinging to his butt...

Philip catches the reflection of the "Suzy" doll in a nearby mirror...

He tears her off his butt and carries her to the couch where he throws her down and starts wailing on her.

Suddenly Philip stops..

PHILIP

Oh, my God...

The Suzy doll is gone. Terrified Philip begins to back up, scanning the room for the doll.

He backs down the dark hallway until he comes to a stop at the bedroom door. With his back to the door he sings the last few lines of the song...

PHILIP

*(singing)*

*I never meant to hurt you.*

*This battle has put an end to*

*my life as a drag entertainer.*

*Let's just end this. HELLO, SAILOR!*

The door flies open and tiny doll hands grab Philip and yank him into the dark abyss as the door slams shut again...

CUT TO:

20. DEBORA S BUNGALOW - THE NEXT MORNING

Debora returns from her trip to discover the apartment vacant.

DEBORA

Philip?

Dropping her luggage she moves from room to room looking for her nephew.

She works her way to the back bedroom to check on the doll.

She SCREAMS in excellent B-movie queen fashion.

BLACK OUT.

FADE IN:

21. DOLLY SHOW SET - MUCH LATER

Debora stands with Bill Bertrand at the carpeted table. Between them sits an overturned box large enough to cover the "Suzy" doll.

LOWER THIRD TV GRAPHIC:

THE DOLLY SHOW LOGO AND TITLE: LOS ANGELES, CA -- SUMMER 2004

ANNOUNCER V.O.

And now another Dolly Show favorite...

On cue, Bill Bertrand turns to Debora.

BILL BERTRAND

I can't tell you how excited I am about  
your visit to the Dolly Show today and...

DEBORA

(interrupting)

Thanks Bill. As an actress of some  
renown...

BILL BERTRAND

...B-movies, aren't they?

DEBORA

Genre films...

BILL

...excuse me?

DEBORA

They're called genre films...not B  
pictures...

BILL

Yes. What I really want to talk about...

Bill reaches for the box.

BILL

...and I think we should mention to our  
audience at home, that we haven't  
actually spoken until now as you arrived  
just prior to taping...

DEBORA

...goddamn L.A. traffic...

BILL

Yes well, when I read your email and saw  
the photos...

Debora grabs the box as well.

DEBORA

My headshot...it's just to die for, isn't it...

BILL

Actually I was referring to the doll's photos...

Bill moves to lift the box, only to be stopped by Debora.

DEBORA

...signed copies are available at my website - double u double u double u debora scream queen roventini dot com.

BILL

If we could have a look at the doll already...

He struggles with Debora over the box.

VOICE

Can we talk about me already?

Bill looks around for the disembodied voice. Debora leans in front of the doll.

DEBORA

(coughs)

...clearing my throat...

BILL

If you will just let me...

Bill manages to get the upper hand and pull the box away, revealing the doll. Awkward silence as Bill is dumbstruck by the doll before him.

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON SUZY DOLL

Revealing the doll as we've seen her before except for one glaring detail -- her head has somehow been magically replaced with Philip's.

BACK TO SCENE

DEBORA

(filling the dead space)

I've always thought I'd shine in a part with heart, but with a little umph too. Like Cat, for instance, or...

PHILIP

(under his breathe)

...Lady Macbeth.

(to Debora)

You've forgotten what this is about?

DEBORA

It's about me getting on TV.

BILL

Oh, my...

Debora looks over at Bill who has tears welling up in his eyes. He is overwhelmed with emotion.

DEBORA

I can explain. What am I saying, he should explain...

PHILIP

...I'm not the one desperate for an audience.

DEBORA

The Drag Queen's Lament? What's that but...

BILL

It's magnificent...

Debora and Philip stop their bickering mid-sentence and shoot glances of disbelief at Bill.

DEBORA

It is?

BILL

Not since my days in the navy, visiting the doll shoppes of faraway ports have I seen anything that comes close to this magnificent specimen. The coloring and attention to detail. Proportion and condition. Everything blends into a toxic elixar and that says I am the finest of my kind, of any kind. And I'm all yours.

PHILIP

Hello Sailor!

BLACK OUT.

FIN