PAUL. Me?

DOUG. You never think I'm being serious. Man, I mean it. You don't know some of the shit I'm getting into. I'm gonna be a rich man. That guy I built the house for, you remember him. Mr. Conklin, the guy with the big lump on his neck? Well, he was real pleased with my work—read pleased. And he bought this big ole chunk of prime lakefront property and when he found out I was with the 23rd tactical in Nam . . . that was his outfit in the second world war . . . that did it, man. Got the contract just like that. Fourteen houses. You know what that'll be worth?

MARAYA. Doug, you haven't even got the money yet.

DOUG. Listen, man, with this deal going any bank that ain't standing in line to lend me the bread is a bank with its head up its ass. One joint, Marsie, huh?

MARAYA. No.

DOUG. One toke. One fucking toke is all.

MARAYA. No, Doug, you can't.

PAUL. (*Looks at* SUSAN's *watch.*) It's twenty past.

MARAYA. We better get moving.

DOUG. Yeah, O.K. (*Yells.*) Hey, Jake, come on, kid, it's bank time. Man, I'll tell ya, I'm no good at this shit. I'm just not. I don't know why the fuck Cisco can't take care of it. It's his uncle.

SUSAN. Why doesn't he?

DOUG. He doesn't have a suit. Naa, I don't know. JAKE! He hates his uncle. In fact, I think it's mutual, but I'm supposed to promise this dude Cisco'll straighten out if he lends us the bread. The family's impressed that Cisco's a partner in a company. Shit-kicker Construction Unlimited. I'll tell you what I can't figure out is how anyone'd think it's worth half a million to get Cisco right. I like the dude. He's my partner and I'll carry him through a lot of shit for sure, but Cisco, man, you could get him straight as

a ruler and I still wouldn't pay you more'n a dollar for him.

MARAYA. Are we going or not?

DOUG. Yeah, yeah, we're going. This is weird. This is definitely non-normal. I gotta go talk bullshit to a bank president. Doug Superfreak meets Mr. Straight-money. You guys'll come up, right?

SUSAN. We'll see you soon. Good luck.

DOUG. I don't know how you guys can live in this city. Look at that squirrel. He's got hepatitis, no shit. Look at him. Pathetic. Shooting up with a dirty needle. Give him an hour in the country and he'd forget there ever was a Central Park. You should move up. I'm serious. I dump Cisco, we go 50-50 on the business, you bring you camera, take pictures of trees and shit like that. It's so pretty up there.

MARAYA. Doug.

DOUG. O.K., O.K., take it easy. See you guys. Hey, Jakie-poo. (*Exits.*)

SUSAN. When are you expecting?

PAUL. Susan, they have to go.

MARAYA. November, and that's absolutely the last one. It was a mistake believe me. (*To* BABY-MATTY.) Not you, honey, the next one. All I can tell you is don't listen to doctors. They said I was safe for a couple months after Matty here . . . four weeks later, bang. Four weeks. Oh well, gotta go. You guys take care, huh. (*For* BABY-MATTY.) "Bye-bye. Go "bye-bye." Bye. (*Exits. Pause.* SUSAN *offers some chicken.*)

SUSAN. Want some more?

PAUL. No. (*Pause.*)

SUSAN. How've you been?

PAUL. Great. You?

SUSAN. O.K.

PAUL. So much for the good news.

SUSAN. Did you sell the script yet?

PAUL. No.

SUSAN. It'll happen, don't worry.

PAUL. No it won't. It's a piece of shit.

SUSAN. I read it. I thought it was good.

PAUL. Yet another point of agreement.

SUSAN. Paul, what's the matter?

PAUL. Why'd you have to go invite Doug and Maraya?

SUSAN. I thought you'd want to see them. They're your friends.

PAUL. But now?

SUSAN. They're only in town for the day. They have to go back this afternoon.

PAUL. Susan, for christ sakes, we haven't seen each other for three months. We do have things to talk about.

SUSAN. I'm sorry. I thought you'd want to see them. We have all afternoon to talk.

PAUL. I thought you had to work.

SUSAN. I can take the afternoon off.

PAUL. Nice job.

SUSAN. Yes, as a matter of fact, it's a very nice job.

PAUL. Taking pictures of rich people's houses.

SUSAN. I knew that's how you'd see it.

PAUL. Sorry.

SUSAN. Paul, it does happen to be the best architectural journal in the country. In fact, it's one of the best in the world. And I like working there. I like the people. I like their ideas. I like what they're trying to do with the magazine and I like the fact that I'm beginning to feel like I can take my work seriously for the first time.

PAUL. I said I'm sorry.

SUSAN. I heard you.

PAUL. Moving right along.

SUSAN. And another thing, Paul. I need to make my

own living. I never realized it before, how much I hated taking money from you, from my family. Now I don't feel like I have to apologize for anything any more and that's important, Paul. You're not the only one around here that's proud, you know.

PAUL. You're right. And I'm sorry. Really. That was stupid. I didn't mean to put you down.

SUSAN. I know you didn't. I just had to tell you. Oh, babe, it's so nice to see you.

PAUL. I miss you.

SUSAN. Well, I miss you too.

PAUL. A lot?

SUSAN. Yeah, pretty much a whole lot.

PAUL. Were you . . . have you been with anyone else?

SUSAN. As in guys? A few. How about you?

PAUL. Guys? Not many.

SUSAN. 'Cause I was with a woman. Once. Life's infinite variety.

PAUL. How interesting. Was it nice?

SUSAN. No. I mean yes, in a way, but no, not really. I miss making love to you.

PAUL. Yeah, that part was always pretty good.

SUSAN. Was? Why do you talk about it like it's over? (*Pause.*) Is it?

PAUL. I don't know, is it?

SUSAN. Isn't that what we're supposed to be talking about? This wasn't supposed to be permanent. I thought we were just trying out a little time on our own. You want to end it?

PAUL. No.

SUSAN. So let's talk about it.

PAUL. That's what we're doing.

SUSAN. O.K. Things are going pretty well for me, you know.

PAUL. So I gathered.

SUSAN. What I mean is, I can't move back to Boston.

PAUL. Can't? You're being physically restrained?

SUSAN. I don't want to.

PAUL. Ah. So I'd have to move to New York, is that it?

SUSAN. You don't have to make it sound like the end of the world. You always talked about moving to New York.

PAUL. I'm just trying to clarify the situation.

SUSAN. You could do so well here, Paul.

PAUL. I'm doing just fine in Boston. All our friends are there. I've been made a full editor. I like it there.

SUSAN. But you said you wanted your own business one day. You can do it here. There's a lot more film happening here than there is in Boston. And I'm meeting a lot of people who might be able to help.

PAUL. You sound like my brother.

SUSAN. Well, what's wrong with getting a little help, for God sake? Soolie helped me. I've helped some people here. It's not just a favor, you know. You do it because you think someone's good. And you are, babe. You should be doing . . . just, something more like what I know you're capable of doing. Why do you keep fighting it?

PAUL. We should have a sex change before we think about getting back together.

SUSAN. Well, you're the one that always said it. "If you're white, middle class and American you have to work 24 hours a day to not make it." So stop working so hard.

PAUL. O.K., let's say I move to New York. That's condition number one, right? So let's say I accept that . . .

SUSAN. Don't do me any favors.

PAUL. Well, for christ sake, that's what you're saying, isn't it? If I want you, I have to have New York.

SUSAN. It isn't a condition.

PAUL. Everything is a condition, Susan. Everything.

SUSAN. What are you saying?

PAUL. I just want to know what I get in exchange.

SUSAN. What do you want?

PAUL. You know what I want.

SUSAN. Oh.

PAUL. Have you thought about it?

SUSAN. I don't think either of us is ready for that.

PAUL. That's bullshit . . .

SUSAN. I'm not.

PAUL. Well when? We can't start when we're sixty.

SUSAN. I'm thirty one.

PAUL. Great. Only twenty-nine years to go.

SUSAN. Would you want to be our child, Paul? I mean honestly, at this point in time do you really think you'd want to have the two of us for parents?

PAUL. We're no worse than a few I grew up with.

SUSAN. That's what I mean. I want to have kids someday. I do. Just not now.

PAUL. So what's the score so far? Paul moves to New York. Susan remains childless. That's two to nothing. I need some points here.

SUSAN. We'll talk about it, O.K.?

PAUL. We'll talk about it? That sounds familiar.

SUSAN. Well, you can't just expect me to say yeah, great. "You want kids, we'll have kids." It is something we have to talk about.

PAUL. O.K. That's half a point, right?

SUSAN. Can you stay for the weekend? I think we should spend some time together. I'd like you to meet some of my friends. I've bored them to death talking about you. I don't think they believe you exist. There's a party tomorrow night. I have room at my place.

PAUL. Is that an offer?

SUSAN. Can you stay?
PAUL. Yeah.
SUSAN. Good. (*They kiss.*) Let's clear up here.
PAUL. Are we going somewhere?
SUSAN. We can talk at my place.
PAUL. As opposed to here where we can't talk?
SUSAN. You want to stay here?
PAUL. No, I want to go back to your place. And talk.
SUSAN. I'm expecting a call, that's all.
PAUL. Oh.
SUSAN. Come on. (*They rise.*)
PAUL. Susan.
SUSAN. What?
PAUL. What is it? I feel like . . . I don't know.
SUSAN. It's been three months. We need time. Let's go. (*Exits. Off.*) You coming, babe? (PAUL *follows. Fried chicken on bench. Fade.*)

SCENE 6

Slide: 1977. PAUL *and* SUSAN's *living room, Central Park West. Evening. Painter's drop cloth on floor. Ladder, buckets of paint, paint tray brushes. Pile of boxes covered with sheet. Armchair.* SUSAN *and* SELINA *sit on floor finishing take-out Chinese meal. They are in work clothes. As lights go up, they are convulsed with laughter.*

SUSAN. I don't believe it. What's your say?
SELINA. (*Breaks her fortune cookie and reads.*) "He who knows not, but knows not that he knows not is a fool. Shun him." That's a fortune?
SUSAN. Whew. Heavy.

SELINA. Someone at the cookie factory's been working overtime.
*SUSAN. (*Looks into food container.*) Want some more?
SELINA. I'm stuffed.
SUSAN. All in all I'd call that a pretty shitty meal.
SELINA. It's better than I could do.
PAUL. (*Off.*) What time is it?
SUSAN. Ten past.
SELINA. Is he really serious about the job?
SUSAN. Why would he joke about something like that?
SELINA. He's already got two editors working for him. I don't see why he needs me.
SUSAN. 'Cause Bert's a jerk. Paul ought to fire him but he won't so he's gonna need someone else around who really knows what they're doing. Look, it's a big deal. First feature film. He doesn't want to fuck it up.
SELINA. I thought he didn't have it yet. Isn't that why he's going to California?
SUSAN. That's just a formality. He already knows definitely they want him, but there's this whole ritual you have to do . . . meet the director . . . meet the producer . . . sit around for a few days snorting coke. That's how they do business.
SELINA. I've never worked on a feature.
PAUL. (*Off.*) What time is it?
SUSAN. Quarter past. I wish he'd get a watch. Listen, I know you're worried. It's a big move. I mean I was terrified when I came to New York the first time. Remember my show . . . ?
SELINA. The Space Portraits?
SUSAN. Right. Jesus, the things I didn't know about photography. It feels like about a million years ago.

* (The scene can start here if you prefer)