

THE LAST OF
PUBLIC ACCESS

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Story by

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SOUND: The whirling of an old VCR. A TAPE is slid into the slot. A TV SCREEN FLICKERS TO LIFE...

A BURST OF STATIC SENDS US TO --

INT. 'SOCKY'S PUPPET HOUSE' SET - UNKNOWN TIME

OLD VHS FOOTAGE: We're watching a RECORDING of a LOCAL PUBLIC ACCESS KID'S TELEVISION SHOW. The SHOW'S TITLE appears on screen, in a bright, but very cheap font, followed by MUSIC:

SOCKY'S PUPPET HOUSE

A PRE-RECORDED CHORUS OF CHILDREN CHEER with delight.

When the TITLE FADES, we PAN TO FIND the very fake, very handmade facade of SOCKY'S HOUSE - All made of Cardboard.

In walks the HOST: ANDY.

He's all smiles, in a business casual suit & tie (*like Mr. Rogers on a Budget*) - but underneath his warm, welcoming appearance, there's something brewing. A ticking time bomb.

But for the moment, Andy couldn't look happier.

ANDY

Hi-hi-hi, everyone! Welcome to
Socky's Puppet House!

The Choir of Children cheer: "YAAAAY!!!". Andy smiles warmly.

ANDY (CONT'D)

I'm Andy and I'm so, so glad you
could all make it for today's show -
it's an important one
because...*unfortunately*...it'll be
Socky's last.

The Children cry out: "NOOO!!". Andy nods, saddened but caring.

ANDY (CONT'D)

I know, I know. I'm sad too. But
there's an important lesson to be
learned - for when things come to
an end...

Andy trails off for a second, thinking - something slightly out of character - but quickly recovers - Smiling wide again.

ANDY (CONT'D)
 ... But we can get to that later.
 What's important now, on our last
 adventure together, is to have a
 fun time. Do you want to have a fun
 time?

The Children: "YES!!".

ANDY (CONT'D)
 (sly)
 Do you want to see Socky?
 (off them going apeshit)
 WELL LETS BRING HIM OUT!! On the
 count of three, let's call him out!
 Ready? ONE...TWO...THREE!! SOCKY!!!

The Children join in, at the top of their lungs: "SOCKY!!!".

We PAN OVER to SOCKY'S HOUSE, where a facade window is cut
 out (perfect place for a puppet to come out). Nothing is
 there. Socky is nowhere to be seen. A long moment of silence.

PAN BACK to Andy, who's unsure of what's taking so long.

ANDY (CONT'D)
 Socky? Everyone's waiting... come
 out... Socky!?

Andy looks to the camera, confused, then back to Socky's
 House. He knocks on the facade, causing it to shake too much.
 (It's cheap). Nothing happens. Socky isn't there.

ANDY (CONT'D)
 Um. So... no Socky?

Andy looks to someone off-screen: *what's going on?*

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
 I dunno... I dunno.

ANDY
 (a whisper)
 Where's Harry?

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
 I dunno. I don't think he showed.

ANDY
 (beat, stunned)
 What do you mean he didn't show!?
 It's OUR LAST SHOW!

The Director doesn't know what to say.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Where is he? He was literally just here 20 minutes ago.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
He might be out back-

ANDY
Can you go get him?

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Yeah, yeah.
(to a PA)
Go get Harry for me.

We can hear footsteps running off.

DIRECTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(to Andy)
Should we keep rolling?

Andy sighs, thinks for a moment, then nods/shrugs:

ANDY
Yeah, okay, just keep it going.
We'll, uh... just edit it down.

Andy begins pacing around the set. The camera begins to lazily track with him as he walks. We ZOOM into a MEDIUM CLOSE-UP. Andy is clearly fed up. That much is obvious.

ANDY (CONT'D)
This is unbelievable. Un-be-lievable. I mean, does he not care? He's a co-creator for christsakes! He's the star of the show! I made it that way! ... It was my idea for there to be a sock in the first place - Socky's on T-shirt's because of me, damnit! But NOOOO, Harry decides not to show up during our last fucking hoorah.

Andy stops for a moment, runs a hand through his hair.

ANDY (CONT'D)
This is the only thing people in the ass-backwards town will remember! Who'll teach their kids now!? NOT THEM!... Who cares if our last season got low ratings, the children LOVE ME - I made them connect emotionally with a piece of fucking felt!

(MORE)

ANDY (CONT'D)

I made them believe a sock loved them more than their parents ever could - I DID THAT. All Harry did was provide a hand and a voice. I... I did it all...

Andy sits down on the ground. Alone. Pathetic. We ZOOM in on his face. He's exhausted from ranting. He catches his breath.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Can, uh... Can someone get an ETA on that PA with Harry?

Before anyone of the stunned crew can answer that-

BOOM!

A BACK DOOR swings open and somebody stumbles in. We can't see them at the moment, but we can see Andy track their movement with his eyes. He can't believe it. Andy stands up.

HARRY (O.S.)

(groggy/drunk)

Sorry! Sorry... I'm here. Sorry. Hi every(BURPS)one! Socky made it in-

PA (O.S.)

I found him down the street like this, had to drag him.

HARRY, a total mess, comes into view. Stumbling, drunk, towards the Socky's House facade. He moves behind it.

Andy is still stunned.

ANDY

Harry... there's low and then there's late for your own puppet show.

HARRY (O.S.)

I'm ready! Let's go!

ANDY

Where's Socky?

Harry, SOCKY PUPPET on his hand, sticks it out the window opening. He starts animating it.

HARRY (O.S.)

(IN SOCKY'S VOICE)

I'm ready, Andy-buddy!

ANDY
Harry, we need to talk first.

HARRY
C'mon, man, I'm here. I'm here!

ANDY
I should fire your ass right here
and now. Do you any idea-

HARRY (O.S.)
(SQWEALING SOCKY VOICE)
ROLL THE FUCKING CAMERAS, ANDY!

Andy looks to the director, shrugs and nods: *go ahead*. The CAMERA returns to it's FIRST POSITION. Andy clears his throat. Tries to remember his last couple lines. And then-

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
And... ACTION!

BAM! - Andy's back in character.

ANDY
Socky! I'm so glad you're home!

SOCKY
Ha-ha-hiya, everybody! I hope
everyone is having a- hhugg- Happy
Day! (BURPS).
(briefly in Harry's voice)
Sorry, my bad.
(back to Socky's voice)
Ya'll wanna have some fuuuuuun!?

The Children are back: "YAAAY!!".

SOCKY (CONT'D)
(with indigestion)
Jesus christ. Ya'll are so loud.
(BURPS). Sorry. What's our first
game of the epi- (BURPS)- sode!?

Suddenly, a SPLATTER of VOMIT shoots out the window opening and onto the back of Socky's head. The crew groan in disgust.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
CUT! CUT IT THERE!

We can hear Harry continue to vomit from behind Socky's House. Andy just stands there. Thinking. Numb to it all.

ANDY
(to himself)
Maybe ending it is for the best.

And with that Andy walks off-screen.

Harry keeps rocking Socky's House as he tries to get up. It proceeds to FALL OVER and HIT A GIANT STUDIO LIGHT. *WHAM!!*

The Studio Light SMASHES ON THE GROUND. The Bulb EXPLODES INTO SPARKS, which then **IGNITES THE ALCOHOL-FILLED VOMIT** on the floor. The FIRE SPREADS and SPREADS... The WHOLE SET (and Harry) **IS ENGULFED IN FLAMES**. The CAMERA FALLS OVER. *CRACK!*

The crew burns. Harry is still vomiting, even while on fire.

STATIC.
BLACKOUT.