

Scene From
How To Steal A Picasso
 (1W – 1 M)

JOHNNY SMITH - He gave up art to become a lawyer and regrets it. He has secrets.

CASEY SMITH - A rough/tough, street-wise, tattooed artist whose hero is Banksy

LOCATION - Front steps of a house in Hamtramck, Michigan

(Lights up. On the worn out stoop, CASEY and JOHNNY nurse beers. She's a brazen street-wise street artist wearing a "Bruce Springsteen Isn't My Boss" t-shirt, he's a well dressed yuppie - you'd never guess they're twins. The stoop is littered with used paint spray cans.)

CASEY
(Enthusiastically embellishing)

So he's got me in cuffs--!

JOHNNY

Handcuffs?

CASEY

His knee jammed so deep in my groin I'm pissin' a little!

JOHNNY

Shit.

CASEY

So, POW I kick him in the balls! But then the other chokeholds me! So I do this fantastic Batman-like spin move and WHAM I launch his dick into deep space!

JOHNNY

Holy shit.

CASEY

But then the first one regains consciousness and attacks me with mace! Totally blind, I still manage to do this amazing judo kick! And it looks like I'm about to escape when, ZAP! The first one fires his Taser!

JOHNNY

What's that like?

CASEY

It's like hitting your fucking funny bone so fucking hard you fucking shit your brains out!

JOHNNY

Casey, you never told me this.

CASEY

And I'm like convulsing and crapping myself but I still manage to pull the dart out with my teeth. But then the other one fires his Taser into my brain and I'm about to pass out, when the second one says, "Hold on a sec! *(Beat)* This one's different, she's got talent!"

JOHNNY

Huh?

CASEY

And the other cop stops tasing me and says, "I know what you mean. Her work really resonates with me."

JOHNNY

You're shitting me.

CASEY

And the first one says, "There's a conceptual symbiotic wholeness about her work."

JOHNNY

Wait a minute, this is bullshit.

CASEY

And half blind and hemorrhaging I yell, "Don't you see, we artists are attempting to take the universe, the timeless, lonely, incomprehensible universe, and freeze it in order to find purpose and meaning, what might be called the soul of the moment!" And the first cop says, "My god she's right! Maybe it's not graffiti – Maybe it's art!"

JOHNNY

(Not believing her)

You're telling me no charges were filed?

CASEY

They even gave me back my spray paint. Although they did tell me that the next time they catch me tagging cop cars they'll break my legs.

JOHNNY

You are so full of shit.

CASEY

Top that. Go ahead top it.

JOHNNY

I can't top it, it's bullshit.

CASEY

So I win?

JOHNNY

No.

Then top it.

CASEY

JOHNNY
(Thinking)

Okay. Ah. All right. I'm in New York. And I'm on this blind date with this sexy B.Y.U. grad.

CASEY

As in Brigham Young?

JOHNNY

Yeah. And she tells me she wants to meet at the Museum of Modern Art in front of this Picasso.

CASEY

Which one?

JOHNNY

It's called "Girl Before A Mirror."

CASEY

I know that painting. I've studied that painting.

JOHNNY

I've not only studied it, give me two hours and I'll paint you an exact duplicate.

CASEY
(With an ironic chuckle)

I know you could.

JOHNNY

So I walk up, introduce myself and without taking her eyes off the painting she makes this rambling declaration about how she's "devastated by the kinetic impulses of Picasso's electromagnetic gesture-field."

CASEY

You're shitting me.

JOHNNY

And then nothing.

CASEY

What do you mean, nothing?

JOHNNY

She just stands there staring at the painting. Two minutes go by. Three. I try to talk, she waves me off.

CASEY

And this is a blind date?

JOHNNY

Never seen her before in my life.

CASEY

Did she know you're a painter?

JOHNNY

Was a painter - Failed to mention it. At the five-minute mark I begin to wonder if she'd had an aneurysm. I mean, how long are you supposed to stare at a painting? What's the proper number of minutes one's supposed to ponder a Picasso? At the eight minute mark--.

CASEY

(Impressed)

You're kidding.

JOHNNY

She's still staring at the painting and I begin to think... Maybe I don't want to get laid that badly.

CASEY

(Laughing)

You shit.

JOHNNY

At the nine-minute mark, I gently ease to the next painting and she says, "That's it? That's all you're willing to *invest* in cubism?"

CASEY

"Invest?"

JOHNNY

Yeah. And I say, look lady, I'm happy to *invest*, but there's this Jackson Pollock in the next room and unless we leave now we won't be able to stare at it for three and a half hours still have enough time to go to your place and screw our brains out before midnight.

CASEY

Being a total shit in the first ten minutes of a blind date - that always works.

JOHNNY

She accuses me of being a "shallow jerk."

CASEY

(Kindly)

She got that right.

JOHNNY

I call her a "charlatan."

CASEY

Oh Jeez.

JOHNNY

Security is called.

CASEY

(Laughing)

You're kidding.

JOHNNY
And we're unceremoniously escorted from the building.

CASEY
So you never got laid.

JOHNNY
Oh, no, we went to her place and screwed like bunnies - I mean she *was* a B.Y.U. grad.

(They laugh.)

JOHNNY
Top that.

CASEY
Shit, I've missed you.

JOHNNY
Go ahead top it.

CASEY
Tomorrow, I'll top it tomorrow.

JOHNNY
No, today.

CASEY
Tomorrow I'm unveiling my greatest work of subversive art ever. Something Banksy and Karen Finley would be proud of. Then I'll top it. What time is it?

JOHNNY
Don't know, almost five?

CASEY
Mom'll be home soon. Drink faster.

JOHNNY
Have you thought about my offer?

CASEY
You weren't serious.

JOHNNY
Why not?

CASEY
You are offering *me* a job.

JOHNNY
Top that.

CASEY
I haven't seen you in what...?

JOHNNY

Don't know, four years?

CASEY

And you want me to come work at your big ass, fancy, New York City law firm. You expect me to believe that shit?

JOHNNY

It'd have to be entry level, some meaningless secretarial bullshit, but I can pull strings.

CASEY

You are aware that I currently work as a night security guard. And that I was fired from my previous employment for "gross misconduct."

JOHNNY

(Amused)

I'd expect no less.

CASEY

And that you have to do quite a lot to be fired for gross misconduct from Taco Bell.

JOHNNY

How about if I throw in a little signing bonus. Say, a thousand bucks.

*(JOHNNY fans a wad of hundred dollar bills in his wallet.
That stops her.)*

CASEY

Holy shit.

JOHNNY

There's more where that came from.

CASEY

Put that away, we don't do things like that in this neighborhood.

(JOHNNY puts it back in his wallet.)

JOHNNY

Just want to help my older sister.

CASEY

By four minutes, older by four.

JOHNNY

Take the money.

CASEY

No, I don't want your ill-gotten gains.

JOHNNY

It's not what you think. It's legit.

CASEY
(*Kindly*)

There's more to life than a paycheck you capitalist pig.

JOHNNY
(*Kindly*)

Like what commie bastard.

CASEY

Like expressing myself.

JOHNNY

By spray-painting cop cars?

(CASEY points at the beautiful Poetry Flags strung from the door. Please read set description to understand Poetry Flags.)

CASEY

Like poetry flags.

JOHNNY

Is that what you call'em?

CASEY

People walk by and I invite them to adopt a little Maya Angelou, e.e. Cummings, Sylvia Plath.

JOHNNY

Art for art's sake, huh?

CASEY

No. Art for art's sake is bullshit! Art should shock and awe! Art should take the world by the throat and shout, "Hey you, yeah you, walking down the street, pull your head out of your ass and read a little fucking Sylvia Plath asshole!"

JOHNNY

And the old man puts up with this?

CASEY

He doesn't define me. (*Admiring her creation*) Like'em? Ozzy helped me put'em up.

JOHNNY

Christ, you're not still with Ozzy Buckowski?

CASEY

Hell no. We broke up a long time ago.

JOHNNY

Good.

CASEY

But we still sleep together twice a week. Although, I am getting tired of his Bertolt Brecht sex.

JOHNNY

Bertolt Brecht sex?

CASEY

Yeah. We have sex but during it he constantly critiques himself - It's very alienating.