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Video manuscript:

Funny story really. Lynn came home one day after painting class and showed her painting of a pear on a table to me and her parents Willie and Kate.

She told us to be honest about what we thought of it. When she showed it I had nothing else to say but: "Babe: It doesn't speak to me...next!"

Willie liked it – it's a very happy pear he said - looks good enough to eat but Lynn was not going to settle for that – she explained to us that it was supposed to be about the conflicting disharmony between man and nature.

There was a moment of silence then and I had to give her a word of the wise. Forget about art. Stick to plan A and throw yourself at the first rich man to come along.

Lynn got a bit upset with me and tried to lecture me about art – but hey honey I had a nodding acquaintance with art myself – I was quite the artist in my times. I could paint any canvas any colour for 29.95. No ops – no extras.

That's when Willie mockingly suggested that I rekindled my interest in art and spent some of my idle hours with painting. Kate wasn't late to add – you know the idle hours means between you wake up and fall asleep. HAHA – courtesy laugh - but boy was I was going to show them. I accepted Willie's offer!

I set myself up a studio in the garage – you know the garage where I crashlanded with my spaceship. At first I was feeling insecure and the paintings didn't work the way I wanted them to. While I was painting Willie came out into the garage – sorry studio - where he found me shouting: "I'm worthless – I'm nothing – I'm a disappointment to my parents" Willie looked a bit tired as it was late at night. I think my Wagner music had kept him awake.

I told him to spit on me as I hated my own paintings...well then I did at least. He wouldn't. He had just taken an antihistamine but otherwise he would happily have spit on me. That would have helped – I needed to suffer for my art to continue.

Willie then left the garage – sorry studio – and left me out there all by myself leaving me with my weary thoughts and self loathing. I needed to do something to get back on the horse and make some art. I tried to torture myself by breaking my thumbs. Aw aw aw – that hurt like hell I tell ya but by using moderate physical pressure I was able to paint and paint and paint. For eight straight hours. Willie took my boom box when he left the garage...oops there I did it again – studio of course - so the only music I had to keep me going was myself whistling Wagner for the entire time. Quite an amazing task considering I have no lips but the music gave me inspiration.

After I was done suffering and had finished my masterpiece I was excited I tell ya. I took it inside the house and called for Willie, Kate, Lynn and Brian and told them to get ready for the unveiling – ladies and gentlemen: "Welcome. Please no flash photography and check your guns at the door" I shouted.

I also gave the crowd the artist biography: *He was just 17 – you know what I mean. And the way he looked was way beyond compare...*but before I could finish Kate told me to just unveil the damn thing...Americans right? Rush rush rush...

TADAAA - I tore off the veil and they were flabbergasted at what they saw. Kate said it looked like something she saw in traffic school. I was glad she didn't ridicule me.

Lynn on the other hand mocked me: "Sorry babe – it doesn't speak to me....NEXT!"

Pfft – what does she know...she wouldn't even take it to her teacher Mr Ruben who happened to be a famous artist. I really would have to have him judge my work. She wouldn't take it just because I wasn't in his class she said.

I wasn't going to let her off the hook so easily. That painting could be my big break – my one way ticket out of that dump – FOREVER! You know what – she just wanted to make her pear cry out for the loss of humanity. How could she? She doesn't have a tormented soul.

All of a sudden it struck me – why not put the painting in Lynn's carrier bag and when she opens it in art class they will all see my masterpiece. Maybe they will call me maestro? At least that's what I thought at the time.

It turned out that after a look see, Mr. Ruben, Lynn's art teacher, was amazed at the work. He showed it to the entire class. Lynn tried to explain that it was an accident but Lynn told me that Mr. Ruben had been firm and said: There are no mistakes...this work is brave...raw...but inspired. He even called it a very good work. Lynn later told me that the painting was upside down on the easel... but that didn't matter. This painting was speaking from the soul Mr. Ruben had continued and he said the painting combined the stylistic elements of Pollock, Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. All the great ones.

Funny thing is Mr. Ruben hated Lynn's pear painting – looks like something from a model home in the valley had said. Lynn wasn't too amused. Haaah – she needs a tormented soul.

When Lynn came back from art class she was furious of me – just because I snuck my painting in her bag. Phew – talk about being selfish.

But it worked...”Oh joy, oh rapture – my days of pain and suffering has paid off” I knew it! He loved it.” I exclaimed. Willie and Kate were sitting in the living room with us and the only thing Kate said before she left the room was: “And so the breakdown of human civilisation begins...” What did I care. I was finally an artist!

I went to the studio and painted away – painting after painting. I was inspired and needed a lot of supplies. Willie went to buy some but it took ages before he came back to the studio. I couldn’t work like that. It was all wrong. He couldn’t say where he had been. I was not amused. Leaving me to wait...I would not stand for that kind of incompetence I told him. I had to get out of there and with Mr. Ruben’s help I was going to be famous. Ha ha ha (mockingly) – I could be right up there with Gauguin, Picasso – we could hang together and do lunch. These guys always gets the best tables. Willie wasn’t sure that I was going to have lunch with Gauguin any time soon though. Ignorant.

I could really imagine it – people would drop my name at dinner parties. And we all know what comes with that kind of fame: Greeting cards - coffee mugs – that’s what art is all about. Just ask Garfield – if you can ever get him on the phone.

The day after Lynn took another painting to art class and showed it to Mr. Ruben. It turns out Mr. Ruben wasn’t interested in Lynn’s work but wanted to ask Lynn out for a date. He even invited her to a gallery opening – his own - and I quote: “I’ve heard mine is pretty good”. Haah – talk about modesty!

Lynn asked him if what he said about her work being brave and raw was just to get her on a date or if he actually liked her work. The “artist” tried to talk his way of the awkward situation by saying that like was just a subjective term. Art is art. There’s no good – no bad and my opinion shouldn’t matter he continued.

Lynn tried to explain him that he was the teacher and should have an opinion – to which he just said I’m no good teacher. He got that right. Hitting on Lynn – how dare he.

I was in the living room getting ready for my first retrospective: “ALF – the early weeks”, when Lynn came back home from art class and I immediately detected a level 3 smug alert.

“Guess who’s career is in the toilet” she said...Mr. Ruben never liked your work. He just wanted to go out with me....I was shocked. “My life suddenly had no meaning...I couldn’t believe it”. “Back to normal” Willie said – always a patronizing comment when you are down the most. No greeting cards or coffee mugs – or dinners with Gauguin. Darn!

I was just so depressed I went into the studio for some self pity. I wanted to be alone but Lynn came in and tried to cheer me up. I had started on a fresco but with my shattered career all I could do was snack on some of my early works. The pasta painting was good.

Lynn didn’t like the painting but as she said that just because art doesn’t bring an artist money or fame there’s no reason to quit. A lot of great artists never lived to see their own success.

If you like to paint you should paint she said and she encouraged me to continue just for the pleasure of doing it. Sure more mediocrity to the world. Haaah – what could could that do.

And yet I decided to finished that cockamimie fresco and for ages – or at least that’s how long it felt, I was lying under the ceiling with backpains painting like a mad man.

It wasn’t very lucrative and to be honest it was pretty empty without the promise of cash so I decided to quit painting after all and let it all be damned.

And so you may think why is he telling this story?

Well I’m actually trying to explain to you the punchline for the joke that goes: “How many artists does it take to change a light bulb?” “100 – 1 to change the bulb and 99 other artists to tell him it looks good”

HAH!







