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BERNARD from SEXUAL PERVERSITY IN CHICAGO

By David Mamet

BERNARD

So I am over at the Commonwealth, in the pancake house off the lobby, and I am working on a stack of those raisin and nut jobs...and I'm reading the paper, and I'm reading, and I'm casing the pancake house, and the usual shot, am I right?"

While eating pancakes, in the downstairs restaurant in a cheap rooming house or hostel, Bernard is looking for any pretty girls in the restaurant, while pretending to read the paper. "the usual shot, am I right?" means that this is what Danny should expect him to do – always on the look- out for a pretty girl to chat-up. Notice the punctuation. Constant commas indicate the quick, staccato rhythm of Mamet's writing which is a feature of working class Chicago speech.

"So who walks in over to the cash register but this chick... nineteen, twenty year old chick and she wants a packet of Viceroys. Gets the smokes, and does this number about how she forgot her purse up in her room."

"does this number" indicates that Bernard doesn't believe that she actually forgot her 'purse' (we would say 'handbag'). He suggests it is an excuse to make it clear that she has a room in the hostel if Bernard is interested in her.

"Yeah, up in her room...was she a pro? Well, at this point we don't know. So anyway, I go over and ask can I front her for the smokes, and she says she couldn't, and then she says Well, alright, and would I like to join her in a cup of coffee...So down we sit and get to talking. This, That, blah, blah, blah, and 'Come up to my room and I'll pay you back for the cigarettes'...Was she a pro? So at this point we don't know. Pro, semi- pro, Betty co-ed from College, anybody's ballgame."

The girl's initial refusal of Bernard's offer to pay for her cigarettes and her seemingly innocent suggestion of coffee keeps up Danny's curiosity as to whether the girl is a prostitute, just makes a little pocket money from having sex or is just an everyday student from a co-educational college. The outcome of all this is as uncertain as a close baseball game.

"So, anyway, up we go. Fifth floor on the alley and it's 'Sit down, you wanna drink?' 'What you got?' , 'Bourbon', 'Fine'. And goddam if she doesn't lay half a rock on me for the cigarettes...But then what shot does she up and pull? The shot she is pulling is the following two things: A) She says 'I think I want to take a shower' and B) She says 'And then let's fuck'...nineteen, twenty...and was she a pro?...so at this point I don't know. But I do say I'll join her in the shower, if she has no objections.'

The room is on an upper floor, at the back, looking out on an alley, so probably a cheap one. But to his surprise she gives him the money for the cigarettes.

"So into the old shower. And does this broad have a body? Are you kidding me? The tits...the legs...the ass on this broad...young broad, young ass...And lathering her...and drop the soap...This, that and we get out. Towelling off, each of us in his or her full glory. So while we're towelling off, I flick the towel at her, very playfully, and by accident it catches her a good one on the ass, and thwack, a big red mark...So I'm all sorry and so forth. But what does this broad do but let out a squeal of pleasure and relief that would fucking kill a horse. So what the hell I am liberal. So I look around figuring to follow in my footsteps, and what is handy but this little G.E. clock radio. So I pick the mother up and heave it at her. It catches her across the shoulder blades, and we've got this long welt...does it draw blood?... at this point, no. So what does she do? She says 'Wait a Minute' and she crawls under the bed. From under the bed she pulls this suitcase and from out of the suitcase comes this World War Two Flak suit

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