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## Upside Down

by Candida Lloyd

I leave the police station with my black hoody up over my head and my hands deep in my pockets. I know what you're thinking – drugs, assault, theft. But It's not what it seems. I can explain, but I have to go back to the beginning...

Fresh out of film school, I'd spent weeks preparing my showreel and hassling production companies for a break. I loitered outside the offices of Channel Funny in the hope of catching their director who was always on the phone or dashing off in a cab. Eventually he barked at me, "well you're a persistent little fucker aren't you! Have you got a car?"

"Yes!"

"Well then, you're our new runner. Come in on Monday."

I sat in on a production meeting where comedians pitched ideas for a new comedy series. Testosterone filled the air and I understood for the first-time how humour was a form of aggression. The comedians competed loudly for attention. One idea was about a couple who start out on a romantic date; various locations – restaurant, cinema, bowling alley, but who end up having a huge row and trashing the place. The director and other comedians laughed hard at this idea. I forced a laugh too.

Another was about an artist selling his paintings in the centre of town – like the ones you get in European cities displaying landscapes or offering to do portrait sketches. But in this this case, his would be "ABSOLUTE SHITE!". The comedians killed themselves with laughter.

I drove manically around town gathering comedy props needed for the shoot, including a child's toy that made a mooing sound and lots of sugar glass for the unhappy dating couple to smash.

I made paintings in bright colours for the sketch about the artist. I used my left hand and folded them in half whilst the paint was wet to make those butterfly paintings you see in nursery school.

The shoot consisted of long days hanging around various locations. Occasionally there would be an urgent need for me to attend to something: the child's toy has sopped mooing! More batteries! NOW! Don't keep the crew waiting!

We were running behind schedule and I was instructed to go ahead to the next location and set up ready for the crap artist skit. I parked illegally, no spaces, and ran into the town square, paintings in one hand and take-away coffee cup in the other. I laid the paintings out on the ground in front of me and waited.

"Those are crap mate!" someone shouted.

A police woman came over and told me that I needed to move on. I tried to explain that I really couldn't and that if I did I'd lose my job and the director would kill me. At that moment woman walked over, stuck a fiver in the now empty coffee cup and gave me a pitying look.

"Right! You're coming with me to the station," said the police woman

So, there you have it. From budding film-maker to petty criminal in a few easy stages.

Candida Lloyd