

INT. BAR

ANDREW sits across from his old teacher FLETCHER who invited Andrew to join him. Andrew takes a drink.

FLETCHER
I don't know if you heard, uh, I'm
not at Schaefer anymore.

ANDREW
Yeah, I did hear that. Did you
quit?

Fletcher knows it was Andrew who had him ousted.

FLETCHER
Not exactly. Some parents got a kid
from Sean Casey's year, I think, to
say some things about me. Although,
why anybody would have anything
other than peaches and cream to say
about me is a mystery.

Andrew smiles and laughs.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)
That's a good laugh, right?

ANDREW
I'm sorry.

They talk over each other.

FLETCHER
I get it.

ANDREW
No, I'm sorry.

FLETCHER
I know I made enemies. I'm
conducting in a while... they
brought back the JVC Fest this
year. They got me opening in a
couple of weeks with a pro band.

ANDREW
That's great.

FLETCHER
Yeah... it's all right.
(thoughtful pause)
(MORE)

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

I don't think people understood what it was I was doing at Schaefer. I wasn't there to conduct. Any fucking moron can wave his arms and keep people in tempo.

Andrew smiles.

ANDREW

True.

FLETCHER

I was there to push people beyond what's expected of them. I believe that is an absolute necessity. Otherwise we're depriving the world of the next Louie Armstrong; the next Charlie Parker. I told you that story about how Charlie Parker became Charlie Parker, right?

ANDREW

Yeah... Charlie Parker's a young kid, pretty good on the sax, gets up to play at a cutting session and he fucks it up.

FLETCHER

Exactly. And Joe Jones throws a cymbal at his head and nearly decapitates him for it... Parker is laughed off stage. Cries himself to sleep that night, but the next morning, what does he do?

ANDREW

Gets up and practices.

FLETCHER

And he practices with one goal in mind... never to be laughed at again. And a year later he goes back to The Reno and he steps up on that stage and he plays the best mother fucking solo the world has ever heard.

They sit and think about that for a moment.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

So imagine if Jones had just said, "Well, that's okay Charlie. Eh... that was all right.

(MORE)

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Good job." And Charlie thinks to himself, well I did do a pretty good job. End of story. No Bird. That, to me, is an absolute tragedy. But that's just what the world wants, now. People wonder why jazz is dying.

Fletcher takes a drink.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

I'll tell ya, man, and every Starbucks "jazz" album just proves my point, really. There are no two words in the English language more harmful than "good job".

ANDREW

But is there a line? You know, maybe you go too far and you discourage the next Charlie Parker from ever becoming Charlie Parker?

FLETCHER

No, man. No. Because the next Charlie Parker would never be discouraged.

ANDREW

Yeah.

FLETCHER

The truth is, Andrew, I... never really had a Charlie Parker. But I tried. I actually fucking tried. And that's more than most people ever do. And I will never apologize for how I tried.

Andrew stares at Fletcher as Fletcher looks away, both pondering completely different things.

END SCENE