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CHALLENGER from THE COMEDIANS by Trevor Griffiths

Challenger:

Aye well, what went wrong there? There was a distinct smell of cock-up on the air about half-way through. I've got a note about a Pakistani on a rape charge...Aye, that's it. What happened then?

Was it new material or something?

Well it was horrible. The cardinal sin for any performer is embarrassing the audience. You had 'em doing up their shoelaces and picking up old beer mats. (pause) I don't know. It's a nice idea, but you need the material, my God, if you're gonna carry it off.

Liked the song, nice sentiment. Quite catchy really... George McBrain. Cracking opening. Bang. No messing. Liked it. Lot of sex but well handled, if you see what I mean. Near the knuckle but not half-way up the armpit. A question of taste. Knowing when to draw back. Even with yobboes like that lot down there. (pause) Quite subtle but not too subtle. 'Tell him you've got a headache...' 'Floating handbags'...Yes, yes...Good character, I believed it, it was all of a piece. Confident, a bit aggressive, like that. Like the joke about the thick Seamus. See, that's what I mean, don't push your own particular prejudice, you're there on their terms, not your own. Good ending. See, it was downbeat, but it was firm. You know, diminuendo. Well thought out...

Gethin Price. (another pause) Mmmmmmm. Mmmmmmm. Not a lot to say about your piece, Price. You have a certain talent maybe as a mime, something like that...What you did tonight just...won't do. Music hall maybe, but there is no music hall...You wanna be a comedian, you'd better start somewhere else, there's no way you'll get started with what you've got. Not viable. You've got to speak to the audience, for God's sake. (pause) Personally, I found the content of your act...how shall I put it?...repulsive. And aggressively unfunny. If you want to get on, lad you'd better sort a few problems out first. Get some distance, see what I mean. Don't give us your hang-ups straight. Too hot to handle. Four golden rules. For all of you, though some more than others. One. All audiences are thick, collectively, but it's a bad comedian who lets 'em know it. Two. Two laughs are better than one. Always. Three. You don't have to love the people, but the people have to love you. Four. Sell yourself. If you're giving it away, it won't be worth

having. (pause) All right, I coulda left this till I got back south, but I'm not that sorta person. At the moment, on tonight, I'm interested in just two of you...you and you...I've got forms here...enrolment. When these've been received, there'll be an agent to look after your business and develop your career. Don't give up your jobs just now, mind. There'll be time enough for that when you're getting the bookings. For the rest of you, I'll see you again. Drop me a line, I'm approachable. Just as long as you've learnt your lessons from tonight, that is.

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