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EDDIE from THE COMEDIANS by Trevor Griffiths

EDDIE

It's not the jokes. It's what lies behind 'em. It's the attitude. A real comedian—that's a daring man. He *dares* to see what his listeners shy away from, fear to express. And what he sees is a sort of truth about people, and about their situation, about what hurts or terrifies them, about what's hard, above all, about what they *want*. A joke releases the tension, says the unsayable, any joke pretty well. But a true joke, a comedian's joke, has to do more than release tension, it has to *liberate* the will and the desire, it has to *change the situation*. (pause) There's very little won't take a joke. But when a joke bases itself upon a distortion- (looking at PRICE, deliberately) – a stereotype perhaps – and gives the lie to the truth so as to win a laugh and stay in favour, we've moved away from a comic art and into the world of "entertainment" and slick success. (pause) You're better than that, damn you. And even if you're not, you should bloody well want to be.

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