

Waste of Time

by

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Cast of Characters

BYRON: 14
MOTHER: 40's
FATHER: 40's

Place
Long Island

Time
Saturday Morning

Setting: A large living room to a brand new suburban home.

At Rise: Byron sits on the living room couch and his parents sit on the opposite couch facing him.

BYRON: I want to talk to you guys because I need for you both to understand me better.

MOTHER: What is it now Byron?

BYRON: You see? You're already starting out negative.

FATHER: Just tell us what's on your mind.

(BEAT)

BYRON: ...I want to start my own business.

MOTHER (to FATHER): You see?

FATHER (to BYRON): What business?

MOTHER: Bikes! What do you think it is?

BYRON: I want to start my own BMX business.

MOTHER: You are in school!

BYRON: So?

MOTHER: You are only fourteen years old.

BYRON: I can do both.

FATHER: You can't do both.

MOTHER: How are you going to do both, Byron? You can barely get good grades as it is. You're practically failing math and you expect to build a business? You need math skills for that.

BYRON: No one uses algebra or calculus. Basic math is all I need to know.

FATHER: Do you know about balance sheets? Income statements?

BYRON: No.

FATHER: What about incorporating a business, do you know anything about that?

BYRON: NO.

MOTHER: So how are you going to start a bike business?

BYRON: Online. I've already been building my own website and I've already built over fifteen bikes.

MOTHER: The trouble with you is that you don't focus. You are all over the place. You spend way too much time on building bikes when you should be focused on your studies.

BYRON: But my studies aren't going to get me anywhere.

MOTHER: They will get you into a good college.

BYRON: I don't want to go to college!

FATHER: Stop your shouting. You are going to college.

BYRON: I don't want to.

FATHER: You have to go and you will go or I'll break your legs and you'll never ride a bike again.

BYRON: I can't talk to either of you without insults or threats. This is my life and I should be able to live it how I want to live it. I hate school! I don't care about geometry or biology or all the other crap they are trying to cram into my brain. It's useless information. All I'm learning is how to temporarily memorize stuff I have no interest in, in order to pass tests! I'm not learning anything valuable that I can use in my own life. It's bullshit! Why can't I learn the stuff I want to learn? Why can't I follow my own interests? Why does everyone think I'm wasting my time? You both don't see what makes me happy, you just want me to follow rules and be miserable like everybody else. Right? So I can be some robot who gets in some assembly line and pumps out a lousy life. I'm different. You both call me stupid and I'm not stupid. You show no faith in me. I built all those bikes with my own brains and my own two hands. No one taught me. I taught myself! And you call me dumb? Just because I don't get straight A's like Tiffany or Jason. So what?! What have they ever done on their own? Nothing!

FATHER: Do you have any customers?

MOTHER: Don't you dare encourage him!

FATHER: He's stated his case, let's hear him out.

MOTHER: I don't want to hear anymore of this nonsense. (MOTHER stands) This is absolutely ridiculous!

FATHER: Martha, please sit down...sit down.

(MOTHER sits)

Answer my questions Byron...do you have customers?

BYRON: I do.

FATHER: From where?

BYRON: Friends at school. There's a whole movement taking place right now. Everybody is getting into riding and friends of mine have seen my bikes and they want one and are willing to buy from me because they are cooler and cheaper.

MOTHER: You've turned our garage into your workshop. I want everything burned.

FATHER: Here's the deal...we need you to do good in school, at least pass. We can't have you flunk out. If you raise your grades, we'll allow you to start selling your bikes, but not until you raise your grades.

BYRON: I can do that.

MOTHER: I want you to get A's and B's.

BYRON: Dad just said as long as I pass.

FATHER: As long as you pass but aim higher. You won't get into a good college with just passing grades.

MOTHER: That's right. You will end up going to some public university. Your sister is in the tenth grade and she's already taking college classes and building her credits.

BYRON: Good for Tiffany.

MOTHER: And Jason is taking twelve grade math and he's only in the seventh grade. How does that make you look?

BYRON: I don't care how it makes me look, but you do.

MOTHER: That's why Jason teases you and I let him.

BYRON (sarcastic): Good!

FATHER: What makes you think you can start a bike business?

BYRON: Because I'm good at it and I have people wanting to buy my bikes. (beat) You know, I've been into this since I was a little kid.

MOTHER: Worst thing we could have bought him was a build your own bike kit.

FATHER: Your idea.

MOTHER: I know it was my freaking idea and it was a bad one! This is all my fault.

BYRON: Mom, why does it have to sound so terrible?

MOTHER: Because you are distracted from reality. What makes you think you are so special that you don't have to be like everyone else?

BYRON: Have you ever looked at the bikes I've built?

MOTHER: It's a pile of junk.

BYRON: That's what is in the garage. I keep the finished products in the shed.

FATHER: The shed? I told you not to use the shed.

BYRON: It's just for storage until I sell them.

FATHER: I don't want you keeping your bikes in the shed.

BYRON: Then I need to build another shed, so I can store my products.

MOTHER: No! You aren't taking up our yard, making a mockery of me.

BYRON: I need a place to keep them!

FATHER: Lower your voice, Byron. (to MOTHER) I'll let you use my shed for now until we see how things progress. If this project of yours fails, then we wouldn't have wasted anytime on building sheds and what have you.

BYRON: Thank you.

MOTHER: And how long do you imagine this enterprise of yours is going to last?

BYRON: I have no idea. All I can do is try.

MOTHER (to FATHER): We need to give him a cut off time.

FATHER: What do you have in mind?

MOTHER: End of summer. (to BYRON) Since we are already in May and the school year is almost up, we will allow you to do this business of yours throughout summer. We will make a determination by end of August as to where you stand with it. If you aren't making a substantial amount of money, it will be closed for good.

BYRON: Substantial? How do you measure substantial?

MOTHER: A thousand dollars a week.

BYRON: Are you kidding?

MOTHER: If you produce a thousand dollars a week in earnings then you can go full time and skip school.

FATHER: Martha?! Are you going crazy?

MOTHER: No, in fact, I'm going to destroy this problem once and for all because Byron will never make that much per week. It's impossible!

BYRON: That isn't fair.

MOTHER: You bet your ass isn't fair. Life isn't fair.

BYRON: Why can't I do good in school and build my business? Why is this so hard for you to understand?

MOTHER: Because your future isn't going to be making two wheeler bikes Byron, your future is going to be much more respected.

BYRON: Respected. There's that word I hate. I don't want to be a lawyer or a banker or whatever it is you and Dad want me to be. I want to do what I want to do.

FATHER: Watch it young man, that's enough.

BYRON: You just want to control me.

MOTHER: While you're under this roof and I am your mother, you have no choice.

BYRON: Jesus! I think i'm going to go mad if I live here any longer.

FATHER: Lift up your grades and we will take things from there. We need to see improvements and then we will have another meeting and if your grades have gone up, you can begin your business, not before.

BYRON: It's already May Dad, I can't do much to raise them by now.

FATHER: Are you headed for summer school?

BYRON: Maybe.

MOTHER: Oh, no!

FATHER: Listen, if you are expected to go to summer school than the entire deal is off.

BYRON: What are you talking about??

FATHER: Listen now, you failed to admit to me and your mother that you may be going to summer school and that's a problem.

BYRON: Dad, I won't go.

FATHER: If you do extra credit, extra homework, after school make ups, whatever it is you need to do to keep your butt from going to summer school and ONLY THEN will we allow you to start you bike business but if you are going to summer school, the deal is off.

BYRON: This sucks...I'm never gonna get anywhere listening to you both.

MOTHER: That's our offer, you take it or leave it.

BYRON: Fine! Fine!

FATHER: That's it now. We've discussed it.

(BYRON exits living room)

MOTHER: What do you think?

FATHER: I think we have a very bright boy on our hands.

MOTHER: You serious?

FATHER: I am...

END OF PLAY