**BAR MITZVAH SPEECH**

**FOR**

**STAN ROTHBART**

Andreas, today we're all here to celebrate **YOU** and your Bar Mitzvah... your passage into manhood.... but before you go back to hanging out with your friends and indulging in all of your fascinating... creative activities, I'd like to take a little time to pay you a **special tribute.**... (**If you want to make a little joke you can say**).... as if **that** doesn't happen every day!!! (**And wait for the laugh**)...

It's been one of the great blessings of my life to have you as my son. From the moment you were born, you had... and still have... that certain **something**.... that distinguishes you and let's everyone know that you are one unique person. I'm so proud of you... who you are, how you conduct yourself, how you're always willing to step into the fray and how naturally you are willing to be the peacemaker... (**If you want to make a little joke you can say**).... and judging by the shape of things, that's a **VERY** marketable skill....(**And wait for the laugh**). You give of yourself tirelessly and you're always willing to sacrifice your wants for the betterment of the group. You're a team player, a considerate friend; you're a leader and a comrade.... Andreas... you're the **ultimate**.... you're a **MENSCH**.

Celebrations like these inspire taking a look back.... at our roots, our family... our history.... and someday, if we're all blessed, you'll be standing in a similar spot honoring **YOUR** son or daughter.... But **HEY**... let's not rush things!! You're only **thirteen**!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). But I **DO** want to take a look back to the person for whom you are named...you're named after my father.... we call him Pop...what an extraordinary man he was... you have some pretty big shoes to fill... and so far, I'm happy to say, you're on the right path.

Your grandfather and grandmother came to this country in 1949. They arrived as refugees having remarkably survived the Holocaust. We all hear of the legends of people that came over with nothing... your grandparents were those people.... but they had soul. They were Gutte Neshamas (**good souls in Yiddish)** and they were willing to do whatever was needed to sustain themselves- after all, not many people get second chances at life itself. Some very good people sponsored them to come to America and they found themselves in Ontario, California. These people were kind and generous. They gave your grandfather a job and a place to live for his family.... **YOUR** family. This great country found a way to open its arms and offer optimism to our family. This country provided an opportunity to survive and succeed and that's just what Pop did.... and he spent his life giving back while giving to others. When your grandmother's brother immigrated, Pop was there to help and he gave Uncle Ben a job and a place to live. When Alex Katz, Grandma's friend, immigrated to this country, Pop also gave him a job and a place for his family to live. It was the same with Pop's childhood friend Alex Poll, and cousin Karchi Mausekeopf..... and for others as well... you get the picture... Drester, I am so proud that you have the same character, the same goodness, the same sense of purpose and integrity. You come from an incredible lineage and although you never had the good fortune to know him, trust me, you have inherited a precious part of his light and soul.

And with all that sense of conscience and humanity, there also exists within you a fantastic sense of creativity, fun, and curiosity... so much so... that sometimes I can't keep up....from your fascination with video games to your club, Bird Nation.... I'm grateful you have time to spend exploring with **me**! I may not be Guy Fieri.... and I won't be dying my hair platinum any time soon (**HS- hope your hair isn't platinum!**), but our road trips in search of the "spicier" side of life are.... wellll they're really **HOT**!!! By the way.... I just might have an idea for our next culinary road trip..... and it involves.... what else? SRIRACHA! I know to you that's a separate food group... well, there's a whole history behind the sauce... guess where it was created????

Andreas, thank you for being my son. Thank you for being a great kid and the pride and joy of your mother and me. Thank you for the great relationship you have with your sister Gabriella... (**if you want to make a little joke you can say as an aside**).... this kid really **IS** a freak... he even gets along with his sister!! (**And wait for the laugh**)

Sometimes we hear expressions like "a person is judged by the friends he keeps," but we know how people "flock" to you, especially because of Bird Nation.... and sometimes I think you have no idea of just how special you are, and in a way that's good.... just keep on the path you've begun and remember that it's always important to give. Count your blessings, never forget to have gratitude for your gifts in life, and know that your mother and I will always have your back. Albert Einstein said, "Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of **value**."....... wellllllll a **little** success won't hurt.... (**Wait for the laugh**). Just know we wish for you success on **YOUR** terms. You're on the right road to finding your way in this world... maybe try to finish college first? (**Wait for the laugh**).... and if all else fails.... **TAKE FOUNTAIN**!! (**Or would he understand Sunset or Wilshire better? And** **Wait for the laugh**)... Mazel tov Andreas.... we love you!