**BIRTHDAY SPEECH**

**FOR**

**EDWARD KHALAMEIZER**

Well, well, well… hello everyone!!! The day has **FINALLY** come… the day when we get to acknowledge the **MAN**… the **MYTH**…. And the “**MYTH**ter to Valerie… (**Wait for the laugh)**… yes… today we celebrate an incredible milestone… our friend, Anatoly, **FINALLY** turns **FIFTY**!!! Of course, there’s so much joy associated with this red-letter day, but a part of me thinks back with mixed emotions… and yes, even a little pain. You see, while you may think that Anatoly and I have been friends for **ALL** of our lives, that’s not quite true… and when I look back on the beginning, or at least as far back as I can go, I am cut with the searing, painful realization that I wasn’t there for the first month of his life… **MY G-D!!!** How much did I miss??? How much crying and cooing and **KVETCHING** went on **WITHOUT ME**???? I shudder to think…. And I **CANNOT** **BELIEVE** our mothers couldn’t coordinate timing better!!! **WHAT**??? They couldn’t take maternity leave together while they both worked at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ???? … then again, maybe we should blame our **fathers**!!! (**Wait for the laugh).** Can you **BELIEVE** our mothers worked together???? Mind blowing!!!! I digress… But through the pain of that one month of missed experience, there’s **ALWAYS** been a silver lining: at least for **me**… Anatoly, I will **ALWAYS BE YOUNGER** than **YOU**!!! (**Wait for the laugh).**

And speaking of parents, (**name Anatoly’s mother and father**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, thank you for bringing this great guy into this world. Thank you for giving me my best friend, and most of all, because of you, I can practice this new material!!! (**Wait for the laugh**)

I am grateful and proud to say that I **cannot** imagine life without Anatoly. Growing up together was one true gift … knowing I would always have the comfort and brotherhood of this great guy by my side… and as we grew up, we **have always been** side by side, whether virtually or in reality, even when, as we got older, life pulled us in different directions. I once heard about a Chinese proverb. It goes something like, “An invisible thread connects those destined to meet and be friends, despite the time, the place, or circumstances. While the thread may get tightened or tangled, the true connection will never be broken.” Lucky me. Anatoly and I have always nurtured our connection. (**Not sure how much Yiddish you might want to throw in… how’s this??**) I believe our connection has been like a “kunna hurra bendel… like a lucky red ribbon, tying us together, bringing us luck and blessings.

When we were kids, it was great, as we got older, it stayed great and our friendship grew. And as we grew and matured, we found ourselves in this “magic land…” we crossed paths from California to Texas and back. A little here… a little there… and through the years, our friendship and our families grew and grew together as well. It’s been great to support each other growing up. It’s even greater to be there as we each grow stronger and build the next generations. I’m so proud of our history. I’m even prouder of who we are, the wonderful people in our lives, and the lessons we’ve learned together, along the way.

I think it’s pretty clear that you can tell the measure of a man by the company he keeps… by those who gravitate towards him… and by those he values and respects. And **NEXT TO** this great man is a phenomenal woman. Valerie… I have to give it to you… you’re amazing…the way you maintain a career, raise two adorable, talented daughters, Jacqueline and Sophie, keep a wonderful home, mastermind all of the comings and goings of the whole family, I don’t know how you do it…. Especially since I would think that keeping Anatoly in line would be a full time job itself!! (**Wait for the laugh)**.

And Anatoly, you’ve certainly shown us your talents and passions throughout the years. Your family and career are both wonderful, but the way you indulge your hobbies in your free time…**WOW**!! Leather working… carpentry… **CARPENTRY**??? Didn’t you get the memo that we Jewish people **don’t do manual labor**?? I mean, there **WAS** that one Jewish guy… started off as a carpenter… he became pretty famous… last I heard, that hammering and nailing kind of **backfired**… (**Wait for the laugh**) (**is that too much?? Let me know**).

Clearly, everyone in this room knows I’m kidding. We **ALL** know what a great guy our birthday boy is… especially your Cheerleaders Club… yes. **ALL** the wives in our friends group **think**… no… they **KNOW** … you’re the **GOAT**!!! Yes.. the **Greatest of All Time**!! Greatest husband. Greatest Dad. Greatest, most perfect brother… uncle… son… neighbor… you name it.. **YOU’RE** the **GREATEST**!!! If you **WEREN’T** so great, it would **REALLY** be annoying. So thanks for raising the bar and making us work harder to keep up with you to even stay in the game!!!

Anatoly…. I’d like to raise a glass… (**name your favorite Bourbon**) of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , the drink of kings…. to **OUR** king for the evening… To Anatoly… no matter where circumstance may find you…. And for all we know, it **COULD BE TEXAS NEXT…** we’ve got plenty of room out there!!! … may you have all of the love, health, happiness, and good fortune you might ever wish for, and may we be best friends for another **AT LEAST** another 120 years!!! **AMEN**!! Happy Birthday!!