

Bad•Words

By

Andrew C. Dodge

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - MORNING

KIDS and FAMILY mill about in front of an elevated stage bedecked with rows of folding chairs.

A giant banner reads:

"SOUTHLAND DISTRICT'S 15TH ANNUAL REGIONAL SPELLING BEE...
NEXT STOP, WASHINGTON D.C.!!!"

At the snack table, GUY DUNCAN, disheveled 30s, shoves donuts into the worn pockets of his shitty blazer.

CRISPLY DRESSED DAD (O.S.)
You must be so proud. I know I am.

Guy looks up to see a CRISPLY DRESSED DAD.

CRISPLY DRESSED DAD (CONT'D)
Aren't kids amazing? Which one's
yours?

Guy tears into a donut. An avalanche of powdered sugar falls down his blazer.

GUY
(full mouth)
Are you fucking kidding me?

Guy shambles away, leaving the Dad confused.

INT. GYMNASIUM, STAGE

A PAUNCHY WOMAN in a SALMON COLORED PANTSUIT steps behind the microphone and darts a smile out into the gymnasium.

SALMON PANTSUIT
OOOOKAY everyone! The Spelling Bee
is about to begin so will all of
our noble competitors please take
their seats up on stage.

Parents take their seats down below as the students make their way up on stage.

Guy sits between two students up on the stage in the back row.

He looks at the OVERWEIGHT BOY, 12, sitting on his left.

GUY
 Christ. Would it kill you to lose
 some weight? I barely have any
 room here.

The overweight boy self-consciously looks away.

In front, Salmon Pantsuit notices Guy sitting up on stage.

SALMON PANTSUIT
 I'm sorry, Sir?

Guy morosely looks up.

SALMON PANTSUIT (CONT'D)
 (precious tone)
 These seats are for the
 competitors, only, so if you can
 just-

GUY
 I *am* a competitor.

Salmon Pantsuit chuckles just for a moment. But Guy doesn't.

CUT TO:

EXT. GYMNASIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Guy stands outside with Salmon Pantsuit and the TWO OTHER
 JUDGES- a SMALL, BALD MAN, 70s, with huge eye GLASSES and a
 WOMAN, 50s, proudly wearing a BEDAZZLED DENIM VEST.

Guy sucks on his teeth as all three scrutinize a shitty
 tattered PIECE OF PAPER.

The Bald Judge puts his huge glasses on, making his eyes as
 big as planets, which startles Guy.

BALD GLASSES
 (old man forcefulness)
 Mr. Duncan, I'm not going to allow
 it. You are not eligible. In any
 fashion, way, shape, or manner!

The Bald Judge pulls his huge glasses off.

GUY
 NO, your Honor, YOU'RE OUT OF
ORDER!

(MORE)

GUY (CONT'D)

Page thirty nine of the Scribbs National Spelling Bee rule book. Rule Twenty Four Sub point B. Quote: "The speller must not have passed beyond the eighth grade on or before February 1, 2011." That, Sir, is a rule made by YOUR INSTITUTE, NOT MINE!

(re: shitty tattered paper)

You're looking at my transcript! Try not to wrinkle it any more than it is, okay? As you can see, I haven't passed beyond the eighth grade. Not on or before February 1, 2011! Not ever!

BALD GLASSES

That may be but-

GUY

-Page sixty nine of the Scribbs Institute National Spelling Bee rule book. Rule Fifty One Sub Point A: "The speller must not have earned a high school diploma or the legal equivalent of a high school diploma." Guess what, chicken butts? I haven't! A total of 83 paragraphs, five hundred and eighty one lines of rules in your rule book and I am complying with every stupid one of them!

BEDAZZLED JUDGE

The Spelling Bee is meant for kids. Not adults who couldn't even graduate the 8th Grade.

GUY

"Couldn't?" "Couldn't?" So now you're saying you won't let me participate because you think I'm stupid? Did you just call me fucking *retarded*?

BEDAZZLED JUDGE

(flustered)

That's not what I meant at all.

SALMON PANTSUIT

There's no need for such salty language, Mr. Duncan!

SALMON PANTSUIT (CONT'D)

You don't have a sponsor present. Every speller must be sponsored by a nationally published newspaper.

JENNY WIDGEON, 30s, approaches.

JENNY

Guy! There you are!
(to Judges)
Jenny Widgeon. Daily Probe- Guy's sponsor. Sorry I'm late.

BALD GLASSES

The Daily Pro- HA! That's not a newspaper.

JENNY

Well let's not argue over semantics, shall we?

GUY

They don't want to let me participate.

JENNY

(feigning shock, gasps)
They don't want to let you participate?

GUY

And they called me a retarded.

Jenny pulls out her cellphone. Dials. Waits.

JENNY

(into cellphone)
You were right. Ok. Thanks.

Jenny slams her cell off.

SALMON PANTSUIT

What was that? Who did you just talk to?

JENNY

Lead council of The Daily Probe's legal team.

GUY

They're more like Piranhas with scorpion tails for dicks than actual lawyers.

JENNY

As you can guess, the Daily Probe is involved in its fare share of legal suits and boy do these guys know how to gum up the works! So, in about a half hour you will receive a Temporary Restraining Order and Preliminary Injunction prohibiting the continuation of this competition until we clear this whole legal matter up.

Jenny cringes, whispers.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Sorry.

BEDAZZLED JUDGE

Legal matter? This isn't a legal matter!

GUY

It is now. We're suing the three of you personally as well as The Scribbs Institute for discrimination and fraud for the amount of ten million dollars.

All the color drains out of the Judges' faces.

BALD GLASSES

How dare you try to hijack this spelling bee! You can't do that!

JENNY

Hmm. Maybe. Maybe not. Again. Semantics. But getting down to the bottom of that will take weeks. Months.

GUY

Until then, no spelling bee. Hey, can I at least stay to watch you tell that entire gymnasium full of kids and parents that they won't get their shot at the Nationals.

Salmon Pantsuit nervously looks at the other judges.

She has no choice, it seems.

SALMON PANTSUIT
(resigned)
The rules are the rules, I guess.

Salmon Pantsuit eyeballs Jenny's phone.

SALMON PANTSUIT (CONT'D)
So can you just...

JENNY
Oh, right. Yes. Certainly.

Jenny speed dials her cellphone.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Yep. Yep. Yeeep. Okay.

Jenny hangs up the phone.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Well, okay. Looks like we have a
spelling bee to get to!

Salmon Pantsuit looks like she swallowed a wasp.

INT. GYMNASIUM, JUDGE'S TABLE

A crowd of concerned parents has bloomed around the table.

SALMON PANTSUIT
There's nothing we can do about the
loophole he found. He's clearly an
alcoholic or a drug tweaker. I
think the *least* unpleasant option
is to just humor his derangement a
bit, let him participate, and when
he loses, his pathetic reality of a
life will sink in. The best child
will win. I assure you. Social
justice will prevail. Don't you
all believe in your kids? I do!

The parents nod.

SALMON PANTSUIT (CONT'D)
Then let's be the bigger people in
this situation, mkay?

CUT TO:

INT. GYMNASIUM, STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Brace-Faced girl stands behind the microphone. Bald Glasses is the proctor.

BALD GLASSES
Oleaginous.

BRACES
Oleaginous?

BALD GLASSES
Oleaginous.

BRACES
Oleaginous. Can I have the definition, please?

Bald Glasses shoots Guy a look.

BALD GLASSES
"Having the nature or qualities of oil." Or "Unctuous; fawning; smarmy." Oleaginous.

Guy subtly scratches his nose with his middle finger.

BRACES
Oleaginous. Can I have the language of origin?

BALD GLASSES
Latin.

BRACES
Oleaginous. Does it contain the Latin root "olea" meaning "olive?"

BALD GLASSES
That is correct.

BRACES
Oleaginous...

Brace-Faced Girl starts ghost-spelling the word in her hand.

BRACES (CONT'D)
Oleaginous. Can you use it in a sentence?

GUY
Oh my God!

All the kids sitting around Guy squirm with discomfort.

BALD GLASSES

"The oleaginous man knew he shouldn't attend the party, but came anyway.

GUY

(cough)

Koughissmyass.

BRACES

Oleaginous.

Brace-Faced Girl ghost-spells it in her hand again.

BRACES (CONT'D)

Oleaginous.

BALD GLASSES

Oleaginous.

BRACES

Oleaginous. Can you tell me the part of speech?

PROCTOR

Adjective.

Guy turns to the Overweight Boy.

GUY

No shit it's an adjective.

She ghost-spells it one more time.

BRACES

Oleaginous. Any other pronunciations?

PROCTOR

No.

BRACES

Oleaginous. O-L-E-A-G-I-N-O-U-S.
Oleaginous.

PROCTOR

That is correct.

Everyone in the room applauds except Guy. Relieved, Brace Faced Girl sits back down.

Next, a BOY, 11, with a HUGE MOLE on his cheek walks to the microphone. Guy leans over to the Overweight Boy.

GUY
 (re: Mole)
 Hey, if he ever ends up in prison I
 know what his cell-wife will be
 aiming for every single time! Am I
 right? Am I right?

The Overweight Boy nervously shifts in his seat.

PROCTOR
 Recidivism.

MOLE
 Recidivism.

PROCTOR
 Recidivism.

MOLE
 Recidivism.

PROCTOR
 Recidivism.

MOLE
 Recidivism. Can I have the
 definition?

PROCTOR
 "A tendency to lapse into a
 previous condition or pattern of
 behavior; especially, a falling
 back or relapse into prior criminal
 habits." Recidivism.

MOLE
 Recidivism. Can I have the part of
 speech?

PROCTOR
 Noun.

Mole ghost spells it in his hand.

MOLE
 Recidivism. Can you please use it
 in a sentence?

Guy turns to the Brace-Faced Girl.

GUY
 Holy balls, who doesn't know this
 fucking word, huh? Jesus. You.
 Are. All. So. Lame.

MOLE
R-E-C-E-D-I-V-I-S-M. Recidivism.

Bedazzled Vest sadly hits a crude buzzer. The parents in the audience "AWWWs" but applauds with appreciation for the attempt.

Guy's laughter erupts over it all.

Mole lowers his head Charlie Brown style and walks off the stage.

The applause dies down and everyone sits uncomfortably as Guy's laughter continues to ring through the gymnasium.

Back in the seats, Jenny shakes her head from Guy's obnoxiousness.

Finally, Guy finishes, dabs his eyes.

GUY
Oh, so pathetic. Hoo...

Guy notices everyone's waiting for him.

GUY (CONT'D)
Oh, I'm up.

Guy moves to the mic. The crowd murmurs.

Bald Glasses sighs.

BALD GLASSES
Absquatulate-

GUY
(impatient. Quick.)
A-B-S-Q-U-A-T-U-L-A-T-E.

Guy turns and heads back to his seat.

BALD GLASSES
(Horried. Surprised.)
That's- That's correct.

Nobody applauds. Just silent shock.

Back at his seat, an evil smile creeps across Guy's face as he addresses the kids sitting around him.

GUY

I hope all of your pillow cases are waterproof, because tonight they're gonna be soaked with lots of nerdy little snot tears! Boo hoo hoo...

TITLE: **BAD WORDS**

EXT. GYMNASIUM, PARKING LOT - LATER

GUY RUNS OUT WITH THE GIANT FIRST-PLACE TROPHY TUCKED UNDER HIS ARM.

An ANGRY MOB of parents burst out after him, throwing coffee cups and donuts.

Jenny screeches her car to a stop in Guy's path.

JENNY

(half reluctant)

GET IN IF YOU WANT TO LIVE!

Guy quickly piles in and slams down the lock.

A HOME BAKED MOM hawks an angry LOOGI on the window right level with Guy's face.

As the loogi drips down the window, the Crisply Dressed Dad rushes the car and screams:

CRISPLY DRESSED DAD

YOU ARE THE DEVIL!!!

The car peels out of the parking lot just as Crisply Dressed Dad launches a fold-up chair, smashing a tail light.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR, MOVING - LATER

Guy slouches in the seat next to his trophy. Jenny drives like a bat out of hell's ass.

JENNY

Did you see that back there?!
Total Parentocalypse! You owe me a tail light!

GUY

Just watch your driving, will you?

JENNY

"Grown man goes to National Spelling Bee!" by Jenny Widgeon. Oh, God. This is the only time I wished the nation's illiteracy rate was even higher.

GUY

I'm glad I could help.

JENNY

Nonono. Thank you! Thank you for walking into the Probe and convincing my editors to help you pull off this craptastic stunt!

GUY

(mocking)

Wah! I have integrity but the world won't let me show it. Wah!

JENNY

Hey! I am a real reporter, you get that? I've covered presidential elections! I've *uncovered* international corporate scandals! And if it wasn't for the collapse of the newspaper business I'd still be doing that.

GUY

Here's a headline for you: I DON'T GIVE A DANCING SHIT.

JENNY

Packing for Washington D.C. is going to be simple for you, isn't it? Because you just stuff all of your clothes in the hole where your heart would be if you had one. You're your own carry on!

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR, MOVING - SAME TIME

Jenny's car speeds away as we pan up to a PASSENGER PLANE FLYING OVERHEAD.

CUT TO:

INT. PLANE, FLYING - MUCH LATER

Guy sits with his eyes shut tight. Jenny sits next to him. She lowers Guy's tray and places a tape recorder on it in front of him. Guy opens his eyes.

GUY
...the fuck's this?

JENNY
Time for a obligatory interview.

GUY
Not now. I'm getting my beauty rest.

JENNY
Yeah, and it's really working for you. It is. I mean it. Alright. Where to begin? Hmm. I wonder. Oh yeah! Why are you doing this? Why have you decided, *at this late stage in your life*, to compete against children in the National Spelling Bee?

GUY
Sleepy time.

Guy points to his closed eyes.

JENNY
You gonna make this hard or easy?

Guy flips her the bird.

JENNY (CONT'D)
I've had bigger challenges than you. Trust me.

Guy remains still, his eyes shut. Jenny impatiently snaps her recorder up.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Fine. I'm going to the bathroom. We'll settle this later.

Jenny gets out of her seat and storms up the aisle. Guy keeps his eyes closed. Suddenly, an INDIAN BOY, 12, CHAITANYA CHOPRA- as awkward as the day is long- pops up from the seat behind Jenny's.

CHAITANYA
Hi. I'm Chaitanya Chopra.

GUY
 (annoyed)
 What?

CHAITANYA
 My name.

GUY
 Congratufuckinlations.

CHAITANYA
 What's your name?

Guy says nothing.

CHAITANYA (CONT'D)
 What's your name?

GUY
 Guy.

Chaitanya stares at Guy squeezing his eyes shut.

CHAITANYA
 "Guy" what?

GUY
 Does it matter?

CHAITANYA
 I'm going to the National Spelling
 Bee. My parents are up in first
 class. My Dad says that economy
 class builds character.

GUY
 (who cares)
 Amazing.

Chaitanya leans over Guy a bit more, looks out of his window.

CHAITANYA
 You have a great view. I've gone
 to the National Spelling Bee twice
 before. I overheard you say you're
 going to the National Spelling Bee,
 too. You're the grown-up who's
 competing, huh?

Guy keeps his eyes shut. Says nothing.

CHAITANYA (CONT'D)
 I heard about you. What was your
 winning word?

Nothing from Guy.

 CHAITANYA (CONT'D)
Your word? Your winning word?

 GUY
 (annoyed)
What?

 CHAITANYA
What was the word you spelled to
win your regional? To get here?
Mine was "Intelligentsia."

 GUY
I don't fucking remember.

 CHAITANYA
Come on, try to remember.

 GUY
Shit, I don't know.

 CHAITANYA
Think. You should remember. How
can you forget? It's such a
special word.

 GUY
 (tired)
"Autofellatio."

 CHAITANYA
I've never heard of that word.
What's it's origin?

 GUY
Loneliness.

 CHAITANYA
No that can't be right...I know
"Auto" is of Greek origin meaning
"self," right? Fellatio...fellatio
fellatio... is that derived from
the Latin "fellare" meaning to
suck?

 GUY
 (incredibly annoyed)
Listen, don't get your tits in a
tangle. It's just a fucking word.
Jesus!

Guy closes his eyes again.

CHAITANYA

Hey, can I trade seats with you? I enjoy sitting next to the window on airplanes.

GUY

No.

CHAITANYA

Why not?

GUY

(flustered)

Because my seat is over an especially important part of the plane. I move and the plane won't be balanced and we'll all plummet and crash in a fiery nightmarish death.

CHAITANYA

(unbelieving)

What? Are you sure?

Across the aisle, A LITTLE BOY, 7, overhears this. He looks straight ahead and sits rigid, completely freaked out.

GUY

Shit. See what you did? Now I got to take an eight-ball piss.

Guy gets up.

BOY

NOOO! I DON'T WANT TO DIE!!!

Guy walks up the aisle to the lavatory as FLIGHT ATTENDANTS rush past him to the screaming boy.

CUT TO:

ESPN INTRO

Sweeping music rises as

A Camera pans across an empty mid-western school auditorium.

A COLLAGE of children's voices start spelling random letters, but all at once.

NARRATOR

Can you hear the buzz of the bee?

Various shots of spellers in moments of victory and defeat.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The buzz that started long ago. We all have our memories of when we first heard it.

Various shots of chairs with numbers. Of dictionary pages flipping.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

An old school-time competition is about to capture your imagination.

The music starts to swell.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

We all have our hometown heroes. But the genius of these competitors is spellbinding.

Images of victorious kids pop up one after another.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And like bees to honey, our lust for competition leads us hungrily to the epicenter of this quest for greatness.

Images of one teen after another taking the giant check from SCRIBBS COO BILL BOWMAN, 60s- executively handsome for his age.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The prize is just a word away, and those who compete want to take that check from the Legendary Scribbs COO Bill Bowman. They've dreamed of it all their lives.

Images of teens holding up the spelling bee trophy...

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And that's why it's the drama of "The Bee." So, can you hear the buzz? Well, can you?

The images suddenly turn to MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL type graphics as the faint sound of bee buzzing morphs into the robotic WHUP WHUP WHUP of military helicopters as...

TWO ROBOT WARRIOR BEES FLY IN FROM OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE SCREEN AND COLLIDE WITH A VIOLENT MECHANICAL EXPLOSION TO BLARING ELECTRIC GUITARS!

Suddenly TWO YUCKITY YUCK ANNOUNCERS appear in the ballroom auditorium in front of the stage.

CHUCK

Welcome everyone to the 85th annual Scribbs Institute National Spelling Bee, I'm Chuck Wilde coming at you live from the Historic State Plaza Hotel here in the heart of our country's only capital, Washington D.C.!!!

PETE

And I'm Peter Yates. Chuck, over the years the popularity of the National Spelling Bee has grown to sick proportions and this year viewership promises to rival that of any championship sporting event.

CHUCK

You don't have to spell that out for me, Pete. What can we say? The world loves a good showdown and what. A. Showdown. It will be! Let's get to know some of this year's most noteworthy alphabet gladiators!

From here on out, all broadcast graphics of names will be produced by these violent mechanical bees blowing things up and shooting lasers with their stingers.

Thunderous music plays over montages of pre-filmed, in-studio shots of competitors standing awkwardly for the camera.

The insane graphics and production go totally against the grain of how nerdy they all actually are...

JOYCE SACKS, 14 years-old with pigtails, acne and a crooked grin.

PETE (V.O.)

Joyce Sacks. A fourteen year old spelling *assassin* hailing from Plymouth Minnesota. Came in 8th last year but this year retreat is not an option. Word has it that she's been working with three different coaches- one for English, one for Greek and one for Latin- and she's ready to declare "All your bases are belong to us!"

Next, BAXTER FLOURNEY, 9, BRACES and a BOWL HAIRCUT complimented by uncomfortable glances at the camera.

CHUCK (V.O.)

That kid with braces stealing your soul with his death stare? Oh nothing, just nine year-old mind killer Baxter Flourney from Worcester, Massachusetts. His Dad crushed the National Spelling Bee in 1980 at the age of 9. Last year, his older brother Benjamin beheaded first place at the age of 9. And what does this mean? The Bee runs thick in his blood and he's about spill some of his competition's!

Next, Chaitanya, the boy from the airplane...

PETE (V.O.)

Some say that twelve year-old Chaitanya Chopra from Olathe, Kansas has ice for blood. Others say that if you opened up his skull you'd find Stephen Hawking AND Albert Einstein in a mixed martial arts fight. Whatever the truth is, Chaitanya has placed third for the last two years and he isn't going to take it anymore! He's focused. He wants it. And word on the street is he's gonna spine-rip anyone who gets in his way!

The graphics explode to reveal ERIC TAI, 14- weird is an understatement.

CHUCK (V.O.)

Don't let his virgin exterior fool you! Eric Tai from San Diego California is an absolute spelling bee Mongoose! Two years ago, he placed second. Last year, he lost by a syllable to Benjamin Flourney. One syllable! Now, Eric wants to proverbially pop out of the Mekong Delta with a knife in his mouth and disembowel the final round.

Next we see a montage of rough video footage of Guy constantly walking away from the camera and flipping the bird.

PETE (V.O.)

And finally, in what has been the strangest turn of events in Bee history, we have contestant Guy Duncan from St. Louis, Missouri. Oh, did we forget to mention? Guy's *thirty four* years-old! This man has made huge waves in the competitive spelling world by exposing and capitalizing on a loophole in the competition's rules, and OH MAMA! Have things been topsy-turvy! But he's here and the only way we're gonna get rid of him is if he loses!

Finally, we see quick footage cuts of Scribbs COO Bill Bowman all around the world: Spoon feeding a hungry African child, skydiving, Ostrich racing, climbing to the top of a human tower in Sardinia.

CHUCK (V.O.)

And all of this spelling bee action is constantly promoted, lauded, and endorsed by one of America's most charismatic COOs, Scribbs Institute's own Bill Bowman.

We cut to a LIVE SATELLITE FEED of Bowman, donning an X-Games helmet, being harnessed to a zipline that stretches beyond the fiery lip of a volcano!

CHUCK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We have Mr. Bowman joining us on a live feed right now to share a few words.

BOWMAN

Thanks Chuck, Pete. I'm sorry I'm not in town yet. I'm at the mouth of the Kilauea Volcano on the island of Kauai, as I zipline across all the major volcanos of the world in my ongoing attempt to raise awareness about the literacy epidemic in America. You know, it's a lot more dangerous than it looks- and I'm talking about our literacy rate, not the ziplining. But never fear, I'll make it to Washington in time to hand out first prize to our next National Spelling Bee champion. Who will be the next champion? I don't know.

(MORE)

BOWMAN (CONT'D)

But I'll tell you this, you can't be a Bee champion, unless you've shown honor, sportsmanship and integrity. It's just impossible. As always, I can't wait to meet all of our noble competitors. Well, most of them. I'll be arriving with high hopes, as well as that much loved giant check!

Bowman turns away from the camera, gives the people around him a thumbs-up, and ZIPLINES OVER THE VOLCANO!

INT. HOTEL HALL - DAY

Guy and Jenny follow a crisply walking REGISTRATION REP down the hall.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL OFFICE - DAY

Guy and Jenny enter the office to find NATIONAL SPELLING BEE DIRECTOR BERNICE DEAGAN, 40s, tall, peter pan hair, sitting behind the hotel manager's desk.

Director Deagan motions toward the two seats before the desk.

DIRECTOR DEAGAN

Have a seat. I'm Bernice Deagan, Director of the National Spelling Bee.

(beat)

Struthious.

GUY

Excuse me?

DIRECTOR DEAGAN

S-T-R-U-T-H-I-O-U-S. Struthious. That was my winning word. 1973. National Champion. Just thought you should know that. If you didn't already.

GUY

Oh.

DIRECTOR DEAGAN

Guy. I don't like you.

JENNY

Listen-

DIRECTOR DEAGAN

Now you just shoosh!

(beat)

You know, when I was a little girl, I was always picked last in P.E. I hated sports. That's probably what, thankfully, thrust me into the welcoming bosom of the spelling bee. Now, I'm proud to say, we are projected to have more viewers than the Superbowl. That feels kinda nice to say out loud. So how did I accomplish this? Elbow grease? Yes. Hard work? Maybe. Integrity? You betcha. But what I didn't do is use slimy gimmicks just as yourself!

Director Deagan pulls out a competitor number from her desk.

DIRECTOR DEAGAN (CONT'D)

So I wanted to personally give you your number...

She moves around the table and hangs it around Guy's neck.

DIRECTOR DEAGAN (CONT'D)

You think you're smart because you found a loophole- and you're taking advantage of it. B-R-A-V-O. But I know you're not smarter than even the poorest speller in this competition. So may this number serve as the noose you hang yourself by.

GUY

Wow. Thanks.

DIRECTOR DEAGAN

Don't mention it. Oh, and one other thing. I personally arranged your hotel accommodations for you. Just wanted you to know that.

GUY

You shouldn't have.

DIRECTOR DEAGAN

But I did.

GUY
 So that all you got? Some sort of
 weird veiled threat?
 You could have done that in an e-
 mail. Jesus.

Guy gets up. Jenny follows.

DIRECTOR DEAGAN
 I just thought it would mean more
 in person.

GUY
 Not in this day and age!

Guy exits.

DIRECTOR DEAGAN
 (calling after him)
 I'm watching you.

GUY (O.S.)
 (calling back)
 GOOD!

The door slams behind Guy and Jenny.

CUT TO:

INT. STATE PLAZA HOTEL LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

The place is packed with Bee parents and kids. Guy bulldozes his way through. Jenny keeps up.

JENNY
 Hey! Where are you going? The
 contestant ice cream social is that
 way!

Guy walks off, raising his middle finger as he goes.

JENNY (CONT'D)
 (to herself)
 Wow. What a complete asshole.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

As the doors start to close, Guy sees Chaitanya running toward the elevator.

CHAITANYA
 Hold the door!

Guy doesn't budge, forcing Chaitanya to wrestle between the doors himself.

 CHAITANYA (CONT'D)
Whew! I made it. Hey, I know you!

Guy doesn't answer.

 CHAITANYA (CONT'D)
You're Guy, from the airplane.

Guy stays silent.

 GUY
No I'm not.

 CHAITANYA
I'm Chaitanya, remember? Cool.
I like words. What's your favorite
word?

Guy tries to ignore him.

 CHAITANYA (CONT'D)
Come on. What's your favorite word
in the whole wide world?

 GUY
I don't-

 CHAITANYA
-Favorite word?

 GUY
I don't have a favorite word.

 CHAITANYA
Mine is "assassin." It just sounds
so cool, you know? Assassin.
Assassin. Assassin. Assassin.
ASSasSIN. AssASSin.

Guy presses the button some more.

 CHAITANYA (CONT'D)
What's yours?

 GUY
(shut up)
I. Don't. Have. One.

CHAITANYA

Of course you do. Everyone does. I bet you even Helen Keller had a favorite word. She was blind and deaf. Everyone's got a favorite word.

GUY

Well, I guess I'm a fucking oddball, then.

CHAITANYA

I bet Abraham Lincoln had a favorite word. Mark Twain. Neil Armstrong. Charles Schultz. Bill Clinton. Charlie Chaplin...and he did silent films.

GUY

NO SHIT! BUT I DON'T!

CHAITANYA

Well, *if* you were to have one what would it be?

GUY

(gritted teeth)
I don't.

CHAITANYA

Say you're on a desert island and this Gorilla comes out of the jungle and holds a gun to your head and says, "HOO HOO! Tell me what your favorite word is!" What would you say?

Guy gets flustered.

GUY

Listen, Chet...Chick...whatever the fuck your name is.

CHAITANYA

Chaitanya.

GUY

STOP TRYING TO GET ALL UP IN MY FUCKING HEAD, *SLUM DOG!*

CHAITANYA

Okay.

The elevator door opens and Guy angrily pours out.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Before Guy can open the door all the way, it hits the mattress, which is ON THE FLOOR.

GUY

What the...

Guy fights his way in to see that the gray, tiny room is nothing but a mattress flanked by gray industrial shelves. On the other wall stands a deep, mildewed washbasin...

AND NO BATHROOM.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Guy takes a close look at the door. He notices the faded indentation of the words "Cleaning Staff Only" underneath his polished brass room number.

Guy clenches his teeth.

CUT TO:

INT. FRONT DESK - MOMENTS LATER

Guy stands before a BARBIE DOLL FRONT DESK CLERK, 20s.

FRONT DESK REPRESENTATIVE

Unfortunately, the hotel is completely sold out.

GUY

I don't have a bathroom!

FRONT DESK

(patronizing)

Yeah. Ouch.

GUY

I DON'T HAVE A BATHROOM.

The front desk clerk crinkles her nose.

Guy storms away.

INT. STATE PLAZA HOTEL, BAR - LATER

A small, stylish bar.

Guy stands out like a black-nailed thumb amongst this polished, smiling crowd.

He spots Jenny sitting at the bar. The only open seat is right next to her.

JENNY

Bartender. Old Fashioned.

If Guy wants booze, he has no choice. He sighs and sits down next to her.

JENNY (CONT'D)

(to Bartender)

Make that two.

(to Guy)

No mini-bar, huh?

GUY

No nothing.

JENNY

I think the Queen Bee is sending you a message.

GUY

Damn Skippy.

JENNY

Man. There are so many parents around here. This place is bursting in the seems with them.

GUY

No shit.

JENNY

Where are your parents?

GUY

Oh Jesus Christ. I just want to have a drink in peace. Is that too much to ask?

JENNY

Listen, I'm trying to make the best out of my situation, okay? I'm supposed to cover you, so I'm going to do it the best way I know how. By asking questions. By starting with the basics. By getting to know you.

GUY

Well do me a favor and *don't* get to know me. Just report what you see, and leave it at that. Stop trying so hard.

JENNY

You're like an insolent child hiding secrets from his mother.

GUY

Heh, you don't amount to half the broad my mother was!

Guy realizes he just revealed a personal fact. He grimaces and curses at himself under his breath. Slugs his drink.

JENNY

I'm sorry. When did she die?

GUY

Fuck off.

Jenny flags the bartender.

JENNY

I'm gonna need another.

GUY

I'm gonna need two!

CUT TO:

INT. STATE PLAZA HOTEL, BAR - LATER

Now several empty glasses sit before Guy and Jenny...

JENNY

Look, it's my job! I'm just doing my job.

GUY

Is that how you justify being what you are?

JENNY

What *I* am? Look at *you*!

CUT TO:

INT. STATE PLAZA HOTEL, BAR - LATER

Now twice as many empty glasses litter the bar in front of them. They both stubbornly sit, tipsy and angry.

GUY
Look, screw you.

JENNY
Whatever.

GUY
SCREW YOU!

JENNY
YOU KNOW WHAT?! SCREW YOU!

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

With his pants around his ankles, Guy desperately humps Jenny on his mattress.

JENNY
Yes. YES! Don't look at me.
DON'T LOOK AT ME! DON'T LOOK AT
ME.

Guy cranes his head away to the side as far as he can- his face practically presses against the nasty mop sink.

GUY
Jesus Christ okay I'm not looking
at you!

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Guy lies on the mattress on the floor as Jenny hurriedly puts her skirt back on.

JENNY
Wow. That was a mistake.

GUY
It was great for me, too.

JENNY
I'll...I'll see you tomorrow.

Jenny leaves.

Guy spots Jenny's forgotten underwear on the floor. He picks them up. Shoves them in his pocket.

There's a KNOCK on the door.

Guy gets up. Opens the door.

GUY

Yeah, if you're so together then
why'd you forget your under-

Chaitanya standing there, holding a JAR OF NUTS.

CHAITANYA

Sorry to bother you, but I heard
you were still awake. Would you
mind helping me open this jar of
mixed nuts?

Chaitanya peers past Guy.

CHAITANYA (CONT'D)

Wow. Small room.

Guy slams the door in the boy's face.

Chaitanya knocks some more.

CHAITANYA (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Can you help me? I haven't had
anything to eat all night. I was
studying my words so hard I missed
room service hours and this jar is
too hard for me to open.

Guy opens the door.

GUY

Oh yeah well we all need something,
don't we? Life is filled with
disappointment!

Guy grabs the jar and SMASHES IT against the opposite wall.
He slams the door shut.

Guy listens to see if Chaitanya has left.

CHAITANYA (O.C.)

I...I was wondering if you wanted
to be my friend.

Guy opens the door.

GUY

Listen Slum Dog, I dunno what makes you think that I want to be your friend but you better *baba ghanoush* that idea right out of your head!

Guy slams the door.

CHAITANYA (O.C.)

Okay. It's cool. I just thought it would be fun to study together before tomorrow. Drink soda pop from the mini-bar and stuff.

Guy opens the door.

GUY

Your room has a mini-bar?

CHAITANYA

Yeah.

GUY

What about your Mom...Dad?

CHAITANYA

My Dad believes that I should learn how to be my own man, and that means staying in my own hotel room myself this weekend.

GUY

What...is he in the room next door?

CHAITANYA

He's staying at a fancier hotel a few blocks away.

GUY

(hell yeah)
Bummer.

CHAITANYA

It's kind of neat. I get to jump on the bed as much as I want. But tonight I messed up and missed room service.

CUT TO:

INT. CHAITANYA'S HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Chaitanya happily picks through the mixed nuts AND BROKEN JAR GLASS- now gathered in a wad of toilette paper- on the hotel room desk.

Guy leans into the mini-bar and pulls out every bottle of booze there is.

GUY
 (more focused on his
 drink)
 Careful of the fucking glass.

CHAITANYA
 Okay. I will.

Chaitanya happily eats a nut.

CHAITANYA (CONT'D)
 I think I know what your favorite
 word is.

GUY
 Really.

CHAITANYA
 The "F" word.

Guy ponders this. Shrugs.

GUY
 Maybe.

CHAITANYA
 You say it a lot.

GUY
 Everyone should.

CHAITANYA
 My father says bad words. But I'm
 not allowed to. What about your
 dad?

GUY
 I never knew my dad. But my mom
 said bad words a lot. You can say
 bad words. I don't give a shit.

CHAITANYA
 I shouldn't.

GUY

Do it. Who has the right to decide what is a bad word and what is a good word? Shouldn't it be that whatever word best expresses how you feel is a good word? Do it.

The very thought makes Chaitanya grin.

CHAITANYA

No.

GUY

Stop acting like a little fucking Quaker and do it.

CHAITANYA

Okay.

(relishing every syllable)
Mutherfucker.

Chaitanya laughs.

GUY

Did your soul burst into flames?

CHAITANYA

Okay. All done.

GUY

You're a real fucking weirdo, you know that?

Chaitanya shrugs. Guy pours a mini rum into his glass.

CHAITANYA

Do you like rum?

GUY

I do.

CHAITANYA

You can be like a pirate with your rum! And if you had a cigarette you could be a total butt pirate!

GUY

Don't ever call me a butt pirate.

CHAITANYA

Why? You smoke, don't you?

GUY
"Butt Pirate" has nothing to do
with cigarettes.

Chaitanya blankly looks at him.

GUY (CONT'D)
You'll find out one day, I'm sure.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Guy sits asleep in the desk chair with his head lolled back
and a rope of drool stretching from his mouth.

Chaitanya taps him on the shoulder.

CHAITANYA
Hey. Hey!

Guy starts awake. Chaitanya's now in a pair of TRANSFORMER
PAJAMAS. Guy looks him up and down.

GUY
The fuck happened to you?

CHAITANYA
It's morning. You passed out last
night and I was scared to wake you.
My Dad will be here any minute, you
should go.

GUY
Fine. Fuck. Yeah.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - LATER

Guy shuffles down the hallway. He passes an INDIAN MAN going
the other way.

GUY
Solemn a lick 'em.

Guy keeps his head low and walks on. The Indian Man turns
and looks after him.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Guy and Jenny speed-walk down the hall. Guy stumbles along, completely hung-over.

JENNY

Did I leave my underwear in your apartment last night?

GUY

Who knows?

JENNY

You look like hell.

GUY

I don't have a shower.

An awkward beat.

JENNY

Baxter Fournery's in your round.
He comes from Bee royalty.

GUY

I'm so scared.

JENNY

Maybe you should be. He's awesome.

GUY

Right.

Guy walks in.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Stage lights instantly hit Guy as he enters. Everyone murmurs as he makes his way to the stage.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, BROADCAST BOOTH - SAME TIME

Chuck and Pete are on the air.

CHUCK

AND HERE COMES OUR MAN OF MYSTERY!

PETE

Pure drama, Chuck. Pure drama.
Ladies and Gentleman of the world,
we have all one hundred and fifty
competitors, let the Bee begin!

Guy passes Director Deagan, who grimaces to herself in disappointment that he made it.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSEHOLD - SAME TIME

A FAMILY gathers on the couch to watch the Spelling Bee...

INT. BEST BUY - SAME TIME

Crowds of SHOPPERS cluster around the FLATSCREEN DISPLAY, which is turned to the Bee...

INT. SPORTS BAR - SAME TIME

BAR REGULARS order rounds of beer and shush each other as they watch the Bee...

INT. TENT, SOMEWHERE IN AFGHANISTAN - SAME TIME

SOLDIERS huddle in a camouflage tent around a small TV that is tuned to the Bee.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

Guy finds his seat up on the stage right next to Baxter Flourney.

A few rows up sits Chaitanya, who tries to get Guy's attention to wave at him, but fails.

The PROCTOR and JUDGES sit facing them, and a crowd of uneasy parents watch from their seats. Jenny sits in the last seat in the last row.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, BROADCAST BOOTH

CHUCK

First up, Ling Quan, 13 years old from Pleasanton, Oregon.

PETE

Chuck, Ling says when she grows up she wants to be president of the United States.

CHUCK
(chuckling)
Not a chance.

Pete shoots chuck a look.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
...that...there is a single person
who *wouldn't* vote for her. Let's
go to the competition.

They both chuckle.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

An ASIAN GIRL LING, 13, BRACES, moves up to the microphone.

PROCTOR
Dactylogram.

LING
Dactylogram?

PROCTOR
Dactylogram.

LING
Dactylogram.

PROCTOR
Dactylogram.

Guy rubs his temples.

GUY
Oh God.

The Asian Girl ghost-spells in the palm of her hand.

LING
Can I have the definition, please?

PROCTOR
A fingerprint.

LING
Dactylogram. Can I have the
origin, please?

PROCTOR
Dactylogram. From a Greek
combination *dactylos* meaning
"fingers, toes."

LING
Dactylogram.

PROCTOR
Dactylogram.

Ling ghost-spells in her palm one more time.

GUY
I'm in hell.

Guy turns to Baxter.

GUY (CONT'D)
Hey. Wassup. I'm Guy. You're
Baxter, right?

Baxter snobbishly looks over at Guy.

BAXTER
I'm not supposed to talk to you.

GUY
Why not?

BAXTER
Because my Dad says you're probably
just some unemployed bum trying to
steal the prize money that I
deserve. And that you're a
cheater.

GUY
Really?

BAXTER
Yeah.

Guy chuckles at this slight. Baxter inches away.

Guy puts his hands in his pocket and discovers he still has
Jenny's underwear. Guy leans over to Baxter and nods out
toward the audience.

GUY
Well, your Dad's kind of right. I
don't blame him for being so angry.
Do me a favor, will you?

Guy pulls JENNY'S UNDERWEAR out from his pocket. Wads it into Baxter's hand.

GUY (CONT'D)

Can you give these back to your mom? She left them in my room last night. I'd do it myself but your Dad's around and who wants to deal with that. Good luck with the divorce, by the way. Divorces suck.

Baxter's snobbish look melts into shock.

BAXTER

What?

Stunned, confused, Baxter takes the underwear, takes the news. The audience applauds as LING victoriously takes her seat.

GUY

Oh shit, you're up.

Not knowing what else to do, Baxter quickly shoves the underwear into his pocket. Blinking hard, Baxter walks up to the mic- the underwear bulging in his pocket.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, BROADCAST BOOTH

PETE

Next up, probably the next Spelling Bee king, Baxter Flourney.

CHUCK

Pete, Baxter says he wants to be president of the United States when he grows up. And win a Nobel.

PETE

Well, shall we cast our votes now?

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

PROCTOR

Noctivagant.

Baxter looks out to his parents. His FATHER watches sternly while his MOTHER offers a hopeful thumbs-up.

PROCTOR (CONT'D)
Noctivagant.

Baxter blinks back to consciousness.

BAXTER
I'm sorry, can you say the word
again?

PROCTOR
Noctivagant.

BAXTER
Noct...

PROCTOR
Noctivagant.

Baxter looks out at his parents again.

BAXTER
Noctivagant....definition?

PROCTOR
"Going about in the night; night-
wandering."

BAXTER
Uh...Noctivagant. Can...can you
use it in a sentence?

PROCTOR
"The noctivagant alley cat kept the
entire neighborhood up all night by
sitting on the fence, yowling out
to her many suitors."

The audience chuckles off this playful sentence. Is Baxter's
mother chuckling *the most*?

Baxter tries hard to focus. He starts to ghost-spell in his
hand, but he can't concentrate. He sweats. He breathes
hard.

BAXTER
Noctivagant. Other pron...
pronunciations?

PROCTOR
I have just Noctivagant.

Baxter swallows hard.

BAXTER
 Noctivagant. N-O-C-T-I-V-I-G-A-N-
 T. Noctivagant.

A delicate DESK BELL *tings* to alert everyone that Baxter spelled the word incorrectly!

The crowd "AWWs" in disappointment. Some gasp. Baxter's parents erupt with surprise. Crushed, Baxter walks off the stage and down the isle.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSEHOLD - SAME TIME

The MOTHER on the couch gasps and covers her mouth.

CHUCK (TV)
 I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS! DOWN GOES
 FLOURNEY! DOWN GOES FLOURNEY!

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

A smile creeps across Guy's face. Then he starts to laugh.

PETE (O.S.)
 Well Chuck, not everybody is
 displeased by this shocker...

The camera zooms in on Guy's devilish grin.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, BROADCAST BOOTH

CHUCK
 Well, Chuck. Now that the room
 seems to have recovered from that
 shock, up next, something even
 weirder...Guy Duncan.

PETE
 Guy said when he grows up he wants
 to be a...well, he's already grown
 up.

CHUCK
 Most people believe that Guy is
 pulling a stunt, and he'll
 immediately strike out here, let's
 listen in and see.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

Guy heads to the mic.

PROCTOR
 Frabjous-

GUY
 (quick)
 F-R-A-B-J-O-U-S.

Guy turns around and sits back down. He turns to all the
 kids around him.

GUY (CONT'D)
 (ominous)
 Are you ready to get your shit
 pushed in?

The kids all look at Guy in shock.

CUT TO:

We pop around to televisions around the world as Guy easily
 spells his words throughout round one:

On a television in a Barber shop...

GUY (CONT'D)
 (quick)
 F-R-A-B-J-O-U-S.

On a television in an executive's office...

PROCTOR
 SANG-FROID

GUY
 (quick, unceremonious)
 S-A-N-G DASH F-R-O-I-D.

On a television in a retirement home...

PROCTOR
 EMOLUMENT.

GUY
 (quick)
 E-M-O-L-U-M-E-N-T

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - LATER

Director Deagan faces a CROWD of screaming, angry parents in her office. She holds up her hands to shush them, and has to shout them down.

DIRECTOR DEAGAN
 Listen, LISTEN! WE ARE DOING ALL
 THAT WE CAN to find a happy
 resolution to this situation!

RAGING MOTHER
 Aren't you embarrassed? This is
 going to go down in history as the
 most ridiculous national spelling
 bee ever! And it will be on your
 head.

RAGING FATHER
 HE IS A GROWN MAN!

BEET-RED FATHER
 DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH MONEY I'VE
 SPENT ON GOD-DAMNED COACHES?!

RAGING FATHER
 He's a lunatic! He's infected!

BEET-RED FATHER
 I swear on my child's life as God
 as my witness, this will be the
 last year you are Director of the
 Bee.

DIRECTOR DEAGAN
 Look, Mr. Duncan doesn't possess
 the discipline and practice that
 all of your children have. I'm
 confident he's not going to make it
 much farther. I swear on all your
 children's lives that if he makes
 it to the final round, I'll step
 down as Director of the Bee.
 Immediately.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Guy lies on Jenny's bed, a mini rum bottle sticking out of his mouth.

GUY

You're room is bigger than mine.
Thanks for letting me shower. I'll
get to it as soon as my buzz picks
up.

JENNY

Wow. You thanked me for something.
Lemme ask you a question, what is
the grammatical significance of the
sentence, "Why run from fire ants?"

GUY

(barely thinking about it)
I dunno. It contains all the
vowels in the English language in
reverse alphabetical order.

JENNY

Yeah but that's a sentence, too bad
there isn't a single word that
contains all the vowels, but in
alphabetical order.

GUY

Facetious.

Jenny stands up.

JENNY

Son of a bitch.

GUY

What?

JENNY

You are brilliant. No, really,
you're a freaking genius!

GUY

Fuck you.

JENNY

Those questions I just asked you?
From a test they give to geniuses.
And I'd bet you have photographic
memory, or something close to it.

GUY

I barely went to school. So your big conspiracy theory is shit.

JENNY

Yeah, well I got hold of your school records. Guess what? Your eighth grade counselor made a note in your file right before you dropped out that you showed signs of genius.

Jenny tosses an old manila file onto Guy's chest. Guy picks it up. Reads it.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Fed-Ex was waiting for me at the front desk. I told you I'm good.

GUY

(reading)

That fucking fucker. Mr. Leavenworth told me I was a useless loser. And then he secretly makes notes that he thought I was smart. I'm glad I slashed his tires. And let his prized beagle loose.

JENNY

You display all the social signs of a genius. Antisocial. Outsider. You think you're better than others. You just never had a chance to shine in school. You never had a chance to realize it.

GUY

Boo hoo, I had a bad childhood. Waaah. I never knew my Daddy Waaahfuckinaaaaah. You' sound pretty fucking stupid, you know that?

JENNY

Sometimes brilliance and photographic memory are inherited. Maybe your Mom was brilliant.

GUY

Not likely. She fucking hated it when I had books around.

(MORE)

GUY (CONT'D)

One time as a kid I tried to sign up for the local spelling bee and she completely lost her shit on me for it.

JENNY

So is that why you're here? To do something you weren't able to do while your mom was alive?

Guy realizes what Jenny's trying to do.

GUY

I'm not talking anymore.

JENNY

You know what? You have problems. You can't open up!

GUY

I have problems? Remember you last night? Now, that was a problem.

JENNY

(self-conscious)

So? So?

GUY

So?

JENNY

Well you can stop worrying about it because its never happening again!

GUY

Fucking good.

JENNY

GOOD!

GUY

Fine.

JENNY

Perfect!

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM, SHOWER - LATER

Through the frosted glass we see Guy taking Jenny from behind, giving her dramatic thrusts.

JENNY
 Oh God...GOD yes YES...don't look
 at me. DON'T LOOK AT ME!

GUY
 I'M NOT LOOKING AT YOU THE WATER'S
 IN MY FUCKING FACE!

JENNY
 UGH! YES! DON'T LOOK AT ME!

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Guy gets dressed as Jenny lies on the bed. He heads for the door.

JENNY
 Guy?

Guy turns to Jenny.

JENNY (CONT'D)
 But what about your Dad?

Guy leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Guy gets to the door of his shitty hotel room, where he finds Chaitanya sitting on the floor waiting for him.

CHAITANYA
 Hey Guy! The hotel restaurant is
 still open. Wanna grab some
 alimantation for our hyperphagia!
 (beat)
 I'm hungry.

GUY
 Why don't you do yourself a favor
 and find some other pre-
 masturbaters like yourself to nerd
 out with, okay? This place is
 crawling with them it shouldn't be
 hard.

Chaitanya just gives him a blank look.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Guy slouches across the table from Chaitanya, completely lost in thought and fiddling with the salt shaker.

CHAITANYA

Without salt, civilization would not be the same.

GUY

Where are your folks? Shouldn't you all be eating a dinner of chilled monkey brains or something?

CHAITANYA

My father rather enjoys the dinner provided in his own hotel. Plus, he encourages me to spend as much time as possible preparing for each round. You want to practice with me?

Chaitanya pulls out a HUGE THREE RING BINDER. Starts studying.

GUY

Listen, Slum Dog. I'm not here to be your fucking friend.

CHAITANYA

Then why'd you come with me?

GUY

I dunno. Because you look all pathetic and pussified and I can't stand it.

Guy watches Chaitanya happily study.

GUY (CONT'D)

I'm going to humiliate you up there. I'm going to beat you like a mule.

CHAITANYA

Not everything is about winning.

GUY

Right. You're not here to win.

CHAITANYA
It's about the love of spelling.
It's about fun.

 GUY
Fun?

 CHAITANYA
Yeah.

 GUY
Reading a bunch of fucking words
and roots and all sorts of other
wordy shit is fun?

 CHAITANYA
Don't you think so?

Guy scoffs.

 GUY
Then, you've never really had real
fun.

 CHAITANYA
One time, for breakfast I was
eating waffles, and I thought to
myself, "Hmmm this looks like a
scrabble board." So then, without
my mother knowing, I opened up a
can of alphabet soup and drained
all the soup out...and used the
letters to play scrabble...ON MY
WAFFLES!

Chaitanya snickers gleefully.

 GUY
With who?

 CHAITANYA
What?

 GUY
Who did you play Scrabble on your
waffles with? Against?

 CHAITANYA
Just myself! It was crazy!

 GUY
You are a flaming nerd.

An ANGRY WOMAN walks up to Guy.

ANGRY WOMAN

Excuse me. I'm the mother of one of the competitors competing here.

GUY

That's what competitors do, right?

ANGRY WOMAN

I just want to say what you're doing is an insult to every honest child who worked so hard to be here, including my son.

GUY

I have an idea. Why don't you take said son and shove him back up your rusty birth canal.

ANGRY WOMAN

How dare you?!

GUY

How dare YOU!

ANGRY WOMAN

HOW DARE YOU?!

GUY

No! HOW DARE YOU!

Speechless, the Angry Woman marches away.

Guy looks at Chaitanya.

GUY (CONT'D)

Fucking moms, right? Fuck 'em. Let's go get a fucking hot dog. This place is depressing me.

CHAITANYA

I can't.

GUY

Why the fuck not?

CHAITANYA

My Dad doesn't want me to leave the hotel.

GUY

Your Dad is off having fun without you, like Dad's fuckin' seem to do, right?

(MORE)

GUY (CONT'D)

Just running off, having their own wonderful lives. We're just going for a hot dog. Jesus.

CHAITANYA

What if he calls to check up on me?

GUY

So you miss his call. Say you were on the shitter. Or just say you went fucking out! What's he going to do? Pull you out of the National fucking Spelling Bee? Come on.

Guy leads Chaitanya out of the lobby.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - LATER

Jenny sits at a table with a cup of joe. JEREMY, 40s, HANDSOME CRISP SUIT sits down across from her.

JEREMY

Jenny Widgeon. How are you?

JENNY

Jeremy. It's been a long time.

JEREMY

I'll say. I'm glad I was in town to catch your call.

JENNY

Wow. You look really, really good.

Jenny grabs the sugar and starts pouring lots into her coffee.

JEREMY

Thanks. I've been staying away from sugar. Cold turkey.

Jenny self-consciously puts the sugar down.

JENNY

Wow. It shows. How's the world's handsomest federal agent doing these days?

JEREMY

It's not as fun as it used to be.
I miss you digging around where you
shouldn't be.

JENNY

Yeah, me, too. Listen, I need to
call in "the" favor.

JEREMY

Oh! What a relief. I was hoping
that's why you called. It's been
hanging over my head like giant,
Cancerous testicle for years. I
like to keep a debt-free lifestyle.

Jenny slips Jeremy a napkin with "GUY DUNCAN" written on it.

JENNY

Anything you can find would be
appreciated.

JEREMY

That's it? Just a background run?

JENNY

Yep.

JEREMY

I expected so much more. It
doesn't seem like enough. You
saved my ass...my career!

JENNY

After this we're even steven.

JEREMY

Just this? No sex? I mean I'm
married but I'll do it.

JENNY

No.

JEREMY

Or I dunno...I could frame somebody
for drug possession...have their
records wiped...a mysterious
deportation of an annoying
neighbor, maybe?

JENNY

Nope. This is it.

JEREMY

Put someone on the most wanted list? It's really easy to do.

JENNY

Not necessary.

JEREMY

Fill their facebook page with kiddie porn?

JENNY

Really, no.

JEREMY

Well, I'll take it! A small price to pay. Thanks Jenny.

JENNY

No, thank you.

CUT TO:

INT. BEN'S CHILI BOWL - LATER

Sitting across from each other, Guy and Chaitanya chomp Chili Dogs. Chaitanya smiles with each bite, chili drips all over his mouth.

CHAITANYA

This is the best hot dog I've ever had in my entire life!

GUY

Slow down, Slum Dog. You've got fucking chili everywhere. You look like you've eaten out someone's ass.

CHAITANYA

Ha ha! Funny. You look like there was a person who pooped their underwear and then you paid them five dollars for their pooped underwear and then they sold it to you and then you used it for a bank robber mask and then you threw the pooped underwear away and forgot to wash your face!

Chaitanya takes a happy sip of his soda.

GUY

You should really not try to insult people. You can't do it.

CHAITANYA

This soda pop is so delicious.

GUY

Just call it "soda" okay?
Otherwise you're asking to get raped.

CHAITANYA

Wow. I can't believe it. I am actually out in Washington D.C.

GUY

So?

CHAITANYA

I've never been out before.

GUY

Bullshit.

CHAITANYA

Really. My father says that seeing the sights would prove to be too big of a distraction.

GUY

Let me get this straight. This is the third year you've been to Washington D.C. and you've never left the fucking hotel? Ever?

CHAITANYA

Yeah.

GUY

Well, doesn't that make you fucking mad?

CHAITANYA

As my father says, I'm here for the spelling bee, not to be a tourist. Plus, he always brings me back a souvenir.

GUY

Wait, while you bleed and shit all over your study words your dad goes and sees all the sights?

CHAITANYA

One time he got me this cool
snowglobe with the Lincoln Memorial
in it.

GUY

Listen to me. Your life has been
total horseshit. You gotta see
stuff to know stuff. You gotta
really give it to your old man.
Don't let him get away with this!

CHAITANYA

Get away with what?

GUY

Being a selfish asshole.

CHAITANYA

No he's not.

GUY

I call "Horseshit." I call it!
I'm saying it out loud right now.
No wonder you're such a fucking
oddball.

CHAITANYA

I've always liked the word
"oddball." A useful synonym for
that is "heteroclite."

GUY

You. Are. A. Fucking.
Heteroclit.

CHAITANYA

(correcting Guy)
"clite."

GUY

No, I meant, clit, because that is
how you are acting right now. Come
on. Finish up. There's no time to
waste. You gotta do shit.

CHAITANYA

Like what?

GUY

How about being a little like a
fucking kid, for starters.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

INT. SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

Guy and Chaitanya jump over a subway turnstile and dash into a subway car...

EXT. REFLECTING POOL - LATER

With his pant legs rolled up, Chaitanya wades across the pool and picks up as many coins as possible. Guy encourages him to pick up more...

CUT TO:

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - LATER

Guy and Chaitanya each dash out of the store with a spray paint can in hand...

EXT. ALLEYWAY - LATER

With his spray paint, Guy scrawls graffiti words "COCK" and "DICK" and "ASS" on the alley wall.

With his can Chaitanya scrawls "COPRAPHAGIA!"

EXT. D.C. BAR - LATER

Guy gives Chaitanya the "Shhh" signal as they sneak up on a LOBBYIST who is passed out on the sidewalk and take off his shoes. They run away before the Lobbyist comes-to.

EXT. D.C. STREET - LATER

After Guy ties the laces of the expensive looking stolen loafers together, he coaches Chaitanya on how to launch them up in the air to tangle them in the overhead power line.

Chaitanya gives the shoes a throw, and they catch on the first try. The two high-five underneath the dangling shoes.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - LATER

Guy and Chaitanya are in the back by the refrigerators. Guy opens a glass door and pulls out a MICKEYS 40. He shoves it in Chaitanya's jacket.

The two conspicuously walk out, but get away with it.

END MONTAGE

EXT. LINCOLN MEMORIAL STEPS - LATER

Guy takes a swig of the Mickeys. Hands it to Chaitanya.
Chaitanya takes a swig.

And chokes. *COUGH! COUGH! COUGH!*

GUY
Easy there, Slum Dog.

CHAITANYA
Wow. I think that went all the way
to my balls.

GUY
Hell yeah, it did.

CHAITANYA
I said "balls."

Guy takes another swig.

CHAITANYA (CONT'D)
I like having you as a friend.

GUY
I'm not your friend.

CHAITANYA
I really don't have any friends at
home. At first, I thought being
good at spelling would get me
friends, but kids just make fun of
me more. I hate being picked on.

GUY
You know, when I was a kid I moved
a lot, running with my mom from
credit collectors, ditching
apartments to avoid the rent...I
was never in one place long enough
to have any friends.

Guy remembers, snickers...

Chaitanya pulls a TOY TAXI CAB out of his pocket, rolls it on
the step.

GUY (CONT'D)
 What the fuck is that?

CHAITANYA
 (sheepish)
 I grabbed it in the liquor mart.

CHAITANYA (CONT'D)
 Toys are fun to have when you can't
 play with other kids. What was
 your favorite toy as a kid?

GUY
 I had a toy car once. It was this
 shitty little matchbox police car.
 It never left my pocket. But one
 night, as we were ditching this one
 apartment, it fell out of my pocket
 in the dark. I never saw it again.
 So yeah...no toys. No friends.

CHAITANYA
 I don't really have friends,
 either. It's hard to have friends
 when you're always studying.

GUY
 Jesus. That wasn't my problem.

CHAITANYA
 Well, I'm your friend now.

This catches Guy off guard and he needs to avoid it.

GUY
 So tell me, Chaiwala, you got a
 girlfriend? I was just joking. I
 know you don't have a girlfriend.

CHAITANYA
 You don't know that!

GUY
 Yes I do. If there's anything I
 know, it's that you don't have a
 girlfriend.

CHAITANYA
 Well, maybe I don't have a
 girlfriend, but I've felt a girl
 up, before.

GUY
 Oh yeah?

CHAITANYA

Yeah!

GUY

I'm not talking about hugs with
grandma.

CHAITANYA

No! Not my grandma, a real girl!

GUY

Oh, a real fucking girl! I get it,
now.

Guy points the Mickeys up at the statue of Abraham Lincoln.

GUY (CONT'D)

You know who that is, right?

CHAITANYA

Lincoln.

GUY

He fucking died so that you could
feel up any type of girl you want.

(beat)

Point is, you're Indian, right?
But thanks to that guy, if you
wanted to feel up, say, a white
girl, they can't arrest you.
Because you're fucking equal.
Thanks, Lincoln!

CHAITANYA

Thanks, Lincoln. Okay, I've never
felt up a girl.

GUY

No shit you haven't. Fucking liar.

CHAITANYA

But one day I will.

GUY

I bet.

Guy takes another swig.

CHAITANYA

I just hope I get one with nipples.

Guy chokes a bit.

GUY

What?

CHAITANYA

I just hope that the first girl I
feel up has nipples.

GUY

Every girl has nipples.

CHAITANYA

Well, you must be very lucky then.
But every girl does not have
nipples. No.

GUY

Why in the fuck do you think that
not all girls have nipples?

CHAITANYA

Just look around at any girl
walking by! Look at their shirts.
On some you can see the
little...nipples poking through
their shirt. On others...there's
nothing.

GUY

Oh sweet Jesus. You're in bad
shape, you know that?

CHAITANYA

Every time I think about it I get
worried. I also worry that if I am
lucky to get a girl with nipples, I
hope they're round.

GUY

You know what? Let me help you put
your mind at ease. Come on.

CHAITANYA

Where we going?

Guy leads Chaitanya off the Memorial steps.

CUT TO:

EXT. 5TH STREET - LATER

Guy walks with Chaitanya.

CHAITANYA
Where are we going?

 GUY
Just fucking hold your horses. If
my old man was around, I wish he
did something like this for me.

 CHAITANYA
Are we getting a sundae? I could
really go for a sundae right now.

Guy pulls Chaitanya into an alley.

EXT. ALLEY

 GUY
Okay. Stay here. Don't fucking
move.

 CHAITANYA
Are you going to get ice cream
cones?

 GUY
Fucking NO with the ice cream!
Just wait here.

Guy disappears out of the alley back onto the street.

EXT. 5TH STREET

We follow Guy as he spots a PROSTITUTE standing directly
under a sign that reads, "PROSTITUTE FREE ZONE."

EXT. ALLEY

Guy returns with the prostitute. Chaitanya, who was leaning
against the wall, straightens up.

 GUY
Slum Dog, I want you to meet
Marzipan. Marzipan, Slum Dog.

 CHAITANYA
Hi.

 MARZIPAN
You said he was sixteen!

GUY

He is sixteen, he just has a hydro-
thyroid retentional problem. You
know, like Gary Coleman.

MARZIPAN

Oh, jeez. God rest his sweet,
funny soul.

GUY

Alright, Chaiwala. All I can say
is, "You're fucking welcome!"

CHAITANYA

For what?

Marzipan PULLS UP HER SHIRT. Chaitanya's eyes go wide as
wagon wheels as he stares at Marzipan's naked tits.

MARZIPAN

...three...four...five...six...
seven...eight...nine...ten.

Marzipan lowers her shirt. Guy pulls out a ten dollar bill
from his pocket. Hands it to her.

GUY

Here.

MARZIPAN

What, no tip?

GUY

Don't ask for the only ten I got
and then I'll have something to tip
you with next time. There's a tip.

MARZIPAN

Asshole.

(to Chaitanya)

Bye sweetie. Good luck with your
glands and shit.

Marzipan leaves the alley. Chaitanya hasn't moved a muscle
since the tit unveiling.

GUY

I actually lied, I have a couple
more bucks. You wanna get ice
cream?

CHAITANYA

Fuck the ice cream, I want to grow
up right now!

They both leave the alley.

CUT TO:

INT. STATE PLAZA HOTEL, LOBBY - LATER

The sleepy DESK CLERK watches as Guy and Chaitanya drag their exhausted bodies across the lobby to the elevator.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATOR, MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

Guy and Chaitanya both lean against the back of the elevator.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Chaitanya stops at his door. Guy keeps shuffling on.

CHAITANYA

Hey, Guy? This was like, the best
night of my life. Are we friends
now?

Without turning around, Guy flips Chaitanya the bird, and steels a small smile to himself, but keeps on walking to his room.

CHAITANYA (CONT'D)

Cool.

Chaitanya, opens his door, where we see his father, the Indian man from before, sternly waiting for him inside. He goes in and the door closes.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL HALL - THE NEXT DAY

Jenny and Guy walk down the hall to the next round. Guy keeps looking at Jenny, but whenever she looks at him, he looks away.

GUY

Fuck it. Yes, it was just me and
my mom growing up. Life sucked,
and then she died last year. It's
as simple as that.

JENNY

I think you like me.

GUY

What? Don't flatter yourself. You just suck at your job and I'm tired of watching you beg.

Chaitanya approaches them.

CHAITANYA

Guy! I wanted to give you something before the round starts. For good luck.

Chaitanya hands Guy his toy taxi that has been crudely converted with black and red markers, into a police car.

This is the first time we see Guy being touched by anything.

GUY

Thanks.

CHAITANYA

I'm going to totally bust your nut.

GUY

No, you don't mean that.

CHAITANYA

I do!

GUY

The nut busting...It's not what you mean...I'm not...just say you're going to kick my ass.

CHAITANYA

Okay. See you in there!

JENNA

What was that all about?

Guy puts the toy car in his pocket.

GUY

Let's go spell some fucking words.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, BROADCAST BOOTH

CHUCK

And welcome everyone who's tuned in to watch Round Two of the Scribbs Institute National Spelling Bee. I wonder what today will offer, Pete?

PETE

Ninety Nine problems, but I'm sure a misspelled bitch ain't one of them, Chuck.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM PROCTOR'S TABLE - SAME TIME

Director Deagan leans over to the Proctor.

DIRECTOR DEAGAN

Sorry. There was an error with the randomization programming, I need to give you the fix before the round.

PROCTOR

Okay.

Director Deagan inserts a USB stick into the Proctor's computer and uploads the program, with a devilish smile.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE - LATER

Guy sits among the competitors, in his own personal hell, as Round two drones on. A KOREAN BOY with Cowlick Hair stands in front of the mic.

COWLICK

Rhapsodize... can I please have the definition?

PROCTOR

"To talk with extravagant enthusiasm." Rhapsodize.

COWLICK

Rhapsodize. Any other pronunciations?

Guy sees Joyce Sacks sitting in front of him. He taps her on the shoulder.

GUY

Excuse me.

Joyce turns.

GUY (CONT'D)

That's your Dad out there in the audience, right?

JOYCE

Yeah.

Guy pulls a pair of HIS OWN UNDERWEAR out of his pocket.

GUY

This is kind of embarrassing, but he left these in my room last night and I don't want to humiliate him by handing them back myself. It was just horseplay, I swear.

(beat)

He truly loves your mom.

With horror, Joyce takes the underwear and stares at it for a long beat. Tears well up in her eyes. Her lower lip quivers.

Joyce stands up out of her seat. All eyes are directed at her as she points out into the audience at her father.

JOYCE

(shrill)

I KNEW IT!!!

Joyce storms off the stage. Guy smiles, pleasantly surprised. All the other kids remain seated, somewhat rattled.

Joyce's parents get up and run after her.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, BROADCAST BOOTH

PETE

Annnnd end scene! Unbelievable! Joyce Sacks flames out without misspelling a single word!

CHUCK

Pete, she caved like a skull hit with a ball peen hammer, Pete.

PETE
I'd hate to have a look in your
freezer.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

PROCTOR
I, um, apologize for that.

COWLICK
It's okay. R-H-A-P-S-O-D-I-Z-E.
Rhapsodize.

PROCTOR
That is correct.

The audience applauds.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, BROADCAST BOOTH

CHUCK
AND LEE PARK HITS A BULL'S-EYE!

PETE
Maybe one day Lee Park will have a
park named after him. The "Lee
Park Park." And then they can add
a park and ride adjacent to it.
The "Lee Park Park Park and Ride."
Something to be proud of, Chuck.

CHUCK
Yeeesss.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

It's Guy's turn. He turns to the kids as he gets up.

GUY
I hope you're fuckin' ready,
because I'm about to get all
Optimus Prime on your asses.

Guy steps up to the mic. He watches as the Proctor's eyes go
WIDE for a moment.

PROCTOR
PNEUMONOLTRAMICROSCOPICSILICO-
VOLCANOCONIOSIS.

The audience gasps. Guy pauses.

PETE (O.S.)
Can you spell Uh-oh, Chuck?

CHUCK (O.S.)
Chances are I can spell it better
than that word!

GUY
Damn it.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, AUDIENCE - SAME TIME

Director Deagan smiles. Leans forward in her chair.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

Guy steps away from the mic for a moment. Paces. We think he's panicking. But then he spots something in the back of the auditorium.

GUY
Thank God. I was worried there for
a second.

Guy waves to the back of the auditorium. Everyone turns around to find a wide-eyed WAITER from the hotel bar, holding a MARTINI.

GUY (CONT'D)
Yeah, that's me...

Unsure, the waiter walks up the aisle to the stage.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, BROADCAST BOOTH

PETE
UN. BELIEVABLE! Guy is pulling a
Thurston Howell the Third right
here at the Bee!

Director Deagan makes a B line to the Judges' table.

CHUCK (O.S.)
Looks like Director Deagan doesn't
agree with Guy's methodology.

PETE (O.S.)

But I can tell you right now,
 Chuck, that Deagan's gonna come up
 dryer than Grandma's sex toy on
 this one. There is no rule that
 states a contestant can't drink
 during a round- because usually the
 contestants are under the legal age
 to drink.

CHUCK (O.S.)

Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolfe?
 Not this fella!

After quietly conferring with the Judges, Director Deagan
 throws her arms up in the air and storms back to her seat.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

Guy watches Director Deagan go and then bends down to the
 waiter, takes the Martini.

GUY

What's the damage?

WAITER

Eleven dollars.

GUY

ELEV- there better be like, angel
 semen in this drink, or something.

The audience gasps as everything Guy's saying is being picked
 up by the mic.

Guy plops his room cardkey in the waiter's hand.

GUY (CONT'D)

Here, put it on the room account,
 and check back every once in
 awhile. I'm gonna dry out real
 fast.

WAITER

Yessir.

Guy leans into the mic.

GUY

Oh yeah. Sorry.

(fast)

(MORE)

GUY (CONT'D)
 P-N-E-U-M-O-N-O-U-L-T-R-AM-I-C-
 R-OS-C-O-P-I-CS-I-L-I-C-OV-O-L-
 C-A-N-OC-O-N-I-O-S-I-S.

Guy unceremoniously returns to his seat with his drink.

PROCTOR
 (unbelieving)
 Correct.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, AUDIENCE - SAME TIME

Director Deagan crosses her arms with a huff.

MONTAGE

We cut between Guy and the other competitors standing at the mic. Guy spells lightning fast every time, and simply turns back to his seat, cocktail in hand, knowing he spelled correctly. The others pause, ghost-spell in their hands, and spell with uncertainty.

Angry viewers around the world boo and throw stuff at their TVs every time Guy is up...

GUY
 H-E-P-A-T-I-C-OC-H-O-L-A-N-G-I-OC-H-
 O-L-E-C-Y-S-TE-N-T-E-R-OS-T-O-M-I-E-
 S.

FRECKLE FACED BOY
 Can I have the root origin please?

GUY
 A-P-O-T-H-E-G-M.

CHAITANYA
 Pertinacious. Can that be used in
 a sentence please?

As Chaitanya spells we see Guy very subtly spelling along with him...almost with encouraging enthusiasm.

GUY
 F-L-O-C-C-IN-A-U-C-I-N-IH-I-L-I-P-I-
 LI-F-I-C-A-T-I-O-N.

CHUCK

This is amazing! The luck of the draw is not going Guy's way as it seems he's getting every mile-long word in the English language!!!

CAMBODIAN GIRL

Hagridden. H-A-G-R-I-T-T-O-N.

Ting! The girl's face falls.

GUY

A-N-T-ID-I-SE-S-T-A-B-L-I-S-HM-E-N-TA-R-I-A-NI-S-M.

SHAVED HEAD BOY

...H-I-P.

Ting! He's out. His lowers his head.

Ting! Another girl is out. She turns to walk off as her face sours into a big sob.

Ting! Another boy is out. He smacks his forehead and walks away.

Ting! And another. He turns and leaves.

Ting! And another. He turns and leaves.

GUY

(burp spells)

H-O-N-O-R-IF-I-C-A-B-I-L-IT-U-D-I-N-IT-A-T-I-B-U-S.

PROCTOR

(horrified disappointed)

That is correct.

One clap can be heard in the back. Coming from Chaitanya.

Guy spells one word after another...with more physical flare each time.

By his last word, Guy's busting ELVIS KARATE KICKS on his way back to his seat.

END MONTAGE.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - EVENING

The pack of angry parents surround Director Deagan as she fights her way through.

ANGRY MOM
He's in the final round!

Director Deagan looks to all the angry parents.

DIRECTOR DEAGAN
Okay, well, obviously I'm not going to resign. That would leave the Bee rudderless in this storm!

ANGRY DAD
BULLSHIT!

The crowd of parents grow loud with protest. Director Deagan, for the first time, looks like the pressure is getting to her.

Elsewhere, Guy exits the ballroom amid very harsh stares.

Chaitanya catches up with Guy.

CHAITANYA
Alright! We're both in! Top twenty five!

Chaitanya tries to hi-five Guy but misses and hits his chest. Jenny approaches.

CHAITANYA (CONT'D)
I'm going to kick your ass.
You want to eat dinner together?
And then maybe study or something?

GUY
Yeah. I don't know, maybe.

CHAITANYA
Meet me in the lobby in like, an hour.

GUY
Yeah, alright.

Chaitanya saunters off.

JENNY
Did I just see what I just saw?

GUY

What?

JENNY

You have a *friend*?

GUY

Look. he's an incredibly annoying kid and the only way to keep him from driving me insane is to deal with him.

JENNY

Do you have a little buddy?

GUY

Hey! It's none of your business, okay?

JENNY

Okay! I was just joking. Have all the friends you want!

GUY

I will! I gotta go study.

Guy storms away. Jenny calls after him.

JENNY

I know you're not studying you don't study! Have fun with your buddy!

CUT TO:

INT. STATE PLAZA HOTEL, LOBBY - LATER

Guy walks past the gift shop. Pauses. Turns to go in.

CUT TO:

INT. STATE PLAZA HOTEL, GIFT SHOP - LATER

Guy stands in front of the magazine stand. Contemplating. With a smile, Guy grabs a Playboy Magazine.

Guy passes the freezer. Then returns to quickly grab a pint of ice cream.

Guy plops them both down at the register. The OLD LADY CLERK, 80s, raises her eyebrows.

OLD LADY CLERK
Gettin' ready for a wild night,
huh?

Guy slaps down money, sneers and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Guy approaches Chaitanya's hotel room. The door is slightly ajar. He's about to knock when he hears Chaitanya's Dad.

CHAITANYA'S DAD (O.S.)
Just make sure he's locked in,
okay?

CHAITANYA (O.S.)
Dad. He's totally locked in. He's
took me around to see the sights
last night! Something you've never
done, by the way.

CHAITANYA'S DAD (O.S.)
Chaitanya, focus. This man is your
enemy. Keep him close but don't
forget that. Remember Donnie
Brasco. You want to win? Do you?

CHAITANYA (O.S.)
Of course!

CHAITANYA'S DAD (O.S.)
Then make best friends with him!
Get him so that he couldn't bear to
beat you!

CHAITANYA (O.S.)
Dad, I got it, okay? No problem.

Guy's face falls. He walks away. Further down the hall we see Guy lean an arm against the wall for support. We see his shoulders heave once- and once only. Guy hurls the ice cream down the all, then continues on.

CUT TO:

INT. STATE PLAZA HOTEL, LOBBY - NIGHT

Guy waits in the lobby, with the bagged magazine in hand. Chaitanya approaches.

GUY
WERE YOU PRETENDING TO BE MY FRIEND
JUST TO TRY TO BEAT ME?

CHAITANYA
What? No! No!

GUY
Plying me with booze? Earning my
trust? Huh?

CHAITANYA
Listen, I can explain.

GUY
And what about last night, huh?
Thought you'd make me tired?
Become best friends along the way
so I wouldn't want to beat you?

CHAITANYA
Listen, I know it's weird but-

GUY
You little shitwit just admit I was
your damned mark!

Chaitanya hems and haws.

CHAITANYA
-IT WAS MY DAD'S IDEA, OKAY?
He felt you were the biggest
threat. The wild card. But I
really like you.

GUY
Liar.

CHAITANYA
It was the truth that I'd never
left the hotel before last night.
It was truth that you and I became
friends!

GUY
All so that you could win.

CHAITANYA
No. Yes. Well, no. The getting
you to lose part was my Dad's idea
but you're cool and I like you.
You showed me my first boobs!

Guy turns away. Chaitanya scurries around to face him.

CHAITANYA (CONT'D)

Do you want to see a friend lose?
My Dad will be so disappointed in
me.

Guy takes out the toy cab/police car Chaitanya gave him,
drops it on the floor and crushes it with his heel.

GUY

Fuck you sideways, Chaiwala!

Guy storms out of the lobby.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATE PLAZA HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Chaitanya chases after Guy.

CHAITANYA

Guy! Guy!

As Guy walks off a MASKED ASSAILANT with a PIPE rushes Guy.

WHAP! WHAP! WHAP! Right at the knee! Guy crumples to the
ground, screaming.

The masked assailant stands over Guy, then freaks and spins
and dashes off-

DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF AN ONCOMING TAXI CAB.

The cab slams on its brakes, sending the Masked Assailant
rolling over its hood.

A crowd quickly gathers around the commotion. The cabbie
gets out of the cab and approaches the Masked Assailant, now
out cold on the street.

The cabbie removes the mask.

IT'S DIRECTOR DEAGAN!

CUT TO:

EXT. STATE PLAZA HOTEL

Police, paramedics, and looky-loos surround the scene.

Director Deagan, now handcuffed on a gurney, is being lifted
up into an ambulance.

DIRECTOR DEAGAN
 He's the one you should be
 arresting! He's a bad man! A B-A-
 D M-A-N!

The ambulance doors close and the ambulance drives off.

Jenny sits with Guy, who now has his knee wrapped in ice.

JENNY
 I'm going to go talk to your buddy.

Guy's holding a death stare on Chaitanya, who stands off in the distance with his father, talking to the police.

GUY
 He's not my friend and don't go
 fucking talking to him!

Chaitanya nervously glances over at Guy. The moment is tense.

JENNY
 I need to.

GUY
 Do it and I'll go talk to ESPN.
 I'll totally open up.

JENNY
 YOU WOULDN'T!

GUY
 Try me.

Guy limps away.

Jenny's phone vibrates. She has an e-mail alert. It reads:

"Jenny- Guy Trippon info. We're even! Jeremy."

Jenny opens up the e-mail on her phone. Reads. Her eyes go wide.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Chaitanya studies from his huge binder. His phone rings. He picks it up.

CHAITANYA

Hello?

FRONT DESK

Yes, your father left a message saying he'll be waiting for you in the lobby in five minutes.

CHAITANYA

(confused)

Really? Thanks.

INT. HOTEL HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Chaitanya walks out of his room. Before the door shuts completely, GUY silently limps inside from behind a nearby planter.

INT. STATE PLAZA HOTEL, LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Chaitanya looks around the lobby. No father.

Chaitanya freezes- a horrible thought has just crossed his mind.

Chaitanya runs for the elevator.

INT. HOTEL HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Chaitanya runs as fast as he can to his room.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Chaitanya scrambles inside...HIS BINDER IS GONE!

Chaitanya notices a flickering reflection from his window.

Chaitanya looks out his window to see Guy below in the parking lot, standing next to the BURNING BINDER! Guy looks up and flips Chaitanya the double bird.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

There is a knock at Guy's door. Guy limps over to and opens it to face a PIZZA DELIVERY GUY holding TWENTY PIZZA BOXES.

PIZZA DELIVERY GUY
That will be two hundred and eighty
dollars, not including tip.

Guy grits his teeth and slams his door.

GUY
Amateur.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MUCH LATER

There's a knock on Chaitanya's door. He opens it and is
greeted by MARZIPAN.

MARZIPAN
Hey, Sugar!

Suddenly ANOTHER HOOKER APPROACHES.

HOOKER
What are you doin' here, bitch?!

MARZIPAN
I GOT THE CALL.

HOOKER
WELL SO DID I!

MARZIPAN
This is my hood, bitch!

HOOKER
WHO YOU CALLING BITCH, BITCH?

Chaitanya slams his door shut, completely freaked out as the
two prostitutes wage war out in the hallway.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MUCH MUCH LATER

Guy jumps awake to his door being rapped hard.

GUY
WHO IS IT?

POLICE (O.S.)
D.C.P.D. Open up, Sir.

GUY
Yeah, right! Nice try Chaiwala!
Who'd you hire, the doorman?

POLICE (O.S.)
Sir, we've received a call that
you're holding someone against
their will in your room, open the
door or we will open it for you.

Guy sits up in bed. Decides to play along.

GUY
*That's right, coppers! I've got a
hostage! And I'll do her if you
get any closer! Then, I'll fuckin'
do myself, you hear?!*

Guy listens, footsteps hurry away from his door.

GUY (CONT'D)
Complete fucking amateur.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Guy lies asleep on his bed.

BOOM! The door splinters open!

GUY
Huh...whah?

A horde of SWAT stumble into the room and on top of Guy.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAWN

Jenny walks out with Guy.

GUY
That little fucking bastard!

JENNY
Hey, at least they didn't press
charges.

GUY
He knew I wouldn't believe it was
the real cops. It's war!

JENNY

Guy. I gotta talk to you about something. I've been digging around and...I found out who your father is. Maybe...just stop walking for a second.

Jenny stops Guy. Looks into his eyes. Takes a deep breath.

JENNY (CONT'D)

As incredible as this sounds, Guy, your father is Scribbs President Bill Bowman.

GUY

Yeah. I know.

JENNY

Wait, what? You *do*?

GUY

My mother told me when she was dying. He was a traveling encyclopedia salesman, she was a waitress at a diner he passed through all the time. When she got pregnant he stuck around for awhile or something, but once I was born, he headed for the hills and never looked back.

JENNY

So Bowman doesn't have any idea who you are-

GUY

-Not a fucking clue. And he's not going to until I finish making a mockery out of what he seems to love more than anything else, the spelling bee.

JENNY

Guy! This is huge.

GUY

It's not important to your story, if that's what you're trying to drive at.

JENNY

Like hell it isn't! This is completely important. Everything else falls to the wayside for this.
(MORE)

JENNY (CONT'D)

This is now the whole *point* of my article.

GUY

No fucking way.

JENNY

Look, not wanting me to get a quote from some kid is one thing, but you can't really tell me what to write.

GUY

I'm doing it right now.

JENNY

I like you and I thought you liked me, but nothing gets in the way of me doing my job well.

GUY

Are you kidding me? Nothing gets in the way of your shitty little *tabloid* piece? Spare me. Why don't you knock off this professional reporter act. You write for a scabby rag that fat housewives wash down with a pint of ice cream every week.

Jenny's clearly stung by Guy's words.

GUY (CONT'D)

If you write one word about this, I'll never talk to you again!

JENNY

FINE! THEN I GUESS THAT'S THE WAY IT HAS TO BE! You just do what you have to do and I'll do what I have to do.

GUY

Whatever. You fucking ingrate!

Jenny scoffs. She's so enraged she's speechless.

Jenny storms off. Guy watches her go, angry, yet torn by a tinge of regret.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, BROADCAST BOOTH

CHUCK

And welcome everyone to the big tamale, the final countdown, where the eye meets the tiger! Pete, if you thought the going got weird *during* the Bee yesterday, just listen to what happened when the semi-final round was over. Reports have come in that National Spelling Bee Director Bernice Deagan has been arrested and charged with assault with a deadly weapon, on none other than Guy Duncan!

PETE

She tried to Tanya Harding him, Chuck. With a pipe. And a ski mask. Allegedly. Much to America's disappointment, Guy only suffered minor injuries and will be competing in the final round.

CHUCK

Un. Believable. This morning Scribbs COO Bill Bowman announced that Director Deagan has been removed from her position and that he himself will oversee the final round today. And we are fortunate enough to have Mr. Bowman with us, in Washington D.C., right now.

Bowman steps into frame.

BOWMAN

Thank you, Chuck. I would like to take the opportunity to address this unique situation to everyone watching out there. I regret the alleged actions of former Director Bernice Deagan. As you know, I myself am a former bee champ. Before I became one of the most influential and powerful executives in America, I learned first hand that the bee is about sportsmanship, not assault and battery. I look forward to moving past this ugly incident and am very excited to personally crown our next National Spelling Bee Champ, whoever that may be.

CHUCK

From your lips to God's ears.
Pete, take it away.

PETE

So let's get to it! The final
round of this year's Scribbs
Institute National Spelling Bee,
where the last speller standing
walks away with *five hundred
thousand dollars-*

Bowman leans in to interject.

BOWMAN

-And a lifetime supply of
dictionaries and encyclopedias-

PETE

-blah blah blah FIVE HUNDRED
THOUSAND DOLLARS!!!

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

All twenty five competitors sit up on the stage as the judges
and audience and Bowman sit before them.

Disheveled and worse for the wear, Guy limps past Chaitanya,
who's wearing a blazer that has one sleeve obviously longer
than the other.

GUY

What happened to the duds? Looks
like a "friend" got hold of them.

Chaitanya's tired and grumpy.

CHAITANYA

You got arrested.

GUY

I'm going to fucking end you.

CHAITANYA

(through gritted teeth)
Bring it.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, BROADCAST BOOTH

PETE

Looks like there's some harsh words
being shared between two of the
contestants down there, Chuck.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

Eric Tai walks up to the mic. He's super awkward, nearly
savantish with his rocking back-and-forth.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, BROADCAST BOOTH

CHUCK

This is Eric Tai. Quite the word
Ninja.

PETE

Yes. If a Chinese person could be
a Ninja.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

PROCTOR

Inchoate.

ERIC

Inchoate.

PROCTOR

Inchoate.

ERIC

Can I have the definition, please?

PROCTOR

Presenting favorable circumstances
or conditions. Inchoate.

ERIC

Inchoate. Part of speech, please?

PROCTOR

Adjective.

ERIC

Inchoate.

Eric ghost-spells in the palm of his hand.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 Inchoate. I-N-C-H-O-A-T-E.
 Inchoate.

PROCTOR
 That is correct.

The audience goes wild. Eric pumps his fist in just about the nerdiest way possible, and returns to his seat.

Next, Chaitanya comes up to the mic. Guy leans forward in his seat.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, BROADCAST BOOTH

CHUCK
 Chaitanya Chopra, Chuck. Chaitanya has been here twice before and hopes three times is the charm.

PETE
 Let's see if the genie's in his bottle, Pete.

CHUCK
 That might have been a skosh culturally insensitive.

PETE
 No more than calling a Chinese kid a Ninja. Let's listen in...

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

PROCTOR
 Tmesis.

CHAITANYA
 Tmesis. Definition?

PROCTOR
 "In grammar and rhetoric, the separation of the parts of a compound word, now generally done for humorous effect; for example, 'abso-bloody-lutely.'"

CHAITANYA
 Is the origin from the Greek "a cutting?"

PROCTOR

Yes.

CHAITANYA

Tmesis. T...

Chaitanya pauses. Guy leans forward even more.

CHAITANYA (CONT'D)

...M-E-S-I-S. Tmesis.

PROCTOR

That is correct.

The audience applauds loudly. Guy scoffs.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, BROADCAST BOOTH

PETE

That was FAN DASH FREAKING DASH
TASTIC!

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

Chaitanya returns to his seat. Guy glares at him.

A HARELIPPED GIRL, 14, approaches the mic.

CHUCK (O.C.)

This is Tamara Sweetzer.

(beat)

She has such a kind soul. So
bright.

PROCTOR

Zeitgeist.

HAIR-LIP

Zeitbeist?

PROCTOR

Zeitgeist.

HAIR-LIP

Z-I-T-G-E-I-S-T. Zeitgeist.

Ting. The audience "AWWWs."

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, BROADCAST BOOTH

PETE

Ouch. The wheels came off of that wagon. Too rushed. Wayee to rushed.

CHUCK

Pete, all the Bee veterans will tell you, "Take your time. Even if you think you know it, ask those questions. Spell it out in your hand."

PETE

So right. You want to be the tortoise, not the hare.

CHUCK

Wow. That one was the most insensitive of all. I can't believe you went there.

PETE

What? "Hare" as in rabbit, not "hare" as in...*lip!*

CHUCK

We should just drop it.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

Tamara rushes off the stage in tears.

GUY

She spelled it Zitzeist! What a retard!

Guy is next. As he approaches the mic there are boos and hisses.

PROCTOR

QUIET IN THE AUDIENCE PLEASE!

CHUCK (O.C.)

And here comes Guy Duncan.

The booing grows. Guy happily stands before his haters.

Guy looks down at Bowman. Bowman looks up at him, with no idea what's going in Guy's head. This is the first time Guy has ever stood before his father. We see a slight change in Guy's face- almost a tinge of *emotion*.

PETE (O.C.)
 Holy smokes! I don't think there's
 ever been booing at the Bee before,
 Chuck.

CHUCK (O.C.)
 Well, there've been a lot of Bee
 firsts this year.

PROCTOR
 WITH DUE RESPECT THIS COMPETITION
 WILL NOT PROCEED UNTIL THERE IS
 QUIET IN THE AUDIENCE.

The crowd quiets down.

PROCTOR (CONT'D)
 Thank you. Condign.

GUY
 Can I have the definition, please?

PROCTOR
 "Wel-

GUY
 Just kidding C-O-N-D-I-G-N.

Guy mimes jerking off and blows raspberries in the mic, then
 returns to his seat. An explosion of boos erupt.

PROCTOR
 That is corr-
 (over the boos)
 THAT IS CORRECT!

Guy turns to the BOY WITH A UNIBROW sitting to his right.

GUY
 They're fucking animals. Your
 parents are fucking animals.

Unibrow gets up. It's his turn.

PROCTOR
 Slubberdegullion.

UNIBROW
 Slubberdegullion.

PROCTOR
 Slubberdegullion.

UNIBROW
Slubberdegullion. Can I have the
definition, please?

PROCTOR
Yes. "A dirty, wretched slob."

The Raging Mother from before stands up in the audience and
points at Guy.

RAGING MOTHER
YOU MEAN LIKE THAT MAN!

The audience laughs and cat calls Guy.

PROCTOR
Ma'am. I'm going to have to ask
you to leave.

RAGING MOTHER
Not until he does!

The Proctor nods and two security guards approach the Raging
Mother. She goes limp and they have to drag her away. As
she gets dragged out she starts chanting:

RAGING MOTHER (CONT'D)
Take him out! Take him out!

CHUCK (O.C.)
Well, we promised fireworks, ladies
and gentleman!

PETE (O.C.)
Is this a Spelling Bee or the G8
Summit?!

CHUCK (O.C.)
Zing! Zow! Petey's back!

Soon, everyone in the audience is chanting "TAKE HIM OUT!"
Guy seems unaffected by all this.

Guy leans in toward the rest of the contestants.

GUY
Get ready, mongoloids. This only
makes me stronger...

We hold on the contestants up on the stage as Guy stands
before the mic.

Through quick cuts we see the number of contestants dwindle down, until finally there are only three. ERIC TAI, CHAITANYA, and GUY.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, BROADCAST BOOTH

CHUCK

And then there were three. Eric Tai, Chaitanya Chopra and Guy Duncan. They will fight to the finish, when we come back!

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

PROCTOR

You may stand and stretch your legs during this commercial break.

Guy looks at Eric Tai who has met his parents at the foot of the stage. His equally awkward father approaches to give him encouragement.

Then Guy looks at Chaitanya who is now huddled with his parents. Guy watches as Chaitanya's mother rubs his back, his father gives him quiet words of inspiration.

Guy looks across the auditorium to Jenny. She turns her back to him and interviews one of the angry parents.

Guy sits completely alone up on the stage.

He looks at Bowman, talking to the Proctor, then he turns back to Chaitanya with his parents again. Then back to Bowman.

Guys blinks wearily. A change is happening inside of him.

PROCTOR (CONT'D)

Okay everyone, ten seconds. The three finalists must now sit together.

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Eric, Chaitanya and Guy all sit side by side.

Eric Tai goes up to the mic. Guy glances at Chaitanya, thinking hard.

PETE (O.C.)

And here we go, what might be the final leg of the competition.

PROCTOR

Kopophobia.

ERIC

Kopophobia. Can I have the definition?

PROCTOR

"Fear of exhaustion. Otherwise known as "Lexicographer's Curse."

ERIC

Is it derived from the Greek "Kopos" meaning "fatigue?"

PROCTOR

Yes.

ERIC

K-O-P-O-P-O-B-I-A.

(beat)

NO!

Ting! The crowd erupts with upset! Eric sadly leaves the stage.

CHUCK (O.C.)

OH THAT'S GOTTA HURT! Eric knew he left out the H. This has been a long day and it's clearly taken it's toll on Eric.

PETE (O.C.)

How ironic that fatigue made him misspell a word about fatigue.

CHUCK (O.C.)

That one will haunt him *for life*. And he's just a kid, so that's a long time to be haunted by something. Long time. And now, Guy Duncan.

Guy steps up to the mic, amidst boos.

PROCTOR

PARISOLOGY.

GUY

P...

Guy stops. He turns to Chaitanya. Then back to the mic.

GUY (CONT'D)

P-A...

Guy takes a disgusted sigh. He's decided what he must do.

GUY (CONT'D)

P-A-R-I-S-A-L-O-G-Y.

Ting! The audience goes crazy with glee. Chaitanya looks at Guy with shock. Bowman applauds.

CHUCK (O.C.)

Well what do you know! For the first time this whole tournament, Guy Duncan has spelled a word incorrectly!

PETE (O.C.)

But, the rules of the final round dictate that because he's one of the final two remaining contestants, Guy remains on stage.

Guy sits back down. Looks at Chaitanya, who stares at Guy with amazement, all pretense of anger has washed away.

GUY

I know how bad you want this. I get it. So take it. Fuck off.

Chaitanya slowly gets to the mic. The audience wildly cheers.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSEHOLD - SAME TIME

The entire family screams for Chaitanya.

INT. SPORTS BAR - SAME TIME

The bar goes all tense up while they watch Chaitanya at the mic.

CUT TO:

PETE (O.C.)

All Chaitanya needs to do now is spell his next word correctly and he's the new champ.

PROCTOR
Infinitesimally.

CHAITANYA
Infinitesimally. Can I have the
definition?

PROCTOR
Yes. "Exceedingly small."

Chaitanya looks back at Guy. He knows this word. But we see
on his face that he's feeling guilty.

CHAITANYA
Infinitesimally. E-N-F-I-N-I-T-E-S-
I-M-A-L-L-Y.

Ting! The crowd erupts with displeasure.

CHUCK (O.C.)
Oh my. Well, a spelling bee can't
be won on an incorrect word, so
'round we go again.

Chaitanya sits down next to Guy.

GUY
Fuck you, Chaiwala.

CHAITANYA
If you think everything I said was
a lie, then I'll prove it to you.
It's not about winning to
me...anymore.

Guy goes to the mic.

PROCTOR
Rugose.

GUY
R-U-G-O-S.

Ting! Guy sits back down.

CUT TO:

INT. TENT, SOMEWHERE IN AFGHANISTAN - SAME TIME
The troops all cheer for Guy's misspelling.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

 CHAITANYA
 You know these words.

Chaitanya gets up to immense applause.

 PROCTOR
 Pejorative.

 CHAITANYA
 P-E-J-O-R-A-T-E-V-E. Pejorative.

Ting!

 PETE (O.C.)
 It's almost as if they're
 misspelling on purpose! I don't
 think this has ever happened!

 CHUCK (O.S.)
 Chaitanya's not even taking his
 time. Something is up.

Chaitanya sits back down.

 GUY
 Just spell the fucking words. All
 you have to do is spell.

 CHAITANYA
 Same with you.

 GUY
 Eat shit, Chaiwala!

Chaitanya stands.

 CHAITANYA
 FUCK YOU!

Guy stands.

 GUY
 FUCK YOU!

Chaitanya kicks Guy in the BALLS! Guy instantly buckles from the pain, falling to his knees.

 AUDIENCE (O.S.)
 Oh!

 CHAITANYA
 Oh God.

Without raising his head Guy SUPERPUNCHES Chaitanya in the BALLS with his FIST!

AUDIENCE (O.S.)

OH!

Chaitanya goes down. Overwhelmed with pain, they both roll on the stage floor for a beat.

CHUCK (O.S.)

OH MY GRAVY THIS HAS TURNED UGLY!

PETE (O.S.)

INDEED IT HAS, CHUCK!

Chaitanya leaps on top of Guy, raining wild haymakers down on him.

Everyone watches in horror as they plow through empty fold-up chairs and off the stage to the floor.

GUY

JUST TAKE IT!

CHAITANYA

YOU TAKE IT, JERK!

Bowman is joined by the Judges as he clambers into the scrum to pull Chaitanya and Guy apart.

The audience screams in a frenzy.

BOWMAN

Knock it off! Both of you!

Chaitanya takes a final swing at Guy and mistakenly connects WITH BOWMAN'S NOSE! Blood erupts from his face and down his dapper suit.

AUDIENCE (O.S.)

OH!

CHAITANYA

Oh shit! Sorry!

Judges force Guy and Chaitanya back in their seats, leaving them sitting next to each other, heaving from the brawl.

Using his handkerchief to stop the blood, Bowman huddles with the judges.

PETE (O.C.)

I just, really don't know what to say, Chuck.

CHUCK (O.C.)

Well, right now, I'm sure President Bowman is looking to disqualify one or both of our finalists, Pete. Let's look at the replay of the inciting incident.

A SLOW-MO of Chaitanya winding up and kicking Guy in the balls replays over and over.

CHUCK (O.C.) (CONT'D)

As you can see, Chaitanya really connected to Guy's scrotal theater of pain.

PETE (O.C.)

My theater hurts just watching the replay.

Bowman departs from the Judge's table and sits back down.

PROCTOR

Gentleman, it has been decided that neither one of you will be disqualified as you both-

The audience's boos become uproarious.

PROCTOR (CONT'D)

(shouting over boos)

-AS YOU BOTH APPEAR TO HAVE EQUALLY CONDUCTED YOURSELVES IN SHAMEFUL MANNER! NOW LET'S FINISH THE COMPETITION, PLEASE! THE AUDIENCE NEEDS TO BE SILENT!

The audience quiets down.

PROCTOR (CONT'D)

Now, can we please proceed?

Guy gets up with a huff. Walks to the mic.

PROCTOR (CONT'D)

Unguent.

GUY

A-N-G-U-E-N-T.

Ting!

Guy sits back down with a "fuck you" face to Chaitanya.

Chaitanya gets to the mic.

PROCTOR
Please consider carefully...for the
love of God...the word...Bucentaur.

CHAITANYA
B...

Chaitanya looks at Guy. The entire audience holds their
breath.

CUT TO:

INT. BEST BUY - SAME TIME

Shopper stand frozen in front of the flatscreens.

INT. HOUSEHOLD - SAME TIME

The wife squeezes the husbands hand in hopeful anticipation.

INT. TENT, SOMEWHERE IN AFGHANISTAN

The troops all lean in close to the small TV.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

CHAITANYA
B-U-C-I-N-T-A-U-R.

Ting!

The crowd erupts with disappointment.

CUT TO:

INT. BEST BUY - SAME TIME

The shoppers all scream "NOOOOOO!"

INT. HOUSEHOLD

The wife beats her husband with a decorative pillow.

INT. TENT, SOMEWHERE IN AFGHANISTAN

The troops all stomp and kick with frustration.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

Guy sighs. Gets back up to the mic.

PROCTOR
Sisyphean.

GUY
C-I-S-S-Y.

Guy sits back down.

CHUCK (O.S.)
That's not even complete! He just
spelled Cissy!

Chaitanya gets back up to the mic. The audience cheers for him once again.

PROCTOR
Please. For the love of mercy,
carefully, very carefully consider
the word Callithump.

CHAITANYA
C-A-L-

Guy's had enough, he gets up and walks over to Chaitanya.

GUY
It's C-A-L-I-T-H-U-M-P.

CHAITANYA
No, you forgot an L.

Guy stands back, knowing what's next.

CHUCK (O.S.)
Ruh-Roh.

Bowman storms onto the stage- his eyes already starting to "raccoon" from the broken nose.

BOWMAN

Stop! Stop. I'm sorry. Sir, you were trying to help a fellow competitor cheat, that is against the rules, you are disqualified.

GUY

(rote)

But it doesn't matter, I spelled it wrong, anyway. He corrected me.

The audience boos.

BOWMAN

Which means that even though you tried to help him cheat, he wasn't cheating and he still technically spelled the word correctly on his own, WHICH MAKES HIM THE NEW CHAMPION!

The audience explodes with cheers.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSEHOLD - SAME TIME

The wife french kisses her husband while the dog watches.

INT. BEST BUY - SAME TIME

Employees and shoppers cheer and hug each other.

INT. SPORTS BAR - SAME TIME

Bar goers cheer and order rounds of shots

INT. TENT, SOMEWHERE IN AFGHANISTAN - SAME TIME

Soldiers cheers and hug and run out to fire their machine guns.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL AUDITORIUM, STAGE

Chaitanya's parents run up on stage to hug and kiss him amongst the growing crowd as balloons shower down in the auditorium.

A giant check and trophy table are whisked in from the wings as Guy quietly moves toward the exit. Chaitanya cranes his head to look for Guy.

CHAITANYA

GUY! GUY! YOU TRICKED ME!

Guy smiles, shrugs and flips him the bird.

Chuck and Pete appear next to Chaitanya.

CHUCK

Well, it was a battle royal for the ages. And now it is over. Many have gone home defeated. And one grabbed the brass ring.

CHAITANYA

Hi, Chuck.

PETE

And now the trophy ceremony.
President Bowman?

BOWMAN

Chaitanya Chopra, it is my great honor to bestow upon you the first place trophy for this year's Scribbs National Spelling Bee, as well as a check for five hundred thousand dollars and a life-time supply of encyclopedias.

Everyone applauds. Bowman hands Chaitanya the giant check and trophy.

Chaitanya, holds the spelling bee trophy up in the air.

PETE

Chaitanya, how do you feel now that you're champion?

CHAITANYA

I don't consider myself the champion. I consider myself a co-champion with Guy. I thought it was unfair to disqualify Guy. GUY!
GUY! COME BACK! WHERE ARE YOU?!

Suddenly a spotlight finds Guy just as he's about to leave the auditorium. Guy turns around.

CHAITANYA (CONT'D)

Come back! Get up here!

Guy watches as Chaitanya pleads on stage. He heads back.

Some people in the audience boo, but nobody cares. Guy tentatively gets back on stage.

 CHAITANYA (CONT'D)
 Guy is my friend. And I've decided
 to split the prize money with him.

 GUY
 (touched)
 Really?

 CHAITANYA
 That's what real friends do.

Chaitanya holds out his hand. Guy goes in for a shake.

 CHUCK
 That's pretty incredible. Among
 many *many* other things this year, I
 think we've all witnessed what true
 sportsmanship is here at the Bee.
 Sort of.

CUT TO:

INT. STATE PLAZA HOTEL, LOBBY - LATER

Guy exits the auditorium and spots Jenny at the check-out counter.

 GUY
 Jenny.

 JENNY
 What.

 GUY
 Come with me.

Guy leads Jenny to where Bowman stands, chatting to a cluster of people.

 GUY (CONT'D)
 Bowman. I need to talk to you.

Bowman nods to the people and they depart. He uncomfortably looks at Guy.

 BOWMAN
 What can I uh...do for you?

GUY

My mom, in her day, used to work in a diner in Kansas City. And every so often this business man would come through town, apparently. He started off as an encyclopedia salesman and finished by leaving her with a baby. That baby was me. I'm your son and I just want to say, FUCK YOU and this is a reporter friend of mine who is going to write an entire article about it whether you like it or not!

Mr. Bowman's face goes slack. Jenny is incredibly touched by Guy's gesture. Guy tensely waits to see what Bowman says next, preparing for the worst.

BOWMAN

Oh my. You...you have her eyes.

GUY

I'M NOT FUCKING LYING- what?

BOWMAN

I've only had one regret in life, and that was walking away from you and Bernice. I thought I had my reasons, but none of them really feel like good reasons, now. How is Berni-

GUY

Dead.

BOWMAN

Oh. I'm sorry.

GUY

Yeah well...it's no skin off your back.

Guy turns to leave.

BOWMAN

Wait!

Guy stops.

BOWMAN (CONT'D)

Look. I was supposed to be on a plane out of here today, but let me reschedule.

(MORE)

BOWMAN (CONT'D)
Meet me at the bar in an hour.
We'll talk. I want to talk.

Bowman sincerely hopes Guy says yes.

GUY
Okay.

BOWMAN
Okay. Good. One hour.

Bowman puts his hand on Guy's shoulder and smiles reassuringly, then walks off.

JENNY
Wow.

GUY
You can say that again.

JENNY
Thanks for the scoop.

GUY
Jenny, I fuckin' like you.

Jenny smiles.

JENNY
Good.

GUY
And it looks like I have an hour
before I meet back up with...Dad.

A sly grin spreads on Jenny's face. She knows what he's thinking.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Guy and Jenny hump passionately. Guy's face is turned away.

JENNY
Okay...NOW!

Guy turns and locks eyes with Jenny. They both smile.

JENNY (CONT'D)
 Holy shit that was easier than I
 thought...aahhhh YES! YES! YES!
 THIS IS SO HOT!

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

The marquee outside reads "CONGRATULATIONS TO CHAITANYA
 CHOPRA- NATIONAL SPELLING BEE CHAMP!"

We pan down as school lets out. Chaitanya walks along with
 his full backpack and armful of books.

Three kids on bikes approach.

KID 1
 HEY SPELLING NERD, CAN YOU SPELL
 DOUCHEBAG?!

CHAITANYA
 Of course. But not for you.

The other kid SLAPS THE BOOKS OUT OF CHAITANYA'S ARMS,
 sending them everywhere.

The three kids laugh and ride off. Nobody tries to help
 Chaitanya.

GUY (O.S.)
 Hey, Slum Dog.

Chaitanya looks up to see a POLICE CAR pulled to the curb
 with Guy smiling behind the wheel. Chaitanya leaves his mess
 and walks over.

CHAITANYA
 Wow!

GUY
 Right?

CHAITANYA
 Where'd you get this?

GUY
 It's an old movie police car. I
 got it at an auction with my half
 of the winnings. Worth every
 penny.

CHAITANYA

Now you don't need the toy you have
the real thing!

GUY

But only because of my good friend.
So, you want to give it a whirl?

CHAITANYA

Who? Me?

GUY

Damn fucking straight. I just
thought you might want to show it
off to some of your...*classmates*.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - LATER

The three bully kids casually ride their bikes down the
middle of the sleepy street...

SIRENS GO OFF BEHIND THEM.

They spin around to see CHAITANYA BEHIND THE WHEEL.

KID 1

OH SHIT!

Chaitanya punches it as the three kids ride their bikes as
fast as their feet can peddle.

AERIAL POV:

A high speed chase!

As the police car tears after the three screaming kids on
their bikes...through the streets, over lawns, through
parking lots. And all the while we hear Chaitanya and Guy
laughing together.

Like friends do.

THE END