

PRODIGY/BULLY

"Pilot"

Teleplay by

Mike O'Malley

Story by

Mike O'Malley & John Wells

Based on the series of shorts written by

Hank Perlman

January 24, 2012

PRODIGY/BULLY

TITLE CARD:

"All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth." Aristotle.

EXT. DILAPIDATED SCHOOL - LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS - DAY

VARIOUS CHILDREN play "King of the Hill" on a pile of dirt in a school parking lot.

Close-up on the laughing, happy face of AUDIE MURPHY, 11.

Strong, wiry and unkempt, Audie stands atop the hill, taking on all comers. Dispensing with his neighborhood friends and classmates via kicks, shoves, and outright violence. With each boy Audie flings off the pile, it becomes clear that if Audie were on that island in "Lord Of the Flies," he would have killed and roasted Piggy on the first day.

An unseen ENGLISH MAN, dripping with the same Anti-American pomposity that incited a revolution 240 years ago, narrates:

NARRATOR

America's education system is, in two words: A shambles.

ANGLE ON: Audie entering a bleak, foreboding, public school. Graffiti covers the walls, iron bars brace the windows.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Children are more akin to inmates than students.

Audie and his classmates pass through a metal detector.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Thankfully, there are pockets of hope known as "Schools for the Gifted." Oases of instruction that expand and develop the minds of the brightest. By invitation only.

EXT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - CAMPUS - DAY

Majestic marble pillars frame the entrance to an auditorium. Bunting drapes between the pillars, along with a sign:

"Kaltschmidt School Matriculation Day"

INT. MURPHY HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Audie eats a bowl of Froot Loops and addresses the camera.

AUDIE

I didn't even know this special smart kid school existed til they told me I got a scholarship. I guess they have some cool stuff. Laboratories. An indoor pool. But I don't know, my Dad's not so into it.

EXT. MURPHY HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Audie's father, TOMMY, 40, blunt, half-muscle/half-fat, lowers a new engine block into his '83 Camaro. Audie's mother, CELESTE, 38, thin, intense, buxom, scans through a Kaltschmidt admissions brochure.

CELESTE

They have a huge cafeteria.

TOMMY

I'm not letting some uppity rich kid school torpedo the foundation I already laid. He's fine where he is.

CELESTE

A ton of scientists went there.

TOMMY

Name one.

CELESTE

I don't have to *name* one, I just have to read one off this list. "Yusef Galahad" from Saudi Arabia. Class of '82.

She shows him the photo of a nerdish ARABIC MAN in his 40s.

TOMMY

The privileged son of some oil warlord and one of his hundred whore-wives. Probably bribed his way in.

CELESTE

However he got in, he learned a lot while he was there.

TOMMY

Says them.

CELESTE

Says the Nobel prize he won. Why don't we just let him try it out?

TOMMY

Because the second he starts hanging around a bunch of noobs he's gonna start forgetting everything he needs to know for when the North Koreans launch their nukes. Like how to gut a fish or bayonet someone.

INT. MURPHY HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Back to Audie and his Froot Loops, addressing the camera.

AUDIE

Mom and Dad went upstairs, had some "alone time", and Dad gave in. So I guess I'm going...

(shrugs)

Still, I'm gonna miss my friends.

QUICK GLIMPSE: A jam-packed public school cafeteria. Audie crawls on the floor with his pal BRIAN DOHERTY, 11, a chunky, sleep-deprived orthodontist's dream. Audie takes out a Zippo and ignites four roman candles. Colorful sparks fly. Students cover their food, scream, keep their heads down.

Back to Audie's direct address.

AUDIE (CONT'D)

I'm kinda looking forward to going to a school where you actually get taught stuff...

INT. PAUL TSONGAS ELEMENTARY GYMNASIUM - DAY

A doughy, wrung-out, sixty-year-old "science" and PE teacher, MR. DOUGLAS, addresses the camera. Behind him, four kids are wrestling each other on a big trampoline.

MR. DOUGLAS

Audie, doesn't belong here at Paul Tsongas Middle. We can't help him. He's asking me about black holes and string theory.

(MORE)

MR. DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

Last year he did a science fair project on photosynthesis in a class where half the kids don't understand that "ph" makes the "Eff" sound. I started in security. Then they needed a gym teacher. A year and a half later I'm teaching science. So. You know, I'm happy for the job, all you gotta do to teach 4th grade science is know how to read. But Audie drove me to drink with his questions. I was 11 years sober prior to him. My advice to the new school? Keep him away from mylar and helium.

EXT. GARBAGE STREWN VACANT LOT - DAY

Audie and Brian hold ropes tethered to a silver mylar balloon, ten feet long and three feet wide, hovering a couple feet above the ground. **MATTY**, a neighborhood dunce with crusted snot in one nostril and food stuck in his braces holds on desperately to the lawn chair they've rigged up to the balloon. **Matty** looks terrified.

AUDIE

You should land by The Church of the Good Shepard in about twenty-two minutes. Use the Ziplock bags to collect ozone samples every thousand feet.

Audie nods to Brian and they let go. The balloon rockets up into the air like Titan missile. **Matty** SCREAMING the whole way. Back to Audie's direct address --

AUDIE (CONT'D)

I'm kinda looking forward to going to a school where you don't have to bring your own toilet paper.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - DAY

ANGLE ON: Various well-dressed families take their seats.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - DAY

LAWRENCE MCCARTHY, 50, headmaster of the Kaltschmidt School walks to a podium. Cordial, amiable, he's best described as someone nobody else wants to see naked. He addresses a packed audience of students sitting with their families.

MCCARTHY

We welcome you new students to the oldest, most respected, gifted school in the nation, the Kaltschmidt School! We relish this opportunity to locate and nurture the Einstein, the Da Vinci, the Michelangelo in YOU.

ANGLE ON: The Murphy family, bored out of their minds.

Audie's sister, MOLLY, 12, all sugar and spice, wears a cute yellow dress, is the only one properly atired. Tommy is wearing a Tommy Bahama shirt with a huge Marlin on the back. Celeste is wearing a sweater, jeans and Nikes. Audie is wearing a sleeveless "Under Armour" shirt and nylon sweatpants. Audie's sister JACKIE, a fifteen-year-old girl with no interest in school and biceps bigger than her breasts, wears cargo fatigue shorts and a t-shirt that reads "I am not a man." She's more Hope Solo than Mia Hamm.

Celeste looks at the other families dressed to the nines. Embarrassed, she whispers to Tommy.

CELESTE

I'm so under-dressed.

TOMMY

You go commando too? Nice.

CELESTE

I'm menstruating.

TOMMY

Good, we can't afford another kid.

He kisses her. Celeste smiles. She loves her Tommy.

EXT. THE KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - CAMPUS GARDENS - DAY

QUICK GLIMPSES: The beautiful Oxford-inspired campus.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. STREETS OF LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS - DAY

Audie and Brian walk through a tough working class neighborhood on their way home from school. They pass an auto body shop, an already busy bar and three Dunkin' Donuts.

AUDIE (V.O.)

They made me take some special test during detention. I thought it was busy work. I was just happy to get a break from cleaning up vomit in the bathrooms.

INT. THE KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Headmaster McCarthy directly addresses the camera.

MCCARTHY

We started an outreach program in an attempt to find a few diamonds in the rough to add to our student body. Our goal: Discover some exceptional minds in communities where intelligence has little currency.

EXT. VACANT COURTYARD - SOMEWHERE IN LOWELL - DAY

In the courtyard of a condemned public housing complex, Audie stands opposite Brian. Audie holds a baseball bat. Brian pitches him a Miller Genuine Draft beer bottle. Audie swings and shatters the bottle into pieces while Brian shields his eyes and laughs.

NARRATOR

What was unknown when we set out, was that one boy would present himself as the inarguable focal point of our story.

EXT. BUSY STREET - LOWELL, MASSCHUSETTS - DAY

Audie and his friends Brian and Matty load balloons filled with paint into a wrist rocket. Launch their ammo at a passing school bus. Paint splatters on the side of the bus.

NARRATOR

An intelligent boy who was unfamiliar with the world of private tutors, chinos, and public decorum.

EXT. BUSY INTERSECTION - LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS - NIGHT

Audie, Brian and Matty skateboard up to a Dodge van, and grab onto the back bumper. They scream like Comanches, laughing, until Matty goes flying off into a parked beer truck. Ouch.

NARRATOR

An unrefined boy who suddenly found himself thrust into a delicate, civilized institution.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Beneath a banner that reads "Welcome New Students," Audie punches someone just out of the camera's frame. Hard. He watches his opponent fall like a bag of hammers.

NARRATOR

The boy's name is Audie Murphy.

Off Audie's viciously victorious face we CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES.

As main titles end, we go immediately into --

ACT ONE**INT. COLLINS HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

A Doris Day-ish WOMAN sits with a Mitt Romney-ish MAN.

DORIS DAY MOM

I can't fathom how that Audie Murphy kid was invited to such a distinguished school.

MITT ROMNEY MAN

Bribery or blackmail, I'm sure.

DORIS DAY MOM

He's a bad seed. A bully.

INT. MURPHY HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

TOMMY AND CELESTE address the camera.

TOMMY

My son's not a bully. He got in a fight. When did fighting become bullying?

CELESTE

I've never seen a school with so many trees.

TOMMY

When someone mouths off, and won't stop, you punch him. That's not called bullying, that's called following through on a promise. That's how we do it in Lowell.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

McCarthy addresses the camera.

MCCARTHY

Audie grew up in an Irish-Franco-Canadian home in Lowell, Massachusetts.

START MONTAGE: KEN BURNS EFFECT SLIDE-SHOW...

SNAPSHOTS: Old black and white photos of unhappy mill workers, unhappy boxers, half-happy drunkards in dirty taverns, unhappy and dirty German, Irish, French-Canadian and Polish children of the unhappy immigrant people who settled there.

MCCARTHY (VO) (CONT'D)

Once a community of solidly middle class manufacturing workers...

SNAPSHOT: A DRUNKARD being bum-rushed out of a bar.

MCCARTHY (VO) (CONT'D)

The outsourcing of textile jobs to the Indian sub-continent have destroyed the comfortable life once lived by Lowellers.

SNAPSHOT: An ELDERLY COUPLE sitting on lawn chairs on the sidewalk in front of their triple decker home.

MCCARTHY (VO) (CONT'D)

Audie's unique. He was not raised in a typical "gifted" child's family.

START MURPHY FAMILY MONTAGE - DAY

Quick Glimpses of Audie's family:

* A bloody Tommy Murphy in his grass-stained softball uniform and handcuffs, outside of a bar, winding up to spit in a cop's face.

Subtitle reads: "Dad" Freeze on Tommy's face.

Cut to Tommy's direct address:

TOMMY

I was a lot angrier before I cut my drinking back to just beer. Nowadays I only drink shots if other people buy. And Bloody Marys Sunday mornings when the Patriots play. But that's it. Moderation, you know? Works.

* Celeste Murphy is at the supermarket screaming at a checkout girl, who has not scanned a coupon correctly.

CELESTE

Scan it again. Your thumb covered the barcode. It's a manager's double coupon! Stop cheating me! Scan. It. Again!

Subtitle reads: "Mom" Freeze on Celeste's face.

* Jackie Murphy, sits on the couch. She clears the phlegm from the back of her throat, forms it into a spit-able hunk, tilts her head back, spits the loogie five feet into the air and then catches it back in her mouth.

Subtitle reads: "Big Sister" Freeze on Jackie's face.

Jackie addresses the camera:

JACKIE

You want me to repeat the question? Did I know my little brother was smart? That's the question? Where do I look? There? Like into the camera or over there at you?

* Molly Murphy in her bedroom with more stuffed animals than a children's hospital ward. Molly seems naïve and out of place, because she's both. She's singing into her computer cam so she can upload it to YouTube.

MOLLY

La la, love is love. Love is just love. Love is love. Love! Love!

Subtitle reads: "Sister" Freeze on Molly's face.

Molly addresses the camera:

MOLLY (CONT'D)
 I think the world just needs more
 love. Love everywhere. Just love.
 Love, love, love.

She is incredibly sincere and endearing. And dense.

Title Card: "Six minutes later"

Jackie addresses the camera:

JACKIE
 I knew Audie was smart. But more
 like smart-retarded. Always
 watching "Jeopardy" and reading.
 (Laughs) I'm glad he's gonna hang
 out with other "draters." That's
 retard spelled backwards. It's not
 nice to call people retards any
 more. So I call them "Draters."
 Retards backwards.

Celeste and Tommy address the camera:

CELESTE
 I always knew Audie was smart.

TOMMY
 Yeah, a smart ass.

CELESTE
 Ever since he was four, he liked
 taking things apart to see how they
 worked. It was kinda cute.

TOMMY
 Try managing a fantasy football
 team when you got Bill Gates Junior
 ripping up your laptop.

CELESTE
 He was always interested in how
 things work.

CUT TO A QUICK GLIMPSE: A four year-old Audie on home video
 sits on the kitchen floor of the Murphy home with a
 disassembled lawn mower spread around him. Off Camera we
 hear Celeste, who is working the camera, and half-laughing.

CELESTE (O.C) (CONT'D)
 Uh-oh Audie. What are you doing to
 Daddy's lawn mower?

FOUR YEAR OLD AUDIE
Fixing it.

Back to Tommy and Celeste Direct address:

TOMMY
Then he went all goofy learning the
languages.

CELESTE
Audie watched *Sesame Street* on the
Spanish Channel and the Portuguese
Channel.

TOMMY
Only Lowell, which has become
"Brazil North" would have a cable
company that forces you to pay for
a damn Portugese channel as part of
the basic cable package.

CELESTE
He became this odd little dude who
spoke a bunch of languages.

QUICK GLIMPSE: Audie in the hallway of his decrepit
elementary school saying hello to various other immigrant
children in their native tongues.

CELESTE (CONT'D)
But his smartness scared me. Let's
be honest. Most smart people are a
little off. And totally stuck up.

TOMMY
Yeah, like Jenny Hinkle.

CELESTE
So conceited.

TOMMY
This girl Jenny Hinkle we grew up
with memorized all the state birds
in second grade and got some
certificate and forever after
thought she was God's gift, Miss
Missy Smart.

CELESTE
Not smart enough to use a diaphragm
in tenth grade.

They both snicker at the memory of Jenny Hinkle's pregnancy.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Headmaster McCarthy addresses the camera.

MCCARTHY

Audie has a diamond inside of him.
But Audie himself, is the rough.
We were all a little apprehensive
as he met his classmates for the
first time.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM

Families and their kids sit and listen.

MCCARTHY

Returning students of our fifth
grade class! Please stand, and
introduce yourselves to Audie and
the Murphy family.

CUT TO STUDENTS INTRODUCING THEMSELVES:

TEDDY GRESZIK, a blonde, flat-topped farm boy from Presque Isle, Maine touches his mouth with his fingers and shuffles from side to side before speaking:

TEDDY GRESZIK

Hi, my name is Teddy. Teddy
Greszik. I'm from--I am from
Presque Isle, Maine. I like apples
and science. I want to turn Maine
Red potatoes into the fuel of the
22nd century.

SNAPSHOTS: Teddy in Presque Isle, Maine, on his family's farm: Harvesting potatoes. Delivering a calf. Rebuilding a combine's engine block. At a 4H fair with a blue ribbon and a big smile.

EXT. TEDDY'S FAMILY BARN - DAY

TEDDY'S DAD, 40, looks like a former football player.
TEDDY'S MOM, 39, has bangs and wears a teddy bear sweater that reads "Honey Pot." They are understated and answer the questions truthfully and directly to camera.

TEDDY'S MOM

Teddy was always *different*.

TEDDY'S DAD

Thinks too much.

TEDDY'S MOM

Thinking's not so good for farm life.

TEDDY'S DAD

Teddy was driving a tractor and started trying to figure out how to breed minks and rabbits. Big market for minks that could fornicate like rabbits.

TEDDY'S MOM

Got distracted. Harvested the family cat.

TEDDY'S DAD

Lotta people say cats are smart. Not that cat.

TEDDY'S MOM

A smart cat hears a tractor and sees a kid driving, they steer clear.

BACK IN THE AUDITORIUM:

BOB GHANDI, a squat, furrow-browed Indian kid, stands:

BOB GHANDI

My name is Bob Ghandi. I was born in Calcutta. I no longer live there and I am grateful for the opportunity to make something of my life for my family, who are relying on me to flourish so they will not succumb to the hatred, racism, and poverty inherent in capitalistic societies.

The Crimson-Turbaned Sikh man smiles.

QUICK GLIMPSE: Bob responding to his father's 14-digit math flashcards with computer-esque efficiency.

BOB

Prime. Not prime. Prime. Prime.

The Sikh, AKA BOB GHANDI'S DAD, addresses the camera.

BOB GHANDI'S DAD

Bob will succeed or our family will perish.

ANGLE ON: MALCOLM MERRIWEATHER, standing. Pint-size.

MALCOLM

My name is Malcolm Merriweather and I love science. My love of science began when I read a biography about George Washington Carver. My life's goal is to become the first black scientist famous for something other than turning peanuts into a sandwich spread.

HUGO KIM a confused, soft, Korean Boy, stands.

HUGO

Hugo Kim.

Hugo sits.

ANGLE ON: Jackie, sitting next to Audie, smirks and says:

JACKIE

Holy Super Draters. Audie, for the first time in my life I feel bad for you. This is like the Drater National Zoo.

QUICK GLIMPSE: HUGO'S WHITE AND CHROME LIVING ROOM - DAY

TIGER MOM JINNY, Hugo's Mom, addresses the camera with Hugo sitting next to her.

TIGER MOM JINNY

We are proud of Hugo's work at the Kaltschmidt school. I am certain he will finish number one again in all areas. Won't you, Hugo?

A terrified Hugo tries to smile.

TIGER MOM JINNY (CONT'D)

People call me a "Tiger Mom." This is a made-up Chinese term. I am Korean. People like to make fun of Korean focus. People will soon see that Koreans will be having most of the last laugh. Haha...Yes, laugh.

BACK IN THE AUDITORIUM: COLBY COLLINS, 12, a clean-cut and confident cross between JFK and Mickey Mantle.

COLBY COLLINS

Audie Murphy! Greetings. My name is Colby Collins.

(MORE)

COLBY COLLINS (CONT'D)

I look forward to beginning the extraordinary journey we'll take together at this fine institution. May we meet no obstacle that cannot be overcome!

QUICK SNAPSHOT: Colby planting a flag as the youngest kid ever to summit Mt. Everest.

INT. COLBY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

COLBY'S MOM, 39, the Doris Day look-alike and COLBY'S DAD, 50, the Mitt Romney clone, sit on a couch. The wall behind them is covered with Colby's youth soccer jerseys, framed.

COLBY'S MOM

There's nothing, it seems, that Colby can't do.

COLBY'S DAD

Well, except fail.

They both grin the grin of believers.

BACK IN THE AUDITORIUM:

HEATHER KWITKOWSKI-WELCH stands. Pretty, cheerful, poised. And clearly Hispanic. This is the girl every parent wishes they were raising.

The moment he sees her, Audie is hooked. His heart races. The rest of the world falls away and all he can feel is an intense overwhelming need to be next to her. The camera slowly pushes toward her as Audie stares with slack-jawed admiration.

HEATHER

Welcome Audie, I'm sure you're gonna love it here. My name is Heather Kwitkowski-Welch. I'm super excited to be here at the Kaltschmidt school, and super thrilled to keep up with the great traditions of this totally cool school and super appreciative of the two people who encouraged me most--my two amazing moms.

ANGLE ON: MARY WELCH, 51 and her wife, BONNIE KWITKOWSKI, 48.

QUICK GLIMPSE: Heather, a cellist, plays side by side with a teacher who we realize is YO YO MA. Heather stops, and very politely says:

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Yo Yo, I'm so sorry to interrupt.
But I think your A might be flat.

Yo Yo listens, realizes she's right.

INT. HEATHER'S VERY SIMPLE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Heather sits next to Mary and Bonnie, the ex-nuns who adopted her. They resemble Penn and Teller, in appearance and behavior. Mary addresses the camera.

MARY

Heather is just phenomenal. We
just watch from the sidelines, make
sure she's fed, and root her on.
Right, Bonnie?

Bonnie just nods and smiles.

BACK IN THE AUDITORIUM: Audie stands.

AUDIE

Audie Murphy. I'm from right here
in Lowell!

Tommy, Celeste, Jackie and Molly hoot, holler and applaud.

The rest of the school is more baffled than bothered.

AUDIE (CONT'D)

Lowell, Massachusetts! Lo-well!
Lo-well! Lo-well!

As the Murphy family chants, Colby turns to his parents.

COLBY COLLINS

I'm guessing enrollment standards
have fallen this year, eh?

ANGLE ON: Audie, laughing and high-fiving his family.

ANGLE ON: Heather, observing Audie. Audie catches her eye and she smiles at him, gives him a small wave.

MCCARTHY (VO)

5th grade students at the K School
are immersed in a wide-ranging
curriculum immediately. Physics.
20th Century English Literature.
Ancient Civilizations. Latin...

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - LATIN CLASSROOM - DAY

An ANCIENT LATIN TEACHER is at the whiteboard conjugating verbs. Audie's head spins.

ANCIENT TEACHER
To love, to be fond of...anyone?

Colby is showing off.

COLBY COLLINS
Amo, amare, amavi, amatus.

ANCIENT TEACHER
Impressive, young man.

COLBY COLLINS
Gratias tibi ago, sir.

Colby smiles his blindingly perfect smile at Heather. Heather blushes. Audie notices Heather's blush.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - MATH CLASSROOM - DAY

MCCARTHY (VO)
Calculus...

Bob Ghandi is at the chalkboard solving some massive algebraic formula, as the teacher watches, amazed. As Bob walks back to his seat...

COLBY COLLINS
Bob, you're on my team for
"Mathletes." We will dominate.

Audie is wondering if he's in over his head.

MCCARTHY
And of course, philosophy...

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - PHILOSOPHY CLASS - DAY

A severe 50-year-old DANISH PHILOSOPHY TEACHER lectures.

DANISH PHILOSOPHY TEACHER
Kierkegaard said: "Science and scholarship want to teach that becoming objective is the way. Christianity teaches that the way is to become subjective, to become a subject." But we will not be subjects to anything but the truth!

TEDDY GRESZIK
Will we cover the Gospels?

DANISH PHILOSOPHY TEACHER
Only when discussing where Jesus
plagiarized Eastern philosophical
traditions and parables and passed
them off as his own.

TEDDY GRESZIK
(Meekly)
How could Jesus, who is God, steal?

The Philosophy teacher smiles while taunting Teddy.

DANISH PHILOSOPHY TEACHER
How could you, a boy with the mind
of a giant, ask a question with so
little insight?

Snickers from Colby. He looks to Bob and Malcolm who also
snicker. He looks over to Heather but she disapproves of the
teacher and the situation.

Teddy looks dumbfounded, and blushes bright red.

AUDIE
Leave him alone.

The teacher checks his seating chart for a name.

DANISH PHILOSOPHY TEACHER
Mr... Murphy. What on earth
happened to your shirt sleeves?

AUDIE
Does that make you feel big?
Humiliating kids?

Heather takes note of Audie sticking up for Teddy.

The students can't believe Audie is taking on a teacher.

DANISH PHILOSOPHY TEACHER
Well, I can see this is going to be
a scrappy class. I like scrappy
classes. With scrappy boys full of
their scrappy selves. So, let's
get right to it. I want a thirty-
five page paper by Monday on the
history of religion in Europe,
courtesy of Mr. Murphy.

(MORE)

DANISH PHILOSOPHY TEACHER (CONT'D)
And Mr. Murphy, don't ever come to
my class in a shirt that exposes
your armpits again.

The kids are shocked. And pissed at Audie.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Outside the classroom, Audie's classmates are stunned.

COLBY COLLINS
Thanks for the homework.

AUDIE
Write yours in Latin. Maybe
you'll get extra credit.

Audie walks off. Colby calls after him:

COLBY COLLINS
Hey Murphy! Everyone has to write
a paper because you and your potato
farmer couldn't keep your mouths
shut. You queer or something?

Audie stops. Turns.

AUDIE
What did you say?

COLBY COLLINS
I was just wondering if you and
Eddie are queer.

TEDDY GRESZIK
It's Teddy.

Audie takes a step toward Colby.

AUDIE
You gotta be queer to talk back to
a teacher?

COLBY COLLINS
Teachers teach. We learn. Eddie
was just being taught.

TEDDY GRESZIK
It's Teddy. Not Eddie.

COLBY COLLINS
But I get it if it's because you're
queer.

AUDIE
Watch your mouth.

HUGO (SOTTO)
What does queer mean?

MALCOLM (SOTTO)
Good at philosophy, I think.

COLBY COLLINS
It's nothing to be embarrassed
about, being queer.

AUDIE
Shut your mouth or I'll shut it for
you.

COLBY COLLINS
A lot of smart dudes were queer.
Alan Turing. Da Vinci. Elton John
played at my father's birthday
party. He's queer like you. And
lemme tell ya something: that
queer's got some pipes.

Colby doesn't even see the punch coming. He goes down like a
bag of hammers. Audie stands over him. The image from
earlier.

AUDIE
Get up and I'll do it again.

Audie stands over Colby, fists cocked.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**INT./EXT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - DAY**

Pandemonium. There's incredible disarray with the fact that violence has come to the Kaltschmidt School.

The reaction is not commensurate with the situation.

Rather, it's as if a school shooting has occurred.

Kids are running. Teachers are yelling. Kids hide under desks, crawl into their lockers.

MCCARTHY (VO)

We've never had a problem with physical bullying. Intellectual bullying? Sure...

Tiger Mom Jinny carries Hugo out of the school, cradling him like a baby. She's surprisingly strong--and fast.

TWO PARAMEDICS load Colby onto an ambulance for a trip to the ER as a precautionary step.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

MCCARTHY, in his office, addresses the camera.

MCCARTHY

Debate and intimidation come with the territory of a competitive academic environment. But fisticuffs? I don't think we've ever had a student before who knew how to clench a fist.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - TEACHERS LOUNGE - DAY

TWENTY TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS are crammed into the Teachers Lounge debating how the punch should be dealt with.

Rather than a calm discussion, it is heated. Teachers shout and overlap one another. It has the air of a raucous Parliamentary session in a newly formed country.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

We must have order! Quiet!

They quiet, at least momentarily.

DANISH PHILOSOPHY TEACHER
What is official school policy?

SANDRA BOUCHER, 62, Humanities Teacher and devoted hater of all things male, speaks up.

MISS BOUCHER
Expulsion!

OLD MALE TEACHER
The school honor code does not say that.

MISS BOUCHER
There is nothing honorable about bullying! Testosterone is a scourge!

YOUNG FEMALE TEACHER
We allow assaults?

MISS BOUCHER
Castration!

MCCARTHY
He claims he was provoked.

MISS BOUCHER
Provocation is no excuse for physical violence. Neither are testicles.

OLD MALE TEACHER
Stop attacking testicles.

A TINY MALE TEACHER with a distractingly high voice, 39, pipes up.

TINY TEACHER
We must protect the Queers!

MISS BOUCHER
This isn't about gender preference! It is about male rage. Rage caused by adolescent testosterone!

OLD MALE TEACHER
Girls cry, boys fight. Live, learn, deal.

MISS BOUCHER
Will you please hurry up and die?

He fakes falling over and dying. More shouting and ad-libbed disrespect.

ANGLE ON: ANGELA WEST WASHINGTON, 46. Commanding, regal.

ANGELA

Why don't we all take a deep breath
and remember why we're here?

(and)

I gotta be honest.

MCCARTHY

When have you not been, Angela?

Chuckles from the teachers. They all like her.

ANGELA

I'm from Philadelphia. And I'm
happy to finally see someone smack
someone else in the face.

Gasps.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - ANGELA'S OFFICE - DAY

Direct address by Angela West:

ANGELA

Look, in academia, if someone
bullies you, you either sue them
for sexual harassment or you start
a whispering campaign that destroys
their character. But in life,
throughout humanity's evolution,
when people said stupid stuff,
people got punched in the mouth.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - DINING HALL - DAY

As before. Angela is wrapping up the same argument:

ANGELA

The mouth can be mightier than the
sword. And the mouth can really
hurt people. That might be as
important a lesson to teach here as
the obvious "No more punching"
lesson. I say let the lesson sink
in to everyone, have the puncher
apologize, and move on.

Off the teachers, and McCarthy, considering her suggestion.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

McCarthy direct address:

MCCARTHY

We're unaccustomed to violence. Sure, we always have the random suicide or two every year-- but, again, the nature of suicide is self-inflicted violence. Relational aggression? Between teachers, sure. But not student on student.

INT. MURPHY HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tommy and Celeste address the camera.

TOMMY

I raised my kids to know how to throw a punch. Proud they all can.

CELESTE

That school puts out an everyday cafeteria buffet that blows away Sunday brunch at the Sheraton.

TOMMY

Celeste, enough with the buffet.

CELESTE

My point is: He should fill his backpack and bring stuff home for dinner.

TOMMY

My point is: Fighting's fighting. Bullying's bullying. That's why they have two different words. They're two different things.

INT. VARIOUS LIVING ROOMS - DAY

Direct address reactions to the punch from parents.

Tiger Mom Jinny:

TIGER MOM JINNY

I thought I escaped this kind of brutality when I left Seoul. My grandmother was forced to comfort Japanese soldiers in World War Two.

(MORE)

TIGER MOM JINNY (CONT'D)

And when I say forced to comfort, I mean "forced to service sexually." It starts with punching, it leads to war, and then, can state-sanctioned prostitution be far behind? Cut the snake off at the head, now.

Colby's parents:

COLBY'S MOM

Colby's always been drawn to the plight of gay people. He was a big fan of Mr. Rogers when he was younger.

Teddy's parents:

TEDDY'S DAD

I thought gays only lived where they did musicals. Does this school do musicals?

TEDDY'S MOM

I always loved "Godspell." When they crucify the Hippie Jesus, it just gets me. Every time. Even though you know that's the way he has to go, it's always surprising.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Colby, with fat lip, milks his injury for all it's worth.

COLBY COLLINS

I was just trying to tell Audie that it's nothing to be ashamed of...being gay. And if Audie and Teddy really indeed love one another, then that is a love I will celebrate, encourage, and if I am lucky to be in a position of power in school government, I pledge to pass legislation supporting gay rights at Kaltschmidt and call it the "Audie Murphy has no shame in being gay law." It would be an honor on behalf of my homosexual classmates to do so.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Audie, Tommy and Celeste sit across from McCarthy. Behind McCarthy is a giant aquarium.

CELESTE

I love your aquarium.

MCCARTHY

'Tis our ancestors, I feel a kinship.

TOMMY

You one of those freaks who think Adam and Eve were dolphins?

CELESTE

Scuba diving must be so scary.

MCCARTHY

Audie needs to apologize. He assaulted another student.

TOMMY

He just punched him. If he'd assaulted him, kid wouldn't have got up.

Celeste walks over to the aquarium.

CELESTE

How do you keep the bigger fish from eating the smaller ones?

TOMMY

My son is not apologizing for hitting someone who called him queer.

MCCARTHY

Numerous witnesses say Colby simply inquired about Audie's romantic gender preference.

TOMMY

That kid knew what he was doing! It's an old taunt. I mastered the "homo" thing by the time I was four.

MCCARTHY

This is an elite school and we demand elite behavior from our students.

CELESTE

Mr. McCarthy, can't we just chalk this one up to nerves, and kids, and you know, boys being boys, and snails and puppy tails, and lords and flies and you know, just, I'm not saying "look the other way" exactly, I mean, we can look that way--I am looking that way, and we've looked and now that we've looked we can--we can reflect, and we--we you know, we... move on. I think we should just, just move on. It'd be good for everyone. Keep on keeping on, ya know?

MCCARTHY

In order to make this right, Audie needs to apologize in front of the entire school tomorrow.

Audie finally speaks up.

AUDIE

Why would I say sorry if I meant it? He knows I meant it. I know I meant it. He knows what he did to make me do what I did. Seems kinda stupid to say sorry after the fact, ya know?

MCCARTHY

A public apology or expulsion. I'll give you the evening to reconsider.

Off Audie, wishing he hadn't punched Colby.

INT. MURPHY HOME - KITCHEN - TWILIGHT

The family discusses the situation. Tommy is pissed.

AUDIE

Maybe I just say it.

TOMMY

You know the family motto, Audie! No regrets! Never regret pounding someone who calls you a name.

AUDIE

It's a...pretty cool place.

TOMMY

You're not apologizing.

CELESTE

Well, I want to go on record as saying it's not because we have a problem with queers.

TOMMY

Course it ain't! Queers is good people. My cousin Mark is queer.

CUT TO: MARK, 35, TOMMY'S COUSIN.

Mark, by appearance and manner, seems as stereotypically hetero as Bruce Springsteen or Brett Favre.

COUSIN MARK

My cousin Tommy and his family have always supported my efforts with Queer Nation. They march with me every year in the Gay Tolerance Parade in Provincetown.

CUT TO: EXT. GAY PARADE IN PROVINCETOWN - DAY

Tommy, Mark, Audie, Celeste, Jackie and Molly all march and hold signs in a sea of tanned, tank-topped men.

CUT BACK TO: TOMMY AND CELESTE

Tommy addresses the camera.

TOMMY

Lemme tell you something I learned from hanging out with my cousin. Any guy who's over 40 and in shape? Gay.

INT. MURPHY HOME - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jackie has pinned Audie down by his shoulders. She sits atop Audie and gets inches away from his face.

JACKIE

If you apologize, we look like a family of pussies. Do you think I'm a pussy?

AUDIE

No.

JACKIE

What was that? Did you just call me a pussy?

AUDIE

Jackie, I'm inches away from your ears. You heard me.

She cocks her fist like she's gonna punch him. Molly walks in the room. She's wearing a candy necklace

MOLLY

Jackie, I got you a candy necklace at Amber's house.

JACKIE

Made outta Smarties or Spree?

MOLLY

Smarties.

Jackie gets off Audie and starts eating the necklace. She exits, but not before turning back to Audie:

JACKIE

You're dead meat if you apologize.

MOLLY

Sorry to hear you got kicked outta school. It was so big and clean and Harry Potterish.

AUDIE

Yeah.

MOLLY

Do they play Quidditch there?

AUDIE

I don't--No, Molly, they don't.

Audie is uncharacteristically emotional.

MOLLY

Are you sad I didn't bring you a candy necklace? Sorry, Jackie told me she'd cut my ponytail off if I got you one too.

AUDIE

It's fine.

MOLLY

You'll get to go back to Paul
Tsongas Middle School with me!
Remember? I got held back last
summer! We'll be in the same grade
this year! We can totally be
science fair buddies.

Audie looks over at Molly, his beloved sister, the one soft spot in his life and smiles, slightly.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

You don't wanna go back to Paul
Tsongas, do you? You like that K
school better?

AUDIE

I liked that I didn't have to
pretend to not be smart.

A beat. She lets this sink in. Leans her head on his shoulder.

EXT. DOHERTY HOUSE - WALKWAY - TWILIGHT

Audie skateboards up to a three decker house that should be demolished. This is the Doherty Household.

His friend Brian stands on the grass-less lawn, and breaks bricks in half with a small sledgehammer. He throws a brick to his older brother, DONNIE DOHERTY, 21. Donnie holds a mason's trowel with cement on it. Donnie, shirtless, is muscular in an Iggy Pop-ish way, and tatted up with shamrocks, Irish Claddagh symbols and a huge bloody crucifixion scene on his back. He looks like who he is--an ex-convict always on the verge of recidivism. But he's the friendliest, calmest guy ever.

DONNIE

Audie.

AUDIE

Donnie. Brian.

BRIAN

Audie.

DONNIE

How was your first day at the smart school?

AUDIE

Punched a smart ass, got kicked out.

BRIAN

Nice!

Brian high-fives him.

DONNIE

Zero tolerance policies are gonna ruin this country. Watch.

AUDIE

Well, if I go back and apologize for punching the smart ass, I can stay. But I'm not sorry so, I'm not saying I am.

DONNIE

So there isn't a zero tolerance policy? It's a "Say Sorry" policy?

AUDIE

Yup.

DONNIE

So, you're basically giving up the scholarship to the smart school because you don't want to say you're sorry?

AUDIE

The kid deserved it.

DONNIE

Hey, little man, if that were the way the world went, I wouldn't have done two years for smacking that cop with a brick. For a smart kid you're kinda stupid.

(Lays another brick)

Sometimes you have to do what the man asks you to do--or you end up in solitary with only a thin blanket and a bucket to crap in. Try to look at the school as a game where they're slowly telling you the rules. Learn the rules. Play the game. Win.

Off Audie, considering this.

EXT. MURPHY HOME - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Heather knocks on the Murphy's front door. Her two mothers wait at the curb in their Honda Odyssey. Anxiously.

Jackie answers the door. Sees Heather. Yells to her Mom.

JACKIE
Mom! Mexican food's here! (To
Heather) My mom will pay you.

Jackie turns away.

HEATHER
Excuse me, is Audie home?

Jackie turns back.

JACKIE
Audie ordered the food?

HEATHER
No, I'm not--I go to school with
him.

JACKIE
Not anymore you don't.

Jackie yells up the stairs.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
Audie, some barrio girl from your
drater school is here!

Audie comes downstairs. Can't believe Heather is there.

AUDIE
What are you doing here?

HEATHER
Other than making my two Moms mad
that I'm neglecting cello practice?

Audie spies Heather's two Moms, in the car, engine running.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
I thought it was really cool how
you stuck up for Teddy today.

AUDIE
I didn't stick up for anyone.

HEATHER
Yes, you did.

AUDIE

No, usually when I tell someone to shut their mouth they know what that means. I painted myself into a corner.

HEATHER

I've been going to "gifted" schools since pre-school and I've never seen anyone stick up for another kid like that. I don't want you to quit.

Audie's heart swells just a bit.

AUDIE

I can't apologize for something I don't regret doing.

HEATHER

Are you familiar with the Incan Myth of Manco Capac?

Audie shakes his head no...

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Manco Capac was someone who so many things came easily to...

As she talks, her voice drops out, and the camera pushes in on Audie falling head over heels in love with her.

QUICK CUT TO AUDIE DIRECT ADDRESS:

AUDIE

What was I thinking? I'm thinking -
-I'm not listening to a word she's saying, I'm thinking she has the whitest teeth I've ever seen, and they're so even. My sister Molly's got a tooth that's going sideways.

*** SNAPSHOT:** Molly wearing headgear.

BACK TO HEATHER AND AUDIE ON THE PORCH:

HEATHER

So, Manco Capac used his courage to harvest the coca plants so the Incan people would live in harmony.

(she pauses for effect)

I know you have your reasons for not apologizing. But I hope you do.

She smiles, leans in and kisses him on the cheek. She walks back down the stairs, and gets in the car. Waves.

Audie watches her drive off. Smitten.

Celeste walks out to see Heather driving off with her moms.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

McCarthy addresses the camera.

MCCARTHY

Heather Kwitkowski-Welch is a real gift to this school, she stirred something in Audie that he'd never felt before.

QUICK CUT TO DIRECT ADDRESS BY CELESTE:

CELESTE

Something stirring's alright.
Something called sperm.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - DAY

Audie walks to a podium on the stage.

NARRATOR

With his mother's backing and a stirring in his nascent loins, Audie promised his father that his apology would be insincere and purely a hollow gesture. After some time with Celeste alone in their bedroom to calm Tommy down, the Murphys allowed Audie to proceed with his public shaming.

The entire school awaits Audie's apology.

ANGLE ON: Colby, mouthing the word "Queer" from the audience.

Audie is incensed. But then he sees Heather, in the crowd, smiling at him.

AUDIE

I--I just--I just wanted to apologize to Colby for punching him in the face.

Colby, self-satisfied and smirking.

AUDIE (CONT'D)

I didn't think that it would only take one punch to knock down such an obviously strong and tough kid. But one punch did a ton of damage to him. And for that I apologize.

The entire crowd slowly stands and applauds.

Except for Colby, already plotting his revenge.

Audie walks off the stage to handshakes and pats on the back.

MCCARTHY

Well done, young man. Well done!

He can't believe that his lack of sincerity wasn't a factor. He's learning about the world of academia quickly.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - DINING HALL - DAY

Audie sits with Teddy and Heather. He looks over to Colby who sits with Bob Ghandi and the rest of the gang.

INT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

McCarthy sips a Diet Dr. Pepper. Addresses the camera.

MCCARTHY

The author Malcolm Gladwell wrote a book called "Outliers" that would have people believe that practice is what makes people great. Well, this might be the case in things like ping-pong and bowling. But genius is something bestowed upon the "few". Not something that the "many" can manufacture through repetition.

EXT. KALTSCHMIDT SCHOOL - EQUESTRIAN CENTER - DAY

Colby walks out of the impressive K School stables wearing riding pants and a full English riding outfit. He gets on his huge black stallion and goes out to ride.

ANGLE ON: Audie camouflaged in the nearby woods. His face is painted with Special Forces war paint.

He counts out fifteen pennies. Puts them in the cut-off foot of a pair of panty hose. Wraps a rubber band tightly around it. He loads the ammunition into a wrist rocket slingshot.

MCCARTHY (V.O.)
Genius, once discovered, must be
nurtured.

ANGLE ON: Colby, as the magnificent stallion approaches a jump, leaps up--and then BOOM, Colby is hit square in the chest and knocked off his horse.

MCCARTHY
This is why the K School exists.
To lift our gifted up, and give
them the resources necessary to
move humanity forward.

Audie crawls out of the woods with a satisfied grin.

INT. MURPHY HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

NARRATOR
*Audie was asked the most important
thing he learned about his first
few days at the K school.*

Audie, still clad in camouflage and war paint, eating another bowl of Froot Loops.

AUDIE
Sometimes you have to say you're
sorry, even if you don't mean it,
just so people won't take away the
things you want. Like Heather.

Off Audie's grin...

FADE TO BLACK.