

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Chum flails his arms around, dancing. The group of girls around him giggle.

Chum spins around and falls down. The circle of girls above him opens and JIMMY LENNOX, 9, enters, gazing down at Chum.

JIMMY  
You're pretty funny, kid.

He extends his hand and helps him up.

CHUM  
Thanks.

JIMMY  
Too bad Dudley Jenkins is the  
funniest kid in school.

DUDLEY JENKINS stands next to Jimmy. He gives an affirming nod.

CHUM  
Oh yeah? Prove it.

Dudley adjusts his shirt and takes a look around.

DUDLEY  
Gladly.

He spots Mutt and beckons him over.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)  
Hey you kid, come here. What's  
your name?

MUTT  
Mutt.

DUDLEY  
Hmm... Mutt... what rhymes with  
that... got it!

Dudley picks up a rock and hands it to Mutt.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)  
Hey, hold this for me.

Mutt looks at it curiously.

MUTT  
I don't get it.

DUDLEY

It's a piece of poop. Mutt-BUTT.

He does a celebratory dance and the kids around him crack up.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

Just kidding, just kidding, but  
hey! I said you could hold that  
rock, not EAT it... Mutt-GUTT.

He does his dance again.

JIMMY

See, I told you he was the  
funniest.

The rock flies at Dudley's head. He collapses in front of  
Chum.

CHUM

I don't get it.

INTRO

INT. LYDIA'S OFFICE

Lydia sits behind her desk, Mutt sinks into an over-sized armchair.

LYDIA  
So tell me why you threw the rock.

MUTT  
He said he wanted it back.

LYDIA  
Hmm... what else happened that day?

MUTT  
Um... lemme think.

INT. MUTT'S BRAIN - EARLIER

A spaceship has crash landed on a planet. Mutt escapes and holds a radio up to this face.

MUTT  
First base... come in. I'm crashed  
on a forbidden planet. Over.

MUTT (CONT'D)  
(as first base)  
Come in, Michael, this is First  
Base. Look out for aliens, over.

He turns and sees a giant alien.

MUTT (CONT'D)  
Agh!

INT. LYDIA'S OFFICE - CONTINUED FROM BEFORE

Lydia is dumbfounded.

LYDIA  
You know what? I'll ask your  
father.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Miss Lucy stands before the class.

INTERTITLE: THREE DAYS EARLIER...

LUCY

For our next class projects, we're gonna be giving presentations about our names.

The class GROANS.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Don't worry, it'll be easy. For example... My name is Lucy Crass. Lucy means "light". I was named after my mother's grandmother. I like my name.

She looks for the class's reaction.

LUCY (CONT'D)

See? It's that easy.

Gaby raises her hand high.

GABY

But Miss Crass, I don't know what my name means.

LUCY

Don't worry. I have a name book here that has the meaning of every name.

She sits it down on the table in front of her.

LUCY (CONT'D)

You can come up and check it one at a time...

The students rush up and grab at the book.

LUCY (CONT'D)

One at a ... nevermind.

A student grabs the book, flips through it, sees something, giggles a little, hands it off and sits down.

Chum pushes his way through the crowd and gets to the book. Mutt's behind him. Chum smiles.

MUTT

My turn, my turn.

He flips pages in the book.

MUTT (CONT'D)  
 Murray... Murtagh... Mustafa...  
 Mwamamama... Mya... hey! My name's  
 not in here.

Chum stifles his laughter and grabs at the book.

CHUM  
 Really? Hee hee... Hey, maybe  
 you're name isn't really a name.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

The Professor runs through hallways, comparing door numbers to numbers on the letter he's holding. He spots a door and grabs it.

INT. COURTHOUSE, OFFICE

Inside the office sits RACHEL GRAMERCY, who smiles pleasantly at him from behind a desk.

MRS. GRAMERCY  
 Mister Rayburn?

PROFESSOR  
 Professor, actually.

MRS. GRAMERCY  
 Oh, well, take a seat.

She gestures to the chair before her.

MRS. GRAMERCY (CONT'D)  
 Have any trouble finding the place?

PROFESSOR  
 No, not at all...

MRS. GRAMERCY  
 So why were you late?

The Professor gives a blank stare.

PROFESSOR  
 I had a little trouble...

She files through some papers and places them in front of the Professor, gesturing to them with a pen.

MRS. GRAMERCY

There's just some papers we need to fill out... we can do them here if you want.

PROFESSOR

Yeah, let's just get this over with...

MRS. GRAMERCY

Ok, well first, I'll need the boys' names.

The Professor thinks this over in his head.

PROFESSOR

You know what, I'll do this at home.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The boys are sitting at the coffee table, doing homework and sipping from juiceboxes. The Professor enters, sifting through envelopes.

He drops them on the dinner table and sits with the adoption papers on the couch.

CHUM

Your name's not real.

MUTT

Shut up.

PROFESSOR

What are you guys fighting about now?

CHUM

Mutt's name's not real.

PROFESSOR

Oh geez... how'd you find out?

The boys put down their pencils and stare back at the Professor. The Professor stares at them.

A beat.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

What are you guys working on?

MUTT  
Our class projects.

CHUM  
We have to do a presentation about  
what our names mean.

MUTT  
Mean to us.

CHUM  
Right.

MUTT  
Why did you name us our names?

CHUM  
Was I named after your grandmother?

PROFESSOR  
No, well... you guys have dog  
names...

INT. PET STORE - THE PAST

A younger Professor talks to a cute CASHIER, who stands  
behind a counter with a large tag-maker.

CASHIER  
Just got a new dog, huh?

PROFESSOR  
Yeah... two of them.

CASHIER  
Oh, I love dogs. What are you  
gonna name them?

PROFESSOR  
I was thinking maybe Arthur and  
Dean.

CASHIER  
Aw... those are kinda boring... the  
fun thing about dogs is you can  
give them cute dog names you  
wouldn't give to people.

PROFESSOR  
You mean like... Chum and... Mutt?

CASHIER

Oh my Gawd, those are really cute names, you should name them that.

PROFESSOR

Yeah, ok...

She types something into a computer and two tags pop out of a loud machine.

The Professor grabs them and looks at them, slightly embarrassed.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

So, you wanna go get dinner or something maybe?

CASHIER

Can't, busy.  
(yelling)

NEXT!

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUED FROM BEFORE

The Professor holds up the adoption papers.

PROFESSOR

You know kids, I think I have good news for you.

MUTT

What is it?

CHUM

Is it candy?

PROFESSOR

No... It's a document from the state court... I need to fill out this paperwork so that I legally adopt you. But, we can change your names if you want.

MUTT

Why would we do that?

PROFESSOR

So you can have people names.

CHUM

But how will we know when someone's talking to us?



PROFESSOR

Well, you'll get used to your people names.

MUTT

I dunno, sounds kinda fishy.

CHUM

Can we have two names?

MUTT

Yeah! There's this kind in our class... Clay. But his other name's Gram, but he goes by Clay cuz it's his middle name.

The Professor perks up. Mutt starts sipping his juice.

PROFESSOR

Now there's an idea... why don't you guys pick out middle names for yourselves?

MUTT

Clorox!

Mutt spits juice all over the Professor, who reacts calmly.

PROFESSOR

Think it over... maybe talk to your friends. Find really good names that you might like.

He gives them the forms from the envelope.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

Here... fill these out. They want to know your weight and height too... I'm gonna go change.

He stands and stumbles into his bedroom.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAFETERIA

The boys sit at the cafeteria table next to CLAY, a kid from class, and FLOYD, an incredibly tall fourth-grader.

Chum opens a thermos and looks inside.

CHUM

Mmm mm mm... I love alphabet soup.

MUTT

Oooh! Let me have the M's.

CHUM

That's ok, I don't like them  
anyway.

He gets a spoon and scoops letters into the thermos lid.

FLOYD

Did you guys start your projects  
yet?

CHUM

Yeah, I'm almost through with the  
research phase...

MUTT

Ew! That's a W.

He pulls a noodle out of his cup and puts it on a napkin.

MUTT (CONT'D)

Guess what. We get to pick our  
middle names.

CLAY

Really?

MUTT

Yeah, whatever we want.

CLAY

Cool!

FLOYD

You should get a cool name, like  
FLAMELORD.

CLAY

Or what about Clay?

CHUM

But that's already your name.

CLAY

That's ok.

FLOYD

Then you guys could copy each  
other's assignments.

CHUM  
Mutt should do that. His name  
wasn't even in the namebook.

Clay and Floyd GASP.

CLAY  
Your name wasn't in the namebook?

MUTT  
I don't think it was a complete  
volume...

CHUM  
It's cuz your name's not a real  
name.

MUTT  
Nuh uh!

Mutt starts packing up his lunch.

MUTT (CONT'D)  
I think I'm done here.

He paces away.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

Kids play hopscotch. Some slide down the slide, others are  
swinging. Distantly, you can hear laughter.

DUDLEY  
Mutt GUTT...

WHAP! Like a rock hitting a kid's head.

Mutt stands behind the fallen Dudley, a scornful look on his  
face.

INTERMISSION: SWAT BOT, disciplines your dog for you

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Mutt paces through a canyon, hands near the six-shooters at his sides.

A pebble tumbles from a rock wall, he quickly turns and aims his gun in the direction of the sound.

A beat. Nothing there.

He holsters it and paces further. From the other side of the cliff face, an alien pops out and pounces on him.

INT. LYDIA'S OFFICE

Mutt jumps from the recliner to the ground.

MUTT

Rar! I'll get you Matthew!

He swaps places with the imaginary cowboy and points his finger up to where he was before.

MUTT (CONT'D)

Don't make me laugh, I mean, I don't think so... BANG!

Lydia jots down a note: MATTHEW?

LYDIA

You know, Dudley's parents pulled him out of public school.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

MR. And MRS. JENKINS stand over the Principal's desk, redfaced.

MR. JENKINS

This was a HATE crime. This school promotes prejudices.

PRINCIPAL DEE WILLIAMS

I can assure you, your son wasn't singled out because he's... um...

MR. JENKINS

We're Minnesotan-American.

MRS. JENKINS

We're putting him in a private school, immediately.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mutt and Dudley sit next to each other, avoiding each other's eyes. Dudley holds an ice pack to his head.

MUTT

Sorry...

DUDLEY

No, it's my fault. I went too far with the rhyming. I should've known better.

The yelling from behind the store stops. Mr. And Mrs. Jenkins pop out of the door and grab their son.

MRS. JENKINS

Let's go, Dudley.

DUDLEY

Learn from my mistake! Don't let this happen to you!

He gets dragged away. Chum watches them leave, then approaches Mutt.

CHUM

Dad's here.

MUTT

Is he mad?

CHUM

No, he's talking to Miss Lucy.

MUTT

Yes.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, CIRCLE DRIVE

The Professor stands outside his car, smiling and talking to an angry looking Lucy.

PROFESSOR

Lucy, you look good. I haven't seen you since...

LUCY

You backed into my car?

The Professor looks down at the dent on the back of Lucy's car.

PROFESSOR

Oh, right... I still need to get  
you my insurance information...

He gets nervous and sweats a little. His eyes dart away from  
Lucy.

LUCY

Look, that's not important right  
now. What's important is that we  
deal with your son. He's always  
been a little unruly, but this is  
the first time that he's actually  
physically hurt someone.

PROFESSOR

So I'll spank him with a newspaper  
when I get home, but I tell ya,  
he's gonna do it again.

A beat. The professor realizes what he just said.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

I'll talk to my wife - ex-wife...  
estranged wife. We're not  
romantically involved or  
anything... she's not even involved  
with the kids.

Lucy gives him a puzzled look.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

Let me start over. My wife of  
convenience that I barely ever talk  
to is a child psychiatrist. I'm  
sure she can work out whatever is  
wrong with um...

LUCY

Mutt.

PROFESSOR

Mutt.

Lucy pulls the Professor in closer and checks back on the  
boys to make sure they can't hear.

LUCY

(quiet, stern)

Mister Rayburn, I seriously think you should consider forming a stronger relationship with your children if you expect them to do well in school, or you might wind up with two very distant, very disobedient children.

PROFESSOR

I... I'll talk to them.

(yelling to the boys)

Come on, kids, let's go.

INT. PROFESSOR'S CAR

The boys clamber into the car. The Professor gets in the front seat, starts the engine, and waves at Lucy as he drives away.

CHUM

You're going the wrong way. This isn't the way home.

PROFESSOR

We're going to see Miss Lydia.

CHUM AND MUTT

Yay!

INT. LYDIA'S OFFICE

The Professor lays on the chair.

PROFESSOR

And that's pretty much how we ended up here.

LYDIA

You said the boys had class assignments about their names. How did those turn out?

PROFESSOR

Oh geez... I got a mouthful from Lucy about that.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Miss Lucy stands at the front of the classroom, with her hands on Tamothy's shoulders.

LUCY

Well, children, as you might know, Dudley was accepted into a very nice private school, but we were given a new student, so I want you all to welcome Tamothy Higgins.

The class half-heartedly claps, except for Mutt, who's standing and waving profusely. Tamothy walks back to the empty desk and puts some books down.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Also, today is our presentations for our name projects. Do we have any volunteers? Floyd, I saw your hand first.

Floyd, the very tall kid, sits at his desk, blank stare.

FLOYD

No, I didn't have my hand up.

LUCY

Well, I saw your hand first. Do you want to go anyway?

FLOYD

Ok... it's not very good though.

LUCY

I'm sure it'll be fine.

He grabs a paper and walks to the front of the room. Lucy gets out a clipboard and sits on a stool.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Ok, ready.

FLOYD

My name's Floyd. It means grey.

He puts the paper down and gives Lucy a "what now" look.

LUCY

But what does it mean to you?

FLOYD

Um... I dunno... stuff.



LUCY  
Do you have your visual aide?

Chum, sitting comfortably, suddenly remembers something.

CHUM  
(quietly)  
Oh shoot!

He gets out a piece of paper and starts scribbling.

FLOYD  
Oh yeah... here.

He hands her a grey piece of construction paper and sits down. Lucy unfolds it and shows it to the class. It has "Floyd" written on it.

LUCY  
Did everyone see this? Very good  
Floyd. A. Who wants to go next?

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - LATER

Gaby is holding a statue of Atlas.

GABY  
Gaby means "Strong of God."

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

FLORA, a pigtailed african-ablack girl holds a flower.

FLORA  
Flora means "flower."

She gives it a sniff.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Clay holds a ball of clay in his hand.

CLAY  
My name is Clay. It comes from the  
English word 'clay,' which means  
'clay'.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Jimmy stands before the class.

JIMMY

Jimmy is short for James, which means 'holder of the heel.' But I don't go by James, I go by Jimmy. I hold the ball.

He pulls a basketball from behind his back and starts spinning it. The class applauds.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Lucy looks at her list.

LUCY

Let's see, who hasn't gone yet.

Tamothy holds up his hand.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Tamothy, since you're new, you don't have to go today...

He stands up, pops a disc out of his laptop, and walks out into the hall, coming back with a tv on a cart. He pops the DVD in and turns down the lights. He stares into the TV.

INT. TV

A background of a starfield. The planet earth is slowly coming into view.

ANNOUNCER

Tamothy... quite possibly the greatest name in the world. But to understand the name, we must first understand the ancient Macedonians, who in 800 bc, invented the first bicycle...

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - LATER

The class watches in awe with light flickering on their faces and the sounds of clinking swords and screaming warriors plays.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

An old black and white movie plays.

ACTRESS

I love you Rick.

ACTOR

I love me too.

The credits roll over a cheesy orchestra score. The class bursts into wild applause.

Mutt at his desk in awe.

MUTT

That was the best movie ever.

Jimmy wipes tears from his eyes as he stands and claps.

JIMMY

Tough act to follow.

Chum looks at Jimmy, then back at the paper on his desk and smiles confidently. He raises his hand.

CHUM

Can I go?

LUCY

Ok, Chum, and then after you will be Mutt.

Chum takes his papers and confidently struts to the front. He shows the crude drawing of a sandwich.

CHUM

What do you call a baloney sandwich and a fart? A baloney sandwich with cheese!

The class cracks up laughing. Miss Lucy looks appalled.

LUCY

Chum, please, get on with your presentation.

CHUM

Sorry, sorry...

He calms down and picks up his piece of paper.

CHUM (CONT'D)

My name is Chum. It means 'friend'.

Modest applause with a few scattered giggles. Chum returns to his desk bowing.

Lucy looks up from her clipboard.

LUCY  
Ok, Mutt, are you ready?

He doesn't move, just stares away. Lucy shakes her head and jots something down. The class OOHS.

INT. LYDIA'S OFFICE - CONTINUED FROM BEFORE

Lydia writes things on a notepad. She looks up to face the professor.

LYDIA  
Let me see what you drew.

He holds up a picture of a sailboat. She takes it and throws it away.

LYDIA (CONT'D)  
Do you think Mutt might be embarrassed of his name?

PROFESSOR  
His name...

He jumps up and looks excited.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)  
Ah ha! Problem solved. I already told him he could change his name for the adoption papers. I can do this stuff. I'm a good father...

LYDIA  
(interrupting)  
Winston. You can't just change your child's name. It's his badge. His identity. Making him think he should change it is like making him think that he's been doing everything wrong his whole life.

The Professor drops back onto the couch, confused.

PROFESSOR  
Aw... this is hard. I don't know what I'm doing...

LYDIA  
Just show him that he should be proud of his name.

PROFESSOR

Hmm...

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

The Professor comes through the front door with a shopping bag. The boys are sitting on the couch watching TV. Mutt looks a little depressed.

PROFESSOR

Mutt, come here, I want to show you something.

Chum's interest is piqued, but he remains on the couch. Mutt slowly strides over.

MUTT

What is it?

PROFESSOR

I found a different namebook for you to use for your project.

The Professor pulls out a book. The cover reads "Dictionary." He puts it on the table. Mutt pulls out a chair, climbs into it and curiously looks through the book.

MUTT

Hey, it has my name!

He reads.

MUTT (CONT'D)

Whoa! It means a lot of things.

PROFESSOR

Well, let's see which one suits you the best.

MUTT

One, a mongrel dog.

PROFESSOR

Not that, read the next one.

MUTT

Two, a stupid or foolish person.

The Professor looks at the dictionary.

PROFESSOR  
That can't be right... No, it's a  
shortened form of 'muttonhead.'  
Here, try this one.

He points to a definition.

MUTT  
An inferior...

PROFESSOR  
(interrupting)  
Nope! The next one.

MUTT  
A mixbreed often resulting in  
varying and unique appearances and  
characteristics... I don't get it.  
What does mixbreed mean?

He writes on a piece of paper with a pencil as he reads.

The Professor flips some pages and points.

MUTT (CONT'D)  
Oh! What about 'varying'?

The Professor flips through again and points to another  
definition.

MUTT (CONT'D)  
(more excited)  
Oh!

He jots down more notes.

MUTT (CONT'D)  
What about...

The Professor lets out an exhausted SIGH over a proud smile.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Mutt stands at the front of the classroom, a satisfied smile  
on his face. He looks at his piece of paper, crumples it and  
tosses it aside.

MUTT  
My name is Mutt. It means  
'different.'

The class claps. Mutt returns to his desk proudly.

LUCY  
 Very good Mutt, A, minus twenty  
 points... C plus.

Mutt smiles and sits attentively. Lucy stands and returns to the front of the class.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
 Ok class, get out your homework  
 from last night on the human  
 body...

The rest of the students shuffle through their belongings and put the homework on their desks. Mutt continues sitting and smiling.

END CREDITS

INT. COURTHOUSE

The Professor runs through the hallway again, settling on Mrs. Gramercy's office and throwing open the door.

INT. COURTHOUSE, OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

With heaving breaths, he drops into the chair opposite Mrs. Gramercy and pulls papers from his briefcase.

MRS. GRAMERCY  
 You're late again.

PROFESSOR  
 (between breathes)  
 Sorry... I was held up again. But  
 I have the papers.

He puts a stack of papers in front of her and she places them before her to read, putting on her glasses.

MRS. GRAMERCY  
 Ok, your boys' names are...

She reads the papers.

MRS. GRAMERCY (CONT'D)  
 Chum Alphabet Soup and Mutt Clorox?