

The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity

written by

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ACT ONE

We hear the ringside bell.

RING ANNOUNCER

The following contest is scheduled for one fall with a one hour time limit. Introducing first, already in the ring because he's not enough of a star to warrant his own elaborate entrance, hailing from Parts Unknown because we can't be bothered to come up with a better hometown for him, weighing in at ... well, I'm not going to even tell you, because it's embarrassing how small he is, this is The Mace!

MACE. In his mask.

Lights change. MACE pulls his mask up and off his face, and directly addresses the audience.

MACE

So every time I'm about to get in the ring, I think back to nineteen eighty-six. I'm six years old, my younger brother's five, my older brother's eight, we're sitting on cold hardwood floors on Cruger Avenue in the Bronx on Saturday mornings, eating Frosted Flakes that are really just generic flakes of corn with generic spoons of sugar sprinkled on top with a little drop of milk to give the impression that it's gonna get soggy, and we all know that there ain't no Tony the Tiger grrrrrr-owling at our poor Filipino butts from the front of that box. But still, we ate it. And we drank a quart of water right along with it. No soda in our house. Unhealthy. So Saturday morning, on the floor, Underoos, 11 am - nah. Go back to 10:45. Still on the floor, still cereal, still Underoos and shirtless, me, my brother, and my brother, and we're playing with wrestling guys. Not action figures, not dolls, nah - we played with wrestling guys.

(MORE)

MACE (CONT'D)

My brother and my brother, they played with the big World Wrestling Federation wrestling guys, with the big molded rubber that was like almost a foot tall and they were heavy and you couldn't even move their arms cause they came already shaped into some muscle pose - man, that stuff wasn't even worth playing with. I think my brother and my brother only got them cause they looked just like the guys - I mean, the British Bulldogs, Kamala, whatever - they got the characters right, but you couldn't wrestle with them. So my brother and my brother played with the big doofy WWF guys, and nah, they're not even playing with them, cause you can't play with them, cause they're not built to be played with really, they're built to be put on a shelf, they're not toys, but it's worse than not being toys - they're nothing, they're not productive, and they give you the wrong idea about what wrestling is. Those big rubber things that don't move, they make you think that wrestling is about big and static and pre-posed and color, that it's about what the toymakers dictated based on what they thought would be interesting to kids, but nah - I was a kid, and what was interesting to me, as a kid was being able to do some, you know, playing with my toys.

So what I had, I had the AWA.- American Wrestling Association - wrestling guys, see, cause they were smaller, and their arms moved, and their legs moved, and the heads could even turn a little, and you could play with them, you could kind of almost have real matches and do real moves with them, but see, the thing was, nobody in New York City knew nothing about the AWA.

(MORE)

MACE (CONT'D)

The WWF was on TV at eleven o'clock, they had Wrestlemania, they had Cyndi Lauper and the MTV hook-up, the Rock 'n Wrestling Connection or whatever, and all that made it look like their toys would be fun. But those toys were garbage. I hated those toys. But the AWA guys, yo. I could tell stories with those guys. I had whole drawn out epic storylines about who hated who and who won what belt, and I acted them out with six little AWA wrestling guys. And my brothers made fun of me, but screw them, because when the wrestling came on at 11 am on Saturday morning, and they got all excited about the colors, and the music, and the like, cool, I don't know, hair or whatever they got excited about, and they would stop eating the fake Frosted Flakes and start hitting each other and trying to do the moves they saw Junkyard Dog or Ricky Steamboat or The Hart Foundation doing, while they were doing all that, I was *watching*, for real, and I was understanding every second of the stories that were being told. So it's 11 am, Saturday morning, Underoos, fake flakes, big rubber wrestling guys, small perfect wrestling guys, my brother clotheslining my brother and my brother setting my brother up to try to body slam him - and that's when my grandpa would walk in, already dressed, always dressed, the head flick up so he's looking down his nose at my brother and my brother and they stop in a second and he doesn't have to say nothing cause the bodyslamming ain't gonna happen when he's in the room, and the cup of coffee, and he looks at the TV, and he laughs, and he says: "It takes most people a long time to know what they love in life, Grandson. But I think you already know."

(silence)

And he was right.

(MACE remembers his grandfather. He gets lost in the memory.)

MACE (CONT'D)

Sorry - I get distracted sometimes.
That's not even the point of the
story.

So.

I got a job doing exactly what I
love. Which meant I came to work
for Everett K Olson.

(Reveal EKO.)

EKO

Founder, CEO, and chief creative
mind behind The largest wrestling
organization in the world. The best
wrestling there is, the best
wrestling there was, the best
wrestling there will ever be.
T.H.E. wrestling.

MACE

Everett K. Olson, or as we call
him, EKO, subscribes to the big,
colorful, pre-posed school of
running a wrestling company.
Wrestling guys that look good, not
wrestling guys you can play with.

EKO

What do I care if they play with
our toys? I just care that they buy
them.

MACE

And it's hard to argue with his
results. He runs Monday night's
highest ranked cable television
program. He produces twelve pay-
per-view broadcasts a year, each
garnering nearly one million buys.

EKO

And I've made two appearances on
Dancing with the Stars.

MACE

And he won both times. So while I
vehemently and respectfully object
to my boss's overly simplistic
approach to my art form, I don't
mention my objection. I mean, even
if I did, he'd tell me -

EKO

You've got nothing to complain about, Mace. You've achieved the American Dream. You're a T.H.E. Wrestler.

(And EKO is gone.)

MACE

And he's right. I am a T.H.E. Wrestler. I'm one of the really good T.H.E. Wrestlers, and that means, unlike other jobs where when you get really good, you become a boss or a star or you get paid more, in wrestling being really good - like really better than like how good you think I'm gonna be from me telling you that I'm really good - when you get really good at the wrestling part of the wrestling business, you're not rewarded. You're unrewarded. De-rewarded. De-warded?

Sorry. Being really good at the wrestling part of the wrestling business means you make the other guy in the ring with you look better than he is, so you get in the ring with some guy who sucks, and he looks like he's kicking your butt, and the audience wants to see guys who can kick guys' butts, so that guy gets the applause, and then that guy gets the credit, and then the boss loves the job you did making that guy look like he didn't suck, so you get to make the next guy who sucks look like he doesn't suck, because the more guys who don't suck the better for T.H.E. Wrestling, because guys who don't suck sell T-shirts, but the problem with that is that while you're getting your butt kicked by guys who only look like they don't suck because you're making them look like they don't suck, the audience starts to think - guess what? You're the one who sucks.

(MORE)

MACE (CONT'D)

So then - and let's drop the metaphor cause I'm not really talking about you, but thank you for playing along - so then I go to the bottom in the minds of the boss because I'm losing so much, and as bad as I want to walk in to his corporate nightmare office and remind him that wrestling is not a legitimate sporting event and I am losing because he is writing scripts that tell me to lose, as bad as I want to tell my boss that, I don't tell him nothing. Because it's actually a good job. A dream job. An Underoos-and-bootleg-Frosted-Flakes-on-the-floor daydream job. And I'm happy to lose. And I'm happy for the audience to tell me that I suck. Because when I wake up in the morning, I don't even need an alarm clock. And I don't mind that my knees hurt. My hands hurt. My everythings hurt. I don't mind. Because I'm a T.H.E. Wrestler. And I'm in love with who I am.

(beat)

MACE (CONT'D)

Now I don't have no illusions about who I am though. I am a T.H.E. Wrestler. I am not THE T.H.E. Wrestler. That's this guy.

(Music: something very hip-hop, very flashy, and somehow money-oriented. Something current and contemporary and big and obnoxious and ridiculous.)

(And that's the perfect definition of this entire section: The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity. It's hip-hop, it's flashy, and it's all about money.)

RING ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentlemen ... allow me to introduce to you... standing in at THE ideal height... weighing in at THE ideal weight... hailing from THE United States of America... he... is...

(MORE)

RING ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
 THE Wrestling Champion THE T.H.E.
 Wrestling Champion... he... is...
 CHAAAAD DEEEEEITYYYYY!

(Finally, he is revealed: CHAD DEITY. He is huge. He is strong. He is extremely well-dressed. He wears a big gold championship belt. He is literally tossing money around as he enters through the audience and heads to the stage/ ring.)

MACE.
 Here are the facts about Chad Deity, organized in handy numbered outline form. Number one: Chad Deity is extremely muscular.

(CHAD DEITY strikes a pose.)

MACE
 Number two: Chad Deity has a winning smile.

(CHAD DEITY smiles winningly.)

MACE (CONT'D)
 Number three: Chad Deity is good on the mic.

(CHAD DEITY is handed a microphone.)

CHAD DEITY
 Chad Deity was hanging out with his boy Derek Jeter the other day and Chad Deity's boy Derek Jeter turned to Chad Deity and said, "Chad Deity, you're the champion and the ladies' man and the media icon that I've always wanted to be," and Chad Deity looked at his boy Derek Jeter and said "Chad Deity knows, Derek Jeter. Chad Deity knows."

MACE.
 Number four: Chad Deity has made a lot of money for T.H.E. Wrestling, thanks to numbers one through three.

CHAD DEITY.
 Number four A: Chad Deity has made a lot of money for Chad Deity, thanks to number four.

MACE.

Number four A one: Macedonio Guerra has not made himself even a fraction of what Chad Deity has made, even though you could argue that the Macedonio Guerras of the wrestling world are just as essential to the success of T.H.E. Wrestling as the Chad Deities -

CHAD DEITY.

There ain't Chad Deities.

MACE.

- The one, the only, THE Chad Deity. And the reason why I am as important to his success - which means the success of T.H.E. Wrestling - the reason why I am as important to the myth of Chad Deity as Chad Deity himself is fact number five:

CHAD DEITY.

Chad Deity is a terrible wrestler.

MACE.

He's got charisma.

CHAD DEITY.

Charisma owes Chad money.

MACE.

He's got the look.

(CHAD DEITY rips off his shirt and poses.)

MACE

He's not above cheesy stuff like that.

CHAD DEITY.

Not even remotely above it!

MACE.

He's got everything you need to be a superstar wrestler. Cause remember, being talented really ain't a factor of key importance.

CHAD DEITY.

Not even remotely important!

MACE.

When I'm on the attack in a wrestling match, it's a constant process of action, reaction, and evaluation, thinking about the outcome of the match, which yes, we already know going into the fight, so don't dismiss my art form on the basis of it being predetermined unless you're ready to dismiss ballet for the swan already knowing it's gonna end up dead. I'm listening to the crowd and assessing how much they hate me, deciding whether my next move should be high-flying and fancy or evil and nefarious, figuring out at every step of the process exactly how best to tell our story - and I'm the guy who they all think sucks, because when Chad Deity is on the attack, his thought process is a little more easy to follow:

CHAD DEITY.

Punch! Punch! Clothesline! Elbow Drop! Pick 'em up - Powerbomb 'em - Pin 'em.

MACE.

That's the most popular wrestler in T.H.E. Wrestling, folks.

CHAD DEITY.

Mace, come here and let me powerbomb you, brother.

MACE.

No offense to you all, but I only take powerbombs when I'm getting paid. Let's go to the videotape.

(MACE shows video of CHAD DEITY powerbombing him.)

MACE

You see, when Chad Deity powerbombs me - and it's happened a lot over the years - I allow myself to be bent over with my head between his-legs. I jump into the air when he's pretending to pick me up. I bend my body in half and sit straight up and elevate myself into position on his shoulders.

CHAD DEITY.
Then Chad Deity takes over.

MACE.
He falls forward.

CHAD DEITY.
That's my part.

MACE.
He doesn't even do that so good. I smack both hands on the mat to evenly distribute the impact throughout my back. I keep my chin tucked into my chest to prevent concussions. And most important to the reputation of the champion of T.H.E. Wrestling -

CHAD DEITY.
- Chad Deity-

MACE.
- I bounce off the mat and convulse in pain and scream and howl to make it seem like this guy, this unbelievably untalented freak of physical and charismatic nature is actually worth a damn as a professional wrestler.

CHAD DEITY.
Teamwork.

MACE.
It is teamwork, even if I'm the only one on the team doing the work. And that, ladies and gentlemen, not the storylines, not the competition, not the dazzling physiques or the pretty colors or the elaborate entrance of Chad Deity is the reason that professional wrestling is the most uniquely profound artistic expression of the ideals of America

CHAD DEITY.
In wrestling, you can't kick a guy's butt without the help of the guy whose butt you're kicking.

MACE.

People love the powerbomb. They love the power, the beauty, the implausibility of it. People know that the powerbomb requires me and The Champ to unite to make it look like he's murdering me, when in actuality I'm doing what I can to make him look like the all-world fighting machine he's made out to be, and he's doing what he can with his limited capacity to make sure I don't break my neck, and so at the bottom of what we're doing is we're both trying to ensure that neither one of us gets hurt. That fact is powerful and beautiful and, like I said, one of the most profound expressions of the ideals of this nation.

CHAD DEITY.

Pick 'em up - Powerbomb 'em - Pin 'em.

(EKO appears)

EKO.

We should put that on a T-shirt

(into Bluetooth)

EKO (CONT)

Did you hear that? Have those ready by intermission.

MACE.

And that right there - the catchphrases, the T-shirts - that's why Chad Deity is more important to Everett K. Olson than Macedonio Guerra is.

EKO.

That's not your name.

MACE.

In T.H.E. Wrestling, I'm known as The Mace.

EKO.

That other name is too hard to pronounce.

MACE.
For white people.

CHAD DEITY.
I can't pronounce it.

EKO.
For wrestling fans. Wrestling fans
do not speak Spanish.

MACE.
He's my boss, so I don't bring up
Lucha Libre, or the World Wrestling
Council in Puerto Rico, or the
Manila Wrestling Federation or the
late Eddie Guerrero or Carlos Colon
or El Hijo Del Santo or B-Boy or
Dave Bautista - half Filipino.
I don't bring up any of them. I let
my boss be right.

EKO.
Now put on your mask. Time for the
show.

(EKO and CHAD exit.)

MACE.
I don't bring up how the mask is a
sanctified, holy Mexican wrestling
tradition. I know my role. I shut
my mouth. I know that tonight, The
Mace will go out there and put on a
show and Chad Deity will be the
beneficiary of all my hard work.
(MORE)

MACE. (CONT'D)

I know that even if I'm the AWA wrestling guy, and I have multiple points of articulation, which is what they call the movable parts these days, and you can use me to tell a real story, and even if Chad Deity is the big, unbendable, pre-posed lump of hockey puck rubber that ain't really good for nothing but collecting dust on a back shelf, I know my brother and my brother would still rather play with Chad Deity, and the rest of the United States would still rather play with Chad Deity, and ultimately, because of that undeniable fact, I know that Chad Deity deserves every ounce of respect and dollars and championship gold that he receives. And I know that the only role that I'm destined to fulfill in all my days in T.H.E. Wrestling, as long as they may last, is the one I'm in right now: Jobber to the Stars. The guy who loses to make the winners look good.

(silence)

MACE. (CONT'D)

Whatever. None of this is the point of the story either. So my brother and my brother - remember them? - they moved to Red Hook, Brooklyn. And every weekend they cross the Brooklyn Queens Expressway into Carroll Gardens to play basketball, cause they're so darn predictable and they gotta go play basketball like every other kid in our Like-Mike-If-I-Could-Be Like-Mike generation. And whenever they're playing basketball in Carroll Gardens, they call to tell me about this kid.

(VICENTE PARTIDA (VP), on a cell phone.)

VP.

Nah, but -

MACE.

This tall, lanky, Mexican kid.

VP.

Nah, but -

MACE.

He calls himself VP.

VP.

Nah, but baby, mira, I'm saying,
but - I'm saying! Carajo, I'm
saying -
Cause I'm Mexican.
Nah, but that's my culture, Baby.
You don't know nothing about my
culture. You're Dominican. Nah, I'm
not saying Dominicans are stupid.
I'm saying, you Dominican, so you
ain't never had no reason to know
nothing about no real Mexicans.
Until me baby.

MACE.

My brother and my brother find the
kid's use of Spanish slang when
he's hitting on Latinas hilarious,
and since the kid stays steady
hitting on Latinas - and well,
women in general - my brother and
my brother keep calling me. And
once in a while if I get lucky, I
get to hear when he stops hitting
on Latinas - or well, women in
general - cause when he stops
hitting on them, most of the time
it gets even funnier.

(VP, covering the phone as he yells to someone offstage.)

VP.

You best back off, my brother. You
step on my sneakers again and I
will mess. You. Up.
Me and my whole country got the
capabilities. Long-range nuclear
missile status, dog.
Mexico is the new Superpower.
We make your Jordans, provide all
your competitively priced plastic
surgery, AND provide your all
inclusive beach resort when you
just need a break.
New superpower, suckas.

(MORE)

VP. (CONT'D)

Now get your self up off my street
before I bust you.

(back to the phone)

Nah, pero Mamita, oye all I'm
saying is I'll treat you right.

MACE.

And then, my brother and my brother
hang up the phone, cause VP is
ready to get game. And I sit in my
hotel room, moderately obsessed
with the way this kid works with
words, switches codes, drops slang
and makes me laugh, indirect, him
on his cell phone and me on my
brother's or my brother's. And a
few hours later, my brother and my
brother call me, and they tell me
the same thing every time: VP
wrecked us on the court, they say.
This kid, he can play they say.
Like Billy Hoyle in *White Men Can't
Jump*, like he's hustling us, yo.
Like he comes in, goofy, awkward,
flat footed Mexican, man.

But he speaks a little Chinese, so
you get a little of that Yao Ming
warning shot.

He could trash talk you in English,
Spanish, Hindi, and Urdu and I stay
listening cause I didn't even know
my brother knew that Urdu was a
word, let alone a language. And I
realize that it's changing the
entire way they look at the world
to find this Mexican, this Mexican,
I don't know, this Mexican rock
star.

And then one time, my brother and
my brother say: I'd pay to see this
kid.

(beat)

I'd pay to see this kid.

(beat)

They see him every week, and they'd
pay to see this kid.

(beat)

Now THIS is the point of the story.

(MORE)

MACE. (CONT'D)

Next time T.H.E. Wrestling comes to New York to do a show, I head straight down to Carroll Gardens, in theory to play basketball with my brother and my brother, but really to watch basketball, but really to watch my brother and my brother and really really, to watch VP, who is really Vicente Partida.

VP.

The mayor of Smith Street.

MACE.

Smith Street is the hopping new social center of Brooklyn reborn.

VP.

BROOKLYN, WHAT!

MACE.

Vicente Partida's family owns a gas station by the F train at Carroll Street, a pizzeria near Bergen, a botanica one block in from Atlantic Avenue, and an apartment building just off the BQE.

VP.

LUXURY LOFTS, WHAT!

MACE.

Everything my brother and my brother said about this kid was true and insufficient. His mouth never stops moving. Trash talk in English, Spanish, Hindi, and Urdu, yes, but sprinklings of Polish, Italian - man, when a Japanese girl strolls past:

VP.

(in Japanese)

Yaa, yaa, kawaiko-chan. Ocha demo shinai?

(Hey, hey, cutie. Can I take you out for tea?)

MACE.

And he gets the number. And he wins the game.

And I end up amazed. And I end up talking to him.

(MORE)

MACE. (CONT'D)

(to VP)

You ever think about going pro?

VP.

Man, basketball ain't no kind of job. I'm an entertainer, Papa. All I need is an audience and there's audience everywhere.

MACE.

So I don't think any more about it - he already is where he really wants to be, because anywhere he goes, he is the party, he is the most amazing thing happening in the room. And then he says something, the thing, the one sentence that impacts the rest of my life more than anything before:

VP.

Nah, I need more than an audience.

MACE.

You do?

VP.

I need, what I need is, I need that Larry Bird vs. Magic Johnson, that rivalry, only I don't care about trying to beat him and winning some stupid championship ring...

MACE.

... that thing's going on your finger for a minute then off to eBay anyway...

VP.

... I want to be working with somebody, I want him to elevate me...

MACE.

... to push you, to make you work harder...

VP.

... and have my back...

MACE.

... and make sure he don't hurt you...

VP.
 ... and it ain't nothing that's
 romantic or love or nothing like
 that

MACE.
 It's community.

VP.
 (Seeing they are on the
 same page)
 It's community.

(silence)

MACE.
 I'm gonna get you a job.

(VP exits.)

MACE. (CONT'D)
 Now it's not my place to get
 involved in the money side of
 T.H.E. Wrestling. I ain't a
 financial factor far as EKO is
 concerned, and I ain't ultimately
 interested in making no more money
 for no one and I don't need no more
 money for me since I came from
 watered down sugar flakes and sugar
 water and I figure anything I got
 that ain't got water and sugar in
 the name is gravy, so I stay out of
 business discussions.
 But VP knows what I know, what any
 professional wrestler who really
 understands what he does for a
 living knows, which is that the
 value of two men in silly outfits
 pretending to beat each other into
 submission is not in the fight -
 it's in the communion. And those
 are just his intangibles. With the
 tangibles this kid brings to the
 table, he could outshine even the
 elaborate entrance of Chad Deity.

(Music: It's hip-hop and it's impossible not to dance to it
 and oh man, what a party.)

(It's the soundtrack for this little section: call it The
 Elaborate Entrance of Vicente Partida)

RING ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentlemen, the following contest is scheduled for one fall, with a next generation of human history time limit.

(This is Chad Deity's Elaborate Entrance but bigger and more exciting.)

RING ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Introducing first, hailing from Mumbai Do-Or-Die, Mexico; hailing from the planet of Brooklyn, New York; hailing from the new global society; weighing in at an incalculable sociopolitical weight; he is the future of professional wrestling; scratch that, he is the future of the world; he is Vicente Partida!

The Elaborate Entrance of Vicente Partida needs to convince the audience that he is a can't miss star.

And at the end, reveal Everett K. Olson watching the whole thing.

EKO.

I don't think there's a place in the company for him.

(Everything involved in the entrance disappears, leaving only EKO, MACE, and VP.)

MACE.

I suggest I'd take a pay cut

EKO.

I don't pay you enough to split your salary.

MACE.

I suggest maybe Chad Deity doesn't need quite so elaborate an entrance.

(silence)

EKO.

Mace, Mace, Mace.
I'm going to pretend you didn't say that. Let me explain this to you again.

MACE.

He explains this to me a lot.

EKO.

Chad Deity's elaborate entrance makes soldiers remember what they fight for, makes fathers teach their sons to stand up and cheer on greatness. Chad Deity's elaborate entrance, by proxy, is America's elaborate entrance, ongoing, giving proof through the night that the flag is still there. Chad Deity's elaborate entrance defeats demons, and we feel like our demons deserve that defeat, and we feel, more importantly, that we can be the ones to defeat them.

EKO's cell rings. He checks it.

EKO

Sorry, gotta take this.

MACE.

My boss has a knack for overstating his case. He's also got an uncanny understanding of the T.H.E. Wrestling audience and exactly what they want to see. And when he mentions the demons, he looks to VP, and he looks to me... and he seems to have an idea.

EKO.

Your boy, this, this kid, this - where is he from anyway?

MACE.

Brooklyn.

EKO.

No, I mean, he's brown, not like you, and that's not racist, so relax. What is he, Afghan? Oriental?

MACE.

He's Mexican.

EKO.

No. That's boring. What is he?

MACE.

I tell him Vicente Partida is from India.

EKO.

He's not a fundamentalist, is he? I think I might be able to sell a fundamentalist.

MACE.

I don't mention that the history of professional wrestling is filled with sloppy generic Middle East stereotypes and Russian stereotypes and Native American stereotypes and Samoan stereotypes and it's garbage.

But I don't mention it. Instead VP and I propose a little outer borough counter-action.

(VP enters.)

VP.

Call my character the Son of Shiva, Hindu god of Death and Destruction. I'll break my opponents' bodies, shatter their souls - and then tell them it's all for their higher consciousness, some hippie nonsense.

MACE.

He wasn't feeling that.

VP.

Aight, forget that - we don't play up India. We go to Brooklyn. Viggie Smalls is the illest. The Notorious V.I.G. The Leader of the V-V-V-V-V-V-V-V-Unit.

(rapping)

So dope in the ring that it's
really unfair
I see your boys in the back and I'm
killing 'em there
Now ladies don't worry it ain't
silly to stare
You getting pinned by the slumdog
milli-a-naire

MACE.

It's an unlikely thing to see, this kid with the brown skin that's not brown like my brown which ain't brown like the brown that folks like my boss expect to hear words like this flowing out of, and that's why it's money.

VP.

It worked for John Cena, and he's a white kid from Boston - from BOSTON! You got me, from the home of hiphop...

MACE.

... I don't stop him to say that Brooklyn ain't the home of hip-hop, even though as a Bronx kid, I'm deeply offended...

VP.

...You got me, VP, and I can make this work like no one else, see?

MACE.

And EKO looks up from his computer screen and gives the dismissive hand wave I-ain't-feeling-it kind of move.

EKO.

What kind of street credibility can I sell between the coasts with a skinny Pakistani?

MACE.

I cringe, but VP doesn't even slow down to acknowledge that (a) he ain't from Pakistan and therefore (b) he ain't a pakistani. And for a second I think about Everett K. Olson complaining about the Filipino he's got under some stupid mask, or the black man his company has made out to be a villain. But Chad Deity is a money machine. The Filipino and the Mexican haven't made EKO a dime.

VP.

That's cool - the Brooklyn thing don't take advantage of the fact that me and my people are the new super power anyway. You know we're the new superpower, right? Brazil and Russia and India and China - that's the BRIC. And yo, I speak all kinds of Indian and some kinds of Chinese and the Brazilian's just like Spanish and give me a week in Brighton Beach, I'll pick up the Russian. I'll pick up a bunch of Russians.

MACE.

And I look at the boss, and I can see he wants to wave this off, but VP's in his element now, and when this kid's in motion like this, ain't nobody interested in stopping him.

VP.

So you put me in a suit, and I'm talking about outsourcing tech jobs and I'm talking about our ever-growing economic and cultural capital while the American economy is melting right before their eyes. And I'll do it in six different languages. They'll hate me.

MACE.

I think this one has a chance, seeing as how it stirs up the kind of nationalistic fear and loathing for an exotic outsider that this industry loves and has thrived on, and Everett K Olson is actually listening and he's thinking hard and -

EKO.

THAT'S IT!

MACE.

That's it?

EKO.

What wrestling needs right now is a Muslim fundamentalist!

MACE.

There's already been a Muslim fundamentalist in professional wrestling. Muhammad Hassan. It didn't end well. Google it. I don't mention this.

EKO.

Only problem is, I don't know what we got with this kid.

MACE.

He's got a point. VP isn't a wrestler. I hadn't really thought about that until right now.

EKO.

But we make him a fundamentalist, we say he's from someplace else -
(into Bluetooth)
Where are Muslims from? A cave, right?

(to MACE)

A cave or something, and we put somebody else with him to handle the heavy lifting.

MACE.

And as soon as my boss mentions the heavy lifting, everything comes clear and I understand why I was the one who had a brother and a brother who crossed the BQE to find this kid - I'm his heavy lifting. Charisma challenged wrestlers like me have always been paired with smooth talkers like VP. He can be my manager, trash-talking our enemies, bragging and boasting and making everyone want to see us get beat, and then I can get in the ring and back up every inch of that talk with the best wrestling performance this company has ever seen. Just like I always dreamed. And I'll never have to worry about saying a word.

(to EKO)

I'll do the heavy lifting.

EKO.

You? You're gonna talk for him?

(silence)

MACE.

Um. Everett K Olson wants someone to *talk* for Vicente Partida?

EKO.

The kid is supposed to be this militant cave-dwelling fundamentalist, right? And he's in here rapping and sounding like your average street hood from cell block C.

MACE.

Everett K Olson wants someone to *talk* for Vicente Partida.

EKO.

We need someone ... someone to manage him. Someone to come out and speak Arabic and rant and rave and really give the suckers in the cheap seats something to get riled up over.

MACE.

Go home and Google Muhammad Hassan tonight.
Please.

EKO.

And what am I gonna do, send him out there with some Cuban kid...

MACE.

Filipino.

EKO.

... to rant and rave in Spanish?

MACE.

Spanglish. At best.

EKO.

And tick off the crowd for this Israeli Iraqi whatever he is?

MACE.

Israeli? I can't even.

EKO.

Mace, Mace, Mace - you don't work for this, Mace.

(CHAD DEITY is revealed somewhere in the room - he's been there the whole time, unnoticed. Maybe he's in an oversized chair facing away and spins into view.)

CHAD DEITY

Make him Mexican.

VP.

Where did he come from?

CHAD DEITY.

Mexican guy, hates America, hates freedom, comes here to steal away jobs, leech off services, make our good hard-earned American money and send it back to his little militant revolutionary comrades in Mexico. And he's got connections with Iran for the nukes and Kenya for the - what does Kenya have?

EKO.

Socialism!

CHAD DEITY.

... and those all connect him with Al-Qaeda and Hamas and the French for the destruction of the greatest country on Earth. And the Mexican enlists this great Origami warrior, trained in the deadly MMA - Muslim Martial Arts - where they believe you can murder a man with pressure points and prayer.

EKO.

You gotta admit, the kid has that look.

CHAD DEITY.

And the Mexican and the Middle Easterner come to the States and they want to bring us down from the inside.

EKO.

So they figure the best way to do that is to start at the top with a major symbolic victory.

CHAD DEITY.

So they come to T.H.E. Wrestling -

EKO.

They come after Chad Deity

CHAD DEITY.

They come after the heart of
America.

MACE.

I definitely don't tell them that
there is no country named America.

EKO.

Mace, Mace, Mace, this could work,
Mace.

MACE.

This isn't what we're -

VP.

Let's do it.

(pause)

Yeah. We're in. Let's do it.

MACE.

And I look over at Vicente Partida,
and he doesn't say anything else,
and he doesn't have to say anything
else, because it's instantly clear
that he's not unfamiliar with
anything that's happening right
now. He's heard it on basketball
courts and in pizza places and from
beautiful but ignorant Brooklynites
with words like "pink" and "hottie"
stenciled across subtle sagged
sweatpants. He's heard this. He's
fought it. He's beaten it not
through fistfights and the stink of
swagger, but through no look passes
and perfect pepperoni slices.
I look to VP and he tells me
without speaking, he tells me that
the best way he knows to overcome
is by taking up the challenge and
ripping the terms of that challenge
to his own, new, fashionable
shreds.

VP.

We'll do it.

MACE.

So we did it.

(EKO, VP, and CHAD DEITY exit.)

(REF enters the ring holding a tray with MACE and VP's new costumes, and stands beside MACE.)

MACE

The first thing Everett K. Olson did with his newly created Axis of Enemy Combatants was to script our debut promo - the moment that

(holds up VP's costume)

The Fundamentalist - yeah, that's the name he came up with - and Che Chavez Castro

(holds up his costume,
looks at REF, both shake
their heads)

- I swear, folks, this is what I'm working against here - the moment that The Fundamentalist and Che Chavez Castro were first unveiled to a national television audience. Making the Filipino a Mexican and the Mexican a Muslim.

(takes the costumes and
sends the REF away)

The second thing Everett K. Olson did was to disavow any association with the words we were about to speak.

(EKO, addressing the television audience.)

EKO.

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MACE.

I don't mention that it's his fault that people are about to be subjected to our comments... or that he wrote our comments. Instead, as usual, I go ahead and do what I have been paid to do.

(MACE changes to his Che Chavez Castro costume. He speaks with an exaggerated Mexican accent and delivers a bad, over-the-top wrestling promo.)

MACE. (CONT'D)
 (as Che Chavez Castro)
 Attention Capitalist pigs! I am
 Che Chavez Castro, Mexican
 revolutionary and denouncer of all
 things American!
 I have traveled long and far in
 search for freedom, in search for a
 better life, in search for...
 America. And now I have crossed the
 border. I have found riches and
 happiness and the American Dream...
 and I hate it!

(VP enters, getting into his costume.)

VP.
 From the audience, silence.
 I'm gonna jump in for my boy while
 he's in character, if that's cool.
 Thanks.
 They want to boo us. They want to
 do exactly what Everett K. Olson
 expects them to want to do, which
 is wrap themselves in an American
 flag and tell us to go back where
 we came from, tell us to love it or
 leave it, tell us U-S-A, U-S-A and
 everything that goes along with
 jingo patriot mindless
 entertainment national empowerment
 via men playfighting in spandex
 panties. But they can't. The words
 coming out of Mace's mouth don't
 let them. The words are foolish.
 The audience has heard them before.
 We're a caricature in a world of
 cartoons. We're pencil sketched.
 The audience wants animation and
 colour.

MACE.
 I am consumed with hatred of
 everything that your nation stands
 for, and as a Mexican man of
 action, I have decided to take a
 stand.

VP.

And that's my cue. And I nail it. I rise from prayer, Muslim prayer I assume, although I'm not sure my turban and my Greek worry beads and my yoga mat are exactly Allah-approved. I pose fear-inspiringly. I glare. I lock my eyes on the camera, and I glare, and I got no expression on my face, and Mace vibes off it, he feels it, and his voice settles in, and he's getting creepy, and it's powerful, and it's a start.

MACE.

And this is the stand I have chosen to take. Behold The Fundamentalist.

VP.

And some music starts, and I think it's a Bollywood love song, but it might be cut with some chanting Tibetan monks and maybe I even hear some Riverdance Gaelic business someplace in the mix. But me and Mace, we keep glaring, and we ain't speaking, and the pose we hit and the look we give and the connection me and him got on some psychic mind meld status, like those evil twin brothers from G.I.Joe, all that combines to make the nonsense fade to the background just long enough that we feel like we did everything that could be done with what they gave us. And we don't say another word.

MACE.

(as himself)

We stare them down.

VP.

And it's silent. And they're scared.

MACE.

And it's way better than anyone could have expected.

(EKO's office)

EKO.

Guys, guys, this is great. Don't change a thing. Don't change a thing. Less words, maybe. The silent part, that's gold. Less words. They'll hate you.

(EKO exits.)

MACE.

They'll hate us. In this business, that's about the best thing you can hear. And it took me I don't know how many years, and I had to do it as Che Chavez Castro, the Mexican revolutionary and generic Middle East sympathizer, and I don't know for exact what I did, but tonight, I did something, and it was something good, and it was alongside someone who I trust, and all I know is we're gonna build on that, and all I know is somehow I've been building on that since cold hard wood Saturday mornings in 1986. We took the wrong thing. We made it the right thing. I'm proud of that. So next week... we go ahead and do it again.

(EKO, addressing the television audience.)

EKO.

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VP.

Only we don't make no comments. We make it uncomfortable and creepy. Thirty seconds they give us onscreen.

MACE.

Thirty seconds we don't speak.

VP.

We ain't saying nothin.

MACE.

And neither is the audience. Ten seconds we stare at the camera. Intensity.

VP

And I catch the ghost or something. I rip off the prayer robe shawl tent thing they have me in this week, and I throw it on the floor and I throw myself on the floor and I start doing one-handed push-ups and yo, I never knew I could do one-handed push-ups but I bang them out and I keep my eyes on the camera the whole time.

MACE.

And I stay where I am in the back of the frame and I glare.

VP.

And fifteen seconds after the push-ups start, I'm back on my feet, and I'm sweating just a little, and I got perfect drops, two of them, dripping slow and tracing the bends of the bones in my face, and I'm right back where I came from, me and Macedonio Guerra. Me and my boy Mace scaring the back of the neck of every wrestling fan in the country.

MACE.

And in the last two seconds, it feels so much like the moment when you realize who you are and what you do and why you do and where you fit that a smile breaks in the back corner of the left side of my mouth.

VP.

At the same time the same smile breaks on mine. Perfect.

(EKO's office)

EKO.

Chill bumps you guys are giving me. Back of my leg, every hair is running away from every other hair.

MACE.

Generally nothing Everett K. Olson says by way of praise means a thing. Still this feels pretty good.

EKO

They don't know what to make of you two. They know they want to boo you and they know they will boo you but right now they don't know where you're coming from and it scares the life out of them.

I might never have neither of you speak again.

(into Bluelooth)

Hi, yeah, I ordered a shiatsu foot sauna steam massager from you, just wondering if it had been shipped yet. I have a tracking number.

(CHAD DEITY is revealed somewhere in the room with a loaf of raisin bread.)

CHAD DEITY.

The government demands that there be a minimum number of raisins in raisin bread.

(all eyes on CHAD DEITY. Double take.)

CHAD DEITY

It's true. Says so right here on the back of The Champ's bag of raisin bread.

VP.

You know, we're actually in the middle of something

CHAD DEITY.

Don't worry - you're not bothering The Champ. You see, brother, most people find the government's involvement in raisin bread allotment kind of ridiculous. But not Chad Deity, no way, baby. Chad Deity knows that it is not ridiculous. Chad Deity knows that this is the United States of America! This is the greatest country in the world!

(MORE)

CHAD DEITY. (CONT'D)

We deserve the best: the best economy, the best armed forces, the best wrestling champion. And damn it, we deserve the best and biggest and most raisins in each and every bite of every slice of every loaf of our raisin bread. That, my friends, is the American Dream. That, my friends, is what Chad Deity stands for, and The Champ, for one, is glad that the US Government sees things his way. And you, Mace, of all the people in this room, should understand the American Dream, particularly as relates to raisin bread, because your people fought, and protested, and boycotted for the right to pick grapes.

MACE.

I'm not Mexican.

CHAD DEITY.

This no word thing you're doing? The Champ approves. Not a bad start.

VP.

Not a bad start? The audience is eating it up.

CHAD DEITY.

Sure. For now. But sooner or later, they're going to want you to speak. What are you going to have to say?

(beat)

You ain't got the raisins, brother. Right now, you're giving them bread, and it's different bread, so they're excited while they figure out what to do with it. But eventually they're gonna realize your bread don't work for French toast, they're gonna realize your bread don't work for cream cheese and jelly, and they'll come looking for the raisins.

Chad Deity exits.

EKO

He's right, you know. You're doing good. You're doing fine.

(MORE)

EKO (CONT'D)

But we could use, we could use some more words. That's the reason we've got you in there with him, Mace. You're the one who I'm paying to deliver the raisins.

EKO exits.

MACE.

I'm accustomed to this kind of Chad-inspired change of mind from the boss so it's easy for me to keep my mouth shut and let it slide. But VP? Not so much.

VP.

I might, never have the neither of you speak again. Chill bumps you guys are giving me he says. Ay yo, get both those dudes back in here and let's get this all understood that we don't need to hear what they think they know about what you and me are doing out there.

MACE.

I let VP vent, and when he's good and vented, I let him know that I spent the whole raisin conversation thinking about what we were gonna do next week. I spent the whole raisin conversation thinking about the only two words we possibly needed to say.

(EKO, addressing the television audience.)

EKO.

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VP

First thing you see after Everett K. Olson disavows all connection with everything you're about to see is...

(VP holds up a life-size poster of CHAD DEITY.)

MACE.
 (matter-of-fact)
 ... Chad Deity.

VP.
 Every five, six seconds or so, Mace drops that name, and every time he spits that name, the name of the champion of the world, all I do is smirk.

MACE.
 (mocking)
 Chad Deity.

VP.
 Every time that name shoots out of Mace's mouth, my mind races to raisin bread, and that takes care of the smirk - couldn't hold my ridicule in if I tried. And I got exactly zero interest in trying.

MACE.
 (angry)
 Chad Deity.

VP.
 We got a world champion and he's rich and he God Blesses America, and he talks vociferous and he's non-threatening unless you yourself are a threat to that which he God Blesses, and you ain't a threat because you're physically imposing or because you might pull off your dashiki - or whatever you terrorist types wear - and bomb an arena full of God-fearing, Chad Deity-fearing, tax-paying, ticket buying Americans, but you're a threat because Chad Deity drew a line in the sand and instead of stepping over that line so Chad Deity could pick you up, powerbomb you, pin you, you held your ground and didn't speak and dared that dude to meet you on your side of his stupid line of fiction.

MACE.
 (disgusted)
 Chad Deity.

VP.

And my Mexican self stands right here next to my Filipino brother, Macedonio Guerra, and every time that name shoots out of his mouth, I can feel him drifting back to The Bronx while it was burning and being told to drop dead, drifting back to Vieques and mandated sterilization and a commonwealth government without the money to keep itself in business and illegal occupations, and extraordinary rendition, and ...

(beat)

right now a nation full of "patriots" who love to complain about how screwed up everything is, but ain't willing to sacrifice a single thing for the benefit of the greater good ... and Chad Deity's still out here God Blessing America. And yeah, wrestling don't got nothing to do with politics, and Chad Deity ain't the reason that what's wrong is wrong, but for some one who represents everything that's supposed to be right, that so called Champion ain't yet gave me one reason to respect him.

MACE.

(furious)

Chad...

(VP spits in the face of the poster.)

MACE. (CONT'D)

... Deity.

(VP exits.)

MACE. (CONT'D)

In an argument in the streets, the crowd watching things unfold will always let you know when a nerve's been struck.

(EKO, CHAD DEITY, and anyone else available from off stage as the crowd in the streets.)

EKO, CHAD DEITY, &ALL.

OOOOOOOOOOHHHHHH MAN.

MACE.

When The Fundamentalist spits in
the face of Chad Deity, twenty-five
thousand people in the arena and
millions watching at home go...

EKO, CHAD DEL'IY, & ALL.
OOOOOOOOOOHHHHHH MAN.

MACE.

We only put two raisins in our
bread. But they were some big
raisins.

End of Act One

Intermission

ACT TWO

(EKO and REF, in the ring.)

EKO.

(as Ring Announcer)

The following contest is scheduled
for one fall with a forty-five
minute time limit.
Introducing first to my right...
The Bad Guy!

The BAD GUY enters, antagonizing the fans.

EKO

And his opponent...

The Elaborate Enterance of Chad Deity begins.

CHAD DEITY enters

The match begins. CHAD DEITY destroys THE BAD GUY. Kicks,
punches, body slams - basic and angry. The REF ignores the
cheap stuff. THE BAD GUY gets no offense in.

After about thirty seconds of punishment, CHAD DEITY picks
THE BAD GUY up, Powerbombs him, pins him. The REF slaps the
floor, one two three.

SOUND of the final bell. RING RING RING.

EKO returns to the ring.

EKO (CONT'D)

The winner of this match, and STILL
T.H.E. Wrestling Champion-

(CHAD DEITY snatches the microphone out of the EKO's hand.)

CHAD DEITY.

Do you know how many crispers I
have in my refrigerator? I have
four. Four crispers. Two on the
bottom, two on the top. Right where
your freezer is on your
refrigerator, that's where I have
two extra crispers. My freezer is
as big as your refrigerator, and my
crispers are as big as your
freezer, and I don't even use a
crisper.

(MORE)

CHAD DEITY. (CONT'D)

My son, he's got a refrigerator, a mini-refrigerator downstairs in the part of the house that's specially devoted to him. You know what's in his crispers? Chad Deity action figures. He likes his toys cold. I don't know-he's a weird kid. But my son gets what he wants. Unless what he wants is wrong. And my son, he knows what's right and what's wrong. And because he knows what's right and what's wrong, my son knows not to spit in anyone's face. Ever.

And you, Mace, you might be Che Chavez Castro or whatever you're choosing to call yourself now, but a month ago you were under a mask getting picked up and powerbombed and pinned in every arena T.H.E. Wrestling traveled to. And me and EKO, we told you how you could change that, and Mace, you were making progress, but now, you mention my name, you spit in my face, and the decision's made. Chad Deity has to answer, and you both have to go down, and go down big, and you'll both be back under masks the night after I pin The Fundamentalist and send him back to Turkmenistan or Filipinostan or Voltronistan or wherever we decide he came from.

That's what you're missing in this Macedonio. We decide. Me and EKO. We decide. You just made our decision easy and obvious. Two crispers for Vicente. Two crispers for Macedonio. Four crispers for Chad Deity. Unused.

(CHAD DEITY exits.)

(MACE enters.)

MACE.

Chad Deity is angry.
When Chad Deity is angry onscreen, that's good for business.
T.H.E. Wrestling makes a lot of money from Chad Deity being angry on television. When Chad Deity is angry behind the scenes?

(MORE)

MACE. (CONT'D)
 That's a little more complicated.
 And now Chad Deity is angry at me
 and VP. That's a lot more
 complicated. Cause remember: in
 wrestling, you can't kick a guy's
 butt without the help of the guy
 whose butt you're kicking.
 Of course, you also can't kick a
 guy's butt if he doesn't know how
 to make it look like you're kicking
 his butt.

(VP enters)

MACE. (CONT'D)
 I still gotta teach VP to wrestle.

(VP trips while entering the ring.)

MACE. (CONT'D)
 Excuse me. We've got a lot of work
 to do.

(MACE joins VP in the ring.)

MACE. (CONT'D)
 Okay. First thing we've got to do
 is teach you how to take a bump.
 How to fall.

(Reveal EKO, with THE BAD GUY.)

EKO.
 Mace, Mace, Mace.
 The T.H.E. Wrestling fan is not
 interested in guys who fall.
 The T.H.E. Wrestling fan is
 interested in guys who make guys
 fall.
 (to VP)
 Kid, don't worry about the bumps.
 We need to start out by picking
 your finisher.

MACE.
 The finisher is wrestling's version
 of the knockout blow. Each wrestler
 has a unique move they use to put
 his opponent away. Chad Deity's
 finisher is, of course, the
 powerbomb. Mace's finisher. Well, I
 don't ever get to put my opponents
 away. Whatever. Let's stick with
 The Champ.

(MORE)

MACE. (CONT'D)

When Chad Deity hits the powerbomb,
fans know to stand, to cheer.
The night is over. The day is won.
You saw what you came to see.
You go to a baseball game, and
Slugger McHometeam isn't guaranteed
to hit a home run that day, no
matter what he's been shooting
slash ingesting into his body...

THE BAD GUY.

... Allegedly.

EKO.

We don't know anything about those
kinds of substances here in T.H.E.
Wrestling.

(awkward silence)

Now, the obvious finisher for The
Fundamentalist is the Camel Clutch.
Show him the Camel Clutch.

THE BAD GUY puts MACE into the Camel Clutch. MACE screams in
pain, then speaks calmly while still in the hold.)

MACE.

You know who did the Camel Clutch?
The Iron Sheik. Sabu. The
aforementioned Muhammad Hassan
all you with iPhones saw that when
you Googled him at intermission.
I'm onto you.

(THE BAD GUY releases the hold.)

MACE. (CONT'D)

Every wrestler who has ever been
portrayed as having "Middle
Eastern" ancestry has done the
Camel Clutch. Because Middle
Easterners ride camels. So they do
the Camel Clutch. I swear to God I
hate wrestling sometimes. I don't
mention this hatred.

(to EKO)

You know what I'm thinking, Boss?
I'm thinking we go in a different
direction.

EKO.

There is no different direction.
He's a fundamentalist. The Camel
Clutch is fundamental.

MACE.

I hate wrestling.

(to EKO)

No, you're right, you're right, but I'm thinking... quick strike capability.

EKO.

I'm listening.

MACE.

He's a threat, right? A terrorist threat. And what's the scary thing about terrorism? It can come from anywhere at any time. You don't see it coming.

VP.

It's the shadowy nature of a sleeper cell.

(beat)

What? I can play this game too.

EKO.

Sleeper cell? I like it.

MACE.

I'm thinking the superkick, boss.

(to audience)

This is the superkick.

MACE superkicks THE BAD GUY. It's quick, it's out of nowhere, it knocks THE BAD GUY off his feet.

The REF slaps three times on the mat. THE BAD GUY IS OUT COLD.

MACE. (CONT'D)

You might see a match where a wrestler gets shoved off the top rope, through a table, down to the concrete floor directly on his head - and he still gets up to fight. Now that same wrestler, same match, he gets hit with a superkick...

MACE superkicks THE BAD GUY again.

The REF slaps three times on the mat. THE BAD GUY IS OUT COLD.

MACE. (CONT'D)

... dude could be laid out for the rest of the night.

(MORE)

MACE. (CONT'D)

In the physics of professional wrestling, as in life, the shot that knocks you out is the one you never see coming.

EKO.

I like it. Use it, kid. We need a new exotic name for it. I'm thinking...

MACE.

Please don't let him say it.

EKO.

I'm thinking...

MACE.

He's gonna say it.

EKO.

The Camel Kick?

(VP goes to superkick EKO.)

(MACE stops him.)

EKO. (CONT'D)

Or maybe... Koran Kick. Kabbalah Kick. I don't know. I'll figure it out. I like it. I smell money. Monday night. Fundamentalist's in-ring debut. He wins with The Koran Kick. Kabbalah Kick. Koran Kabbalah Kick.

Chad Deity reappears. In EKO's ear.

CHAD DEITY.

Um. KKK.

EKO.

Yeah, KKK... oh, maybe not so good.

CHAD disappears.

EKO. (CONT'D)

I'll figure it out. Next week, The Fundamentalist makes his in-ring debut.

(EKO, THE BAD GUY, and VP leave.)

MACE.

So, next week, The Fundamentalist's in-ring debut, I am as calm as I've ever been while walking into an arena. I am going to be a manager for the first time in my career, not a wrestler - all I need to do is walk The Fundamentalist down the aisle, jaw off with the crowd in my stupid fake accent, then raise my guy's hand in victory. Anything goes wrong, I'm there to clean up the mess. And really, what could go wrong?

RING ANNOUNCER.

The following contest is scheduled for one fall with a ten-minute time limit. Introducing first, from Hope, Arkansas, Billy Heartland.

(THE BAD GUY enters as Billy Heartland, Americana to the extreme. His entrance, like all the entrances, is ridiculous. The REF stands in an upstage corner of the ring.)

MACE.

Seriously. But Billy Heartland makes no difference to me because he's a prop, a tool, an inanimate object that will be forgotten immediately after he is announced, because The Elaborate Entrance of The Fundamentalist is about to be all anyone could think about.

EKO.

And his opponent...

(It might be pretty awesome to have some version of The Fundamentalists entrance actually happening as MACE describes it.)

MACE.

The lights in the arena dim. Ten women in designer burkas line the entrance way. A series of red and yellow streamers descend from the ceiling, no doubt referencing the obvious ties between this radical Islamist terrorist and ... Communist China?

(MORE)

MACE. (CONT'D)

The Fundamentalist's music begins, and as horribly offensive and culturally inaccurate as it is, it still makes my spine shiver in glee.

I appear first, lit cigar - Cuban. of course - in one hand, a little set of bongos hoisted above my head in the other.

Seriously. They give me a pair of bongos.

It doesn't matter. I step aside, and there he is -

(VP appears as The Fundamentalist.)

MACE. (CONT'D)

and I don't look back at him because I know he is exactly where he needs to be.

And it all goes by in a blur, because, for the first time, I am a part of an elaborate entrance instead of watching it from the perspective of the soon-to-be-vanquished.

(The Fundamentalist enters the ring.)

MACE. (CONT'D)

And the bell rings, and The Fundamentalist soaks up the boos of the fans, and, nah, he ain't The Fundamentalist, he's Vicente Partida. And the match starts, and Billy Heartland is playing his part...

(Billy Heartland plays his part.)

MACE. (CONT'D)

... and he's terrified of The Fundamentalist, and he's not sure what to make of it all. And it's the moment, the moment we've built for, and I look at Vicente Partida. And he doesn't move.

(VP doesn't move.)

MACE. (CONT'D)

Um.

He's not Vicente Partida right now.

(MORE)

MACE. (CONT'D)

He's not even The Fundamentalist right now. He's... some guy. He's some guy standing there in the ring. And he's not prepared to be there. Something has gone wrong. And I'm supposed to clean up the mess. So what do I do?

I jump up on the ring apron, lit cigar in one hand, bongo set in the other.

I yell frantically at poor Billy Heartland, calling him every mild anti-US name in the book, hoping that he'll follow my lead and catch the life preserver I'm tossing his way.

And the kid, he's acting his butt off, selling this like he's Amy Morton in August: Osage County -
(beat)

What? Wrestlers can have culture. So I'm watching the referee out of the corner of my eye, and the ref's just staring at VP, who is still locked, still looking at something that's not any of us. And since the ref's back is turned, I take it as an opening, just like a real manager would do, were this a legitimate sporting event.

And when Poor Billy Heartland turns around, I slam those cheap bongos against the flat of his back, just under his neck.

(hits Billy, then freezes)

It's a good safe spot to hit someone who isn't expecting it.. Especially when you're dealing with foreign objects.

(to a specific audience member.)

MACE. (CONT'D)

Remind me to talk about foreign objects later. And Poor Billy Heartland, God bless his soul, he sells the bongo like he's been shot with a cannon, and he stumbles forward, he stumbles towards The Fundamentalist, who, shockingly, fortuitously, snaps out of his stupor...

(VP superkicks Billy Heartland.)

MACE. (CONT'D)

... and hits Billy Heartland with the single most beautiful superkick I have ever seen. The crowd collectively gasps. And VP freezes again. Doesn't go for a cover. Doesn't play to the crowd. Freezes. Again. Poor Billy Heartland stays down. Brilliant, Genius, Beautiful Billy Heartland. He just stays down. The referee calls for the bell.

The REF slaps three times on the mat. THE BAD GUY IS OUT COLD.

MACE. (CONT'D)

The Fundamentalist has won his first match with one move.

MACE takes VP backstage.

VP.

There are a lot of people out there. I don't know if I can do this.

MACE.

I don't know if he can do this either. I don't mention it.

VP.

What do you think EKO is going to say?

MACE.

If I could, if I believed it, I'd tell Vicente not to seek acceptance or absolution from the rich, powerful, traditional power structure that pays our checks, because we, as "people of color," as citizens of nation states with rich cultural histories, we define our own success, and people like EKO, they don't understand that stuff. But I don't believe it. Vicente Partida screwed up.

MACE walks back out to the ring.

MACE. (CONT'D)

And I have my moments of being all militant and feeling like a freedom fighter, and I don't mean this Chavez Castro version of militant freedom fighter - but if you don't do your job right, especially in this business, in my business, on my behalf? I'm not standing between you and the boss to take the tongue lashing.

And take a guess how he reacts.
No seriously, take a guess.

(beat)

Exactly. He loved it.

EKO's office. Maybe EKO's got a videotape of the, superkick that he's watching over and over again throughout this.

VP enters from backstage to join MACE.

EKO.

That kick. That incredible kick. You know what I had the announcers call it? The Sleeper Cell. How perfect is that?
The Sleeper Cell.

MACE.

Um. I don't get it.

EKO.

Doesn't matter if you get it. It works.
Like this guy.
(gestures to VP)
He works. I don't get it, but he works.
The fans, they're eating it up. He intimidates his opponents, then BAM - he lays them out. Sleeper Cell. What a name!
This is what we're gonna do with The Fundamentalist now, kid. Minimalism.
It fits with the caves, the anti-technology blah blah blah.
I want you to do as little as possible in the ring.
You'll have the mysterious, annoying, manager guy on the outside, he'll rant and rave, he'll interfere, he'll do the, do the, do the -

MACE.

Heavy lifting.

EKO.

He'll do the heavy lifting. But you, Vicente Partida, you stay minimal and mysterious and don't let the audience have any idea what you're capable of.

By the time we put you in a match with Chad, I'm thinking like three weeks away on Pay Per View, they'll be dying to see what you're going to have in store. Just remember your game plan: nothing, nothing, Sleeper Cell.

(EKO exits.)

MACE.

Surprising things to come out of that conversation - besides him liking the match, I mean:

1. He called VP by his name. His full name. And pronounced it right. I'm still not sure he's ever learned to pronounce Macedonio Guerra.

2. He's already planning a Pay Per View match between The Fundamentalist and Chad Deity. Pay Per View is a big deal - all the TV builds to the Pay Per View, and you put your best stuff on the Pay Per View, because people are paying to view it, so you try to give them something to spend their money on. He thinks VP is ready for that?

And 3. The Sleeper Cell? Really? Unsurprising things to come out of that conversation - there's really only one. I'm going to be doing the heavy lifting.

But I guess I don't mind, because I kind of like the heavy lifting. And VP gets the business, I'm not worried about that. So if the boss is showing more faith in him than he ever showed in me - heck, I should just shut my mouth and go along for the ride.

(beat)

(MORE)

MACE. (CONT'D)

But somehow, I've still got this sneaking suspicion that there's this whole other factor that needs to be looked out for.

(CHAD DEITY nails VP with a chair.)

(VP falls to the ground.)

MACE. (CONT'D)

(to the audience member he spoke to earlier)

I thought I told you to remind me to talk about foreign objects.

CHAD DEITY.

You know something, brother, when The Deity started wrestling, he had a bit of an ego. In those days, the old-timers had ways of teaching cocky newcomers a measure of respect for the business. The old-timer who taught Chad respect, he did it with his fist against my face, right above my eye, repeatedly. Busted me wide open. Knocked me silly. And when he was done, and we got backstage, and they stitched me up on the spot, he reached his hand out to me - as my thirteen stitches were going in - and he said "Darnell, I won't do this again if you don't make me." And I ain't had stitches since.

(silence)

MACE.

Darnell?

CHAD DEITY.

Birth name. Darnell Deity.

(to VP)

You needed to be woken up. I figured I'd do it now with a chair before someone had to do it with thirteen stitches, mess up that pretty little face.

(CHAD DEITY holds his hand out to VP.)

(VP does not shake it.)

CHAD DEITY. (CONT'D)
You froze out there.

VP.
Nope. Minimalism.

CHAD DEITY.
No. You froze.

VP.
And you got a refrigerator that's bigger than my living room and a crisper that your son uses to chill his Barbies. The audience liked it.

CHAD DEITY.
You know how Chad knows you froze? Ooh - The Champ rhymed. You didn't mention Chad Deity.

MACE.
I look at VP and he looks at me and I can tell that he thinks Chad Deity is just being an egotist here, and on some level, well, yeah. But right now, the egotist happens to have a point.

CHAD DEITY.
Weeks of promos, all you've been talking about is Chad Deity this, Chad Deity that, parading around one of the special limited edition Chad Deity posters that's now available out in the lobby. You hate The Deity so much you spit in his metaphorical face. And now... you don't so much as reference his name.

MACE.
Shoot. I didn't even think of that, and it's my job to think of it. I hope he doesn't mention it.

CHAD DEITY.
And Mace, you didn't even think of it. It's your job to think of it.

MACE.
He always mentions it.

VP.

You know, Chad Deity, Vicente Partida appreciates Chad Deity's point, but The Fundamentalist seemed to get a pretty darn good response tonight without mentioning Chad Deity. Maybe The Fundamentalist just has new ideas to get the audience involved that Chad Deity is too old and set in Chad Deity's ways to even think of.

CHAD DEITY.

You froze, Baby!
It's cool. It happens. Next week, you need to mention Chad Deity. Because to be honest with you, as soon as you decided to make the destruction of Chad Deity the only goal that your characters have, you wrote yourself into a short career. Chad Deity's going to beat you. And you're going to have nowhere left to go.
If you go out there next week, and you mention Chad Deity, and you wrestle a quick little match, and you hit that sweet superkick, we can at least extend this out a bit. Maybe turn your vendetta against The Champ into something we can sell.

(beat)

You know, you remind Chad Deity... of Chad Deity.

(CHAD DEITY exits.)

(silence)

MACE.

(to VP)

Um.
You know. Nothing he said was exactly wrong.

VP.

Everything he is is wrong.
If it wasn't for the respect I have for you, bro, I'd tell him exactly how wrong he is.

(VP exits.)

MACE.

So...

(MACE remembers where he
left off.)

Okay, right. So the following week,
EKO pulls out a stop I thought
would have been too obvious even
for him.

RING ANNOUNCER.

The following contest is scheduled
for one fall with a ten-minute time
limit.

Introducing first, from Main
Street, USA... this is Old Glory!

(THE BAD GUY, in an American flag mask, as Old Glory. The REF
enters with him.)

MACE.

I work in a subtle business.

RING ANNOUNCER.

And his opponent...

(VP, as The Fundamentalist)

MACE.

The Fundamentalist's entrance is
just a touch more elaborate this
week than last. Twenty women in
burkas line the entrance way.
The red and yellow streamers are
joined by indecipherable (and
probably pure gibberish) Sanskrit
spelled out in green laser in the
center of the ring.
On the walk down the aisle, I sneak
a look back at VP, and from the
intensity in his eyes, I can see
that he's determined to redeem
himself. He's destined for glory,
finally.

(He gestures to Old
Glory.)

Destined for "Glory" - forget it.
The Fundamentalist gets to the
ring, and he prays, and Che Chavez
Castro curses out the fans in
Spanish, cause all I know in
Spanish is the curses, and the bell
rings, and Old Glory does his part,
he plays to the crowd and starts a
USA USA chant -

Old Glory plays to the crowd.

MACE. (CONT'D)

- and this, this guy, this menace, this, this... Fundamentalist is terrifying, and he's just staring at Old Glory, and he's not moving, and Vicente Partida has frozen again.

Old Glory throws up his hands in disgust.

MACE. (CONT'D)

Now, Old Glory is no Billy Heartland. Old Glory is a legitimate old school tough guy reared in a different era, an era in which if a young whippersnapper dishonored the craft - if he took something without giving back - it was up to the old-timers to give him a receipt. A potato. Thirteen stitches. Old Glory wants permission to beat Vicente Partida to a pulp. At this point, that sounds like a really good plan to me. So I give him the subtlest of gestures, and Old Glory, instead of coming to jaw with The Fundamentalist's manager the way Poor Billy Heartland did, makes his move. He approaches cautiously, still giving the impression that The Fundamentalist is one to be feared, but I know that Old Glory is about to put some serious hurt on-

(The Fundamentalist superkicks Old Glory.)

MACE. (CONT'D)

The audience gasps. Old Glory later tells me that he was knocked cold legit. The Fundamentalist does not go for a pin. The referee assumes that we're following the same game plan as last week, and declares the match over.

The REF slaps three times on the mat. THE BAD GUY IS OUT COLD.

MACE. (CONT'D)

The Fundamentalist has won his first two matches with a total of two - count 'em - two wrestling moves. And they were both the same move.

(Che Chavez Castro raises The Fundamentalist's hand in victory. The Fundamentalist yanks his hand away.)

(MACE and VP stare each other down. MACE regains his composure.)

MACE. (CONT'D)

But now's not the time to berate him for what he's done. I've got work to do. As the bell rings, I grab a microphone and join my man in the squared circle. I'm going to be cutting a promo from the ring. The goal of this promo is clear to me. We hate Chad Deity. The Fundamentalist hates Chad Deity. Che Chavez Castro hates Chad Deity. And what I'm going to do is make sure everyone in the audience knows it.

(VP grabs the microphone away.)

VP.

(as The Fundamentalist)
The Fundamentalist hates America.

MACE.

The Fundamentalist is not supposed to speak.

VP.

The Fundamentalist hates Old Glory. The Fundamentalist hates Billy Heartland. The Fundamentalist hates The New York City.

MACE.

And even here, at this point, I can tell that this is going to go very, very wrong. And it does.

VP.

The Fundamentalist hates...

MACE.

The Fundamentalist announces a long list of every one and every thing that he hates. Conspicuous by its absence, as the late Gorilla Monsoon used to say, is the name of Chad Deity.

VP.

The Fundamentalist hates expensive refrigerators. The Fundamentalist hates raisin bread.

MACE.

He's showing off, but it's worse than showing off, cause it's just for people behind the scenes, and it's just to show that he can, to show that he knows what he's expected to do, and to make it clear that he's not interested in doing it.
He's being a jerk.

VP.

The Fundamentalist hates... T.H.E. Wrestling.

MACE.

Vicente Partida just Sleeper Celled us both out of the main event. The interview ends. We get backstage.

(EKO and CHAD DEITY enter.)

MACE. (CONT'D)

The Boss and The Champ are waiting for us. And they're just staring. I can tell what they're about to do, and it's the right thing.

(To EKO and Chad Deity)

Call off the Pay Per View match. Give VP a few more weeks to work with me on his respect for the business, on taking care of the guy he's in there with. I'm glad they're here, cause they're saving me the hassle of having to handle the situation myself. They look ticked. This is gonna be good.

EKO.

There he is - my next T.H.E.
Champion.

MACE.

I should just stop attempting to
narrate, right?

EKO.

The kicks, they're money. The fans,
they love it. You hear it. You
never hear reactions like that.

MACE.

He's right.
The reactions are amazing. So are
the superkicks.

EKO.

And now, now's the time, now's the
time when we make ourselves a small
fortune. You see, kid, I created
this little theory I call the rule
of three.

MACE.

Everett K. Olson did not create the
rule of three.

EKO.

Sleeper Cell to Billy Heartland,
that's one. Sleeper Cell to Old
Glory, that's two. You're making
your way through the soul of these
United States, kid. The fans, they
know there's a third Sleeper Cell
on the way.

CHAD DEITY.

And the promo.

EKO.

Oh, kid. The promo.

CHAD DEITY.

Chad's gotta admit, the promo was
brilliant.

MACE.

He thought the promo was brilliant?

CHAD DEITY.

The Champ told you that the only thing you needed to do was mention his name -

EKO.

And you didn't even have to.

CHAD DEITY.

Rule of Three.
The fans know that that third Sleeper Cell can only be meant for Chad Deity.

(CHAD takes off his championship belt.)

CHAD DEITY. (CONT'D)

When I started out in T.H.E. Wrestling, the E to the K to the O told me that throwing money in the air was the stupidest idea he had ever heard.

EKO.

I underestimated the champ.

CHAD DEITY.

And now I underestimated the V to the P.

(CHAD hands the belt to VP.)

CHAD DEITY. (CONT'D)

Hold on to this for a little while. You should get used to carrying it.

VP.

So you liked it? That? You liked that?

EKO.

Kid. I don't like things. Liking is not good for business. I do what's good for business. Right now, giving you the belt is what's good for business. We're gonna make millions from folks dying to see Chad Deity try to get his title back and set things right with the world.

(to MACE)

Get him ready.
Next week, we put the title on The Fundamentalist.

(silence)

VP.

That? They liked that?

(VP drops the championship belt in disgust and exits.)

(silence)

MACE.

Okay. So Vicente Partida - nah, revision - The Fundamentalist is about to become T.H.E. Champion. He's fought two matches. He knows one move. I should be ticked, right? I should be complaining about the fact that he goes out there, almost breaks the jaw of a respected veteran, cuts a promo completely disrespecting the business that I love, walks to the back and gets rewarded with the announcement of his first World Championship. And I'm not gonna lie. There's a part of me that's infuriated by this. But I don't know. Maybe I take things too seriously. I mean, Saturday morning, corn flakes and sugar - maybe I've got this business all built up in my head. Maybe I forget we're just wrestling guys. We're just action figures. Just dolls. Maybe I should just keep my mouth shut and make it work.
(silence)
And I'm also not gonna lie.

MACE looks at the belt. MACE walks to the belt. MACE picks up the belt.)

MACE. (CONT'D)

I never expected to get this close to championship gold.

MACE holds the belt up to his waist. Silence. He likes the way it looks. He really likes the way it looks. He gets lost in the moment. He wonders what his grandfather would say if he saw him like this. MACE snaps out of it.)

MACE. (CONT'D)

Sorry. I forgot I'm supposed to be telling a story.

(MORE)

MACE. (CONT'D)
 So my job now is to get The
 Fundamentalist ready to win the
 T.H.E. Championship -

(VP nails MACE with a superkick to the jaw, out of nowhere.
 MACE goes down like he was shot.)

VP.
 I'm going back to Brooklyn.

MACE.
 The shot that knocks you out is the
 one you never see coming.

VP.
 I mean, look. You and me, we got
 stories to tell, and they're
 different, but they came from the
 same place, man - there's beauty in
 that. That's what I came here to
 do.
 But they want to turn us, they want
 to spin our story, fit us in to
 what they already got in mind. Chad
 Deity is Chad Deity. I don't want
 to be The Fundamentalist. You don't
 want to be Che Chavez Castro.
 And if we go along with it, no
 matter how we play it, if it's bad,
 or if we sneak in some good and
 sneak in something to say, we gotta
 go back to Brooklyn, back to the
 Bronx, we gotta look little brown
 kids in the eye and defend our
 decision, we gotta explain why it
 ain't so bad to exist outside
 ourselves for the sake of twenty
 pounds of gold around our waist.

MACE.
 (to VP)
 That's garbage. You're scared.
 (to the audience)
 And it just slips out of my mouth.

VP.
 Maybe. But am I wrong?

(no response)

VP. (CONT'D)
 I didn't come here to be champion,
 man.

(MORE)

VP. (CONT'D)
 I came to create something dope.
 And I think we did as much we can.

(no response)

VP. (CONT'D)
 And I know that I'm wrong here, I
 should just be like you, and keep
 my mouth shut and make it work. But
 when I see something's wrong, I
 gotta say something. I gotta do
 something. I gotta solve it.

(MACE goes to speak.)

VP superkicks MACE again - sudden, shocking, laying MACE out
 flat.)

VP. (CONT'D)
 This is how I know to solve this.
 It was good working with you, bro.

VP exits. Silence. CHAD DEITY rushes in to MACE's side. He
 helps him to his feet.

EKO enters.

EKO.
 Where's your boy, Mace?

(no response)

EKO. (CONT'D)
 Where is your boy. Mace?

(no response)

EKO. (CONT'D)
 He's under contract.
 As are you.

CHAD DEITY.
 It's not his fault, Everett.

EKO.
 You're under contract too, Darnell

(silence)

CHAD DEITY.
 Sorry, Mace.

CHAD DEITY reluctantly turns on MACE, clotheslining him to
 the ground.

THE BAD GUY enters, carrying the Che Chavez Castro costume.

EKO.

You are an important part of T.H.E.
Wrestling, Macedonio Guerra.
You make this business run.
I respect you.

CHAD DEITY pulls MACE to his feet.

EKO holds out his hand. MACE reluctantly shakes it. EKO holds onto MACE's hand.

EKO. (CONT'D)

But right now, I have a problem.
And that problem is your fault. So
I'm going to need you to get out
there and solve my problem.

Silence.

MACE takes the costume. MACE does not move.

EKO. (CONT'D)

I said. Get out there. And solve
my...

MACE punches EKO.

Silence.

MACE physically fights to be heard as he finally says what he has desperately needed to say for so long.

MACE.

And I mention it, I mention it all.
Everett K.

(MORE)

MACE. (CONT'D)

Olson did not invent professional wrestling and I'm not okay with pretending that he did and ignoring the long, rich history of the art form of professional wrestling that existed long before he ever even dreamed of T.H.E. Wrestling, and yeah, I said art form, because that's what this is about, working together to make something beautiful, and it's not about Chad Deity's muscles and money and elaborate entrance, and Chad Deity's muscles and money and elaborate entrance do not represent my American Dream, because my American Dream roots for the underdog, my American Dream respects hard work and substance and throwing your life into doing what you love just like my grandpa taught me in 1986 - and before I know it I'm sweating and spitting and crying, and I mention all of it, I mention the money and I mention Cruger Avenue, 10:45am, I mention my brother and my brother and my grandpa and the sugar water and the wrestling guys and the...

(He takes a great big sigh)

and I mention how easy it would be for Everett K Olson and Chad Deity and Vicente Partida to get the heck out of my way and let me tell a story, a perfect story and I mention all this, a story, a perfect story is all I have ever desired in my existence, and they could keep the money and the power and the prestige and I would do every last bit of the heavy lifting if they would just let me tell One. Perfect. Story.

Silence.

MACE stands over a stunned EKO, CHAD DEITY, and THE BAD GUY. MACE realizes what he has done.

EKO approaches MACE threateningly.

EKO.

Do that on television.

Silence.

MACE.

So I do.

End of Act Two

EPILOGUE

The centre stage ring is gone. In its place is a couch facing the big screen at UFC.

No one on stage except VP. He sits on the couch. Turns on the tv upstage.

Chad Deity stands up right of the couch.

CHAD DEITY.

VP sits at home and turns on his television just to see what T.H.E. Wrestling is doing without him. His job a week ago. Probably still his job now, if you want to get all legal about it.

(EKO and the REF enter on TV)

VP.

And the first face he sees, maybe no surprise, is the boss.

EKO.

On behalf of T.H.E. Wrestling, and on behalf of T.H.E. Champion Chad Deity, I would like to condemn the comments...

VP.

And he's watching with a girl, cause he's, you know, VP, and she rolls her eyes. She gets up and breaks for the bathroom, telling him that when she gets back, he better be watching something more real.

(MACE enters as Che Chavez Castro.)

CHAD DEITY.

The Fundamentalist should be standing there, staring through the camera, indefinable menace that's, honestly, kinda cool to the folks who pay their cash to boo indefinable menaces.

But he's not.

Che Chavez Castro is. Alone.

And he's staring.

And he ain't saying nothing.

And for VP, reading his eyes is easy. Cause what he sees he put there.

He put there the hope and the idealism, the sense that, man, they could change some world through this.

He put there the contempt and the disgust, the abandonment and the distrust and the sense that the people on your own side of the struggle can't be counted on to soldier through.

Especially if they got a little cash. Or a gas station.

Or luxury lofts. Or four crispers.

MACE begins to remove the Che Chavez Castro costume.

VP.

And then VP is surprised. The costume's coming off.

And Mace is still not speaking.

He's still staring, at VP, at Everett K EKO Olson, at Chad Darnell Deity, at Brooklyn, at The Bronx, at probably Kansas and Montana, at every small city and big town and every thirteen-year-old kid sitting at his kitchen counter doing homework during the commercials, and that's not a Mexican radical revolutionary fascist liberal dictator guerrilla freedom-hating freedom fighter. That's Vp's boy Mace.

MACE does not speak.

CHAD DEITY.

And he speaks. He speaks calm. He speaks slow.

(MORE)

CHAD DEITY. (CONT'D)
 He speaks out of character.
 He speaks as Macedonio Guerra.

MACE does not speak.

CHAD DEITY. (CONT'D)
 And the girl, she comes back in the
 room. I had forgot her.
 She asks "we're still watching
 this?"

MACE does not speak.

CHAD DEITY. (CONT'D)
 And VP thinks about it.
 And this time, he's not trying to
 make the moves on her.
 He tells her to just listen. And
 she listens.
 And they watch.
 And Macedonio Guerra goes ahead and
 gives voice to their little corner
 of the world.

(CHAD DEITY enters. No elaborate entrance.)

CHAD DEITY. (CONT'D)
 And when he's done, Chad Deity
 comes out.
 And they stare down.
 And they stand off.
 And the referee rings the bell.

MACE and CHAD DEITY do not move.

CHAD DEITY. (CONT'D)
 And they watch live via satellite
 from someplace in the heart of the
 United States, hearing the cheers
 of a blood thirsty stadium crowd.
 (beat)
 Chad Deity Defeats Macedonio Guerra
 In near-record time.
 The crowd goes wild.
 And the girl, she turns to him, and
 she says: Why are they rooting for
 the bad guy?

CHAD turns to face the screen.

CHAD's music and audience cheering wildly.

MACE enters from stage left. He turns to face the screen.

The BAD GUY, REF, and EKO all enter. They turn to face the screen too.

On the screen, CHAD celebrates. For a long time. The cheers and music begin to fade.

Blackout.

End of Play