

2012 Movie Draft

by Tenessa Gemelke, Brandon Kruse, Joe Mulder, Jameson Simmons, & Mike Wagner

Once again, the calendar has turned to Oscar season, but while the Academy is moving back to the familiar (though after last year's Franco/Hathaway debacle, you won't hear us complaining about Billy Crystal), we here at PoopReading are mixing it up a little with our annual Movie Draft!

Whereas in the past, we've conducted our draft via e-mail, this year we decided to try doing it in an online chat. The result was a much faster pace, but also – we hope – an even more fun and entertaining read.

As always, we've begun with the 20 actors nominated in the upcoming Academy Awards, and drafted them, a la fantasy sports:

Berenice Bejo
Demian Bichir
Kenneth Branagh
Jessica Chastain
George Clooney
Glenn Close
Viola Davis
Jean Dujardin
Jonah Hill
Rooney Mara
Melissa McCarthy
Janet McTeer
Nick Nolte
Gary Oldman
Brad Pitt
Christopher Plummer
Octavia Spencer
Meryl Streep
Max von Sydow
Michelle Williams

Our goal with these drafts isn't necessarily to collect armloads of awards or earn truckloads of cash (though it would be nice if Steven Spielberg would return our calls). Our sole aim is to create the most brain-meltingly awesome movie possible given the available talent. Having drafted our cast, we each selected a movie title from the following list, which consists of English translations of previously nominated (and relatively obscure) "Best Foreign Language Film" contenders:

Beyond the Walls
Confidence
First Love
Immortal Love
Man of Iron
Muddy River
The Nasty Girl
The Nest
The New Land

Nights and Days
Nine Lives
Open Doors
The Pedestrian
Pharoah
Private Life
A Simple Story
A Special Day
Stolen Kisses
Three Brothers
The Village on the River

With cast and title in place, we then returned to our secret idea bunkers (furnishings by JCPenney's new Dictator Designs line) to crank out a movie synopsis. The results are as follows. (And next week, we'll be back with fake reviews of each of the five fake movies)

â€”JAMESON:â€” Welcome to the chat room!

â€”JOE:â€” There we are!

â€”TENESSA:â€” We're all drunk and naked, right?

â€”JAMESON:â€” I know my newborn son is!

â€”BRANDON:â€” I'm sober and bundled up.

â€”JOE:â€” <- Drunk and clothed.

â€”JAMESON:â€” <- Sober and WAY NAKED

â€”MIKE:â€” Shit, I just drafted Jean Dujardin and I don't know who that is.

â€”TENESSA:â€” NOBODY KNOWS WHO THAT IS.

â€”JAMESON:â€” Seriously??? I recommended his movie to you fucks like three months ago. Awesome James Bond spoof entirely in French. You guys suck! I'm going home!

â€”MIKE:â€” I have two kids. I don't see movies in the theatre.

â€”JAMESON:â€” It's on Netflix Streaming. Checkmate.

â€”MIKE:â€” I'm streaming right now.

â€”JOE:â€” Um... I'm Amish. So... can't watch Netflix. (I think they bought it!)

â€”JAMESON:â€” Ah, Joe. You want Qwikster, then.

â€”JOE:â€” Heh, Qwikster. Remember that?

â€”BRANDON:â€” No.

Round 1, Pick 1: Joe

â€œJOE:â€œ I totally take **George Clooney** with the first pick. If we're doing that now.

â€œMIKE:â€œ Why are we letting Joe continue to fuck up Clooney's career?

â€œJOE:â€œ Too soon.

â€œJAMESON:â€œ I read it as Joe was going to try to make amends for *Rule #3*. The way *Ocean's 13* made amends for *Ocean's 12*. *Rule #4*, baby!

â€œJOE:â€œ I'm still not over *Rule #3*.

Round 1, Pick 2: Tenessa

â€œTENESSA:â€œ And I pick **Melissa McCarthy**. BAM. She may or may not be the star in my movie, but she doesn't have to be. She will steal every scene.

Round 1, Pick 3: Jameson

â€œJAMESON:â€œ Then I'm taking **Gary Oldman** because you two are stupid enough to leave him to me. My movie will just be a YouTube clip of Oldman spitting on Matt LeBlanc on *Friends*. *Beat that, motherfuckers!!*

Round 1, Pick 4: Mike

â€œMIKE:â€œ **Brad Pitt**. BOOM! Why do you all keep leaving me the best movie stars? (I really wanted Clooney, so fuck Joe. I also thought McCarthy might drop to me on the rebound after Brandon's pick. And that's really all the planning I did. So, I was happy to get Pitt.)

â€œJOE:â€œ If you thought Clooney was going to be available at Pick #4 you should probably just log off; you're clearly not cut out for this sort of thing. (Though if it helps ease your pain at all, I did debate Clooney vs. Pitt for a few minutes. So, at least these numbskulls let Pick #1.5 fall to you.)

â€œMIKE:â€œ I just saw *The Descendants*, man he was so good.

â€œJAMESON:â€œ If by "he" you mean Gary Oldman, and by "was so good" you mean "is totally the best, you guys", then I agree.

â€œMIKE:â€œ I'm happy with Pitt. I can do comedy, action, Oscar, humpy hump humpersons.

JAMESON: By the way, shame on you for pirating *The*

Descendants, which is the only way you must've seen it since you "don't see movies in the theatre".

Round 1, Pick 5 and Round 2, Pick 6: Brandon

â€œBRANDON:â€œ With my back-to-back picks, how bout I take ohhhhh, I don't know... **Meryl Streep** and **Jonah Hill**?

â€œJAMESON:â€œ BOOM!

â€œMIKE:â€œ Lovers and mother/son!

â€œJOE:â€œ Fat Jonah Hill or skinny Jonah Hill?

â€œBRANDON:â€œ Both.

â€œJAMESON:â€œ Concentrically.

â€œTENESSA:â€œ He'll be like Adam Sandler in *Jack & Jill*.

â€œJOE:â€œ Holy shit... identical twins, one of whom is obese. I smell Oscars for all involved! And also cheese farts. But mostly Oscars for all involved.

Round 2, Pick 7: Mike

â€œMIKE:â€œ I am considering taking one of the four people I've never heard of...

â€œJAMESON:â€œ Wow, you only have four? I have like eight of those this year.

â€œTENESSA:â€œ I have nine.

â€œBRANDON:â€œ I've never heard of any of you.

â€œJOE:â€œ I have two. Boom. So I win, right? This whole thing? We can stop? Well, I mean, I'd seen Octavia Spencer in stuff (I'm sure we all have), but I didn't know her name...

â€œBRANDON:â€œ *Stuff* was awesome. And she was great in it.

â€œMIKE:â€œ But with Pitt... should I go Nolte as his grizzled Dad in *Man of Iron*? Or Glenn Close in *Immortal Love*? Or Viola Davis in... just kidding, she'll go last.

â€œJOE:â€œ Mike, I think we can assume that Nick Nolte will be somebody's grizzled something in whatever movie he ends up in.

â€œMIKE:â€œ I'm going with **Nick Nolte**. I think his chemistry with Pitt would be great, and I think I'll have no trouble getting Michelle Williams if I can't get the woman I really want (Natalie Merchant).

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â€”BRANDON:â€” Natalie Merchant was also great in *stuff*.

â€”TENESSA:â€” I seriously cannot even read Michelle Williams's name without thinking, "Yech, I'll take the crab juice." What about Rooney Mara?

â€”MIKE:â€” Wait. Rooney Mara's a woman? I assumed it was the love child of Andy Rooney and Wellington Mara, the late owner of the Giants.

â€”JOE:â€” You do know she's the granddaughter of the late owner of the Giants, yes? For reals?

â€”TENESSA:â€” Yes, Joe, we all know sports.

â€”MIKE:â€” So I could be right. Also, on a side note, I'm holding four separate Oscar draft chats now, but one is a keeper league.

â€”BRANDON:â€” In a keeper league, you want Christopher Plummer. Oh wait, no, he just died.

Round 2, Pick 8: Jameson

â€”JAMESON:â€” Just trying to decide. Wait or pounce. It's weird I actually have to rethink a few things now that Jonah Hill (*whom I hate*) is off the table...

â€”TENESSA:â€” I do not hate Jonah Hill. I think I could have found a use for him.

â€”MIKE:â€” I like him. Especially as a guest on Letterman.

â€”TENESSA:â€” I'm with Mike. He's the perfect guest.

â€”JOE:â€” Jonah Hill told a story on Conan about making Casey Affleck pee on himself that was easily one of the ten best stories anybody has ever told on a talk show.

â€”MIKE:â€” *Yes*. Close to Jay Thomas's "Lone Ranger" story.

â€”BRANDON:â€” My movie is Streep as Conan with Jonah Hill as his only guest ever. I'll take the title *Three Brothers*.

â€”JAMESON:â€” I'm seeing that. Opening night.

â€”MIKE:â€” If only Tilda Swinton had been nominated.

â€”JOE:â€” Bad luck not getting a Tilda Swinton year, if you're going to make a Conan movie. D'oh! Mike; you beat me to the Tilda Swinton punch! That's the 7th time this week!

â€”BRANDON:â€” The Tilda Swinton punch is delicious.

â€”MIKE:â€” Gmail is telling me "Jameson has entered text." Man, your wife just had a baby.

BRANDON: Mike wins.

â€”JAMESON:â€” I think I'm going to have to throw out my draft plan and take **Rooney Mara**. Can't risk leaving her around with two Joe picks coming up. Then again, my draft plan was hastily thrown together on a napkin eighteen minutes ago, so if it has to be ripped up I suppose I can live with that.

â€”JOE:â€” Well, there goes my draft plan. This was fun... see you guys next year. My entire thing was centered around a poster saying "Clooney." "Rooney." That's as far as I'd thought, but... I think we can all agree I would have won handily.

â€”TENESSA:â€” Joe's draft plan always equals "get all the hot chicks."

â€”MIKE:â€” I honestly didn't look at the list until 15 minutes before we started.

â€”BRANDON:â€” I still haven't looked at it. I pick River Phoenix!

MIKE: I pick Rain Phoenix!

â€”JAMESON:â€” I pick Miguel Sandoval!!!! I always pick Miguel Sandoval.

â€”MIKE:â€” Actually had to check to see if he was on the list. Mine has names I don't know like Berenice Bejo and Demian Bichir.

Round 2, Pick 9: Tenessa

â€”TENESSA:â€” I am picking **Viola Davis** – and that's a real name on the real list, guys.

â€”JAMESON:â€” *What?!?!?* Tenessa, she goes at #20, not #9! We're not even in double-digits yet!

â€”TENESSA:â€” We've still got Octavia.

â€”JAMESON:â€” Thanks a lot, Joe. Had to invite a girl.

â€”MIKE:â€” It's almost like Tenessa's not racist.

â€”JOE:â€” *Bridesmaids 2: Bridesmaids In Tha Hood*.

â€”TENESSA:â€” I am laughing so hard I'm afraid I'll wake the kids.

â€”MIKE:â€” Rachele is pretending to tolerate this.

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â€”JAMESON:â€” Rachele is a saint. My wife left me and took my kid. I'm typing this out of the back of a U-Haul.

â€”MIKE:â€” Probably because of you and Text.

â€”JOE:â€” Ha! I mean, Ha!

â€”BRANDON:â€” Are you numbering your laughs?

â€”JAMESON:â€” I think he's just giving it a laugh rating.

â€”BRANDON:â€” It takes David Niven to get a Ha10.

â€”MIKE:â€” Ha6.

JAMESON: Joe, I like how you're actually letting me believe my Mara pick hurt you. It's like the first time something I've done in this game has had any effect whatsoever.

â€”JOE:â€” Rooney Mara and Jessica Chastain were totally going to be Clooney's anorexic daughters. They were going to go into therapy... Octavia Spencer was going to be a wise black psychologist... it was gonna be a whole thing.

â€”MIKE:â€” Surely one of these other women could be Rooney Mara's character.

â€”JOE:â€” I don't know that anybody else is properly anorexic. We'll see. I'm looking over the board as we speak...

â€”BRANDON:â€” My board just has a picture of Peter MacNicol and a frowny face.

Round 2, Pick 10: Joe

â€”JOE:â€” All right. I'm throwing caution to the wind.
Demian Bechir.

â€”MIKE:â€” Who is that?

â€”TENESSA:â€” He's a kind of Indian yogurt.

â€”JOE:â€” I believe I alone among us watch *Weeds*, so I alone among us know how to properly deploy him.

â€”JAMESON:â€” Hey, I read the synopsis to *A Better Life*! I know plenty! (His truck gets stolen.)

â€”TENESSA:â€” I know that he started on a telenovela as a teenager.

â€”MIKE:â€” I know that he made love to me with his eyes.

â€”BRANDON:â€” I know that he made love TO my eyes.

â€”JOE:â€” I glanced at *A Better Life* on a plane, so... Also it

was directed by Chris Weitz, so, I can at least assume it's message is that America sucks and Christians are retards. Remember *American Dreamz*, guys? Somebody thought people would watch that!

JAMESON: I remember seeing it in the theatre.

â€”BRANDON:â€” More things should replace S with Z. Oops, thingz. Oops, oopz.

â€”JOE:â€” Yez, they zhould.

â€”MIKE:â€” Zex!

â€”TENESSA:â€” <http://www.zorbaz.com/>

â€”BRANDON:â€” Ad bot!

JAMESON: Ha!7!

Round 3, Pick 11: Joe

â€”MIKE:â€” Who will be Joe's second pick? My money is on a white person.

â€”JOE:â€” All right; I'm clearly going to have to re-tool my project from a tense, small-scale family drama to a story of international action an intrigue. What with the Clooney and the Demian Bechir. So... **Berenice Bejo.** Clearly.

â€”BRANDON:â€” I'm so glad Joe is taking the people I had no desire to take.

â€”JAMESON:â€” Yay! Now the rest of us don't have to worry about typing out names with accents.

â€”JOE:â€” Oooo, you guys... y'all are *introuble*. I was just scanning the titles list... I'm gonna go WWII spy thriller on your asses. I've got a hispanic guy who could be from anywhere in Europe, I've got Clooney, and I've got Berenice Bejo. I'm basically unstoppable. And since I have the first pick of titles, there's not much any of you can do about it. Except, you know, letting an actor I can't use fall to me at Pick #20. Which I'm sure you will do.

â€”JAMESON:â€” Michelle Williams will be great as Tokyo Rose.

â€”MIKE:â€” I thought she was good in *Brokeback Mountain*. I need to catch up on why you hate her so much, Jameson.

â€”JOE:â€” If I recall correctly, Mike, it's because she's a duck-faced whore.

â€”JAMESON:â€” Duck-Faced Whore! Also, watch her be in stuff.

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â€”BRANDON:â€” She was terrible in *Stuff*.

â€”MIKE:â€” Natalie Merchant carried *Stuff*.

â€”BRANDON:â€” And yet, they still had her executed.

Round 3, Pick 12: Tenessa

â€”TENESSA:â€” Okey dokey **Kenneth Branagh** is mine. I was pretty sure he and George Clooney were a recipe for box office poison, so I was pretty sure Joe would save him for me. There was always the chance that Joe the Racist would snatch up Viola Davis and Octavia Spencer to be George Clooney's slaves/assistants/prostitutes, so I had to save her from that fate.

â€”MIKE:â€” *Nooooooo!* Damn, I wanted to have a cast of people who'd nailed Emma Thompson. I guess Glenn Close is still available. Still thinking.

â€”JAMESON:â€” Uh oh, Mike is crying into a pillow made of Branagh's chest hair now.

â€”BRANDON:â€” Chest hair? Try lower.

â€”TENESSA:â€” Belly hair?

â€”JAMESON:â€” Toe hair?

â€”MIKE:â€” Ha10!

Round 3, Pick 13: Jameson

â€”JAMESON:â€” Well, color me elated because I was really afraid my #1 pick in this draft might get snatched up by now. But I felt like he *might* survive and I knew Rooney would be gone in a flash. So I'm taking **Jean Dujardin** and you are all going to be so sorry.

â€”TENESSA:â€” We'll only be sorry if we ever look at him, which we won't. *He's French*.

â€”BRANDON:â€” Nothing good has ever come out of France.

â€”JOE:â€” Ha sideways 8!

Round 3, Pick 14: Mike

â€”MIKE:â€” Man. I have Pitt and Nolte. I could go Chastain as Pitt's lover or sister or both. I could go Close as Nolte's ex. Plummer as Nolte's lover. I am stuck.

â€”JOE:â€” Just FYI, if Glenn Close falls to me she's playing a dude again.

â€”JAMESON:â€” If Glenn Close falls to me she's playing two dudes. And one of them is named "Text".

â€”TENESSA:â€” I know this is crazy, but Glenn Close is almost my last choice.

â€”MIKE:â€” I can't decide between Chastain and Michelle Williams. Jameson is spooking me to Chastain, but I'd love it if he had to write a good review of my movie with Williams. So, I will take **Michelle Williams** with the hopes that the night randomizer has Jameson giving me a good review.

â€”TENESSA:â€” I wrote a great movie with Michelle Williams last year. AGAINST ALL ODDS.

â€”JOE:â€” Just promise me that we'll get to watch Nolte go to town on her...

â€”JAMESON:â€” "Go to town" like oral? Or "go to town" like "beat the shit out of"?

JOE: However you want to take it...

â€”JAMESON:â€” I'd like to see first one, then the other.

â€”BRANDON:â€” I'd rather see Nolte go to town *with* her. Maybe do some shopping, get a light lunch.

â€”JOE:â€” They could make an afternoon of it!

Round 3, Pick 15 and Round 4, Pick 16: Brandon

â€”BRANDON:â€” Great. I have no idea what the hell I'm doing. I usually have a plan by now. I have no plan here. I'm cold and I'm frightened. And now I have to make my last two picks and seal my fate. I'm screwed.

â€”TENESSA:â€” Duuude, nothing is fucked here.

â€”JOE:â€” You're being very un-Dude...

â€”BRANDON:â€” Hmm... upon further review, new shit has come to light! **Jessica Chastain** and **Max von Sydow**. Now that I'm done picking, I'm going to take off this drafting girdle.

â€”JAMESON:â€” Ha9!

Round 4, Pick 17: Mike

â€”MIKE:â€” Pitt. Nolte. Williams. And...

â€”JAMESON:â€” Was that a pick, Mike? Did you pick "And"?

â€”JOE:â€” Mike's movie will feature a giant

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anthropomorphic ampersand.

â€ˆTENESSA:â€ˆ I would watch that.

â€ˆMIKE:â€ˆ A giant anthropomorphic ampersand who looks just like **Glenn Close**. Who is my pick. Sorry for the delay, I just kept looking at a picture of Berenice Bejo and was getting distracted. Her hand is Alberting my Nobbs.

â€ˆJAMESON:â€ˆ Ha8, Shame147.

â€ˆJOE:â€ˆ Hands off Wagner, she's mine!

â€ˆBRANDON:â€ˆ Wagner's a girl?

â€ˆJOE:â€ˆ Hands off, Wagner! She (being Berenice Bejo) is mine!

â€ˆMIKE:â€ˆ *Sigh...* [wistful glance at Bejo].

â€ˆBRANDON:â€ˆ I remember when I used to get that wistful glance.

â€ˆMIKE:â€ˆ Now you get a sigh and a 30-second Albert Nobb.

â€ˆBRANDON:â€ˆ Ha109294934!

Round 4, Pick 18: Jameson

â€ˆJAMESON:â€ˆ So, if I'm correct, we have the following remaining: Janet McTeer, Christopher Plummer, Octavia Spencer?

â€ˆBRANDON:â€ˆ I smell *aThree's Company* remake!

â€ˆJAMESON:â€ˆ I still smell Nick Nolte. Seriously, is there a way to wash that out?

â€ˆTENESSA:â€ˆ Nope. You just have to rub Vick's Vapo-Rub under your nose.

â€ˆMIKE:â€ˆ Bleach, dog food, and a melted DVD of *Yentl*.

â€ˆBRANDON:â€ˆ Horse liniment and a picture of Ted McGinley.

â€ˆJAMESON:â€ˆ What is "Things I would rather have sex with than Michelle Williams?" Also, I pick Kelsey Grammer.

â€ˆBRANDON:â€ˆ To have sex with?

â€ˆJAMESON:â€ˆ To go steady. We'll see where things go...

â€ˆBRANDON:â€ˆ He likes to receive a steady stream of

Albert Nobbs.

â€ˆJOE:â€ˆ Oh, just cockblock my one remaining performer that could salvage my Oscar draft and move on, will you?

â€ˆJAMESON:â€ˆ Yeah, but I'm not 100% sure *need* Christopher Plummer. I'm trying to decide between him and the black lady (as in, the only other person I've heard of).

â€ˆTENESSA:â€ˆ Joe, I think I can safely say that there's a 100% chance of you getting Janet McTeer. You can log off now.

â€ˆJAMESON:â€ˆ I've been logging off to Janet McTeer since I was 15.

â€ˆBRANDON:â€ˆ Ha15!

â€ˆMIKE:â€ˆ I've been dropping logs in to Janet McTeer's mouth to help her get into character since 1987.

â€ˆTENESSA:â€ˆ Huh. That explains her face.

â€ˆMIKE:â€ˆ Ha-squared!

â€ˆBRANDON:â€ˆ Tenessa wins.

â€ˆJAMESON:â€ˆ All right, I'm taking **Octavia Spencer**. It's no fun playing just to block someone (as I learned the hard way in the **TV draft**). And this way I can do some extremely offensive slavery material.

Round 4, Pick 19: Tenessa

â€ˆTENESSA:â€ˆ Enjoy Janet, Joe. I'll take good care of **Christopher Plummer**.

Round 4, Pick 20: Joe

â€ˆJOE:â€ˆ **Janet McTeer**. Oh, how will I ever make a WWII movie with an American guy, a swarthy brown guy, a French chick, and a British chick? I'm screwed now! #sarcastic

â€ˆJAMESON:â€ˆ Uh, that French chick is from Buenos Aires. *Did nobody read the cheat sheet??*

â€ˆBRANDON:â€ˆ I had sex with the cheat sheet.

â€ˆJOE:â€ˆ I'll be fine.

â€ˆMIKE:â€ˆ Hey, who does everyone have? I have Brad Pitt, Nick Nolte, Michelle Williams, and Glenn Close.

â€ˆTENESSA:â€ˆ Melissa McCarthy, Viola Davis, Kenneth Branagh, and Christopher Plummer.

â€ˆBRANDON:â€ˆ I have Meryl Streep, Jonah Hill, Jessica Chastain, Max von Sydow, and feline AIDS.

â€ˆJAMESON:â€ˆ I have Gary Oldman, Rooney Mara, Jean Dujardin, Octavia Spencer, and a six-year-old Charleston Chew.

Title Round, Pick 1: Joe

â€ˆJOE:â€ˆ Once Jameson took Rooney Mara – and with her a little piece of my soul – I almost lost hope... but then I checked out our title list and noticed *The Village on the River*. Where is that village? What is its significance? The entire fate of the Allied powers could hinge on one single meeting, if only... you get the idea. George Clooney, Demian Bechir, Berenice Bejo and Janet McTeer in *The Village On the River*.

â€ˆJAMESON:â€ˆ Earn This. 2013.

Title Round, Pick 2: Tenessa

â€ˆTENESSA:â€ˆ I'm not giving away the plot of my movie, primarily because I have no idea what it will be, exactly. But I suppose I still have to pick a title.

â€ˆBRANDON:â€ˆ Why let something like no idea stop you from picking a title?

â€ˆTENESSA:â€ˆ Oh, I won't.

â€ˆJAMESON:â€ˆ Pick *Pharaoh*. It's completely versatile. You can go in any direction. It's a last name. It's the name of a top secret government project. It's an actual pharaoh.

â€ˆJOE:â€ˆ Viola Davis is...*Saturday Night Live* featured player Jay Pharaoh...

â€ˆBRANDON:â€ˆ I want Joe's idea NOW.

â€ˆTENESSA:â€ˆ I pick *Confidence*. I'm doing a biopic about Don Cornelius. *Black women can play dudes too, you guys*.

Title Round, Pick 3: Jameson

â€ˆJAMESON:â€ˆ I really want to take *The Pedestrian* and make it about Dujardin vowing to walk around the world for charity and Oldman, as his older brother, having to pretend to support him while knowing it's completely impossible. Or take *Muddy River* and just have it be a naked shot-for-shot remake of *Erin Brockovich*. Instead, I'll take *The New Land* – it's the only one I made a plan for. Even though that plan originally had Melissa McCarthy or Jonah Hill or Nick Nolte, and you guys fucked me.

Title Round, Pick 4: Mike

â€ˆMIKE:â€ˆ I'd like to take *Three Brothers* and make Williams the third brother. But I think I am going to go with *Man of Iron*. Is it Nolte and his grizzled man of ironness or is it Pitt who is iron on the inside? Or is it Close, who inexplicably plays Albert Nobbs? I'm taking *Man of Iron*.

Title Round, Pick 5: Brandon

â€ˆBRANDON:â€ˆ I'm taking *Private Life*. It will feature a character desiring a more private life.

â€ˆJOE:â€ˆ Just so you guys know, I'm going to do some actual WWII research and totally *Coeur d'Alene* your asses.

â€ˆJAMESON:â€ˆ You say that now, but then you'll get distracted by MILFs and half-ass it.

â€ˆBRANDON:â€ˆ I'm changing my title to *Distracted by MILFs*.

â€ˆTENESSA:â€ˆ I'm changing mine to *Distracting MILF*.

â€ˆBRANDON:â€ˆ Then I'm changing mine to *ALF/MILF*.

JAMESON: I'm envisioning a gripping talker in the style of *Frost/Nixon*, and I CANNOT GET ENOUGH OF IT.

Two weeks pass...

Now here are the five movies that resulted from this year's draft. Fake reviews of these films will be forthcoming next week. (And, who knows, after that maybe there will be Kickstarter projects to get these films made, and they'll be up for an Oscar next year!) *Confidence Starring Melissa McCarthy, Viola Davis, Kenneth Branagh, and Christopher Plummer*

Stephen Spencer (Kenneth Branagh) made quite a sensation when his motivational talk show, *You Can and You Will*, first hit the U.S. Unlike the tough love of Dr. Phil or the easygoing banter of Ellen Degeneres, his daytime appeal was rooted in something simpler: unwavering public affirmation for the losers of the world. He helped meth addicts set career goals while they were high. He asked pregnant teenagers about their political beliefs. At the buffet in a strip club on a Tuesday morning, he interviewed men about what they wanted from a relationship. No matter how unsavory each topic he addressed, the compassion and hope dripping from his British accent made the full-time couch dwellers in his audience melt.

That was twelve years ago.

His empire crumbled around him as he was drawn up on

drug charges, caught in an affair with one of the show's interns, and summarily divorced by his wife. Stephen soon faded from the public eye and retreated into anonymity.

Fast forward to 2012, and we see Stephen – now with a full beard – walking down the empty hallway of a run-down high school, apparently after hours. He enters a science classroom to find three adults perched on stools near black counters littered with goggles and Bunsen burners. He greets his new students, walks to the white board, and writes, "Dr. Stephen Craig: Self-Esteem and Optimism."

His pupils introduce themselves. Leonard Campbell (Christopher Plummer) is a retired bookstore owner who recently lost his wife and his home in a devastating fire. He's been living in a crappy apartment and drinking heavily ever since. Loretta Michaels (Viola Davis) works as a custodian in the building. She just happened to notice the adult education pamphlet in the staff lounge earlier today and thought she'd stick around to check it out. Stephen, showing a bit of desperation, turns and prompts the last student, "What's your story, dear?"

Staring down at her notebook, she (Melissa McCarthy) whispers, "I'm Kelly Blythe. I'm a legal assistant. I don't like myself very much."

As it turns out, that's a load of crap.

"Dr." Stephen "Craig" isn't the only one using an alias in this class. Kelly "Blythe" is actually Kelly Morrison, the then-green journalist who originally broke the story when Stephen's drug problem went public. They never met, but she single-handedly destroyed his career. She has spent years tracking him down. She's writing an unauthorized biography, and this is her chance to expose him as the hollow, manipulative joke he is.

But is he? Kelly's research reveals that Stephen Spencer's birth name is . . . Stephen Craig, who received a legitimate doctorate in positive psychology in 2008. Trying to get a handle on all of this, she divulges her work to Loretta. Unimpressed, Loretta questions, "What's the problem? The guy is teaching a class, and you're taking the class. I don't understand what it is it, exactly, that you want from him."

Is Stephen really trying to make a new life for himself? Can they trust him? Why is he in this dump? With Kelly's deadline fast approaching – and with Leonard making at least one sincere suicide attempt – there's not much time to unravel the true story. *Man of Iron Starring Brad Pitt, Nick Nolte, Michelle Williams, and Glenn Close*

(loosely based on the 1980 Polish film of the same name. Seriously.)

NBS News may bill Mack Dimmick (a slightly paunchy, graying at the temples, Pitt) as "the anchor who never

stopped being a reporter" in their promos, but that doesn't stop his acerbic executive producer Alicia Woodard (a stylish Close) from wryly noting, "he must've been a shitty reporter."

NBS was at the top of the ratings book for years, but they have slipped into second and are falling fast - just as contract time has come for Dimmick. He doesn't have the fire anymore. You'd think he was phoning it in, until he quotes a Shakespearean sonnet from memory after a poignant feature with a cancer survivor or when he cites an obscure sociology article when grilling the Secretary of Education in a live interview. While those moments are more muscle-memory than a man presently dedicated to his craft, Woodard sees them and wants more of them. NBS is in trouble and Woodard knows it. Without an engaged Dimmick, third place...and a pink slip...are next.

At the morning pitch meeting, Woodard opens a letter from a young woman named MaryBeth Jameson-Martin (Williams, who narrates the letter) asking NBS to investigate her father, Simmons (we see a picture of a grizzled Nolte and cut to Simmons in an orange jumpsuit giving hell to the cafeteria workers and prison guards), who is in a maximum security federal prison in Arizona.

Dimmick perks up. "Simmons Jameson! The "bad boy genius architect who built the Ford Foundation Towers and the Balzabao Museum?" An intern says, "you mean the museum that collapsed and killed all those kids?"

Yup. *That* Simmons Jameson. After the Balzabao collapsed, Jameson was sued by a group of parents for taking unnecessary risks with peculiar angles for weight-bearing walls made of heavy iron. He pled guilty, did not defend himself and was sentenced to life in prison. MaryBeth Jameson-Martin says she thinks her dad is hiding something...something that proves his innocence.

Woodard sees the story as a fool's errand about an extraordinarily unpopular figure, but Dimmick is out the door and on a plane before she can stop him. "Maybe he is a reporter," Woodard demures before dressing down an intern over not knowing that Jameson-Martin is a city councilwoman with eyes on the U.S. Senate. Why is she calling attention to her disgraced father?

Even the most hardened of criminals recognize Dimmick at the federal prison, but Simmons Jameson does not want to talk about the Balzabao collapse. Dimmick draws him out, bonding over their love of Shakespeare, fine wine, and...hilariously...having both nailed Debra Winger (*before* she made *An Officer and a Gentleman*). Dimmick knows it is a matter of time before he gets what he wants from Jameson.

What really happened at the Balzabao? Will Woodard figure out why MaryBeth is seeking to clear his name now? Will

Dimmick chose to save his career and eviscerate Simmons for ratings purposes or will he tell the shocking truth about what Simmons Jameson is hiding and who he is protecting? *The New Land Starring Gary Oldman, Jean Dujardin, Rooney Mara, and Octavia Spencer*

Evan Mercater and his niece Nikki (Gary Oldman and Rooney Mara, respectively) are celebrating on an ocean cruise. He's just retired from 30 devoted years as a substitute teacher, but he's looking forward to having more time to dedicate to his other passions: he builds ships in bottles, and he's a 24-hour news junkie and armchair philosopher. Nikki has graduated high school and is mulling an major in digital media, though Evan is imploring her to study anthropology or something he feels is more relevant. They are walking the deck of the cruise ship when they are literally knocked over by Alain Leduc (Jean Dujardin), galloping past in fight-or-flight mode. He's the ship's head chef, a meticulously focused culinary artist, who has just been fired for holding up the delivery of 3,500 cremes brulees to an already restless buffet line. When the cruise's Hospitality Director physically restrained him from adding his painstaking finishing flourishes to each dessert, Leduc quit on the spot and threw a tureen of boiling cheese in his face. Now he's on the run from security, and slams into Evan and Nikki without even seeing them.

The resulting pileup is immediately impacted by Coretta Parks (Octavia Spencer), who's running from the opposite direction while screaming at the top of her lungs. She's the CEO of the world's largest industrial equipment supplier, and she's treating herself to a luxury cruise to celebrate her divorce from an abusive husband whom she supported through medical school, only to see him drop out and peddle He-Man comics on eBay. She's opening a new chapter in her life, but her soon-to-be ex-husband has made his way onto the ship and is on the warpath, causing her to flee for her life. All four of them tussle and try in vain to extricate themselves, but before they know it they've landed in a nearby lifeboat and flipped over the rail. Their vessel falls 60 feet to the water below, rendering all four unconscious on impact. Due to a thick fog, this goes undetected by the ship's personnel, so the ship motors away as their lifeboat drifts idly.

When they come to, it's morning, and the horizon is ocean in all directions. They drift for days, assigning blame, undergoing power struggles, and dividing amongst themselves in every possible permutation, all the while going insane from starvation, heatstroke, and drinking seawater (which they'd know to avoid, if not for the incapacitating starvation and heatstroke). At last they wash up on an island just large enough that its shoreline reaches the horizon in both directions. It is completely uninhabited, but they are convinced in their delirium that it is the American mainland. Evan and Coretta recall a big rock they noticed just before landfall, which they decide must have been Plymouth Rock. Nikki remembers passing through a pink fog the night

before, and soon the delusional castaways are certain that the fog has transported them back in time to the 17th century, where they have arrived just ahead of the Mayflower.

They are convinced that it's now up to them to establish the American colony, and Evan is particularly concerned about recreating as much of American history as possible (reenacting events and transcribing important documents like the Declaration of Independence from memory), in a mad dash to prevent a "butterfly effect" where minor changes in the past might create major upheaval in the present. To this end, he insists that Coretta become a slave in his home, doing housework, cooking, and gardening in exchange for room and board. He is also holding classes in science, geography, and civics, in hopes of populating the new land with enlightened and rational people who will bring forth the important democratic republic that he knows the continent is destined for. (In the meantime, he also sees an opportunity to pre-emptively eradicate various social customs, fashion trends, or turns of phrase that bothered him - for example, when people say "dot-org" instead of "dot O-R-G".) Meanwhile, basic survival skills are lacking from the curriculum, and the settlement is failing to thrive. Nikki hasn't been disconnected from the Internet for more than five consecutive hours since she could walk, and has trouble believing the whole experience is real. She eats some berries and falls ill.

In the meantime, Alain has become romantically obsessed with Coretta, and sets about trying to break her free from her bondage, setting up an ersatz Underground Railroad to his section of the settlement. Alain and Coretta use the distraction of Nikki's illness to escape, and run all the way to the opposite side of the island, whereupon it becomes instantly clear that they are not in colonial Massachusetts. When Evan catches up to them, they explain this to him, but he's mad with power and refuses to accept it. He sentences them to death, but Alain makes a stand, brandishing a shrimp fork he's had with him since the cruise ship. How will the standoff be resolved? Does the fate of New America hang in the balance? Find out this summer in a theatre near you! *A Private Life Starring Jonah Hill, Meryl Streep, Jessica Chastain, and Max von Sydow*

Kevin (Jonah Hill) recently lost his job and had to move back in with his widowed mother, Sandra (Meryl Streep). He's a bit of a schlub, but a sweet, good-hearted guy. His mother, on the other hand, is overbearing and intrusive (she eavesdrops on his phone calls, replies to all of his posts on Facebook, and constantly gives him unsolicited advice), and Kevin is eager to get back on his feet financially so he can move out.

That's especially true after he gets to know Lisa (Jessica Chastain), a cute and vivacious girl he meets in a local coffee shop. They both live in the neighborhood, but what they really bond over is the fact that they're both currently forced to live – unhappily – with family. Lisa is unemployed too,

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and lives with her cold, authoritarian grandfather Carl (Max von Sydow), who likes to brag, among other things, that he ended World War II because he was responsible for the last documented casualty prior to the Japanese surrender. Kevin and Lisa begin dating, but their frustration only grows, as they can never get any privacy – Sandra is always in their way, sometimes literally getting between them when they sit on the couch, and Carl intimidates Kevin, both physically (he stands 6-foot-4 to Kevin's 5-foot-7) and psychologically, telling stories of a Kevin he knew in the war who tried and failed to kill himself with a grenade 23 different times.

So finally, Kevin and Lisa hatch a plan: if they can't change their living situations, maybe they can at least gain some freedom by hitching up Sandra and Carl. They convince the two to go out on a date, figuring it might be a disaster, but are stunned when Sandra and Carl REALLY hit it off. Their relationship becomes instantly intimate, and suddenly Kevin and Lisa have a new problem – they can't seem to stop seeing and hearing the comically over-the-top public displays of affection between the new couple. Lisa overhears them having loud sex in her house, and Kevin has an awkward and uncomfortably long conversation with a naked Carl in the kitchen of his house one night. ("Your mother has the meaty haunches of a Soviet.") Kevin and Lisa have a new goal: undo their horrible mistake.

Kevin agrees to talk to Carl. He explains that Carl's relationship with his mother is making things awkward for him and Lisa; Carl responds by saying he plans to ask Sandra to marry him. Out of competitiveness and desperation, Kevin claims that he wants to marry Lisa, and points out that it would be weird if both couples got married. Carl proposes they settle the matter with a winner-takes-all game of chess (the scene becomes sly allusion to von Sydow's role in *The Seventh Seal*), but when Kevin wins, Carl sweeps away the board in anger and starts choking him. Sandra swoops in at the last minute to break it up, slap Carl, and tell him she never wants to see him again.

Kevin and Lisa decide to stop seeing each other so they can focus on fixing their career and living situations. Six months later, they bump into each other at the same coffee shop and learn that they both have new jobs and their own apartments. They reconnect, excitedly return to Kevin's place, and begin making out on the couch. The camera pans over to a vase, and zooms in to reveal a tiny little built-in camera. We cut to Sandra in her house, watching them on her computer. She rolls her eyes and shakes her head. "He'll never bring her to orgasm *that way*." *The Village on the River Starring George Clooney, Demian Bichir, Berenice Bejo and Janet McTeer*

[I took massive historical and geographical liberties. Live with it.]

Roy Campbell (Clooney) and Costas Karamanis (Bichir), both late 40s, meet up at the historic Ponte di Tiberio bridge in Rimini, Italy in 1964. A handshake. A hug. As they drive

the mile or so out to Casalecchio, a village on the Maracchia River, the scenery remains the same but the scene changes. Loud. Hectic. Mortar fire, gunshots...

1944 - Battle of Rimini. Roy's 1st Canadian Division and Costas's Greek Mountain Brigade are under Nazi fire. Costas, an excellent shot, takes out a Nazi who has a bead on Roy, saving his life. Sure, Costas is a little drunk. He says he shoots best that way.

1964 - They arrive at a small inn in Casalecchio. Roy's wife Claire (McTeer) is there. She's confined to a wheelchair. Checking in, Costas is attracted to Rosalia (Bejo), mid-30s, who runs the place. As they head to their rooms, Rosalia vomits into the waste bin next to her desk. (wtf, right?)

1944 - Fighting has died down. Roy is a high-ranking officer and Costas is more of a grunt, but they quickly become best friends as they await orders.

1964 - Digging around a spare closet, Claire finds a diary, untouched for years. It's Rosalia's. Roy thinks she shouldn't read it, but Claire, writer of popular young-adult fiction, likes Rosalia's story: teen girl, lonely wartime orphan, struggling to maintain her home while the Allies and the Nazis fight over her homeland...

1944 - Roy opens a letter from Claire. Her letters are incredible, he tells Costas; she should be a writer. This one, however, concerns an accident at the munitions factory in Ontario where Claire was working. She's recovering... but it was bad. She'll never walk again. Costas helps Roy grieve by getting both of them blind drunk.

1964 - Costas and Roy go out hunting and discover that Roy's the better shot now. Costas says that's only because he quit drinking after the Battle of Rimini.

1944 - A hungover Roy is roused by a commander. It's time. "Have the Greeks take the airfield, we'll push on toward Rimini."

1964 - At dinner, Rosalia and Costas seem to be developing a connection.

1944 - Costas is still drunk. Feeling indebted, Roy sends Costas's unit into Casalecchio, near the airfield, to clear the houses and the church, a relatively easy task. He sends the other Greek units to the airfield where they are certain to suffer heavy casualties.

1964 - "Rosalia's meeting me at the bridge tonight," Costas tells Roy. Meanwhile, Claire comes across a passage in the diary and her face turns ghostly white...

1944 - Casalecchio, dusk. Costas, drunk, finds some more wine. He storms into a house. A girl looks up, startled. "Who are you?"

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1964 - Claire tells Roy what she read in the diary: Rosalia was raped by a Greek soldier during the Battle of Rimini. His name was Costas. She sat there all night with him passed out in front of the door, too terrified to try to slip by him, to try to grab his weapon, to do anything. But she's going to find him someday, and when she does...

...Rosalia and Costas walk on the Ponte di Tiberio in the Rimini night. Very romantic. "You don't remember me," Rosalia says. Costas says he doesn't remember a lot from before he quit drinking and moved to Australia after the war. "That explains why I couldn't find you," Rosalia says.

1944 - Costas sleeps in front of a door, gun in hand. He wakes up and staggers out into the street. Against the wall in the bedroom, covered by a thin sheet, sits the scared young girl... who looks distressingly like a 14-year-old Rosalia.

1964 - Rosalia has a gun. "Do you know about this bridge?," she asks. Costas doesn't. It was built by the Romans two thousand years ago, she says, and it's still in use. The retreating Nazis tried to blow every bridge in Rimini but this one remains, strong as ever. The war nearly destroyed it, Rosalia says... but it simply wouldn't be destroyed.

Costas pleads with her: he's clean. He's turned his life around. Unsurprisingly, Rosalia doesn't care.

Roy arrives at the edge of the bridge with his hunting rifle. Rosalia tells him not to get any closer. Costas begs him to take her out, like Costas took out that Nazi for him twenty years ago.

"It it true?" Roy asks Costas. Costas doesn't quite remember... but yes, he says. It must be.

1944 - Roy and Costas on the bridge. They agree that no matter what, they'll reunite here 20 years from today.

1964 - Roy turns, and starts walking away. Costas calls out for him. Roy keeps walking... and we hear a gunshot.

THE END
