



**2/3 2 THE BEST OF ME DRAMA**

\$27 MILL BO 2126 SCREENS PG-13 118 MINUTES

**James Marsden (WALK OF SHAME, X MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST, 2 GUNS, HOP)**

**Michelle Monaghan (TV—TRUE DETECTIVE, FILM—BETTER LIVING THROUGH CHEMISTRY, DUE DATE, THE HEARTBREAK KID)**

Our tale begins with hunky hero Dawson Cole (Marsden) surviving an oil rig explosion. Within moments, he learns that his old friend Tuck Hostetler (Gerald McRaney) has just died. Returning to his small town bayou burg for the first time in nearly 21 years, he confronts a problematic past including his own family's local notoriety and his old high school flame, Amanda Collier (Michelle Monaghan). Of course, she's married, with an angry alcoholic A-type jerk husband and a

sainted son in tow. As luck would have it, Tuck leaves them both his cozy cabin, with hopes that they can rekindle their previous romance.

"I'm just a roughneck that got lucky," unassuming oil-rig worker Dawson Cole (James Marsden) tells his co-workers at the beginning of the film, though he's immediately shown using his midnight lunch break to page through one of Stephen Hawking's books. (Smart, humble, and ruggedly not afraid of a little grease! Are your loins stirring yet?) His luck holds out even after the rig explodes into flames, flinging him out into the ocean, where he's rescued after somehow having been underwater for four hours. As he's still recovering, he receives a phone call from the executor of Tuck Hostetler's (Gerald McRaney) estate, who summons him to help scatter the recently passed old coot's ashes. Meanwhile, married upper-class mother Amanda Collier (Michelle Monaghan) is receiving the same call, and manages to inform her scoffing husband between his profuse tee times that she intends to make the trip out ("I'm sorry. Next time someone I love dies, I'll make sure it works with your schedule").



Why has Dawson be away so long? Cue mandatory flashback to a time when both he (Luke Bracey) and she (Liana Liberato) were in high school. Amanda's family are well off. Dawson's, on the other hand, is a bunch of backwater redneck outlaws. His dad (Sean Bridgers) is particularly abusive, beating his introverted son on a regular basis. As Amanda pulls him out of his shell, Tuck provides the oasis for their across the tracks trysts. Just when it looks like things will be going their way, Dawson is involved in an "incident" which forces him to go away for a while.

This will rent as well as **THE NOTEBOOK, BEFORE MIDNIGHT, THIS IS WHERE I LEAVE YOU, THE GIVER, WHAT IF, THE FACE OF LOVE** and **ENDLESS LOVE**.



2/3 **3** **DEAR WHITE PEOPLE** COMEDY  
\$6 MILL BO 657 SCREENS R 108 MINUTES

**Tyler James Williams (TV—THE WALKING DEAD, EVERYBODY HATES CHRIS, THE CLEANER)**  
**Tessa Thompson (TV—RIZZOLI AND ISLES, 666 PARK AVENUE, COPPER—FILM—MURDER ON THE 13<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, SOUTH DAKOTA, FOR COLORED GIRLS)**  
**Dennis Haysbert (TV—24, THE UNIT—FILM—THE DETAILS, SIN CITY, JARHEAD)**

"Racism is over in America," says Winchester University's white president (Peter Syvertsen) to its black dean (Haysbert). "The only people thinking about it are Mexicans, probably." This might be the only completely untruthful and wholly ignorant statement made in Justin Simien's debut feature *Dear White People*, which seems far too true-to-life to be called a satire, even though it's billed as such. Of course, the movie, which unfolds almost entirely within its fictional campus setting, is contrived in ways to support its microcosmic, pseudo-satirical vibe.

The long-acquainted president and dean, for instance, conveniently reflect racial power struggles that spill over into the lives of their respective sons, rebellious Kurt (Kyle Gallner) and upright Troy (Brandon P. Bell), campus hotshots defined by their aspirations to adopt each other's racial norms. But even the film's most extreme line deliveries are electrified with kernels of un-ironic truth. To Sam (Tessa Thompson), the militant black DJ who hosts the hot-button show that gives the film its title, the president scolds, "I think you long for the days when blacks were hanging from trees so you'd have something to complain about," before dubbing her the school's most intolerant figure. Sam, meanwhile, in a reactionary radio broadcast, remarks, "People who say 'African-American' are only too scared to say 'black,' because they actually want to say 'nigger.'"



*This movie* doesn't aim to condemn the fools who believe racism in America has ended, but rather open a vast discussion of how the subject of race—and merely identity—in our country has evolved. Bookended by a news-making frat party with a whites-in-blackface theme, and propelled by a narrative concerning Sam's assault against the school's "randomization of housing" (the only all-black residence hall, Parker/Armstrong, is on the verge of being diversified), the movie feels monumentally topical. It arrives in the wake of Miley Cyrus coming under attack for appropriating twerking and grills, and Spike Lee netting headlines for a stubborn rant against gentrification, claiming, in so many words, that he'd rather not have his childhood neighborhoods multi-colored. Are the Mileys of the world disrespecting a culture and community by robbing their trends for personal gain, or honoring them by expressing an unyielding desire to emulate those trends? Do people like Lee have a perfectly viable distaste for the "white overhaul" of things like historically black locales, or do they counter-productively stand in the way of intermixed racial progress? These are the sort of double-edged, open-to-interpretation questions Simien seems zealously driven to ask, and best of all, he never presumes to have the answers to any of them.

Like the movie itself, every character is a beautiful swirl of contradictions. When Sam isn't hosting her show, making shorts like *Rebirth of a Nation* (a post-Obama repurposing of minstrelsy), or literally writing the book on how to sustain one's blackness at a white-dominated Ivy League school, she's bedding Gabe (Justin Dobies), a white TA. When Troy isn't condoning the multi-racial proposals for Parker/Armstrong, and walking arm-in-arm with his girlfriend, Kurt's lily-white sister, Sophie (Brittany Curran), he's hiding out in his bathroom smoking pot, a substance Simien frequently uses as the ultimate

signifier of black stereotypes. Colandrea (Teyonah Parris), or Coco for short, rebels against her race, only dating white guys and perpetually straightening her hair, while, at night, dissing white girls on her YouTube channel as part of her goal to achieve celebrity. And Lionel (Tyler James Williams), an all-seeing misfit who, after constant residence relocation, has become the punching bag of Kurt's frat house, is so afraid of fellow blacks that he won't let any of them cut his monstrous fro. Though clearly queer, Lionel responds to the dean's inquiry about his sexuality with, "I don't like labels." To which the dean replies, "You've got no categorization—that's your problem." Even here, neither man is wrong, and *Dear White People* revels in the notion that, in our society, labels are as much a necessity as they are a toxin.

This will do as well as **STEP UP ALL IN, LET'S BE COPS, THE CAME TOGETHER, A HAUNTED HOUSE 2, ABOUT LAST NIGHT** and **RIDE ALONG**.



**2/3 1 DRACULA UNTOLD SCI/FI**  
**\$57 MILL BO 2498 SCREENS PG-13 92 MINUTES**

**Luke Evans (FAST AND FURIOUS 6, IMMORTALS, THE HOBBIT: DESOLATION OF SMAUG, CLASH OF THE TITANS)**

**Dominic Cooper (NEED FOR SPEED, REASONABLE DOUBT, AN EDUCATION, THE DEVIL'S DOUBLE)**

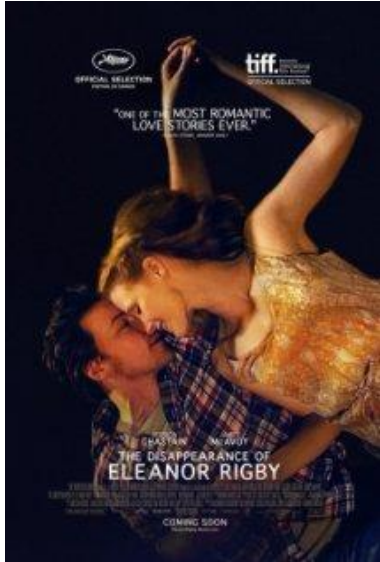
The film, set in the 15th century, also takes the real-life Vlad the Impaler as its inspiration for Dracula, but it reimagines the psychopathic butcher of tens of thousands as a noble ruler, played by Luke Evans, driven to self-sacrifice when the menacing Mehmed (Dominic Cooper), head of the Ottoman empire, demands 1,000 Transylvanian boys, including Vlad's own son (Art Parkinson), as recruits for his child-slave army.

A former child slave himself, Vlad broods over this predicament, attempts to "negotiate" with his Turkish terrorizer in a gesture of Obama-like reconciliation, broods again, then obligatorily strikes a Faustian bargain with a master vampire (Charles Dance) who resides in a nearby bat cave. Granted superhuman strength to slay his enemies, Vlad will revert to his human form only if he can resist sucking blood, a crisis of consciousness that, as delivered by first-time director Gary Shore, plays out across a series of mushy heart to hearts—and eyes to neck—with his wife, Mirena (Sarah Gadon), and incomprehensible battle sequences that, in their predetermined sense of momentum, suggest video-game cutscenes.

It isn't the desire for power or infamy, but the tragedy of familial loss, that pushes Vlad toward closing the master vampire's deal in the manner he hadn't originally planned.. It is, though, worth mentioning the subtle, if dully solemn, thematic resonance of a shot of three wise monkeys lying on a table in one scene, as Vlad's transformation into Dracula is a rebuke to the more popular understanding of the pictorial maxim as a representation of a person's willful ignorance.

Fans of **DAWN OF THE PLANET OF THE APES, THE EQUALIZER, 22 JUMP STREET, DELIVER US FROM EVIL, X MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST** and **GODZILLA** will all love renting this one.





## 2/3 3 THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ELEANOR

**RIGBY** DRAMA

\$1 MILL BO 239 SCREENS R 123 MINUTES

**James McAvoy (X MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST, TRANCE, WELCOME TO THE PUNCH, THE LAST STATION)**

**Jessica Chastain (MAMA, ZERO DARK THIRTY, THE TREE OF LIFE, THE HELP, TAKE SHELTER)**

**Viola Davis (ENDER'S GAME, PRISONERS, WON'T BACK DOWN, THE HELP, DOUBT)**

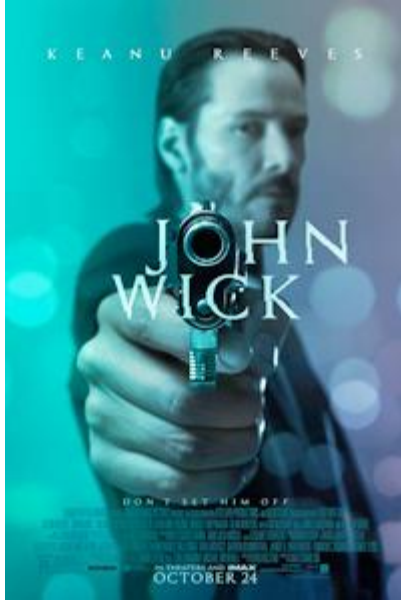
Ned Benson's **The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby** is a unique thing, especially for a debut feature director. Originally designed as two movies, titled "Him" and "Her", both telling the same narrative from differing perspectives, the decision was made to appease audiences with a more neutral version titled "Them". The other two will be in theaters next month but "Them" is out now, and Benson's inexperience shows in tackling such a complicated narrative, but a pair of truly great performances save the day.

The film chronicles the crumbling of the marriage between New York couple Eleanor Rigby (a Chastain) and Connor ( McAvoy), when once it had been gloriously happy. When we first meet them it's at one of those high points, the two showing their playful side during a mischievous dinner date. "There's only one heart in this chest. Please be gentle with me.", he says to her early on. Nothing remotely gentle awaits him or the audience, however. The very next scene is a dazed and distraught Eleanor attempting to end her life on the Brooklyn Bridge. How such a loving couple could reach such a horrible low is a mystery that Benson keeps at arm's length and tucked inside solemn conversations. There's been a tragedy; one that left her depressed and him unable to cope with the hopelessness. When two people grieve differently it can drive a wedge between them worse than the tragedy itself.



Recovering after the suicide attempt, Eleanor shacks up with her family, leaving Connor without a clue as to what happened. Her father (William Hurt) is a college professor and psychologist, always speaking in well-meaning if clunky platitudes like "Tragedy is a foreign country. We don't know how to speak to the natives." Yeah, okay. Her mother (the great Isabelle Huppert) always has a glass of wine at the ready, and Eleanor's sister (Jess Weixler) needs a date. Poor Connor is left to manage his failing restaurant with chef pal Stuart (Bill Hader), while trying not to ask his successful father (Ciaran Hinds) for help. Eleanor and Connor move on without the other but find it hard to redefine themselves as single people. She heads back to school and strikes up a friendship with her abrasive professor (Viola Davis) who, in stark contrast to Eleanor, has abandoned all maternal instincts. Connor is stuck in emotional limbo; wanting to reconnect with Eleanor but finding it impossible to do so. He goes to some pretty extreme lengths to get her attention but it works, for better or worse.

A film that may not be for everybody but will rent as well as **STILL MINE, THE SKELETON TWINS, WISH I WERE HERE, IF I STAY, DALLAS BUYER'S CLUB, THE EAST, UPSIDE DOWN** and **THE MASTER**.



**2/3 1 JOHN WICK ACTION**  
**\$43 MILL BO R 2215 SCREENS**

**Keanu Reeves (THE REPLACEMENTS, SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE, SPEED, BILL AND TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE, THE MATRIX)**  
**Michael Nyqvist (MY SO CALLED FATHER, DAYS AND NIGHTS, MISSION IMPOSSIBLE II)**

Here's something you don't see very often: a movie that knows exactly what it is, and knows you know it too. From its very first moments, when an SUV rolls roughly into a loading dock, its door opening to allow Keanu Reeves to spill out, bloody and ravaged, this story is all about you. It's about what you expect, what you've seen before, what you believe to be true and what you know is not.

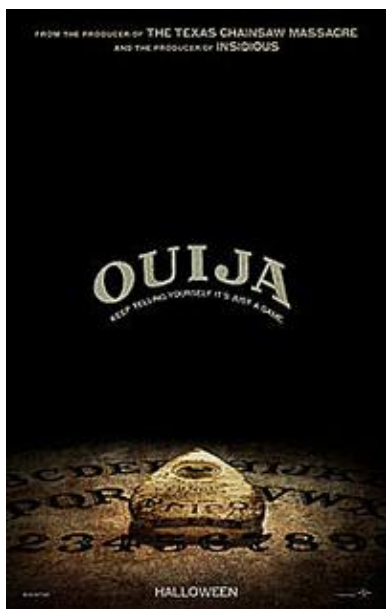
He's a veteran, a retired super-assassin of such renown that only his name need be mentioned for hard-faced killers and kingpins to reveal just the slightest quiver of concern. He's sad, grieving the loss of his wife (Bridget Moynahan) in flashbacks aided by the cellphone video he carries with him always: the wife on the beach, the wife calling him to come home, the wife beautiful and alluring and dead. And he's good. He keeps an astounding fortress of a home, all spare architecture and hidden caches of artillery, and once he's armed—a process rendered here as the determined ritual you expect, strapping on the vest, the extra cartridges, guns, and knives—he's unstoppable.



His gorgeous black Mustang car catches Iosef's eye at a gas station—that most mundane of meet-cute spots—and John brushes off the kid's offer to buy it ("She's not for sale"). Iosef proceeds to act out, arriving at John's home and attended by two thug-protectors assigned by his father, Viggo (Nyqvist). This second encounter turns dire, not when the brute beats John with pipes, underlined by thumping sounds and vivid close-ups of John's accumulating injuries, but by Iosef's decision to kill John's agonizingly adorable beagle, a gift from the long-ailing wife from beyond her grave. John spends long seconds in long shots mourning the dog; that is to say, re-mourning the wife.

That Iosef not only steals the car but also kills the dog double-and-triple marks him for doom. Whenever anyone hears that he's done so, their faces betray that they know what you know: John Wick is now wired for revenge and there is nothing anyone can do about it. It happens that John used to work for Viggo, so he's well aware of the horrors about to be unleashed. Like most fathers of stupid sons in such movies, Viggo seems less surprised or even ready to act on his son's behalf than he looks resigned. Still, he acts on his son's behalf because that's what Russian crime bosses do. Then the mayhem takes off and creates a very entertaining film to be sure.

This absolutely will rent as well as **MAZE RUNNER**, **EXPENDABLES 3**, **EDGE OF TOMORROW**, **PURGE: ANARCHY**, and **BRICK MANSIONS**.



## 2/3 2 OUIJA HORROR

\$51 MILL BO 2899 SCREENS PG-13 89 MINUTES

### Olivia Cooke (TV—BATES MOTEL FILM--THE QUIET ONES, THE SIGNAL)

Our story begins in the past, where best friendies Laine (Olivia Cook) and Debbie (Shelley Hennig) share a love for all things Ouija. Fast forward a few years and the latter decides to do a little planchette positioning on her own. As a result (surprise) tragedy strikes, leaving Laine to rally her other pals—boyfriend Trevor (Darren Kagasoff), rebellious sister Sarah (Ana Coto), waitress buddy Isabelle (Bianca Santos), and Debbie's ex, Pete (Douglas Smith)—in an effort to break out the board game for a little afterlife texting.

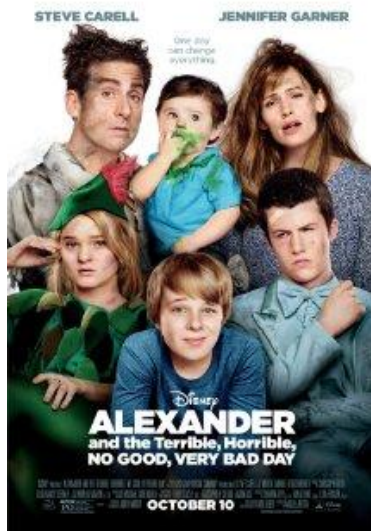
Initially thinking themselves successful in their spirit-contacting quest, they soon find that they have in fact awakened a vengeful spirit, the ghost of a dead girl whose mother was accused (but never

convicted) of murdering her. Intrigued, and hoping to get more information on the case, Laine visits the only remaining member of the family (Lin Shaye). What she discovers there puts everyone in danger. As long as it avoids anything closely resembling the real world, Ouija works.

For the nominal horror fan who wouldn't know Dario Argento from George Romero, Ouija will function just fine. It's a crowdpleaser, in that anyone in the audience will feel happy about being infinitely smarter than the dimwits on screen. What's most unfortunate is that there is a good core idea here, a notion perhaps better explored in A Haunting in Connecticut. With the right director behind the camera, trademark owner Hasbro could have had another potential film franchise on their hands.



This will rent as well as **AS ABOVE SO BELOW**, **INTO THE STORM**, **THE GIVER**, **DELIVER US FROM EVIL**, **THE QUIET ONES**, and **OPEN GRAVE**.



## 2/10 1 ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY COMEDY

\$66 MILL BO 3147 SCREENS PG 81 MINUTES

Steve Carell (THE 40 YEAR OLD VIRGIN, DATE NIGHT, CRAZY STUPID LOVE, ANCHORMAN)

Jennifer Garner (TV—ALIAS—FILM---VALENTINE'S DAY, DALLAS BUYER'S CLUB, DRAFT DAY, JUNO)

Judith Viorst's book exudes a beautiful commitment to the subjectivity of Alexander's epically rotten series of unfortunate events. Refraining from kidspaining things, it doesn't rationalize the insurmountable bad luck

experienced by its protagonist, instead letting readers decide for themselves (more or less) whether Alexander is a victim of circumstance or of his own sour outlook. Played by Ed Oxenbould, the film's Alexander Cooper is no pouting cypher. He's more of an enduring black sheep in a family of chipper overachievers, including Steve Carell as a stay-at-home "fommy" (father mommy) who keeps a perma-smile on his face with no apparent prescription, Jennifer Garner as a non-threateningly reluctant career woman on the rise, and other Disney-contracted youths as Alexander's life-winning siblings and friends, none of whom are apparently planning on attending his backyard birthday party. Coasting on self-pity, Alexander scoops himself up a midnight birthday sundae, makes a wish that the rest of his family could for one day experience the cyclical pain of life as he knows it, blows out the candle, and conjures up a PG-rated Michael Haneke movie.

Both mom and dad enter career-crisis mode in tandem. Alexander's BMOC big brother gets dumped by his girlfriend, sprouts a zit, and gets caught naked stepping out of the shower by his mom (an embarrassment that falls just short on the life-ending scale of contracting Ebola). Meanwhile, Alexander's stage-brat sister gets a frog in her throat just when she's supposed to make her debut as the title role in their school production of *Peter Pan*, though an overzealous dose of cough syrup does help her fly in front of her horrified audience. And so on and so forth.

Expanding the parameters of the original book so that the entire family is subjected to a series of indignities and calamities may have been a necessary concession to the demands of making an easily-digested feature-length kids' movie, and it sets up with very little effort the 11th-hour homily that no terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day can touch you so long as you have family to soften the blow. (Unless, of course, they're the ones responsible for said days.) But the expansion also has the unintended and unfortunate effect of doing exactly the same thing to Alexander he accused his family of doing in the first place: marginalizing him.



Fun movie that will rent like **DOLPHIN TALE 2, TAMMY, NEIGHBORS, BLENDED, MOM'S NIGHT OUT** and **THAT AWKWARD MOMENT**.



**2/10 3 KILL THE MESSENGER THRILLER**  
**\$4 MILL BO 657 SCREENS R 112 MINUTES**

**Jeremy Renner (AMERICAN HUSTLE, THE BOURNE LEGACY, THOR, THE AVENGERS, THE HURT LOCKER)**  
**ROBERT PATRICK (TV—SCORPION, SONS OF ANARCHY—FILM—ENDLESS LOVE, IDENTITY THIEF, GANGSTER SQUAD, TERMINATOR 2)**  
**Rosemary DeWitt (TOUCHY FEELY, PROMISED LAND, THE ODD LIFE OF TIMOTHY GREEN, YOUR SISTER'S SISTER)**

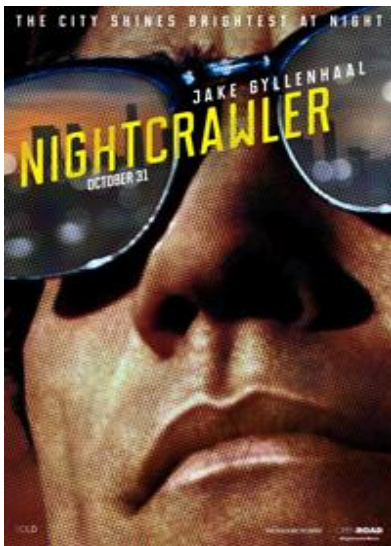
Toward the end of Michael Cuesta's of the story, Gary Webb (Jeremy Renner), the famed Clinton-era *San Jose Mercury News* reporter, opines on more than one occasion that he's become the true focus of countless news outlets, rather than the shattering subject matter of his "Dark

Alliance" series of articles. These pieces detailed the C.I.A.'s part in funding the contras in Nicaragua during the Reagan years, through illegal crack-cocaine sales in the U.S., and Cuesta's film spends its intriguing first 45 minutes tracking the research of the articles and Webb's Clash-soundtracked writing process.

As adapted by Peter Landesman from Webb's articles and Nick Schou's biography of Webb, the script is ultimately less interested in Webb the journalist as it is in Webb the pure, haunted everyman, and by extension, Cuesta flattens out a great deal of what makes Webb such a controversial figure. As the film becomes more and more about the witch hunt that crippled Webb professionally, the man becomes just another martyr for the free-information movement. Scenes featuring Webb dealing with his troubled marriage to Sue (Rosemarie DeWitt), his relationship with his eldest son, Ian (Lucas Hedges), and his view of the decay of his profession are meant to humanize him, lend intimacy to a nasty bit of relatively recent U.S. history. In reality, these elongated dramatic sequences come off as broad and by-the-numbers reiterations of Webb's saintly determination and jangly altruism.



A film that will entertain and rent as well as **THE RAILWAY MAN, ROB THE MOB, OBVIOUS CHILD, PALO ALTO, FADING GIGOLO, RUNNER RUNNER, and THE BOOK THIEF.**



**2/10 2 NIGHTCRAWLER THRILLER**  
**\$29 MILL BO 2756 SCREENS R 117 MINUTES**

**Jake Gyllenhaal (BROTHERS, JARHEAD, BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN, PROOF, PRISONERS, END OF WATCH)**  
**Rene Russo (THOR, LETHAL WEAPON 4, IN THE LINE OF FIRE, RANSOM, GET SHORTY)**

"What do you have?" Lou Bloom (Gyllenhaal) has just walked into a local TV news station, a station that happens to be in LA but might exist in any number of US cities. The hour is late, the rhythms are tense. Trying to impress Nina (Russo), the director, Lou makes a predictably ludicrous assertion. He's got, he says, "something I'm sure everyone will be excited about." Nina's a veteran of the business newbie Lou's trying to crack, her experience making her at once exquisitely vulnerable and utterly cynical, the embodiment of "everyone."

In this movie Nina serves as an especially articulate version of "everybody." When Lou offers her close-up video footage of a crime victim bleeding on a gurney, she's instantly intrigued and—importantly—willing to pay for it. The footage is typical, handheld, badly lit, disturbing, Nina's enthusiasm is the payoff: Lou's awkward first time makes him your guide into the world of tabloid reporting, as he learns what sort of gear he needs, what sort of assistance and payment, and what sorts of pictures sell. He learns from sources you'd anticipate (TV and the internet) and also by observing men at a few scenes, careening their vans to curbs, steadying their cameras as they run to car crashes, soft-footed on sneakers, their camera-mounted lights piercing the darkness even as they reveal precious little.

Lou's limited vision is yours, of course, and so you might feel, at first, aligned with his ambition or even his enthusiasm. When he's encouraged by Nina, whose eyes go wide when she sees his crude imagery on her monitor, he asks for clarification, what sorts of stories she wants. She goes on to over-explain, serving here as the very model of prostitution in the business. She's looking, she says, for images of "urban crime creeping into the suburbs." Lou parses further: she means black criminals



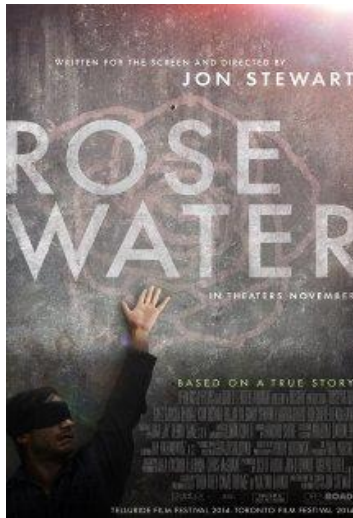
invading white neighborhoods? She means to frighten her viewers? Maybe not in so many words... but yes.

As Rick begins to doubt his mentor and employer, Lou looks increasingly haunted, the 30 pounds Gyllenhall lost for the role leaving his face gaunt and eyes enormous, and Nina increasingly defeated, her investment in Lou's product less convincing as narrative than compelling as institutional critique. Just so, the film turns gradually more lurid, with colors garish and shadows odious, twisty city streets looming in headlights, sirens and chopper sounds ever present as background noise. As Lou begins rearranging crime scenes to tell better stories—moving photos on a refrigerator or a body at a car crash—you realize the film is doing the same, contriving plot points and cues to evoke your own visceral responses.

This focus is embodied by Lou, who becomes scarier and scarier. It's not that he exults in what he does, it's more that he doesn't much care. Save for the rising dollar amounts he charges for his footage, Lou apparently has little sense of their value or their costs. If Nina represents the industry that profits from horror and tragedy, the industry willing to sell anything for cash money (or the promise of cash money), Lou's pathology is both more mundane and more scandalous. Showing no reaction to the carnage he records, he makes art that passes for emotional reality. And this might be one way to understand how tabloids do their work. Ingeniously, repeatedly, formulaically, they conjure unbelievable truths. Like you, Lou is a spectator, his gaze framed in close-up to reflect yours. It's an image as discomfiting as any bloody body or car wreck, as Lou looks through and at you, and looks for you too.



This will rent as well as **LET'S BE COPS**, **EXPENDABLES 3**, **LIFE OF CRIME**, **BRICK MANSIONS**, **SABOTAGE**, and **ROBO COP**.



## 2/10 3 ROSEWATER THRILLER

\$4 MILL BO 449 SCREENS R 103 MINUTES

**Kim Bodnia (TV'S THE BRIDGE—FILM—ALL FOR TWO, LOVE IS ALL YOU NEED, TRUTH ABOUT MEN)**  
**Gael Garcia Bernal (KIM, NO, BLINDNESS, EVEN THE RAIN)**

Jon Stewart's *Rosewater* stars Gael García Bernal as Maziar Bahari, a documentary filmmaker and journalist who was arrested by Iranian authorities in the summer of 2009. Bahari was covering the wave of protests following the reelection of then-president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad—an outcome widely denounced as fraud on the part of the hardline Islamist government. While many asked if Iran was on the cusp of a revolution, Supreme Leader Khamenei pulled a switch that would be echoed a few years later by Egypt's General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi *against* Islamists: holding demonstrators legally culpable for any ensuing bloodshed ahead of time. At a rally, Bahari is seen managing to get video footage of a protestor being shot at long range by a Basij sniper. After *The Guardian* publishes it, he's swiftly arrested on suspicion of being a spy for whomever the crackdown finds politically convenient: Green Wave reformists, the CIA, Mossad, "the Jews." *Rosewater's* screenplay marks the passage of events in Iran's near-fateful summer only up to this point, abruptly transitioning its third-act scenery into the inward space of the prison, and of Bahari's own mind.

Blindfolded in anonymous, talcum-colored rooms, Bahari's incarceration is a spectacle of dull repetition, his nameless handler (Kim Bodnia) dressing him down in a whirlwind of accusations both tenuous and impossible to disprove. In *Then They Came For Me*, his memoir of the 118 days he spent hostage, the real-life Bahari nicknamed this man "Rosewater," after the unmistakable scent of his perfume. As indicated by the opening flashback, wherein a young Bahari visits a mosque and smells rosewater for the first time, the film feels archly bemused by the collisions of religious and secular influence on its hero's personality. (Rosewater confiscates Bahari's DVDs, including *The Sopranos* and *Teorema*, accusing him of carrying pornography.) The state's "evidence" of Bahari's spy career includes a sarcastic performance in a *Daily Show* skit featuring correspondent Jason Jones called "Persians of Interest," in which the real-life Bahari called Ahmadinejad "an idiot." Bahari was mercilessly beaten, tortured, and kept awake for days, but the film seems squeamish to either slow itself down or rub the audience's nose in the Evin Prison dirt.

Stewart deserves credit for trying to resist the inherent triumph-of-the-human-spirit proposition that haunts all movies like *Rosewater*, but the struggle nevertheless ends in a draw. As much seems obvious in a wincingly trailer-ready scene of Bahari gleefully waltzing to Leonard Cohen's "Dance Me to the End of Love" in his cell, the music suddenly snuffed out when Stewart smash-cuts to the video monitor silently cataloguing the detainee's every twirl. Bahari learns to commiserate with the ghost of his own father (Haluk Bilginer), who was imprisoned and tortured under the Shah for being a communist. Above all other considerations, he insists that Bahari refuse to give in—to be "broken." For the sake of his pregnant wife (Claire Foy) in London, Bahari grows to disagree with his father, and soon assents to uttering whatever bullshit party-line apology has been written for him on national television.

Bahari's final scene with his father's ghost is a passionate argument, every bit as subtle as it sounds: The young prisoner explains that a gulag is a gulag, whether it's Stalinist, capitalist, or Islamist. (That the real-life Rosewater's father was *also* imprisoned by the Shah is weirdly elided from Stewart's adaptation.) Perhaps for the wiser, *Rosewater* shrugs off the bigger questions about Iranian politics its first half appears to raise, falling back instead on a gestalt of the eternal, Kafkaesque regime, wherever the viewer may find it. Given Bernal's rendering of a seasoned journalist as a total naïf and the fact that the Iran-set film is in mimetic English, it all becomes uncomfortably slick—a specific geopolitical story stretched uncomfortably to parable-size. This retreat to the middle is echoed in Howard Shore's generic, weeping score, which may as well have been licensed from a million Hollywood Middle-East-set thrillers. So many pundits and journalists have tried grilling Stewart on how seriously he does or doesn't take his work on *The Daily Show*. In the context of this question, *Rosewater* appears as a line in the sand, lamenting a world in which a fatuous TV personality can stay at the top while a serious journalist can get locked up on the opposite side of the same joke.



Will rent like **THIS IS WHERE I LEAVE YOU, THE SKELETON TWINS, IF I STAY, A MOST WANTED MAN, LOCKE, and WHAT IF.**



2/17 1 DUMB AND DUMBER 2 COMEDY  
\$84 MILL BO 3935 SCREENS PG-13 109 MINUTES

**Jeff Daniels (LOOPER, STATE OF PLAY, SPEED, SOMETHING WILD, HEARTBURN, TERMS OF ENDEARMENT)**

**Jim Carrey (FUN WITH DICK AND JANE, LIAR LIAR, ACE VENTURA, THE TRUMAN SHOW, THE CABLE GUY)**

We meet up again with Harry (Daniels) and Lloyd (Carrey) during the former's frequent visit to an insane asylum. There, the latter has been holed up, apparently in some manner of psychological distress over losing Mary "Samsonite". Turns out, it's just an elaborate 20-year-long prank, which is advantageous, since Harry has a bad kidney and needs a transplant.

Hoping his parents can help, he soon learns that he has a daughter with former town tramp Friada Felcher (Kathleen Turner). She, in turn, tells them that the girl (Rachel Melvin) was adopted by a famous scientist (Steve Tom). When they finally make it to the doc's estate, they learn that he is sick, his wife (Laurie Holden) is working with the maintenance man (Rob Riggle) to kill him and get his money, and the now 22-year-old is at a Tech Conference in El Paso. So it's time to hit the highway and save the day via stupidity.



Yes, this is another road movie, another random series of events that rise and fall on the inspirations contained within the six-man script (yes, this mediocrity took a sextet of writers to create). There are no real references to the animated series that resulted from *Dumb and Dumber's* success or the equally uninspired attempt at

a prequel (2003's *Dumb and Dumberer: When Harry Met Lloyd*), and the callbacks to the first film (the Mutt Cutts van, Billy the Blind Kid) get a single punchline before we move along.

Even the current stuff is curbed so that Carrey and Daniels can chew up the scenery. Turner, looking a lot worse for wear, is given little to do except react to the guys' goofball antics, and the rest of the science fair set-up sees wasted opportunity after wasted opportunity. Only Rachel Melvin stands out, doing a dead on impression of Carrey's Lloyd in a girl's guise.

The one guaranteed thing that comes with the passage of time is perspective. There are generations today that never grew up in a world with an arms race, analog technology, or a Berlin Wall. For them, the original *Dumb and Dumber* is a VHS to DVD memory, a seminal moment in their cinematic reckoning. For the rest of us it's a bit of a respite from what's going on in the real world when we need something mindless to entertain us. This will do that.

This will also rent as well as **TAMMY, BLENDED, NEIGHBORS, LET'S BE COPS, and THE FAULT IN OUR STARS.**



**2/17 3 FOXCATCHER DRAMA**  
**\$4 MILL BO 131 SCREENS R 134 MINUTES**

**Steve Carell (ANCHOR MAN 2, THE WAY WAY BACK, DINNER FOR SCHMUCKS, LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE)**

**Channing Tatum (22 JUMP STREET, WHITE HOUSE DOWN, THIS IS THE END, MAGIC MIKE, THE VOW)**

**Mark Ruffalo (BEGIN AGAIN, NOW YOU SEE ME, SHUTTER ISLAND, DATE NIGHT )**

Based on the true story of vastly wealthy John Eleuthere du Pont and his quixotic financial sponsorship of U.S. wrestling in general and the gold medalist brothers Mark and Dave Schultz in particular, *Foxcatcher* is the latest work by director Bennett Miller, responsible for *Capote* and *Moneyball*. In many ways it's his best

yet.

Getting the most attention is the normally comic Carell, who, with the aid of a Cyrano nose and an altered bearing, completely turns the tables on audience expectations as the eccentric John E. du Pont, a quiet, almost diffident man, unnerving in ways that are difficult to pinpoint, someone who has more money than he knows what to do with. A lot more.

However, both Tatum and Ruffalo also undergo significant transformations to play brothers Mark and Dave Schultz, bulking up and changing both body types and the way they habitually present themselves on screen, so much so that seeing their names on the closing credits is something of a shock even if you know they're in the film.

It is somehow fitting that these three men would be brought together by Olympic freestyle wrestling, an unforgiving sport with demands and pressures that are as much psychological as physical, a naked sport that forces intimacy on its participants but finally leaves them with absolutely nowhere to hide.

Another largely wordless scene has Mark working out with his older brother and fellow gold medalist Dave, someone he admires yet seems to resent. The physicality of their interaction couldn't be more authentic (both Ruffalo and his father before him were accomplished high school wrestlers). Plus the way the actors allow their wrestling moves to reflect their relationship is so intuitively done here that Bennett said at Cannes (where *Foxcatcher* won him the director prize) that it enabled him to cut an entire scene of dialogue.

Though it never pushes an agenda, *Foxcatcher* is at its most acute in its insights into what we value in America, the deference our nominally egalitarian society pays to inherited wealth and power, how we allow ourselves to slide unawares into the most awful situations. The hardest things it tells us about ourselves may be the things we need to hear most of all.

This will rent as well as **THE SKELETON TWINS, THE ONE I LOVE, THE GIVER, WHAT IF, OBVIOUS CHILD**, and **LOCKE**. Not a huge hit, but a very worthy addition for your customers of discerning taste.





**2/17 2 THE HOMESMAN DRAMA**  
**\$2 MILL BO 322 SCREENS R 122 MINUTES**

**Hilary Swank (MILLION DOLLAR BABY, BOYS DON'T CRY, RED DUST, THE NEXT KARATE KID, P.S. I LOVE YOU)**

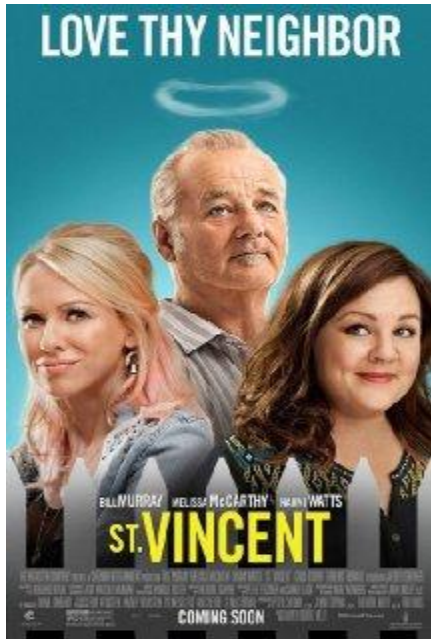
**Tommy Lee Jones (LINCOLN, THE FUGITIVE, COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER, MEN IN BLACK COBB)**

Rejected and lacking for prospects in the Nebraska Territories of 1854, Cuddy (Swank) finds an outlet for her combination of piety and truculence. She agrees to transport three ailing women (Miranda Otto, Sonja Richter, and Grace Gummer) to a church in Iowa, where they can be tended to before being moved back east. Each has succumbed to a state of near-catatonia after being wrecked by disease, tragedy, and bad marriage. Their circumstances are revealed in a series of lurid, obliquely constructed flashbacks intended to reveal the harsh conditions of frontier life. These shocking, confusing scenes are uneasily placed between others that establish the unlikely partnership between Cuddy and George Briggs (Jones), the drifter and deserter Cuddy hires to assist her in this journey.

The film is never subtle, but the film nonetheless makes persistent and compelling distinctions between compassion and empathy. Cuddy discovers Briggs (Jones) in a posture that suits this western's offbeat status: Briggs is astride a horse, but there's a noose around his neck. Cuddy cuts the pitiable, possibly drunken man loose, and offers him a job out of desperation rather than fellow-feeling. As they head east on an episodic journey through bleached, arid plains, both characters confront trials of soul and body. Cuddy crumbles under the wailing of the cargo she's meant to care for, and to compensate for her weakness, she leaves her party behind in order to restore a pillaged gravesite, and nearly dies for her charity. The film is also acute in confusing selfishness and bravery: When the group approaches some menacing Pawnees, Briggs has to stop playing the rascalion and negotiate them out of trouble. It's unclear whether he's more interested in saving himself or the women behind him.



A good addition to your NEW RELEASES that will rent as well as **THE GIVER, IF I STAY, THEY CAME TOGETHER, AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY, and SIDE EFFECTS.**



**2/17 1 ST. VINCENT COMEDY**  
 \$43 MILL BO 2569 SCREENS **PG-13** 102  
 MINUTES

**Bill Murray (STRIPES, ZOMBIELAND, GHOSTBUSTERS, THE ROYAL TENNENBAUMS, RUSHMORE, LOST IN TRANSLATION)**  
**Melissa McCarthy (IDENTITY THIEF, TAMMY, THE HEAT, HANGOVER III, BRIDESMAIDS)**  
**Naomi Watts (J. EDGAR, 21 GRAMS, I HEART HUCKABEES, STRANGE PLANET)**

From the moment boozy misanthrope Vincent (Murray) agrees to help his new next-door neighbor, struggling single mom Maggie (Melissa McCarthy), by babysitting her bully-magnet son, Oliver (Jaeden Lieberher), *St. Vincent's* outcome feels preordained. But the rusty familiarity of the premise is consistently enlivened by Vincent's prickly but humane sensibility. A vein of mostly verbal, the film, even in places where Vincent never goes, like Oliver's

often mildly sardonic humor imbues classroom, whose kind but firm teacher (Chris O'Dowd) bombards the students with a cascade of bemused one-liners. Meanwhile, the contrast between Vincent's world-weary rebelliousness and the earnest middle-class world around him provides a few nicely gonzo sight gags, as in Maggie finding Oliver diligently pushing a gas mower in tight circles around the patch of dirt where Vincent lies in a plastic chaise longue, his ever-present drink on a nearby table and his old Walkman cranked up to blast '70s rock. "I'm teaching him the value of work," Vincent explains faux-innocently.



What counts and works so well is a winning generosity of spirit in both the script and the talented cast. It, and they, make us like the characters enough that we're happy to play along, enjoying the fantasy that this motley, half-baked crew could coalesce into one big happy pseudo-family.



**2/17 2 THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING**  
 DRAMA  
 \$18 MILL BO 1945 SCREENS **PG-13** 123 MINUTES

**Eddie Redmayne (HICK, MY WEEK WITH MARILYN, SAVAGE GRACE, BLACK DEATH)**  
**Felicity Jones (HBO'S -THE GIRLS—FILM--THE AMAZING SPIDER MAN 2, THE INVISIBLE WOMAN, BREATHE IN)**

When Stephen Hawking was diagnosed in his early 20s with motor neuron disease, doctors told him that he would be dead in two years.

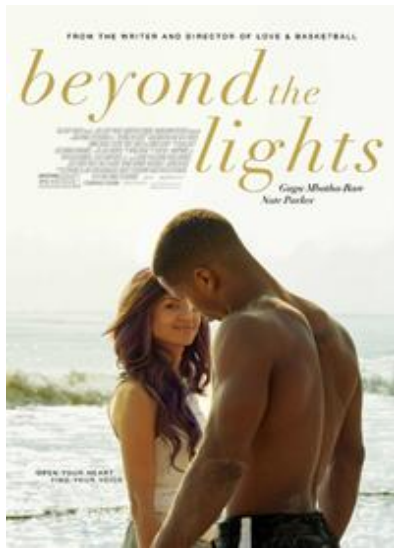
His shell of a body was destined to fail him, to collapse into itself not unlike the black holes that would become the focus of his research throughout his life, though his mind would remain intact until it was time for him to meet his maker. Assuming, that is, he didn't disprove that maker's existence in his mad rush to live those two years to the fullest of his abilities. Fifty years later, and in no small part by the grace of his ex-wife, Jane Wilde, Hawking perseveres as one of the world's greatest minds, a less single-minded version of his younger, no-less-droll self, limitless in his boundless curiosity to solve the mysteries of the universe. Which makes the straight and narrow path staked by James Marsh's *The Theory of Everything* a vexing irony.

The film is elegant in its easy digestibility, from its handsome photography to its sensitive performances. It exudes the aversion to risk so typical of biopics with designs on Oscar while also standing in mild contrast to *A Beautiful Mind's* more flagrant indulgences of style. Marsh, rather transparently, frames Stephen Hawking (Eddie Redmayne) as the film's own center of the universe, friends and family revolving around him as if on an axis. Years before *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, the budding genius sees the universe in a cup of tea, and as he increasingly succumbs to his disease, it's often that lights in the sky, or the oval shapes of an opera house's ornate roof, grip his imagination. It was in *2001: A Space Odyssey* that Stanley Kubrick cut between a bone and a ship to signify the evolution of mankind. Here, Marsh cuts between a bicycle wheel and a circular pattern on a rug to highlight a man's interest in the celestial. The simplicity of the artistry is outright, but at least we're spared the truly remedial spectacle of Stephen's formulas twinkling like stars in the sky.

The filmmakers make science digestible enough for those without cosmology degrees, as in a scene where Jane (Felicity Jones) explains her husband's theories to her future paramour, Jonathan Hellyer Jones (Charlie Cox), using a potato on a fork. And notwithstanding the meddlesome tinkling of Jóhann Jóhannsson's score throughout, they refuse to make an overly portentous show of the symptoms of Stephen's disease bubbling to the surface: When he knocks over of a cup of tea in his dormitory, the moment doesn't exude the wild gravitas of a doomsday clock's ticking. Even his merry riding through the streets of Oxford on a bicycle scans less as a happy-go-lucky vision of what the man will one day lose than it does as allegiance to nearly every film that's ever been made about care-free collegiate Britons. *The Theory of Everything* may not succumb to mockery and cheap sentimentality, but in its meticulous adherence to conventional narrative inducement, it only offers a sanded-down and embossed vision of Stephen and Jane's 30-year marriage.

Though the film refuses to depict Jane as a martyr, it also barely grasps her frustrations as a woman who must care for a man as if he were her child, congenially dancing around their carnality, as well as the implications of their extramarital affairs. But Redmayne and Jones do often succeed at pushing past the film's flattening depiction of the couple's life, especially in a wondrous scene where Stephen lovingly gifts Jane with the admission that he hasn't ruled out God's existence, only to then torturously tell her, through his computer-based communication system, that he's traveling to America with his nurse (Maxine Peake). There's no judgment in this exchange, no regret or animosity between husband and wife, only a strange and jarring sense of relief, of two people freeing themselves from a contract that was originally deemed to expire some three decades earlier. It's an astonishingly subtle display of humane empathy in a film that's otherwise averse to capturing human life in all its complicated fullness.

This will rent as well as **IF I STAY, WHAT IF, WISH I WERE HERE, OBVIOUS CHILD, PALO ALTO, CHEF** and **THE RAILWAY MAN**. This may not be a huge renter but it will be a very smart addition to any **NEW RELEASE SECTION**.



**2/24 2 BEYOND THE LIGHTS MUSICAL  
DRAMA**

**\$14 MILL BO 2134 SCREENS PG-13 116 MINUTES**

**Minnie Driver (TV—ABOUT A BOY—FILM—STAGE  
FRIGHT, I GIVE IT A YEAR, MOTHERHOOD, GROSSE  
POINTE BLANK, GOOD WILL HUNTING)**

**Danny Glover (LETHAL WEAPON, RAGE,  
EXTRACTION, THE SHIFT, HIGHLAND PARK, DEATH  
AT A FUNERAL)**

**Nate Parker (NON-STOP, ABOUT ALEX, ARBITRAGE,  
RED TAILS, THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES)**

“Really, I just want to sing.” While she says this, Noni (Gugu Mbatha-Raw) is preparing to do pretty much anything but sing. A rising pop star, she’s surrounded by label executives and advertising experts, makeup artists and costumers, hangers-on and ever-desperate flunkies, and her mom. As the camera cuts from Noni to Macy Jean (Driver), their faces mirror each other, simultaneously determined and distracted, anxious and bored, alike and opposite.

The fraught relationship between mother and daughter turns increasingly vivid. The melodrama begins with a first scene, set in 1998, when Macy Jean arrives at a South London salon just as it’s closing for the evening and insists that the black hairdresser help with ten-year-old Noni’s (India Jean-Jacques) unruly ‘do. Mom’s desperation wins out, the hair is tamed, and in the next scene, the little girl performs a heartbreaking version of Nina Simone’s “Blackbird” on stage at a local talent contest while mom watches. As lovely as sweet little Noni’s voice may be, as moved as the judges’ faces appear, the cutesy white girl tap dancer wins, with Noni first runner-up.



Cut to the parking lot, where Macy Jean curses the tap dancer and the judges, breaks the second place trophy, and vaguely terrorizes her child. Noni’s eyes well with tears as she stuffs herself into the back seat to await the cut ahead in time to another performance, now with dreadful purple hair and sensational skimpy outfit, alongside her cocky-skinny-white-faux-thug-rapper-boyfriend Kid Culprit (Richard Colson Baker). Macy Jean watches again, less hopeful than ferocious.

With Kaz’s support—and that of his doting dog—Noni will go on to make increasingly right and righteous choices, turning away from the darkness of crude commercialism and toward the light of something more like singing, with occasional forays into contract law (including a rendition of India Arie’s “I Am Light”).

By the time Macy Jean explains herself late in the movie, you already know her motivation. You know she’s been driven by poverty and confidence, naiveté and genius all at once, calculating and brutal. She doesn’t need to tell Noni the story of how she came to see her daughter’s voice as their ticket out. But still, the film provides it, as if this might justify Noni’s next several plot turns, not least being her emerging self-understanding as a young woman with talent and business savvy, art and strategy.

That this emergence coincides with a retreat to a Mexican beach and a return to her natural hair only reinforces the circular structure here, not only within the film’s own plot, but also within the broader framework of melodrama. The conventions in Gina Prince-Bythewood’s movie are fully functioning, not so much challenged as fine-tuned. As Noni makes peace with her own story, as she comes “home”, in her phrasing, the film also delivers what you might most expect, the camera circling the climactic embrace on stage, the crowd consuming, the image sold.

A good one here that will rent as well as **PITCH PERFECT, STEP UP ALL IN, JERSEY BOYS, WHAT IF, ONCE, BLENDED, BEFORE MIDNIGHT,** and **STEP UP-REVOLUTION.**





2/24 1 **BIG HERO 6** FAMILY

\$178 MILL BO 3934 SCREENS PG 102 MINUTES

**VOICES:** James Cromwell, Ryan Potter, Damon Wayans, Jr, Maya Rudolph

Hiro (voiced by Ryan Potter) is a restless 14-year-old living in the near future city of San Fransokyo. He loves to fiddle with fighting robots and worships his older brother Tadashi (Daniel Henney), who doesn't like him competing in these illegal contests. Hoping to inspire his little sibling toward a career in science, he takes him to his high tech college campus and introduces him to his friends GoGo (Jamie Chung), Honey Lemon (Genesis Rodriguez), Wasabi (Damon Wayans, Jr.), Fredzilla (T.J. Miller) and his instructor, Professor Robert Callaghan (James Cromwell). He also wants him to meet latest invention: an inflatable health aid robot named

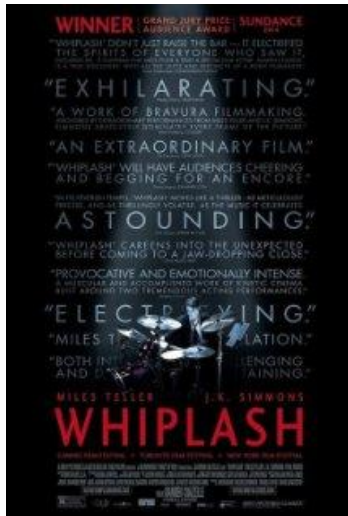
Baymax (Scott Adsit).

Hiro eventually enters the university's annual competition, hoping to wow the instructors as well as suspicious industrialist Alistair Krei (Alan Tudyk) with his novel invention, the mini-bot. During the event, a fire breaks out and tragedy strikes. Hiro is left heartbroken, and determined to understand what happened. Using Baymax as a basis, our tiny lead decides to uncover the truth. He recruits Tadashi's friends, outfits them with brand new superhero-like garb, and trains them to fight... kind of. Their target? An evil figure in a dark cloak and kabuki mask who has mastered control of Hiro's mini-bots.

To say *Big Hero 6* is exciting and exhilarating is an understatement. This is the kind of film that will spark the imagination of any 10- to 20-year-old while easily pleasing those old enough to know better. It differs quite significantly from the comic book version, but that's adaptation for you. Disney understood what would best make this material work and placed Don Hall and Chris Williams in charge. Both worked on the intensely popular *Frozen*, as well as the equally inventive *Wreck-It Ralph*, and their abilities are apparent from the first frame.

Will be huge as was **FROZEN, THE LEGO MOVIE, GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY, MALEFICENT, CAPTAIN AMERICA, IRON MAN 3, and THE NUT JOB.**





2/24 3 WHIPLASH DRAMA  
 \$5 MILL BO 419 SCREENS R 107 MINUTES

**Miles Teller (DIVERGETN, THAT AWKWARD MOMENT, FOOTLOOSE, 21 & OVER, TWO NIGHT STAND)  
 J. K. Simmons (TV—CLOSER, GROWING UP FISHER,-- FILM—JUNO, CONTRABAND, THE WORDS, UP IN THE AIR, I LOVE YOU MAN)**

Damien Chazelle's movie ends, as all things should, with a drum solo, a furious yet precise assault of clattering cymbals and skins enacted by Miles Teller's Andrew Neyman, a prodigious drumming student at the fictitious Shaffer Conservatory of Music in midtown Manhattan. It's the percussionist's final parry in his duel with Fletcher (J.K. Simmons), a sadistic conductor and senior-level instructor at the school. As Neyman's solo grows more complex and immense, the studied technique that he's spent the entirety of the film trying to hone breaks out into wild, exacting ambition, an exhilarating final movement in a film deeply concerned with the limitations of control, and how that influences the measure of mastery.

The thrill of watching Fletcher and Neyman's fray unfold is intensified by Chazelle's attention to the craft and challenge of musicianship. Teller, a drummer for over a decade, does the lion's share of his character's playing, and Chazelle captures the astonishing physical ability, pain, and exhaustion that comes from trying to catch up to the likes of Buddy Rich and Max Roach. That's mostly Teller's own blood on the drum sets, and the other members of Shaffer's core band, to say nothing of the other drummers in the film, are portrayed by trained musicians as well. This decision lends the film authenticity for sure, but it more importantly frees up Chazelle to use his camera more freely, without having to constantly hide stand-in performers and shoot around the mere illusion of talent. *Whiplash* works off of a familiar dramatic two-hander, but Chazelle refuses to define them in familiar terms. The fight between Neyman and Fletcher is less about realizing potential held back by pain and psychology than it is about defining and recognition of talent. Fletcher is fond of the famed story of Jo Jones tossing a cymbal at a young Charlie Parker's head, and his weakness is his own nostalgia for that age of prickly, tough, and brilliant musicians, and a wanting to recapture that time. In essence, Fletcher has never been interested in training and developing musicians, but rather in creating his own legend, making his own Jo Jones story through bullying and duplicity. Chazelle's script makes this Achilles' heel clear when Fletcher uses the death of a prized pupil to create the myth of a prodigious talent taken too soon, a cowardly, showy lie he uses to excuse his own role in the young musician's untimely passing.



Though Neyman showcases virtuosic skill by the end of the film, his rebellion comes from bucking Fletcher's sense of control, by literally ignoring his role as conductor. Chazelle doesn't belittle Fletcher's positive influence on Neyman's ability and style, but he's emphatic about recognizing that moment when the rules congeal into restraints, and idols become something like adversaries.

This will rent as well as **STEP UP, FOOTLOOSE, PITCH PERFECT, BEGIN AGAIN, CHEF, MAGIC IN THE MOONLIGHT, HER, WHEN THE GAME STANDS TALL** and **THAT THING YOU DO.**