

**Arts & Entertainment**

**Kam’s Kapsules: Movies Opening Friday, Dec. 18, 2015**

**BIG BUDGET FILMS**

**Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip** (PG for mile rude humor) Fourth installment in the animated/live action series finds Alvin (Justin Long), Simon (Matthew Gray Gubler) and Theodore (Jesse McCartney) hatching a plan to sabotage their adoptive dad’s (Jason Lee) plans to marry a woman (Kimberly Williams-Paisley) they’ve mistakenly as-



Kam Williams  
*Kam’s Kapsules Movie Reviews*

sumed would make a mean stepmother. With Kaley Cuoco, Anna Faris and Bella Thorne.



‘Son of Saul’

**Sisters** (R for drug use, and pervasive profani-

ty and crude sexuality) Sibling rivalry comedy about two sisters, one promiscuous (Tina Fey), one prudish (Amy Poehler), who throw a wild party in their childhood

John Cena.

**Star Wars: The Force Awakens** (PG-13 for violence) Director J.J. Abrams assumes the reigns of the franchise for the inaugural adventure of a trilogy unfolding three decades after Return of the Jedi. This installment finds Hans Solo (Harrison Ford) and company squaring off against new nemesis Kylo Ren (Adam Driver) and his army of evil Stormtroopers. Principal cast includes familiar faces Mark Hamill and Carrie Fisher as well as newcomers Oscar Isaac, Daisy Ridley, Lupita Nyong’o and Domnhall Gleeson.

**INDEPENDENT & FOREIGN FILMS**

**The Emperor’s New Clothes** (Unrated) Russell Brand stars in this class conscious expose examining the wealth gap between the rich and poor exacerbated by the global financial collapse of 2008.

**Extraction** (R for violence, sexuality, brief nudity and pervasive pro-



‘Star Wars: The Force Awakens’

fanity) Revenge thriller about a geeky government bureaucrat (Kellan Lutz) who goes vigilante when his CIA agent father (Bruce Willis) is kidnapped by terrorists. With Gina Carano, D.B. Sweeney and Summer Altice.

**The Lady in the Car with Glasses and a Gun** (Unrated) Remake of the 1970 thriller of the same name about a secretary (Freya Mavor) who takes her boss’ (Benjamin Bi-

olay) convertible for a joyride after dropping him off at the airport, only to end up the prime suspect for a murder she didn’t commit. Cast includes Stacy Martin, Elio Germano and Thierry Hancisse. (In French with subtitles)

**Noma: My Perfect Storm** (Unrated) Gourmet documentary about chef Rene Redzepi, proprietor of Noma, the Copenhagen restaurant voted best in the world

for four years running.

**Son of Saul** (R for graphic nudity and disturbing violence) Holocaust saga, set in Auschwitz in 1944, revolving around a Jewish prisoner’s (Geza Rohrig) desperate effort to give his gassed son a proper burial after saving the corpse from the crematorium. With Levente Molnar, Urs Rechn and Todd Charmont. (In German, Hungarian, Yiddish and Polish with subtitles)

**Film Review: ‘The Big Short’ Chronicles Financial Collapse of 2008**

By Kam Williams  
For The Skanner News



Michael Lewis’ *The Big Short* was an eye-opening best seller chronicling the machinations on the part of a quartet of Wall Street contrarians (played by Christian Bale, Ryan Gosling, Steve Carell and Brad Pitt) who accurately forecast the global financial crisis of 2008. The four made a mint by investing in Credit Default Swaps (CDS) in anticipation of the collapse of the market in Collateralized Debt Obligations (CDO).

In layman’s terms, these proverbial smartest guys in the room basically bet that the real estate bubble would burst, because of the easy money being lent unqualified borrowers via subprime mortgages. The banks didn’t mind making so-called NINJA loans (No Income/No Job) since they would quickly sell the worthless instrument to unsuspecting investors just about as soon as the deals were completed.

Despite a plethora of decent performances, the screen version of *The Big Short* fails to do justice to the source material. The movie marks Adam McKay’s first foray into dramatic fare. The veteran writer/director has enjoyed quite a career in comedy, which is reflected in a resume that includes *Anchorman* (2004), *Talladega Nights* (2006), *Step Brothers* (2008) and *The Other Guys* (2010), *The Campaign* (2012), *Anchorman 2* (2013) and *Get Hard* (2015).

The film suffers from a few glaring flaws. The first is the fact that the names of all the key players have been changed. Since this is based on a true story, resorting to fictional characters serves to lessen the intensity of a tale that could’ve been quite compelling.

The movie is further trivialized by

a failure to commit fully to drama, — a no-no, given the serious subject matter. After all, no one has been held responsible for the crash, leaving much of the country still miffed about the billion-dollar bailout of Wall Street at the expense of Main Street.

Equally annoying are several celebrity cameos by the likes of chef Anthony Bourdain, Aussie actress Margot Robbie and pop diva Selena Gomez. During distracting, fourth wall-breaking appearances, they face the camera to explain the meaning of derivatives and other arcane financial instruments. McKay ostensibly included these interludes to make his jargon-laden script more accessible.

A disappointingly dry lecture in finance strictly with egghead appeal that manages to squander the services of an A-list cast composed of Academy Award-winners (Marisa Tomei, Melissa Leo and Christian Bale) and nominees (Brad Pitt, Ryan Gosling and Steve Carell).

★½ Fair  
Rated R for nudity, sexuality and pervasive profanity

TINA FEY  
AND  
AMY POEHLER  
ARE



**SISTERS**

THEY DON'T GET ANY CLOSER THAN THIS

UNIVERSAL PICTURES PRESENTS A LITTLE STRANGER/EVERYMAN PICTURES PRODUCTION "SISTERS" TINA FEY AMY POEHLER  
MAYA RUDOLPH IVE BARINHOLTZ JAMES BROLIN JOHN CENA JOHN LEGUIZAMO AND DIANNE WUEST  
WRITTEN BY CHRISTOPHER BECK DIRECTED BY AMY POEHLER CASTING BY JEFF RICHMOND EDITOR BRIAN DELL PRODUCTION DESIGNER TINA FEY EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JAY ROACH PRODUCED BY JOHN LYONS  
RATED R FOR LANGUAGE, DRUG USE, AND SOME STRONG LANGUAGE  
WRITTEN BY PAULA PELL DIRECTED BY JASON MOORE A UNIVERSAL PICTURE  
STARTS FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18 CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS FOR THEATERS AND SHOWTIMES