



NYU Law SLAP Football Top Seven Final Standings

Team	Record	Point Differential Per Game
DHL	8-0-0	24.8
Back That Pass Up	7-0-0	17.5
Cunning Litigants	7-1-0	11.8
Amistad/Cade's Cadets	6-1-0	12.4
Actus Rectum	6-1-0	7.6
Legislative Safety Word	6-2-0	6.4
In re Dicolous	5-2-0	7.2

DHL Takes SLAP Football Championship With Victory Over Back That Pass Up

Goal-Line Stand Clinches Tourney Finale; Captain Cites Team Effort and Female Participation As Keys to Season

By SHOUAN RIAHI '12
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Last Friday, the NYU SLAP football program held its championship round. After two closely contested semi-final games, experienced prevailed over youth as 3L team "DHL" matched up against fellow 3L team "Back That Pass Up" in the championship game. "DHL" got off to a quick start, scoring 16 unanswered points on two deep balls from quarterback Daniel Bromwich '12 to wide receiver Zachary Levin '12. "Back That Pass Up" refused

That Pass Up" found themselves down by four points with less than a minute on the clock and the ball in their hands with the opportunity to win the game. "Back That Pass Up" showed their ingenuity when they drew "DHL's" talented but inexperienced defensive lineman Maya Prokupets '12 offside with a fake snap count on fourth and one to gain a new set of downs. "DHL's" defense tightened up in the red zone, however, denying "Back That Pass Up" on their first three opportunities and coming inches away from

more than the other guy, plain and simple.

SR: Who do you think made the biggest difference out there on the field today?

TM: It was really a team effort, everyone did their part and stepped up when they needed to. The other teams understood that our defense was predicated on the pass rush and they did a good job neutralizing it by sending out offensive linemen into the flats and playing with mobile quarterbacks. We really forced all of our defensive linemen to play in different positions

New Book Offers Law School Exam Success Tips

By WILL BREWER '14
STAFF WRITER

Barry Friedman, a law professor here at NYU Law, and John Goldberg, a professor at Harvard Law, recently released a new book that should be of interest to 1Ls (and perhaps some 2 and 3Ls): Open Book: Succeeding on Exams from the First Day of Law School.

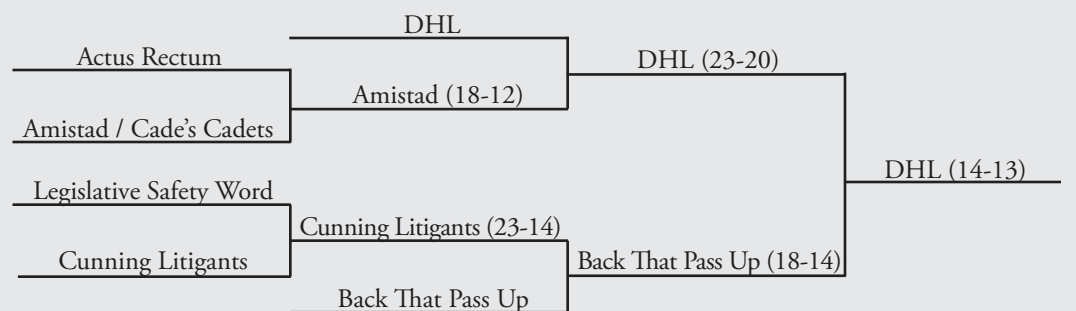
Based partly on Friedman's "pinball theory of exam taking," the two professors decided to write the book when a student remarked that the approach was both novel and helpful in preparing for exams for a 1L that really has no idea what to expect. Although many test prep authors would like students to believe otherwise, law school exam taking is really not rocket science, says Friedman. In his book, he lays out what he says are simple strategies for success.

The book comes with access

to a website filled with study aids, outlines, and other materials. Aside from the book, students can also buy access to a suite of practice exams with actual feedback from professors, including model answers and graded student exams.

So far, the book has received very positive reviews from faculty and students alike. You can go to the website openbooklaw.com to view some sample video clips that provide some helpful hints, as well as reviews for the book itself. Dissimilar from purchasing commercial outlines and aids, this book is intended to provide the tools, devoid of substantive doctrine, for exam taking. As scared 1Ls prepare for their first round of exams, this book will likely provide some confidence and peace of mind.

SLAP Playoff Bracket



to go down easily and scored a touchdown in the closing seconds of the first half, aided primarily by a mismatch in the secondary as "DHL" matched 5'6" Trevor Mauck '12 on "Back That Pass Up's" ridiculously tall Milad Sedeh '12. Unfortunately, "Back That Pass Up" was unable to convert on their two-point conversion and the score at halftime was 16-6 in favor of "DHL." "Back That Pass Up" started the second half with the ball and scored again on a deep ball to Sedeh over Mauck. After that touchdown, "DHL" changed their defensive strategy placing 6'1" Bromwich on Sedeh, which slowed down "Back That Pass Up's" offense. After trading blows on two normally staunch defenses, "Back

intercepting one of them. With 30 seconds left in the game, "Back That Pass Up's" last ditch effort on fourth and goal sailed high and "DHL" celebrated their first flag football championship in three years. I caught up with captain Trevor Mauck, after the game:

SR: Trevor, you just won the NYU SLAP Football League, how do you feel?

TM: Absolutely amazing. We came tantalizingly close our first two years and it would have really hurt to come this close again without bringing home the hardware.

SR: I understand you played the entire game on a severely twisted ankle, what motivated you to play through the pain?

TM: Heart. I wanted it

today and they did a great job adjusting.

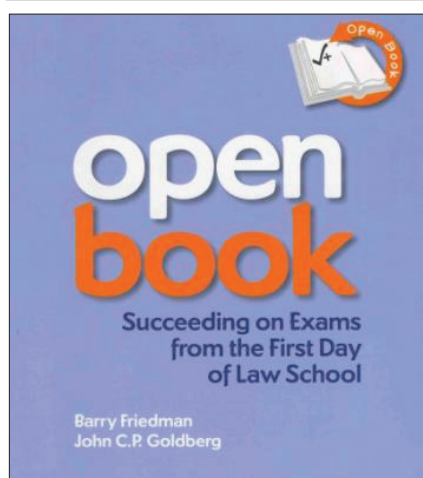
SR: What advice would you have for younger students looking to win a championship of their own?

TM: Girls are the key to victory in SLAP football. If you can find girls who are willing to get physical, rush the passer and can catch out of the backfield, it will open everything up for you going forward.

SR: I think that's great advice. What are you going to do now?

TM: I'm going to Disney-world!!!

Mauck also thanked Kenneth Adler, Benjamin Bartz, and Taylor Freeman for putting the season together and Barbri for financial support.



If this is how you feel studying for and taking exams, a new book from Professor Barry Friedman might be for you.

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The Case For Kindles: Covert Game of Thrones Enjoyment

BY LEIGHTON DELLINGER '12
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Remember 1L year when the Office of Career Services made us meet with them to revise our resumes? I met with Irene Dorzback and she told me to take “reading” out of my interest section. “All law students like to read. That’s why you’re here.” Turns out, she was right. Which is why I have a plea for all my friends in law school: Get a Kindle. You won’t regret it. They’re basically made for us.

I sense your resistance to this new-fangled contraption. (Ed. Note: I can sense your emotions days after this editorial has gone to print and you are reading it in the safety of your own home. We are connected through paper.



Coffee spills are no longer a problem for Leighton.

See the bit later on about my new obsession with sci-fi. (Also note: I know you read *The Commentator* because you blew up my spot at Tea Spot and now I have

think a Kindle is dumb because it doesn’t even have headphones but if it did, they wouldn’t be white and anyone wearing them wouldn’t automatically look like a

going to integrate some ebooks in the mix. Which books have I banished to my Kindle and which do I continue to accumulate so my dust has somewhere to sit and my shelf won’t look so lonely?

Coffee-prone books are officially Kindle-d — that’s all books that would ordinarily travel in my purse with me, including my train reading. The Kindle has these nifty little side buttons that turn the pages so I have officially retired my morning balancing act: (reading left side of the page), coffee in right hand, book left hand, (finish page), coffee in elbow crook, book-with-cover-folded-back in right hand, coffee left hand, (finally reading right hand side of the page ... inevitably and tragically finish right page), coffee into armpit crook,

shadow dancing on a monochromatic geometric shape. Instead, they would be boring grey and you would look like a boring law student listening to a boring audio book that you got for free from Audible.com while you walked to boring school.

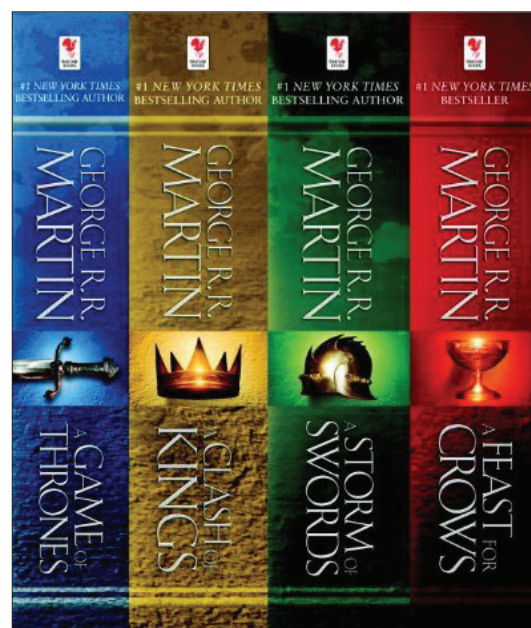
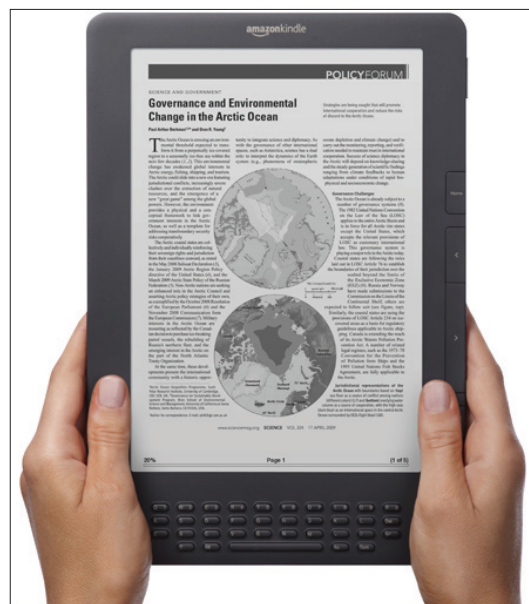
Not so boring now, huh? You saw the word “free” and you freaked. You immediately thought of Thai food or cupcakes and wondered how quickly you could get to Golding to grab a bite. Well, law student, not all wonderful free things make you fat. Some of them make you fun. (That includes audio books. Notice now that we’re functioning in a law school-only definition of “fun” where a collection of audio books makes you cooler and casual references to leisure reading are welcome cocktail-hour conversation.)

Ok, so back to why you should get a Kindle — first, audio books. Second, you don’t have to let go of your smelly obsession with used and found paperbacks. I struggled with this one at first. I love books. Real, actual books. I love the feel of them and the way you can tell the publishers sometimes make the pages look like what you’re reading. (Remember the empty pages in *The Road*? And the distinctive handwriting in *Harry Potter*?) And the way you can ... always manage to spill coffee on a brand-new hard cover? So I decided to keep my books. And keep buying new books. But I’m

oops spilled coffee on my suit and in my shoe? Why always in my shoe?, rebalance coffee in other armpit crook, rebalance body after an unfortunate train lurch, turn page, book successfully back in left hand, coffee in right hand. Repeat. Whew.

Now I hold my coffee in one hand (either hand, in fact) and my Kindle in the other. I turn the pages with just my thumb. I no longer have coffee in my shoes.

The other books I’ve Kindle-d are my embarrassing ones. See, e.g., the four-book bundle of *Game of Thrones*. I don’t generally look sassy (Remember the coffee? In my shoes?) but I will



Hide your sci-fi guilty pleasures with a Kindle.

never look even close to sassy engrossed in a 1,000-page tome of science fiction, borderline-pornographic, mostly-misogynistic fantasy ... awesomeness. I love *Game of Thrones*. I just also want to keep up the charade when I run into a professor at Think — if he asks, I’m catching up on my New Yorker subscription (only \$3 a month for a Kindle subscription). Or, if I’m really stretching it, reading the articles he assigned for class. Psych. I’m leisure reading and dragons are real and the Lannisters are up to their shenanigans again so I’ve realllllly got to get back to my Kindle.



Even with a new-age Kindle, you can retain the romanticism of Old World literature.

Comment

The Eager Reader

lost my favorite quiet study place to a swarm of loyal *Commentator* readers. I am equally livid and proud of this.) I know what you’re thinking, it’s not hipster to read on an electronic device that wasn’t christened by Steve Jobs. You want to get an old paperback from a hostel because that somehow makes the experience of reading more authentic. You

thecommentator

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Truth's Guide to Hitting on Random Strangers at the Library

By TRUTH BADER GINSBERG

Dear Truth,

I was studying in the library the other day, and I found myself sitting across from this really cute girl. I have no idea who she is; I've never seen her around before. 1L? 2L? LLM? Single? Not a clue. This girl could be engaged for all I know. But I was really intrigued, and we kept catching eyes. I wanted to talk to her but had no idea if that's even acceptable, let alone how to go about doing it. Maybe I'll never see her around again, but even if it's just for future reference — how do I hit on a random stranger in the law library?

A fellow 3L friend of mine is one of the most confident men I know. We're talking the type of dude who stops models on the street, asks for their phone number, and ... gets the digits. Real ones. I've witnessed

him in action in the library before. His advice in this situation: "Flash a smile. And eye contact; delayed eye contact is key. Play it cool, but every once in a while, catch her eye, then go back to working. At some point,

"Flash a smile. And eye contact; delayed eye contact is key. Play it cool, but every once in a while, catch her eye, then go back to working. At some point, crack a joke about her reading assignment and how exciting she makes it seem..."

crack a joke about her reading assignment and how exciting she makes it seem. [Ed. Note: *Awesome. Pure awesome.*] Then introduce yourself when you leave, and ask for her name. If you're feeling extra bold, give her your number on a piece of paper when you leave."

This guy is an expert, so I un-

derstand if his advice seems intimidating. But it's actually quite imminently followable. Think of the law library as if it were the friendliest bar you've ever been to. The odds are stacked in your favor in ways they just aren't elsewhere. First, nobody is really expecting you to hit on them, and thus it will be rare to find someone with their guard up; you're not going to run into many cold shoulders. Have you ever flat-out ignored or rebuffed

a fellow student's attempts at friendly conversation? No, you at least say hello. Second, you have a lot of common interests here that you might not have with people in the bar. And especially in this very moment, there's a lot of potential small talk to make — a veritable plethora of ways to strike up

a conversation. Outline fonts and formats! Famous SCOTUS dissents! The protein selections in Golding! Okay, not these. But you know. Other stuff.

Third, you're both working hard, and sitting still in one

of your plight to your benefit. You've got such an easy access point here! You're sitting across from this person for a few hours, both of you staring at the same Word and Gmail interfaces long enough to go

Comment

Habeas Coitus with Truth Bader Ginsberg

place for a prolonged period of time. This lovely lady actually has an incentive NOT to ignore you, because even if she has no interest in you or has a boyfriend of eight years or whatever, you provide a respite from work. Even the most random of introductions will provide a welcome study break. She's attached? Big deal. Worst thing that happens is you have a new person to greet on the Vanderbilt stairs between classes.

So use the commonality

crazy. If you're bored, thirsty, or hungry, this chickie probably is as well. So if you go grab a coffee, ask her if she wants anything or offer to bring her a cup. Or if you're there late and feeling really bold, see if she wants to get a beer before calling it a night. The library should enable more confidence than some random bar does. My dear diligent peers, you've been given an opportunity here. So turn on that swagger and take advantage of it.

Olsen Sister Recuperates from Cult in "Martha Marcy May Marlene"

By HANNAH BAKER
STAFF EDITOR

"Martha Marcy May Marlene," the first full-length film from director and writer Sean Durkin, follows Elizabeth Olsen's variously-named Martha in two inter-cut timelines. In the present, Martha has just escaped from an isolated and insular cult in the Catskills and is recuperating in the similarly isolated Connecticut vacation home of her sister Lucy (Sarah Paulson) and brother-in-law Ted (Hugh Dancy). In the past, we see Martha's experiences in the commune-like cult, led by John Hawkes's charismatic leader Patrick.

But the genius of the movie is that, while the viewers are able to think of Martha's experiences in this way — that she falls under the spell of a cult, escapes, and tries to reacclimatize to society — none of the characters even come close to framing Martha's story in the same way the viewers do. Martha is unwilling or unable to speak about the past to Lucy and Tim, whose closest guess to the truth is that Martha has left an abusive boyfriend. Martha herself, though she is plainly terrified of returning to the farmhouse where she lived for two years, remains seemingly unable to think of the cult from an outside perspective. Still accepting Patrick's vaguely Buddhist views on life, and her increasingly odd behavior that shows how the cult has changed her, Martha sometimes seems silent because she has no way to conceptualize her experiences. No one in the film says the word "cult." No one has access to the



Elizabeth Olsen has many names in the compelling and unsettling "Martha Marcy May Marlene."

same narrative that the viewers experience.

The movie also complicates the viewers' expectations, however, by hinting at the many similarities between Lucy and Ted's world of glamorous careers and too-big weekend mansions and the sinister controlling world of the cult. Both timelines take place in isolated rural locations near lakes and lush green woods. Both involve people telling Martha that she must find her role in life. When Martha has a hysterical fit of screaming during a party, Lucy gives her a sleeping pill — recalling the pill

that each woman in the cult is unknowingly given before her "special night" with Patrick. The women in the cult share clothes, all dressing from the same rack of dresses and faded t-shirts. Lucy lovingly bullies Martha into donning one of her dresses, to replace the ragged clothes she's brought with her. After Martha flees from the cult, Brady Corbet's lower-level member tracks her down in a diner, where he menacingly asserts power over her by taking a bite from her burger. In the next scene, Ted meets Lucy, who has just tracked Martha down

and is relaxing with a glass of wine. Without asking, he takes her wineglass and sips from it — a gesture showing intimacy, but also, in the context of the past scenes, a hint of a power struggle. The editing supports the parallels — the movie cuts effortlessly between the two timelines, a single gesture or movement often beginning in the present timeline and ending in the past.

Contrary to much of the discussion surrounding the film, which focuses on the supposed merging of memory, dream, and reality, the movie's narrative is

generally fairly clear (with the exception of one eerie scene near the end) on what's real and what's not. Martha herself may be losing her grip on reality, but there is no hint that her memories of the cult are anything but accurate. The movie's rejection of such easy ambiguity makes the lines it does draw between Martha's time in the cult and her time with her sister all the more compelling. "Martha Marcy May Marlene" makes the viewer uneasy, all the way to the deeply unsettling ending. But it is absolutely a movie that you should watch.

The State of Cinema: The Best of 2011 From Both Sides of Atlantic

“The Tree of Life,” “Mysteries of Lisbon” Take Top Honors as The Commentator’s Best Films



Brad Pitt plays a frustrated and harsh father in “The Tree of Life.”

BY THOMAS PRIETO '13
STAFF EDITOR

As this is my last column of the year, I have decided to spend it discussing what may perhaps be the best American film of the year, Terrence Malick’s “The Tree of Life,” and what may be the best European film to be released in the United States this year, Raúl Ruiz’s “Mysteries of Lisbon.”

Ruiz, who died in August at age 70, has long gone underappreciated, despite being extremely prolific and one of the best filmmakers of his generation. Ruiz directed over 110 films in his career and he still had more stories to tell as is evidenced by the four-and-a-half-hour-long, yet never dull, “Mysteries of Lisbon.”

Ruiz creates a dense and rich world full of princely orphans, identity-shifting priests, and drunken thieves through what can only be described as the most epic usage of the flashback in film history. There are flashbacks-within-flashbacks-within-flashbacks in this film.

Most of what occurs in the film is in some way related to João (João Luís Arrais), an orphaned

child who lives in a boarding school run by Father Denis (the incredible Adriano Luz). After suffering a seizure, João is visited by a woman that appears to be his mother. It is revealed that the woman, a member of the aristocracy, is his mother, but that her husband is not his father. Other seemingly peripheral characters like the pirate Alberto de Magalhães (the charismatic Ricardo Pereira), and the French widow Elisa de Montfort (Clotilde Hesme), play crucial roles in João’s

undoubtedly the most technically accomplished film of the year. For instance, Ruiz is able to condense all the feelings of a relationship fraught with forbidden love into one spectacular scene (available on the Apple Trailers website). João’s father is shown sitting on the floor next to his love, Angela de Lima. Both have the sorts of giggly expressions common of new couples. In a voiceover he explains that Angela began to receive him at her home while her disapproving father was away.

Suddenly, one of the maids knocks on the mostly glass door behind them and warns them that Angela’s father is arriving. João’s father quickly runs away as

tense classical music begins to play. João’s father explains that while at first their meetings were pure and fraternal, the veil of innocence soon began to pass. As he explains this, João’s father enters the room. The music stops. He walks toward Angela with a passionate look on his face. She leans in and they kiss. The music begins anew and the two lovers

fall off-camera, but the scene is not over. They remain off-camera for but a few seconds. Angela scared and unsure of what they are doing backs away from João’s father. He stands up and the music becomes even more fraught with danger as the two lovers give in to desire.

In many ways, “Mysteries of Lisbon” is a film about the way fiction works. Toward the end of the film, João becomes aware of all the love triangles, vendettas, and coincidences that have shaped his life. He begins to wonder if there is any reason to exist when his life is but the product of an absurdly orderly world and all the mysteries have been revealed. As film critic Ignaty Vishnevetsky put it, “if it were real, the neatness of fiction could drive a man to despair.” João travels the globe in an attempt to escape the neatness of fiction and ends up in a room that is identical to his bedroom as a child. However, before the film closes, one more mystery is presented: the unsolvable ending.

In “The Tree of Life” the contemporary world seems to be comprised of tall steel and glass buildings, men in couture suits, and an abundance of cell phones. However, it is Malick’s ideas about what the past, or more specifically the past as seen from the present, is like that are more interesting. The past of Jack (Sean Penn and Hunter McCracken), an architect in the present, but merely a child for most of the film, is partially seen through the lens of “Oedipus Rex.” Jack’s mother (Jessica Chastain) appears like a fairy tale goddess. She can literally glide through the air and is once depicted within a glass casket like the one found in “Snow White.”

Jack sees his father (Brad Pitt) as the villain of this fairytale. As his business ideas continue to fail, Jack’s father becomes increasingly frustrated and begins to take it out on his family. Although Jack’s father is responsible for some terrifying and truly nerve-wracking scenes, he is not just some sort of all-purpose villain. Jack’s father cares very much about his children and gave up a career as an artist in order to help provide for his family; or at least that’s what I think. Honestly, I’m not quite sure because “The Tree of Life” isn’t explicit about big moments. We

can make sense of some things by putting minor details together, but the film purposefully lacks major details. For instance, we know that Jack’s father smokes, despite the fact that we never see him smoking, because at one point he asks his son for a lighter, which he places on a desk next to a pack of cigarettes.

It is this focus on the small details that makes “The Tree of Life” a dazzling and unique motion picture. This focus on detail mimics the way the human mind remembers the past. Sure, we remember the major events, but often it is those small moments that have etched themselves in our mind. Jack remembers the DDT truck that sprayed all the children as they were playing on the porch; the incredibly private and embarrassing moment when he stole the neighbor’s negligee; and the Toscanini music his father played as he and his brothers ran around the house causing trouble. We are left to unconsciously piece together some of the larger details. Malick keeps this from being a strenuous activity by littering the film with so many details that our brains can’t help but put things together.

“The Tree of Life” elevates a family chamber drama to a cosmic scale. This, in part, is done by framing the story of Jack’s family as a creation myth. Near the beginning of the film, Malick takes 15 minutes away from the main narrative to show the creation of his universe. We are witness to among other things, the birth of the sun and what may be the first act of compassion. These grand moments are reflected in the stray, fleeting moments the film captures so well like the majestic scene in which Jack and his brothers chase their mother through the house while holding a lizard. The pattern the film follows in editing between these moments is not initially apparent (it is certainly not chronological), but it is clear that there is an underlying logic. It is going somewhere. Malick brings all his characters together for what must follow every creation myth: an apocalypse.

“The Tree of Life” is available on Blu-ray and DVD. “Mysteries of Lisbon” will be released on December 20 on Blu-ray and DVD.

Comment

The Man With a Name

life and are given just as much history as the seemingly principal character. The film structurally embraces this revelatory plot by using intricate camera movements (sometimes going so far as to move through walls!) to hide and reveal twists and secrets.

The camera in this film is fluid and the orchestration of movement so masterful, that this is



Although 270 minutes long, “Mysteries of Lisbon” is never dull.