

The Pitch

A 10 minute play by Greg Lam

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At rise: two young men face the audience. They are a writing team in the office of a movie studio executive, making a pitch. The audience is in the position of the studio boss. They are dressed casually, khaki shorts and plaid, or baseball caps, etc., in an attempt for bohemian cool. The pitch is a practiced, enthusiastic patter. They know how little time they have to make an impression. They can, if you wish, have visual aids such as low rent props or storyboard visuals to help illustrate their story.

Rory: So here's the pitch.

Mike: Well, it's all different now. It can't be the same.

Rory: We know that.

Mike: We can't do the exact same type of movie that we have been doing.

Rory: No way. No, sir-ee.

Mike: But we have to do something.

Rory: Something big.

Mike: The president said we have to get back to normal. Be strong.

Rory: So we HAVE to go back to making old school kick-butt, badass action flicks. It's the American way. Truth, justice, and summer blockbusters that star former rappers which gross 100 million in the opening weekend.

Mike: If we don't have the balls to get back to blowing up buildings for the sake of entertainment, they have won.

Rory: All we'd be left with is the namby-pamby French films.

Mike: Romantic comedies... Chick flicks...

Rory: And that Merchant-Ivory period shit.

Mike: Noooooo!

Rory: We can't do that. We can't.

Mike: That's what *they* want us to do. Don't let them win, man.

Rory: That's why we're pitching this, a tough action flick for tough times.

Mike: Kick-ass, patriotic-

Rory: But sensitive!

Mike: Sensitive, compassionate action flick. A "Die Hard" for the new era.

Rory: Bruce Willis would be so perfect!

Mike: The tag line: "Times are tough. Get tougher."

Rory: Do you see where we're going here?

Mike: Art imitates life, but better. Art supports life.

Rory: No compromises.

Mike: We have to go back to it.

Rory: We start with the New York City Skyline.

Mike: Pre-September 11. Special effects now.

Rory: Long view. Credits roll.

Mike: Then comes the plane.

Rory: Way in the distance. To be sensitive.

Mike: And it slams into the first tower!

Rory: Long view. No visible blood or anything.

Mike: But there's panic. There's mayhem, debris. People run.

Rory: And the second plane-

Mike: BUT, this isn't our world.

Rory: It's better!

Mike: It has Bruce Willis.

Rory: He's a superhero.

Mike: Like Superman.

Rory: But not actually Superman, unless we can strike a deal with the comics people.

Mike: Call him "Atlas".

Rory: He's like biblical or something.

Mike: So Atlas takes on the second plane-

Rory: Rips it off the collision course, steers it away from the second target, and gently lands it in the ocean.

Mike: Where his superfriends come on board, and take out the hijackers.

Rory: Superpowers, special effects...

Mike: We'll call them... "The Sentinels."

Rory: Or is that already taken? Wasn't that a UPN series?

Mike: We'll think of something.

Rory: But it'll be cool.

Mike: Get the *Matrix* guy to do fight choreography.

Rory: Keanu Reeves could be another superhero.

Mike: So Atlas goes to the first tower, and puts out the fire. The towers don't collapse.

Rory: The speedy guy goes in and helps everyone get out. Call him "The Blur".

Mike: Played by Cuba Gooding, Jr.

Rory: Cause people still remember that *Jerry Maguire* football thing.

Mike: "Show me the money!"

Rory: Then we have the Batman type-

Mike: Matt Damon, y'know? Cause he's smart, right? It's like *Good Will Hunting*...
in tights.

Rory: He sees the other planes on his monitors.

Mike: Atlas goes and saves those planes.

Rory: And there are others. There's a whole *X-Men* thing going on.

Mike: A real team. This is an ensemble piece.

Rory: Plus, we'll have a Wonder Woman type.

Mike: We gotta have a Wonder Woman type. I mean, we have to have some sort of love
interest, right?

Rory: Plus the costumes...

Mike: Remember that TV series? Linda Carter?

Rory: (sings) "Fighting for your rights.... In her satin tights. And the good old red, white
and blue!"

Mike: We'll have like three of those, too. We'll have a whole *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*
meets *Xena, Warrior Princess* vibe going on.

Rory: And so our heroes. They evacuate the towers. They put out the fires.

Mike: Before... Well. You know.

Rory: And it's done. The bastards have killed some people, but our guys have saved more.

Mike: And we'll have a scene or two of firemen and policemen saving people too.

Rory: For balance.

Mike: They discover something.

Rory: Our heroes, that is. Not the firemen.

Mike: Of course. They're doing detective work.

Rory: This time, they have the hijackers.

Mike: They discover these guys are not human.

Rory: They're aliens.

Mike: Special effects. Special effects.

Rory: The whole *Star Trek* thing.

Mike: See, this isn't our world.

Rory: Alternate universes are attacking us.

Mike: So now we got the *Matrix* audience. Pretty cool, right?

Rory: So the superheroes take a vote.

Mike: People have died.

Rory: They need revenge. We need revenge.

Mike: They go to the world where the alien terrorists came from-

Rory: They can do that. Big science something or other.

Mike: And they kick the crap out of them.

Rory: Smoking craters.

Mike: Teach them a lesson, right?

Rory: And it's only 30, 40 minutes into the movie.

Mike: Action packed! Big national catharsis thing!

Rory: But sensitive. We'll put in character development somewhere in the middle.

Mike: But there's a catch! Get this.

Rory: This whole thing was a trap.

Mike: Misleading clues.

Rory: We walked right in.

Mike: They are clever bastards. They have mind control alien voodoo or something.

Rory: We revenged the wrong dang alternate universe.

Mike: And we've pissed people off.

Rory: Lots of people.

Mike: All the other alternate universes.

Rory: They're scared as shit. They get together a broad coalition.

Mike: And they go after us. En masse.

Rory: They call it "Operation Authorized Storm"

Mike: Their fleets come in.

Rory: Spaceships from a thousand different worlds!

Mike: Excuse me? Did somebody say *Star Wars*?

Rory: The alien fleet blocks out the sun, it's so massive. It's like a swarm of starships. A storm cloud.

Mike: Really cool special effects.

Rory: And they start kicking the crap out of us.

Mike: But not too graphically, of course.

Rory: Not yet.

Mike: And they override our radios, our TVs.

Rory: They send us a message.

Mike: And it's a hell of a shame. All this destruction.

Rory: Yeah. But it's one fuck of a movie.

Mike: I mean that's what we do, bro.

Rory: We're Americans. This is what we do.

Mike: This is our house!

Rory: Our house!

Mike: But we'll donate money to like firefighters or something.

Rory: Yeah. That'll be nice.

Mike: So these alien ships.

Rory: We'll give them an evil name.

Mike: Like "The Alliance of Malice".

Rory: Yeah, so they broadcast a message.

Mike: They demand for us to quit harboring the terrorists that kicked the crap out of the alternate dimension.

Rory: That's what they call our heroes.

Mike: Irony, baby!

Rory: It's deep. It's a deep movie. Like *Saving Private Ryan* deep.

Mike: Our world's governments, they want to stand up to them.

Rory: We're not going to portray our government as bad, of course.

Mike: But the overpowering force of "Authorized Storm"...

Rory: Well, we can't say no. We can't.

Mike: So it's all up to our superheroes.

Rory: The weight of the world...

Mike: Remember, our guy's called "Atlas". Pretty cool, huh?

Rory: And so now what do our heroes do?

Pause. They look out expectantly. Slowly, the excitement drops from their faces.

Rory: Well... We're not exactly sure.

Mike: We haven't worked it out yet.

Rory: I mean, with things as they are-

Mike: It's hard if you try and figure out what people want.

Rory: We could do the *Die Hard* "we-kick-the-crap-out-of-everyone" ending. We could do the *Butch and Sundance* ending.

Mike: "Let's go get them, guys". And then BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM.

Rory: Kind of a downer, that one.

Mike: There's always the *Independence Day* ending.

Rory: Except without the lame "computer virus" thing.

Mike: We're kind of in a pickle.

Rory: It's tricky. A tricky pickle.

Mike: A quandary.

Rory: "Quandary". Ooh. Great word.

Mike: It's not like this is easy, y'know?

Rory: Who knows what the world's gonna look like in a month?

Mike: Or a year?

Rory: But it's already this great movie already, right?

Mike: You know, you could just slap "to be continued" right there. Bam!

Rory: (Sniffs the air) I smell a sequel!

Mike: Oh yeah, instant sequel.

Rory: It worked for *Back to the Future*, right?

Mike: Or, we could just call it "Episode 4", then we'd have space for sequels AND prequels.

Rory: You ain't kidding.

Mike: Unless George Lucas has copyright on that marketing trick.

Rory: Who knows? He just might.

Mike: But whatever. We can work on the details later.

Rory: It'll look great on a "Burger King" cup.

Mike: It's the American way. It's like a tribute or something.

Rory: It's looking at the world through a funhouse mirror.

Mike: It'll be really cool.

Rory: It's just that we don't know how it's supposed to end.

Mike: No. Not... Not yet.

The End