

## ***A Nominee Toasts His Good Fortune***

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(Carpetbagger)

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**Highlight:** Raise a glass of tequila to Demian Bichir -- that's what he'd want you to do.

### **Body**

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"I'm already drunk!" Demian Bichir announced when he called the Bagger from Mexico City on Tuesday morning, just a few hours after becoming a best actor **nominee** for his turn as an undocumented immigrant and gardener in "A **Better** Life."

"I have the best selection of tequila in this house," Mr. Bichir continued. "And it's gone."

No wonder he was celebrating: Mr. Bichir's nomination was something of a surprise, though he did also earn a nod from the Screen Actors Guild. But "**A Better Life**," the story of an immigrant father and son set in East Los Angeles and directed by Chris Weitz, was not widely seen. Mr. Bichir's nomination may help it find an audience. "We lost the first round at the box office," he said, "and we have this new chance. We've been getting so much attention our hopes are growing and growing that people will be going to iTunes and Netflix and downloading the film."

In taking on the role and in discussing his nomination, Mr. Bichir made sure to mention the 11 million undocumented immigrants who live in the United States, and whose struggle - to fit in, to count -- he hoped would be encapsulated by the film.

"It's not a political issue, it's a human issue," he said. "It's just stupid to think that we don't need these 11 million human beings around us. They're not a new enemy, as many politicians call them. They help our lives to be easier and happier every day. There's not an activity in everyday life where an undocumented worker isn't involved."

That includes, in some cases, Oscar voting, the Bagger told Mr. Bichir. Some Academy members have admitted that they have their household staff help them fill out ballots. "No way," he said. "No way! Really? That is crazy. I only hope they see everyone's films, and they are fair."

Mr. Bichir, a big star from a in Mexico and who now calls Los Angeles home, was in Mexico City rehearsing a play, an adaptation of the Kevin Spacey film "**Swimming With Sharks**." He has Mr. Spacey's role, that of a venomous Hollywood agent, and his brother Bruno will direct. The play has a short run, and Mr. Bichir cannot afford cancellations, even for awards ceremonies, but he has a ready understudy: his other brother, Odiseo. "No one else could do that but a real brother," he said.

In the meantime he is looking forward to meeting his fellow **nominees**, stars like George Clooney and Brad Pitt. "I haven't met anybody," Mr. Bichir said, "I'm going to go to the SAG ceremony this Sunday, and I hope to see some of them there and tell them how much I admire their work."

And perhaps have a drink with them. He prefers his tequila straight.

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"And if it's silver, that's my thing," he said. "Hopefully they have some of the good stuff. I might bring my flask. I can't trust catering in any other place. You gotta bring your own."

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