

# Top Chef Recap: Limp Biscuits

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SnoopK8

December 14, 2013

Hello Trashies!

This is SnoopK8 filling in for J-Mo, and like Andi's replacement in *Devil Wears Prada*, I know I have some big shoes to fill. Please don't throw things at me.

Anyway, let's get to it, shall we?

Previously on *Top Chef*:

Restaurant Wars! Travis Masian impressed everyone with his Applebee's Steps of Service™ and PhillyDick Nick was the winner with his David Chang-endorsed "most delicious sauce." On the other team, Justin DevilBear boosted morale in the kitchen by screaming profanities at everyone and Prince Protégé Sara presided over a dining room shitshow that sent her retro bitchface back to the Little Apple. (Or, more correctly, back to an undisclosed location in the bowels of N'awlins with all the other losers.)



**Adieu, Rag**

We open at the Chef Chateau where Illegal Carlos is telling Justin he seemed really nervous during the elimination and Justin agrees, saying the decision could have gone either way. He interviews that he believes the judges made the correct choice in sending Sara home because it keeps him there. That's so weird, because I could have sworn he would have been in favor of sending himself home. Travis comes in with wet hair and two bottles of lube water and sits down to put on his socks.



Everyone greets him heartily and Carlos says he's going to hire Travis as the GM of his next restaurant. Which I'm sure any chef who's trained in the kitchen for years is dying to hear.

Travis interviews that it's great to finally be accepted as just one of the guys and not the Town Gay. He says he grew up in a place where homosexuality is not accepted and he once worked at a place where the chef pulled him aside and told him no gays were allowed in his kitchen. So he's super happy to have found the Bravo Network where he can Be Himself and cook his food in front of the world. He's also thrilled to be making friendships that will last a lifetime... or at least until the next Quickfire.

The cheftestants arrive at the Top Chef Kitchen where Padma is hanging out with *Top Chef Masters* alum Hubert Keller and an assload of Dunkin' Donuts coffee. Or I guess I should say Crunkin' Cronuts so as not to promote the pussy.



### **Scar had to sew her own dress, apparently**

Nina StraightOuttaCompton says she loves her some coffee and on a normal day, she can drink 15 espressos by herself. In other words: don't fuck with Nina.

**Quickfire:** make a dish using coffee in 30 minutes. The winner gets immunity and \$10,000! Second Chance Stephanie says all her shit is old and she could certainly buy a lot of stuff with \$10K. Wow, between her and Justin, this show should be called *Top Chef Masters of the Obvious*. Atypical Shirley says if she wins, she will buy a new air conditioner even though she knows that's not the most exciting thing ever.

Nick is making a coffee cardamom sauce and warns that you have to be careful using coffee in a savory dish because it can overtake everything. Corn-Fed Carrie is making a coffee crepe with coffee custard, which sounds pretty fucking amazing.

Steph is also making a crepe, but hers has bacon jam and sweet potatoes and "something else," she's not sure what yet. She interviews that Quickfires are her nightmare and there is always a pivotal moment where she makes the wrong decision. Oh Steph, be positive. You're smart enough, you're good enough and doggone it, people like you. Well, maybe not enough to put you on *Top Chef* the first time around, but you're here now, and that's all that matters.

Carlos is making a macadamia coffee sponge cake and uses it to give us some backstory about his wife. He saw her out one night when he first came to the U.S. and asked her in Spanish if she was going to be his wife. Twenty years later, they are married with two kids and she makes his coffee every morning. Yay for young love.



**If you marry me, you get to wait on me every day for the rest of your life**

Brian Huskey is taunting the *Top Chef* gods by making a coffee risotto. He knows that risotto is never a good call on *Top Chef*, but having won two back-to-back Quickfires, he feels that “you have to put your balls out there.” Oh hell no. Please keep your balls in your pants, Huskey.

Nina interviews that Nick is her biggest competition and that he is going to make it to the finale. I don’t know about that, but Nina can afford to be magnanimous about her inferiors.

Travis is up first with sockeye salmon with coffee ponzu and mini-penises (penii?).



Karrie’s kool koffee kustard has kandied koffee beans and kokoa nibs. Keller likes the crunch.



Padma can't believe Brian tried to make risotto in 30 minutes and he admits that he is sweating profusely. Sweat adds a certain *je ne sais quoi* to the dish, no?



No.

Hubert calls Carlos' 30-minute sponge cake "pretty adventurous."



By "adventurous," he means it looks like an actual sponge

Padma agrees that Nick's salmon certainly contains a lot of coffee. Isn't that the whole point of the challenge? Shut up, Scar.



Atypical Shirley has made an atypical coffee-crust tenderloin with garlic-coffee puree.



Steph's crepe seems to have come out okay, and it has what she calls "bacon and coffee ham jam."



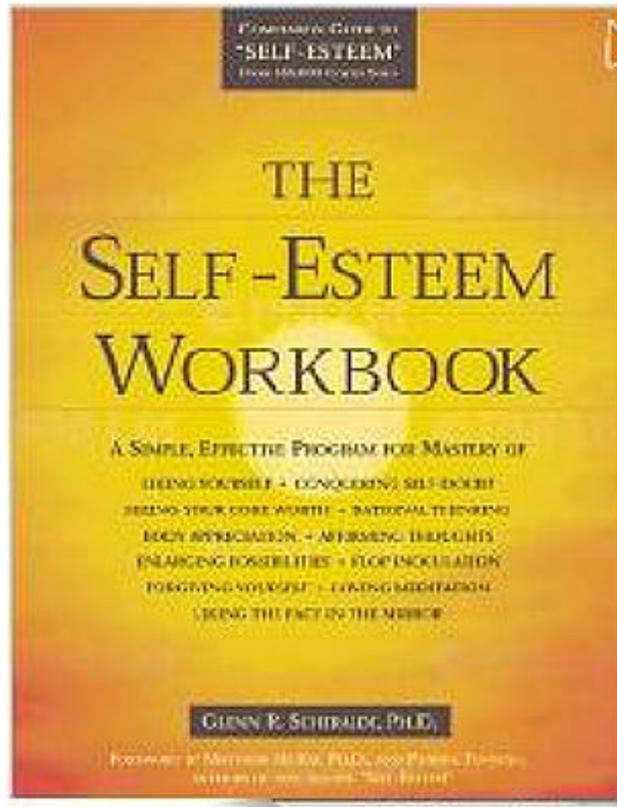
Padma and Hubert deem it "interesting," which Stephanie immediately interprets as "embarrassing" and a "disaster."

## Someone needs a copy of this

Time for the reckoning. On the bottom, we have Brian's balls risotto because the judges couldn't taste the coffee flavor and Nick's salmon because the paste had an unpleasant texture. Nick interviews that, "Someone has to be on the bottom. It might as well be me. Again." Okay, Charlie Brown. Did you also get a bag of rocks for Halloween?

On top we have Shirley's coffee garlic tenderloin because it was surprising and really great. Carrie's dish really "spoke coffee" and was very satisfying, while Stephanie's crepe had good flavor elements. Stephanie says sometimes you get ideas in your head and it's not the worst idea to follow them. She should be a motivational speaker.

And the winnah is...Shirley!



## V for Victory and air conditioners

Time for the Elimination Challenge. This week's Random "Celebrity" Guest Judge is New Orleans native and actor Anthony Mackie, whom I've never heard of, but that doesn't mean anything. Stephanie helpfully tells us that he was in *8 Mile* and that he is a "studmuffin."



### **Apparently he also thinks he is a studmuffin**

8 Mile Mackie says as an actor, he travels a lot and when he comes home, he loves to eat comfort food. His favorite place in town to do so is Dooky Chase's, which is owned by 94-year-old Leah Chase, whom we met earlier in the season.

So the challenge is to "make a dish inspired by food you eat at home." They will get \$275 to shop, have two hours to cook today and one hour tomorrow to finish up at Dooky Chase's. Then they will serve the meal to the judges and Leah Chase and her family.

At the store, Justin, who was Born on a Bayou, says he loves smothered squirrel with rice and gravy, but he is going to substitute chicken thighs for squirrel. Thank goodness, because I really don't want to have to see Padma pick squirrel fur out of her teeth.

Back at the Top Chef Kitchen, Justin tells Nina he's making a smothered chicken fricassee type of dish and it was the first dish he learned to cook. Nina casually remarks that hopefully he won't screw it up because it's so close to home and it means a lot. I approve of Nina's psychological warfare. For her dish, Nina is making a spicy curry chicken that reminds her of home in St. Lucia. She uses a knife to wack the crap out of a coconut, once again implying that she will cut a bitch if she has to.



### **Your head could be next**

Gnick's making gnocchi, also known as gnudi, and also known as "nudie" in Nick's house because his daughter likes to get nekkid or something. I don't know, I just feel like that's a little TMI for TV, but we can let the school psychologist sort that out in 12 years or so.

Stephanie grew up eating mac and cheese and chicken nuggets because her family doesn't cook. She is making bread and mussels in a pickled pepper-tomato broth. Carlos is making pork shanks wrapped in banana leaves and will be using a pressure cooker.

Shirley's pounding dough on a table and Steph asks how long she's going to be because she doesn't want to cut herself on the wildly shaking table. Shirley says she's almost done but her next motion is going to also be really annoying. Cut to Shirley hacking up some pork with a cleaver.



I was hoping for one of them to throw down over this, but everyone this season is so polite and easy-going. It's like *Top Chef Canada*. That's the problem with getting rid of all the douches early.

Daddy Tom comes in to harass them while Travis is making biscuits for his biscuits and gravy dish. Daddy Tom interrogates him about using buttermilk in the biscuits, which he isn't. Then Travis launches into a memory of his grandfather who told him if there are no lumps in the gravy, he didn't make it right. Too bad Granddad didn't slip anything in there about how to cook a biscuit properly, but I guess I'm getting ahead of myself.

Brian tells Tom he's making New York strip steaks in honor of his dad who doesn't really cook, but grills. He is using his mom's marinade and hopes the dish will honor both of his parents. He says the secret is the sugar in the marinade caramelizing on the grill that the kitchen will definitely have.

Cooking Day One is over and everyone returns to the house, where something smells delicious!



### **It's Emeril!**

Emeril Lagasse has sneaked in to make his mom's *caldo verde* which looks basically like kale soup. Shirley calls him "Uncle Emeril" and they chat about homey dishes. Brian interviews that his dad recently had three strokes and he feels guilty for not being around and I want to make fun of him for using the SickParent™ card, but then he breaks down crying and I kind of feel bad. (Shut up, it's Christmastime.)

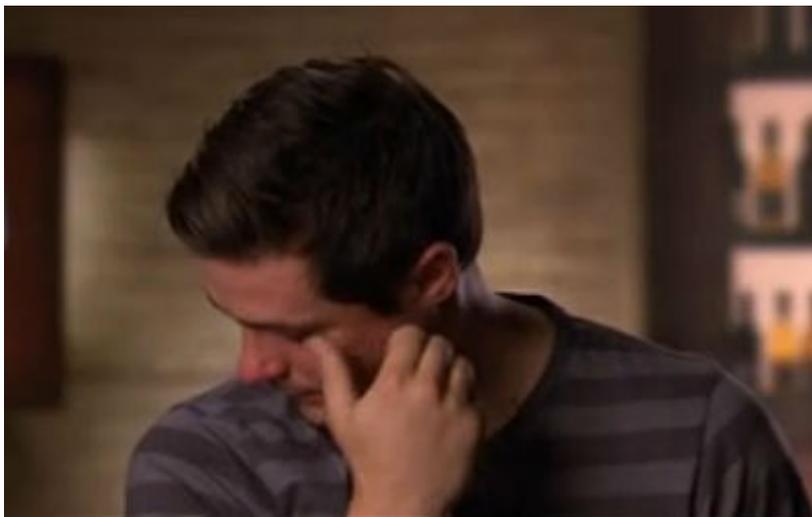
Emeril toasts them all then leaves them to discuss what three foods they would want if they were stuck on an island for the rest of their lives. Nick says he would want bread, butter and something French, which I think is referring to wine. (Or it could just be because I would want wine if it were me.) Stephanie chooses mussels, bread and cheese and Justin says he would pick champagne, caviar and tacos. I like that, except maybe I would substitute oysters for caviar. Tacos would be great for the champagne hangover.

Next day, Nina's on the phone with her grandma and says she is homesick.



### **That phone is older than Nina's grandma**

Also homesick and bawling like a little girl? Nick.



He says all he wants in the world is to go home and cook for his wife and kids. Because apparently he's been deployed in Afghanistan fighting the Taliban for the past two years. Or, you know, drinking hurricanes and eating amazing food in New Orleans for AT MOST a month. Shut up, Nick.

Crunch time at Dooky Chase's. Nick says he needs to cook his rice perfectly because although it's "super easy," super easy always gets people sent home from *Top Chef*. Brian realizes there is no grill to cook his steaks so he has to do them in skillet. He hopes the marinade will pull him through. Travis is worried about his biscuits. His tester biscuits turned out great, but today he only has one chance to make them perfect.

Shirley has immunity so she's taking a risk by making a traditional dish that not everyone will understand, but it's like a piece of home for her. Nick's still whining, saying now is the time that you have to not just execute, but also perform and he is not doing that. He is making something "really, really, really humble." Kind of like his bragging.

Travis' biscuits look great on the outside, but uh-oh, they are raw on the inside.



**Yum**



**Or not**

He hopes that if he covers them with gravy no one will notice. I'm sure that will work.

In the dining room, Leah Chase flirts with Emeril and tells them she started out as a waitress but ended up cooking in the kitchen at Dooky Chase's because no one knew what the hell they were doing.

The first three to serve are Carlos, Brian and Travis.

Padma drools over the "richness of Carlos' pork," which is surprising since Carlos seems a little young for her. 8 Mile Mackie is using his tortilla to wipe up the remnants of the dish, so I guess it's a success.



The judges lament the lack of charcoal flavor in Brian's steak, but whaddya gonna do. No grill = no grilled flavor.



They all like Travis' gravy, but the raw biscuits are a big fail. Emeril says if you're gonna serve biscuits at this table, they'd better be spot-on.



Crybaby Nick is up next. He's frazzled in the kitchen because he misses his family so damn much and he has "so much going into this dish." Like sweat and tears. Literally. Gross. Everyone seems to like his gnocchi/gnudi though. Padma says it melts in her mouth and 8 Mile

wishes he were Nick's daughter.



Shirley also tears up when she presents her dish, but everyone likes it.



Stephanie presents her dish and explains how she and her boyfriend go mussel picking in the summer. Everyone likes the unusual pickled pepper broth.



Meanwhile, Leah Chase compares 8 Mile to Ray Charles who also loves (loved? Is he still alive?) red beans which pretty much has nothing to do with anything, so maybe she is getting senile. (Kidding.)

Back to the food. Justin's chick-assee came out just the way he wanted, but the judges aren't so impressed. 8 Mile wants more gravy and the others think it's too salty.



Nina's curried chicken with a side of fried dough is a hit, with Hubert Keller wishing he had a whole big bowl of it.



Everyone loves Carrie's asparagus-smothered egg which looks NASTY to me, but I am from upstate NY so what do I know.



This week's interstitial has Daddy Tom and 8 Mile reminiscing about eating potted meat on a fishing trip. Daddy Tom was turned off by the "mechanically separated meat" and they all laugh heartily. Hardy har har.

In the Stew Room, the chefs agree that going home on this challenge would be devastating, unlike all the other challenges when it would be awesome.

The TV of Truth comes on and Daddy Tom says they all did a great job. They all cooked from the heart and the food was absolutely delicious. Emeril says it was an awesome day all around. They especially enjoyed Carlos' pork (particularly Padma, amirite?), Steph's mussels and Carrie's aspara-egg. Padma mentions Travis' "wonderful gravy" and Travis says it's either good or bad that they didn't say anything about his biscuits. They also praise Brian's *jus*, Shirley's noodles and Nick's gnocchi. Wow, maybe no one will get sent home. Hahahaha.

Padma slinks in to ask for Nick, Stephanie and Carlos. They are nervous until she tells them they are the favorites.



Nick says he'd have been "flipping tables" had he been sent home for making something he knows he can make perfectly. Someone needs a Xanax.

Steph says she probably shouldn't even eat the mussels that she picks with her boyfriend but she does anyway. Daddy Tom says the combo of pickled peppers and tomato was brilliant.

Everyone also loved Carlos' dish, but Emeril wishes he had served some tequila with it.

The winner is Nick, but 8 Mile tells him he needs to take the drama down a notch. He says Nick almost gave HIM an aneurysm and he needs to relax. In a talking head, Nick says it was a good day for his family and the myriad sacrifices he's had to make to go on reality TV were worth it even though he didn't win money or even a shitty bottle of Terlato wine.

Padma asks them to send back Travis, Brian and Justin.



Once assembled, Padma tells them it was a difficult decision and they had to judge on the finer nuances, such as serving a COMPLETELY RAW biscuit. They make Brian feel worse about the lack of grill by saying he really needed that wood or charcoal flavor to make it successful. They suggest that he use a short rib next time, although it's kind of stupid, because he had no way of knowing ahead of time there would be no grill in a RESTAURANT. Daddy Tom says there was nothing WRONG with his dish, it just lacked oomph.

Travis, on the other hand, says he wasn't happy with his biscuit and admits it was too hot in the kitchen to cut the butter in properly. Then he launches into yet another story about his dad and biscuits and gravy and I'm really starting to wonder if biscuits don't have some kind of deeper psychological meaning to him.

Justin's on the hot seat next and 8 Mile wants to know why he would make that dish for someone from south Louisiana if it's not his strongest dish. Justin argues that he's made the dish lots of times – mostly in the Niagara Falls area – he just hasn't made it *lately*.

In the deliberations, Daddy Tom says Travis should have used really cold butter, although the judges do all praise his gravy. Tom then castigates Justin in absentia for not timing the dish well enough to keep the rice from soaking up all the sauce. But the losah is...Travis and his raw daddy-issue biscuits. He's gracious in his bow-out, saying "it's alright. You live and die by the biscuit." That's some existential shit, you guys.

Daddy Tom says Travis knew the second his dish went out that it would send him home. In his exit interview, Travis cries and is super cute, saying at least he can be totally open about Who He Is and now he knows he can throw down with the best of them.

Okay, I've never actually watched *Last Chance Kitchen* but I guess there is a first time for everything.

Travis says it's not his time to leave and Last Chance Kitchen will be his redemption. Louis interviews that Travis lasted two more challenges than he did, so T played the game better. HOWEVER, Louis is here to beat Travis. (In case you were wondering.)

Travis shows up in his funky Colorado style socks and is greeted by Daddy Tom, who trolls him about being a “self-proclaimed” expert on Asian food, when in actuality he kind of sucks at making Asian food.



So today’s challenge is to make a dish with three of the following Asian ingredients:

Tripe

Sea Cucumber

Dried Skrimps

Chicken Feet

Duck Feet

Chinese Sausage

Squid

Pork Tongue

Throw in some kale and quinoa and that would be what they serve me in hell. The boys have 15 min to shop at the Asian market and 45 min to cook.

Louis’ wife is Korean so he thinks he has it in the bag, but of course Travis’ boyfriend is Asian so he thinks HE has the advantage. Travis says he needs to win so that Daddy Tom knows that he is not just some arrogant little 27-year-old who doesn’t know his shit.

Louis will be making a tripe dish and Travis is making bitter melon soup with squid cakes. Speaking of bitter melons, annoying Sara won’t shut up from the sidelines with her running commentary on what SHE would do. Shut up, Sara.

Time for judging. Daddy Tom says Travis did a nice job on the soup and it’s not as bitter as he’s had in the past. He says that both dishes were really good and they did a lot with difficult ingredients in 45 minutes. He adds that it was a tough decision, but he has to go with the one that had the most flavor, and that is Louis’ tripe. Louis is the winner.

Travis says he is not angry because at least he lost on a difficult dish. He says that Daddy Tom may still think he is an arrogant 27-year-old, but at least he knows that Travis knows his stuff 80% of the time. Aim high, Travis.

Okay then. That concludes our episode. What did you guys think? It's pretty clear that Travis should have gone home since raw biscuits are a pretty big fuck-up. Is it me, or is this season one of the most blah seasons ever? Everyone is mostly likeable and there are no big assholes for me to hate on. Even Justin is only like a 3 on the Josie Scale of Irritating. Oh well, maybe someone will have a huge meltdown next week.

Thanks so much for reading, I hope I was able to get you through until J-Mo returns.

Have a great weekend.

xoxo,  
SnoopK8

PS: Since Kitteh Porn is mandatory around here, here's some holiday cheer:



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