

Win, lose, draw: An Oscar rundown

By Kam Williams
Sentinel-Voice

Despite having garnered a whopping 13 nominations, Oscar night is going to be a big disappointment for fans of *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* which will only win a few times and just in minor categories. Instead, the evening will belong to *Slumdog Millionaire* which I predict will win Best Picture and Best director, netting an impressive 7 Academy Awards overall, despite the fact that it isn't up for anything in the acting categories.

The 81st Annual Academy Awards, hosted by Hugh Jackman at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood, is set to air this Sunday, February 22 on ABC-TV at 8 p.m. Below, first I predict the winner in each category. Next, I say which among the nominees is actually the most deserving. And because so many great movies and performances are invariably overlooked, I also recognize several among those snubbed who were certainly worthy of Oscar consideration.

Best Picture

Will Win: *Slumdog Millionaire*
Slumdog is the prohibitive favorite. Benjamin Button has a puncher's chance of a surprise knockout, although *Milk* is actually the second best of the bunch.

Deserves to Win: *Slumdog Millionaire*
Overlooked: *The Dark Knight*, *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*, *The Secret Life of Bees*, *Burn after Reading*

Best Director

Image

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Best Actor in a Sopa Opera — Bryton McClure, "The Young and the Restless"

Best Actress in a Sopa Opera — Debbi Morgan, "All My Children"

Best Director in a Dramatic Series — Ernest Dickerson, "Lincoln Heights — The Day Before Tomorrow"

Best Director in a Comedy Series — Kevin Sullivan, "30 Rock — MILF Island"

Best Screenplay for a Dramatic Series — Shonda Rhimes, "Grey's Anatomy: Freedom Part 1 & 2"

Best Screenplay for a Comedy Series — Erica D. Montolfo, "The Game: White Coats and White Lies" **News/Information Se-**

Will Win: Danny Boyle (*Slumdog Millionaire*)

In a category ordinary coupled with Best Picture, Boyle is the obvious pick, unless the Academy opts to recognize Fincher (*Benjamin Button*) for his body of work.

Deserves to Win: Danny Boyle

Overlooked: Christopher Nolan (*The Dark Knight*), Woody Allen (*Vicky Cristina Barcelona*), Gina Prince-Bythewood (*The Secret Life of Bees*), Joel and Ethan Coen (*Burn after Reading*)

Best Actor

Will Win: Sean Penn (*Milk*)

This is a difficult category to handicap this year, because Mickey Rourke is certainly the sentimental favorite, having revived his career by overcoming a host of personal problems similar to the character he portrayed in *The Wrestler*. Plus, he's coming into the contest with all the momentum, having won the Golden Globe. But I say the Academy wises up and rewards the more deserving Sean Penn, even though he already has an Oscar on his mantle.

Deserves to Win: Sean Penn

Overlooked: Heath Ledger (*The Dark Knight*), Dev Patel (*Slumdog Millionaire*), Javier Bardem (*Vicky Cristina Barcelona*)

Best Actress

Will Win: Kate Winslet
Winslet wins because the Anglophilic Academy prefers to pick Brits, especially actress. Kate's the only English actress nominated, so she wins. It's as simple as

ries or Special — "In Conversation: Michelle Obama Interview"

Talk Series — "The View"

Reality Series — "American Idol 7"

Variety Series or Special — "An Evening of Stars: Tribute to Smokey Robinson"

Children's Program — "Dora The Explorer"

Best Performance in a Children's Series or Special — Keke Palmer, "True Jackson"

Music Categories
Best Male Artist — Jamie Foxx

Best Female Artist — Beyonce

Best New Artist — Jennifer Hudson

Best Duo, Group or Collaboration — Jennifer

that.
Deserves to Win: Melissa Leo (*Frozen River*)

Overlooked: Sally Hawkins (*Happy-Go-Lucky*), Rebecca Hall (*Vicky Cristina Barcelona*), Freida Pinto (*Slumdog Millionaire*)

Best Supporting Actor

Will Win: Heath Ledger (*The Dark Knight*)

I predicted this outcome when *The Dark Knight* was released way back in July, although the late Heath Ledger really belongs in the lead actor category, given how his spellbinding performance as *The Joker* overshadowed that of Christian Bale in the title role.

Deserves to Win: Heath Ledger

Overlooked: Brad Pitt (*Burn after Reading*), Tom Cruise (*Tropic Thunder*)

Best Supporting Actress

Will Win: Penelope Cruz (*Vicky Cristina Barcelona*)

Penelope prevails even though she wasn't even the best actress in *Vicky Cristina*. Here's why she'll still win: Viola Davis and Amy Adams split votes because they're nominated for the same movie (*Doubt*). Davis also splits votes with Taraji Henson (*Benjamin Button*) because they're both Black. And Marisa Tomei's chances are hurt by the fact that she already has an Oscar.

Deserves to Win: Viola Davis (*Doubt*)

Overlooked: Danai Jekesai Gurira (*The Visitor*), Alicia Keys (*The Secret Life of Bees*), Frances McDormand (*Burn after Reading*)

Best Original Screenplay

Hudson, featuring Fantasia — "I'm His Only Woman"

Best Jazz Artist — Natalie Cole — "Still Unforgettable"

Best Gospel Artist — Mary Mary

Best World Music Album — Cheryl Keyes — "Let Me Take You There"

Best Music Video — "Yes We Can" — Will.i.am

Best Song — "Yes We Can" — Will.i.am

Best Album — Jennifer Hudson — "Jennifer Hudson"

Literary Categories
Fiction — "In the Night of the Heat: A Tennyson Hardwick Novel," Blair Underwood, Tananarive Due, Steven Barnes

Nonfiction — "Letter to My Daughter," Maya Angelou

Will Win: Milk
Deserves to Win: *Frozen River*

Overlooked: *Burn after Reading*, *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*

Best Adapted Screenplay
Will Win: *Slumdog Millionaire*

Deserves to Win: *Slumdog Millionaire*

Overlooked: *The Dark Knight*, *The Secret Life of Bees*

Best Documentary

Will Win: *Man on Wire*
Deserves to Win: *Man on Wire*

Overlooked: *Hollywood Chinese*, *A Man Named Pearl*, *Standing Operating Procedure*

Best Animated Feature

Will Win: *Wall-E*
Deserves to Win: *Wall-E*
Overlooked: *Chicago 10*

The Rest of Kam's Predicted Winners:

Best Foreign Language Film: *Waltz with Bashir*

Best Cinematography: *Slumdog Millionaire*

Best Film Editing: *Slumdog Millionaire*

Best Art Direction: *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*

Best Costume Design: *The Duchess*

Best Makeup: *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*

Best Original Score: *Slumdog Millionaire*

Best Original Song: *Slumdog Millionaire* ("Jai Ho")

Best Sound Editing: *The Dark Knight*

Best Visual Effects: *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*

Debut Author — "Barack, Race, and the Media: Drawing My Own Conclusion," David Glenn Brown

Biography/Autobiography — "The Legs are the Last to Go," Diahann Carroll

Instructional — "32 Ways to Be a Champion in Business," Earvin "Magic" Johnson

Poetry — "Hip Hop Speaks to Children: A Celebration of 'Poetry With a Beat'" Nikki Giovanni

Children — "Barack Obama: Son of Promise, Child of Hope," Nikki Grimes (illustrator — Bryan Collier)

Youth/Teens — "Letters to a Young Sister: Define Your Destiny," Hill Harper
Kam Williams contributed to this story.

Bits 'n' Pieces

Halle Berry says she gave up on Black men

(TMS) Black Academy Award-winning actress Halle Berry says, in effect, she gave up on Black men and decided to find love with White Canadian Gabriel Aubrey. In an interview for the March issue of *Essence* magazine, the mixed-race Berry declares, "I tried Black men. I tried. I married two Black men." However, she adds, "I don't hold all Black males responsible because of the two bad eggs I got... but this [Aubrey] is just where I found love." The 42-year-old Berry has been with Aubrey for four years and the two have a 9-month-old daughter. The *Essence* interview was conducted by Lola Ogunnaike. The March issue has already hit the newsstands.



Halle Berry

British court orders Eddie Murphy to pay Spice Brown \$9.9 million in child support



Eddie Murphy

(TMS) A British court last week ordered American actor/comedienne Eddie Murphy to pay former Spice Girl Melanie "Scary Spice" Brown a total of 7 million pounds (roughly \$9.9 million) in child support for Brown's 22-month old daughter Angel Iris. DNA testing proved that Murphy was the father of the child. Murphy will have to pay 35,000 pounds (approximately \$50,000) a month until the child reaches age 18. The 47-year-old Murphy and the 33-year-old Brown spent 15 months battling over whether he was the father of the child. There are also reports that Murphy has now agreed to see the child.

Chris Brown expresses remorse in wake of arrest on assault in LA

LOS ANGELES — R&B star Chris Brown, who was arrested last weekend on suspicion of attacking a woman widely believed to be the pop star Rihanna, said on Sunday he was "sorry and saddened" about the incident, and was seeking counseling. The 19-year-old performer has been in hiding since the alleged fracas with his girlfriend in a rented Lamborghini. He hired a public relations company that specializes in crisis management to issue a five-sentence statement in which he also said many media and blog reports have been wrong. "Words cannot begin to express how sorry and saddened I am over what transpired," he said. "I am seeking the counseling of my pastor, my mother and other loved ones and I am committed, with God's help, to emerging a better person." He did not mention his father, who was quoted on Friday as telling *People* magazine that his son was "very remorseful." Brown added in his statement: "Much of what has been speculated or reported on blogs and/or reported in the media is wrong. While I would like to be able to talk about this more, until the legal issues are resolved, this is all I can say except that I have not written any messages or made any posts to Facebook, on blogs or any place else. Those posts or writings under my name are frauds."



Chris Brown
