CHICAGO – Have you filled out your Oscar pool ballot yet? Let us guide the way. The film think-tank at HollywoodChicago.com (Matt Fagerholm, Patrick McDonald, and, myself, Brian Tallerico) has convened to break down the major eight categories with their picks for who will win, who should win, and who should have been nominated. It’s almost over. Don’t trip this close to the finish line.

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY
“127 Hours” by Danny Boyle & Simon Beaufoy
“The Social Network” by Aaron Sorkin
“Toy Story 3” by Michael Arndt, John Lasseter, Andrew Stanton, & Lee Unkrich
“True Grit” by Joel & Ethan Coen
“Winter’s Bone” by Debra Granik & Anne Rosellini

When the rapid-fire scene that opens “The Social Network” ended, I turned to my friend and said, “And the winner for Best Adapted Screenplay is...” Despite all the controversy surrounding what once looked like an inevitable sweep for Fincher’s masterpiece, very few have suggested that Aaron Sorkin’s script could possibly be upset. As Matt says, “Aaron Sorkin’s script was hugely perceptive, instantly quotable and hauntingly poignant, effortlessly juxtaposing and balancing the film’s parallel timelines and multiple characters.”
There was a small window where it once looked like “True Grit” could appear as a winner in more categories (and Patrick thinks that the Coen script should win by a small margin) but that window has closed. Anyone who picks anything but “TSN” to win here shouldn’t be allowed to swim in your Oscar pool next year. It’s the pick for all three of us to win and Matt & Brian think it should as well with Pat giving the slight edge to “True Grit.”

As for what should have been nominated, there’s no agreement there at all — Patrick likes the horse-pic “Secretariat” by Mike Rich; Matt goes gaga for Steve Kloves work on “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part I” and hopes that he’ll be considered for the final script at next year’s ceremony; I’ll go into the way-back machine and would have loved a nod for either early-year paranoia masterpiece: “Shutter Island” by Laeta Kalogridis or “The Ghost Writer” by Robert Harris & Roman Polanski. None of ‘em ever really had a chance.

BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

“Another Year” by Mike Leigh
“The Fighter” by Scott Silver, Paul Tamasy, Eric Johnson, & Keith Dorrington
“Inception” by Christopher Nolan
“The Kids Are All Right” by Lisa Cholodenko & Stuart Blumberg
“The King’s Speech” by David Seidler

As Patrick says, “Speech simply has too much cache to win here.” If “The Social Network” is a slam-dunk for Sorkin, this one’s more of a lay-up with Nolan trying to block on the outside but it’s still going through the net for Seidler. All three of us are predicting a win for “The King’s Speech,” although none of us think it’s deserving.

Matt and I would give the prize to Nolan’s daring vision, what Matt calls, “a triumphant work of art in its own right, allowing for multiple interpretations that gradually reveal themselves upon repeat viewings.” Patrick turns to the wonderful Mike Leigh for “Another Year,” yet another excellent offering from one of the best working writer/directors.

Once again, there’s no agreement as to the writers who should watch the awards with hate over the fact that they should have been nominated. Patrick turns to Chris Provenzano & C. Gaby Mitchell for the wonderful parts they wrote for Robert Duvall and Bill Murray in “Get Low”; Matt adores the galvanizing satire on terrorism in “Four Lions”; I can’t understand why so many people missed out on the symbolism and subtlety in the script for “Black Swan,” easily one of the five best of the year and a much-more-ambitious work than what all three of us expect to win here.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

Amy Adams, “The Fighter”
Helena Bonham Carter, “The King’s Speech”
Melissa Leo, “The Fighter”
Hailee Steinfeld, “True Grit”
Jacki Weaver, “Animal Kingdom”

Finally, a potential upset. There’s a pattern of shocking upsets in supporting actress during years that are generally tumultuous. When picture and director split in 2000, Marcia Gay Harden shocked everyone with a win for “Pollack.” It feels like years with close races lead to shocks
Film Feature: HollywoodChicago.com Predicts the 2011 Oscar Winners
Published on HollywoodChicago.com

here. And yet, I’m not predicting it. I’m going with Melissa Leo and so is Matt, while Pat thinks the “Fighter” ladies will split and that the odd advertising campaign hurt Leo enough that Hailee Steinfeld will join Anna Paquin and Tatum O’Neal in all those child Oscar winner montages. My thoughts on that are that I don’t think the ill-advised ads earned Leo a single vote and didn’t cost her one either. If you’re an Academy member and you’re voting based on an ad instead of actual performance, please don’t vote again. Ever.

Matt may not think that Steinfeld WILL win but he thinks that she should because she “pulled off the spectacularly difficult task of getting the audience to believe every word in her elevated speech, without a hint of cutesy precociousness.” Hinting at what could happen with voters, we have zero agreement as to who should win. Pat thinks Steinfeld will but wishes that Jacki Weaver would pull of the true upset here while I would give the prize to Ms. Adams, an actress who continues to prove her remarkable range with each role. In many ways, she’s the beating heart of “The Fighter” and she’s spectacular in every scene.

As for who should have been nominated, Matt turns to one of the break-out stars of 2010 and cites Chloe Grace Moretz’s performance in “Kick-Ass” while Patrick turns to Elizabeth Banks in the under-seen “The Next Three Days.” Personally, I feel like if Sony Pictures Classics had handled the campaign correctly and put her where she belonged, Lesley Manville would have been nominated here for “Another Year.” She certainly deserved to be.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR
Christian Bale, “The Fighter”
John Hawkes, “Winter’s Bone”
Jeremy Renner, “The Town”
Mark Ruffalo, “The Kids Are All Right”
Geoffrey Rush, “The King’s Speech”

This is a two-man race all the way. If Hawkes, Renner, or Ruffalo win, I can guarantee you that they won’t have acceptance speeches ready because there’s NO way they’re expecting it. So, Rush vs. Bale, which some have portrayed as old school vs. new school. Despite the realization we all have that “The King’s Speech” could pull of a real sweep and take ‘em all, pushing Rush into a win here, all three of us think that Bale is going to take home this prize. As Matt says, “He studied the physicality and behavior of his fact-based character so completely that he allegedly fooled some citizens of his hometown into actually believing he was the real Dicky Eklund. His larger-than-life persona was so consuming that it easily hijacked the picture away from subdued, oft-ignored leading man Mark Wahlberg.”

We all agree that Bale WILL win, but who should? Matt and I are happy with the inevitability while Patrick gives the slight edge to Geoffrey Rush. Matt and I agree on the ludicrous snub of Andrew Garfield’s breakthrough work in “The Social Network” while Patrick turns back to “Get Low” and the work of the always-great Bill Murray. I think all three of us would agree that both gentlemen are more-deserving than Jeremy Renner, a great actor giving an okay performance in “The Town.”

BEST ACTRESS
Annette Bening, “The Kids Are All Right”
Nicole Kidman, “Rabbit Hole”
Jennifer Lawrence, “Winter’s Bone”
Natalie Portman, “Black Swan”
Michelle Williams, “Blue Valentine”
Once again, we have agreement. No one is going out on a limb here with all three of us predicting a win for Natalie Portman for “Black Swan,” over what Patrick calls “one of the strongest sets of nominees in memory.” Personally, I think Portman’s performance is the best of the year, period. In any category. And will not only be stunned but deeply disappointed if this amazing physical turn doesn’t take the prize it deserves.

Matt would cast his vote for a performance that I would in many other years, Michelle Williams’ stunning turn in “Blue Valentine.” In Matt’s words, “In “Valentine,” Williams is required to tackle the entire emotional arc of a five-year romance, from initial butterflies of first love to the grueling agony of disillusionment. It may be the greatest performance yet from one of America’s most gifted and fascinating actresses.”

As for who should have been nominated, Matt cites one of the best living actress in Tilda Swinton and her work in “I Am Love” — “Swinton has never been more ravishing than she is in Luca Guadagnino’s exuberant valentine to Italian cinema. Her seamless mastery of the Italian language (with a Russian accent to boot) would make Meryl Streep blush.” Patrick would have nominated Lesley Manville here for “Another Year” while, for the first time I can ever remember, the Academy’s top five matched my top five perfectly. It’s disturbing.

**BEST ACTOR**

Javier Bardem, “Biutiful”

Jeff Bridges, “True Grit”

Jesse Eisenberg, “The Social Network”

Colin Firth, “The King’s Speech”

James Franco, “127 Hours”

Two words — Ryan Gosling. My choice for the biggest snub of the year in any category (and who I would vote to WIN were he nominated) is also Matt’s pick here for the most undeserving snub. Patrick turns to the work by former winner Kevin Spacey in “Casino Jack.”

As for who will win, it’s a foregone conclusion that it’s going to Firth, especially after being nominated last year. Don’t let anyone talk you out of that pick. It’s a LOCK. Here’s something to think about — what if Firth had won last year for “A Single Man.” Would they give it to him two years in a row? Would Bridges win since he would have been robbed the year before? And how would that change the chances for “True Grit” overall? If only...

As for who SHOULD win, I’d give it to the tour-de-force work by James Franco, an actor forced to fill every frame of “127 Hours” and play an intense emotional arc with nothing but a boulder as a co-star. Patrick thinks that Firth “overwhelms the category” and deserves the prize (and, for the record, I won’t be upset when he wins...he’s the best thing about the overrated film), Matt agrees, saying, “His mesmerizing performance allowed the audience to share in his inner struggle, resulting in a climatic radio broadcast that plays like an exhausting tightrope act, as Firth struggles to avoid tripping over each carefully expelled syllable.”

**BEST DIRECTOR**

Darren Aronofsky, “Black Swan”

Joel & Ethan Coen, “True Grit”

David Fincher, “The Social Network”

Tom Hooper, “The King’s Speech”

David O. Russell, “The Fighter”

We’re optimists here at HC as none of us are picking the undeserving Tom Hooper to win the prize despite his DGA win. My feelings are that Hooper’s workman-like direction was above average for the material but nowhere near as ambitious or accomplished as the other four choices (or a dozen others who weren’t even nominated).

Matt and I are going with a Fincher win, something that once seemed inevitable but now seems tenuous with the potential for a “King’s Speech” sweep. As Matt says, “Fincher’s work is the year’s most enthralling, primarily because he makes the audience an active participant in his film’s unfolding, unresolved story. The identity of Facebook’s official creator is ultimately as elusive as that of the Zodiac killer.” After losing out on another film where he was once considered the frontrunner (“The Curious Case of Benjamin Button”), I doubt it will happen again this year. And both Matt and I think Fincher is the deserving #1 choice.

Patrick is thinking with his heart a bit, predicting a stunning upset for Aronofsky, despite having not won a single precursor award. That would be fun. As Patrick says, “Created a unique piece of cinema, using story and cinematic art to blend into a fully realized whole. This is true wishful thinking but it’s what I’m feeling will occur.”

For the first time, we have unanimous agreement on who got screwed, the new King of the Oscar snub — Christopher Nolan. It’s truly amazing that a Nolan’s incredibly-detailed, ambitious, accomplished work couldn’t even get nominated when it should have been considered for the win, certainly over Hooper. As Matt says, “Like Hitchcock, Nolan is being written off by the Academy as more of a showman than a serious artist. Hopefully they will come around to realizing that he is one of the most important and exciting artists in modern cinema.”
**BEST PICTURE**

“127 Hours”
“Black Swan”
“The Fighter”
“Inception”
“The Kids Are All Right”
“The King’s Speech”
“The Social Network”
“Toy Story 3”
“True Grit”
“Winter’s Bone”

While it once seemed like nothing could beat “The Social Network,” as it racked up every critics award, we are now at a point where no one at HollywoodChicago.com is predicting a win (even if Matt and I think that it should be the winner and will squeal with glee if it gets the upset). Patrick continues his heartfelt predictions with what would be the biggest upset in Oscar history with a win for “Black Swan,” saying, “Again, wishful thinking, but I’m willing to risk the title of King Prognosticator simply to honor my favorite film of 2010.”

Matt and I are accepting the inevitability of “The King’s Speech,” a win that I think will go down as one of the most embarrassing in Oscar history. It’s the least-deserving film of the ten nominated. It’s this simple in my eyes — as long as you live, no one will EVER utter these words: “I became a filmmaker because of The King’s Speech.” It’s not ambitious enough, inspiring enough, or memorable enough. It’s a good movie that has been elevated to great by the remarkable machine of Harvey Weinstein. He’s the George Steinbrenner of the Oscars, making average players look like All-Stars just by being on his winning team. We’ve had a few years of critical match with the Academy, but “The King’s Speech” will go on the side of the ledger with “Around the World in 80 Days,” “Gigi,” “Ordinary People,” “A Beautiful Mind,” and “Crash” — other films that no one today thinks deserved their Best Picture win.

As for what should have been nominated, Patrick loves Anton Corbijn’s “The American,” Matt turns to the dark love story of “Blue Valentine,” while I think history will remember both “Shutter Island” and “The Ghost Writer” far more than “The King’s Speech.”

**RECAP OF MOST VOTES AS TO WHAT WILL WIN:**

Best Picture: “The King’s Speech”
Best Director: David Fincher, “The Social Network”
Best Actor: Colin Firth, “The King’s Speech”
Best Actress: Natalie Portman, “Black Swan”
Best Supporting Actor: Christian Bale, “The Fighter”
Best Supporting Actress: Melissa Leo, “The Fighter”
Best Adapted Screenplay: “The Social Network” by Aaron Sorkin
Best Original Screenplay: “The King’s Speech” by David Seidler

**MY PREDICTIONS FOR THE REST:**

Best Art Direction: “The King’s Speech”
Best Cinematography: “True Grit”
Best Costume Design: “The King’s Speech”
Best Editing: “The Social Network”
Best Makeup: “The Wolfman”
Best Score: “The King’s Speech”
Best Song: “127 Hours”
Best Sound Editing: “Inception”
Best Sound Mixing: “Inception”
Best Visual Effects: “Inception”
Best Animated Film: “Toy Story 3”
Best Foreign Language Film: “In a Better World”
Best Documentary: “Inside Job”
Best Documentary Short: “The Warriors of Qiugang”
Best Animated Short: “Day & Night”
Best Live Short: “Na Wewe”

By BRIAN TALLERICO [19]
Content Director
HollywoodChicago.com
brian@hollywoodchicago.com [18]

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 19 2017 - 1:34pm):

Links:
[18] mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com