

Film Feature: Predictions For the 2014 Oscar Nominees

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 15, 2014 - 2:10pm

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It's that most wonderful time of the year in which one group of people (journalists) try to figure out what another group of people (Academy members) think are the best films and performances of the year. Sure, we have the Guild nominees, critics awards, and general buzz but there's only one thing that I can tell you for sure — one of the predictions below will be wrong. And yet we go out on that limb again every year.

- BEST PICTURE**
12 Years a Slave
American Hustle
Captain Phillips
Dallas Buyers Club
Gravity
Her
Inside Llewyn Davis
Nebraska
The Wolf of Wall Street



This category is a bit harder to predict than the last few years. We really only have three undeniable locks. Both Golden Globe winners — “American Hustle” and “12 Years a Slave” — are in for sure and are likely the frontrunners to win the big prize. Alfonso Cuarón’s “Gravity” is right behind the pair and can absolutely be considered a lock. After that? It gets really hazy. Academy screenings of “The Wolf of Wall Street”

have reportedly been mixed but there's an element to this new voting system that some pundits too often ignore — the system encourages films that have loyal, devoted fan bases to be nominated. It's how films like "Tree of Life" got in and how films with fan bases who may not have even bothered to see them like "Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close" land nods. So, I see films with strong, vocal support like Spike Jonze's, the Coen Brothers', and Alexander Payne's films getting in. That's seven. And that could be it but "Captain Phillips" and "Dallas Buyers Club" have popped up in enough Guild Awards lists that one probably shouldn't bet against them. If one of them is #9, it's "DBC," which could be replaced by "Saving Mr. Banks," "Philomena," or even "Blue Jasmine."

BEST DIRECTOR**Alfonso Cuaron, Gravity****Spike Jonze, Her****Steve McQueen, 12 Years a Slave****David O. Russell, American Hustle****Martin Scorsese, The Wolf of Wall Street**

Martin Scorsese on the set of The Wolf of Wall Street

Photo credit: Paramount/Indiewire

If the three picture frontrunners are "Gravity," "12 Years a Slave," and "American Hustle," then one has to assume their three directors are getting nominated (although last year's nominees prove that assuming anything here will only drive you batty). Let's presume that this category gets back to normal and Cuaron, McQueen, and Russell are here. I think the other two spots will go to a legend and a new pioneer. Jonze could be replaced by Greengrass or even Payne but it feels like "Her" and "Wolf" are peaking at just the right time culturally.

BEST ACTOR**Bruce Dern, Nebraska****Leonardo DiCaprio, The Wolf of Wall Street****Chiwetel Ejiofor, 12 Years a Slave****Tom Hanks, Captain Phillips****Matthew McConaughey, Dallas Buyers Club**

Chiwetel Ejiofor as Solomon Northup in 12 Years a Slave

Photo credit: Fox Searchlight

Oh my God, this category. It's enough to keep an Oscar fan up at night. There are really only TWO locks. If Chiwetel Ejiofor or Matthew McConaughey miss out on nomination morning, their snub will be the headline that day. Anyone else? There are essentially five people for three spots and that's leaving out incredible performances from Oscar Isaac & Joaquin Phoenix, both of whom I expect to be snubbed. Who

are the lucky five who get to sweat? Tom Hanks, Robert Redford, Leonardo DiCaprio, Bruce Dern, and Christian Bale. Hanks has been strong in the precursor awards and Dern has the living legend thing, while also being charming on the pre-Oscar circuit. And that's where Redford may have hurt himself, reportedly doing NO campaigning at all. When it's this tight, that could matter. Every year, we predict Leonardo DiCaprio will get nominated and he gets snubbed (didn't get a nod for "The Departed" or "Django Unchained"). I'm going out on that limb again and predicting the best performance of the year will be recognized. Do you really want to hurt me again?

BEST ACTRESS**Amy Adams, American Hustle****Cate Blanchett, Blue Jasmine****Sandra Bullock, Gravity****Judi Dench, Philomena****Emma Thompson, Saving Mr. Banks**

Sandra Bullock as Ryan Stone in Gravity

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

A category that once seemed locked in at five now has a bit of tumult thanks to the unexpected rise of "American Hustle," which seems likely to push out one of the previously-assumed five. But who misses out? Certainly not Cate Blanchett, who I truly expect to win her first leading actress award next month. And not Sandra Bullock, who would give Mrs. Blanchett a run for her money if she hadn't won a trophy recently for "The Blind Side." It leaves four candidates for three spots — Amy Adams, Judi Dench, Meryl Streep, and Emma Thompson. While I know it never makes sense to vote against Dame Meryl, she actually has had the least precursor support of the four and it really feels like "Hustle" is playing in at least three acting categories, maybe four. Remember last year when "Silver Linings Playbook" landed four acting nods? Remember who directed that?

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR**Barkhad Abdi, Captain Phillips****Bradley Cooper, American Hustle****Michael Fassbender, 12 Years a Slave****James Gandolfini, Enough Said****Jared Leto, Dallas Buyers Club**

Michael Fassbender as Edwin Epps in 12 Years a Slave

Photo credit: Fox Searchlight

Jared Leto feels like the likely winner here and will certainly get a nomination even if his lackluster Golden Globes speech may hurt him when it comes to the actual trophy. He has done no campaigning and yet the consensus on Michael Fassbender's work is strong enough that he

feels like a lock, although he felt like a lock for “Shame” too and got screwed there. Barkhad Abdi has lined up a lot of precursor support and “Phillips” has played well for Academy viewers. I think he’s close to a lock. Remember what I was saying about the “Hustle” wave? Bradley Cooper is going to be an Oscar nominee in back-to-back years. Finally, there’s one spot that will either go with bittersweet love to the great James Gandolfini or with recognition of a young talent in Daniel Bruhl for “Rush.” I don’t see “Rush” playing as well as “Enough Said.” Call me crazy. I’ve been called worse.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

- Jennifer Lawrence, American Hustle
- Lupita Nyong’o, 12 Years a Slave
- Julia Roberts, August: Osage County
- June Squibb, Nebraska
- Oprah Winfrey, Lee Daniels’ The Butler



Lupita Nyong'o as Patsey in 12 Years a Slave
Photo credit: Fox Searchlight

I so want to go out on a limb here and predict that “Dallas Buyers Club” will ride a wave of recent support all the way to a nod for Jennifer Garner but the stats don’t quite support it and I can’t figure out who to kick out. These have been the presumptive five for so long that I have them memorized. And, no, the Academy is not ready to get behind the great voice-only work by Scarlett Johansson and nominate her, even if some of the critics groups did. It’s these five. Yawn. I hope I’m wrong here and it’s not even Garner or Scarlett. Let’s go completely out of left field. Did y’all see “Blue is the Warmest Color”?

The rest of the categories, without semi-witty commentary, on page two.



12 Years a Slave

Photo credit: Fox Searchlight

BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

- American Hustle
- Blue Jasmine
- Her
- Inside Llewyn Davis
- Nebraska

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY

- 12 Years a Slave
- Before Midnight
- Captain Phillips
- Philomena
- The Wolf of Wall Street

BEST ANIMATED FEATURE

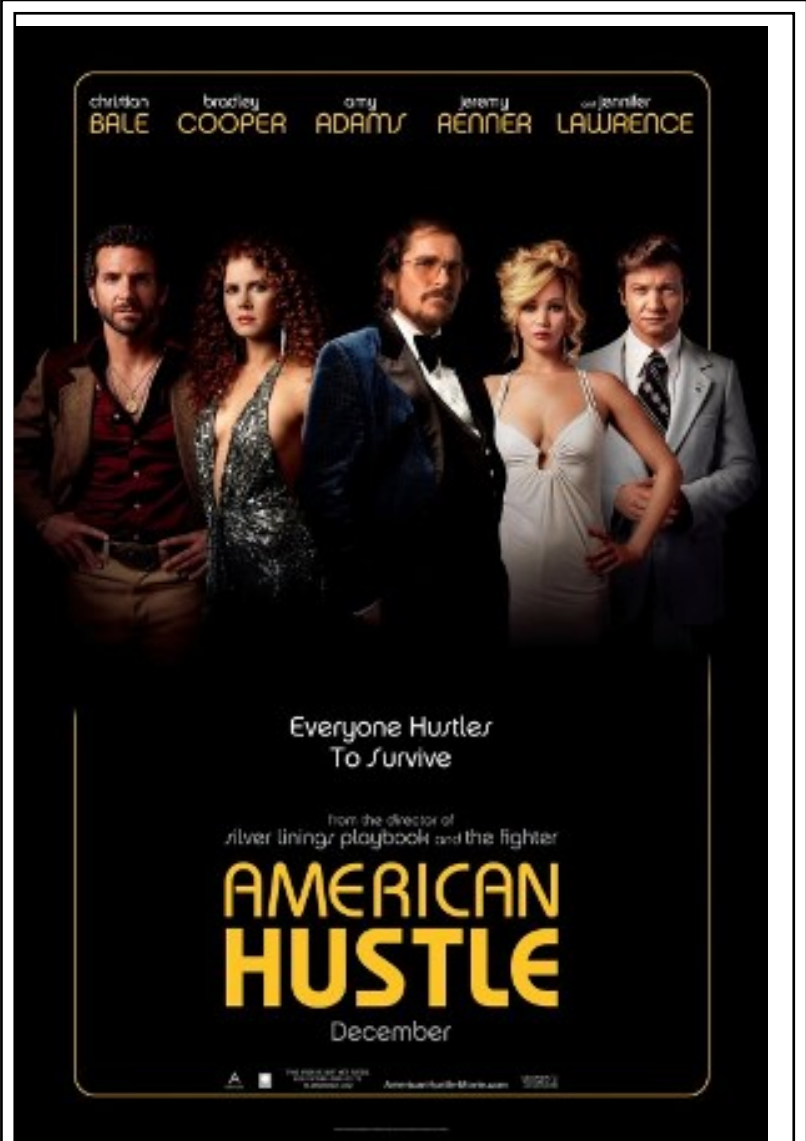
- The Croods
- Ernest and Celestine
- Frozen
- Monsters University
- The Wind Rises

BEST FOREIGN FILM

- The Broken Circle Breakdown
- The Grandmaster
- The Great Beauty
- The Hunt
- Omar

BEST DOCUMENTARY

- 20 Feet From Stardom
- The Act of Killing
- Blackfish
- The Square
- Stories We Tell



American Hustle
Photo credit: Sony Pictures

BEST ART DIRECTION/PRODUCTION DESIGN

- 12 Years a Slave
- American Hustle

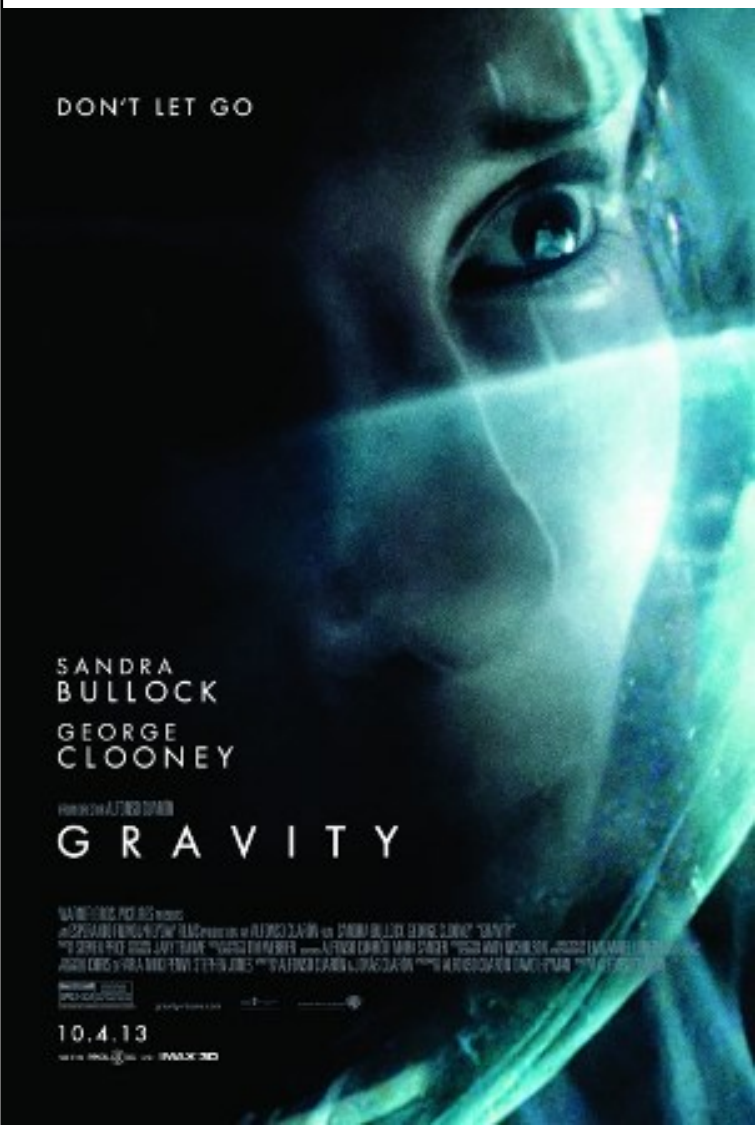
Gravity
The Great Gatsby
The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY
12 Years a Slave
Captain Phillips
Gravity
Inside Llewyn Davis
Prisoners

BEST COSTUME DESIGN
12 Years a Slave
American Hustle
The Great Gatsby
The Invisible Woman
Oz the Great and Powerful

BEST EDITING
12 Years a Slave
American Hustle
Captain Phillips
Gravity
The Wolf of Wall Street

BEST MAKEUP
American Hustle
Dallas Buyers Club
The Lone Ranger



Gravity
Photo credit: Warner Bros.

BEST SCORE
12 Years a Slave
The Book Thief
Frozen
Gravity
Philomena

BEST SONG
Frozen
The Great Gatsby
Her

The Hunger Games: Catching Fire
Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom

BEST SOUND EDITING

All is Lost
Captain Phillips
Gravity
Pacific Rim
Rush

BEST SOUND MIXING

All is Lost
Captain Phillips
Frozen
Inside Llewyn Davis
Rush

BEST VISUAL EFFECTS

Gravity
The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug
Iron Man 3
Pacific Rim
World War Z



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