

## Film Feature: 10 Biggest Snubs of the 2014 Oscar Nominations

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 24, 2014 - 3:47pm

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As there are upwards of 6,000 members in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, I simply do not have the time or wherewithal to graffiti on everyone's house "Robert Redford?" However, I can at least make a post on the internet calling out those they have snubbed; exposing where their collective categorizing as a majority of old white males went wrong.

In keeping with Brian Tallerico's Oscar snub list from last year, I am going to also share which films would be taken out in a snubbed one's place, while focusing on the top eight categories - with two particularly impassioned snubs to round out an even ten. And as "Life of Pi" was the film to rail against in award season 2013, I will try, but flounder, to mask my painful disinterest in supporting the cause of kudos for Alexander Payne's "Nebraska."



### Best Documentary: "Stories We Tell"

With the Academy representing their soft spots for unusual subject characters ("American Hustle"), history (almost everything nominated) and family ("Philomena," "Nebraska"), it is an unwelcome surprise that Sarah Polley's incredibly delightful true life family saga "Stories We Tell" did not find its way into the "Best Documentary" bunch. By flipping the duty of storytelling onto her family members, Polley crafts an unforgettable tale about the hidden elements within all family trees, while maintaining a great heart for the film's biggest star, that of the memory of her mother.

Instead of: The tale of two cult-famous New York artistes "Cutie and the Boxer" has a handful of verite peaks that alone make it worth a look

(including the interactions with art gallery curators) but its subject matter doesn't fill up a feature length as well as it may dream to. "Cutie and the Boxer" may have strong characters, but it doesn't have the strength within the true-life story of Polley's own personal narrative.



### Best Cinematography: "12 Years a Slave"

Hand-in-hand with its dramatic content, "12 Years a Slave" becomes such a devastating cinematic experience due to its imbuing of atmosphere, which it garners from Sean Bobbitt's camerawork. Adding a meticulous yet highly expressive language to the film, Bobbitt makes searing use out of extensive long-takes and the rule-of-thirds cinematography, all very elemental yet effective in his craft...

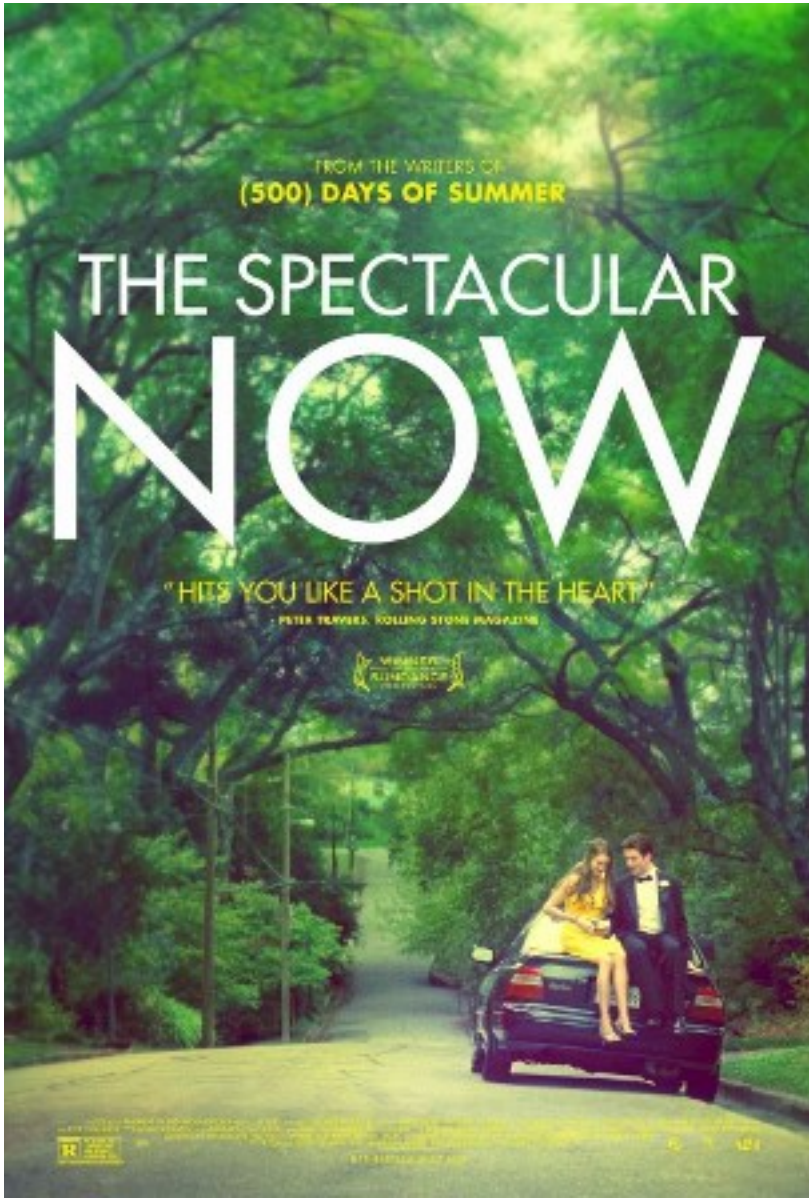
Instead of: ... which comes with more cinematic immediacy than Phedon Papamichael's nostalgic black-and-white pans in the dour "Nebraska."

**Best Original Screenplay: “The Place Beyond the Pines” by Derek Cianfrance & Ben Coccio and Darius Marauder**

In terms of original storytelling, this past year has at least given us inspired gems like the survival poetry of “All is Lost,” the authentic recreation of a single day in “Fruitvale Station,” the folk song tales of “Inside Llewyn Davis,” and even the moral spectacle of “Prisoners” by Aaron Guzikowski. But it is Derek Cianfrance’s “The Place Beyond the Pines” that best boasts the promise and potential of original cinematic storytelling. It is one where ambition, scope, and confidence take a viewer on a sojourn through character lives to locations and times unexpected, with the constant charge of a high-speed chase.

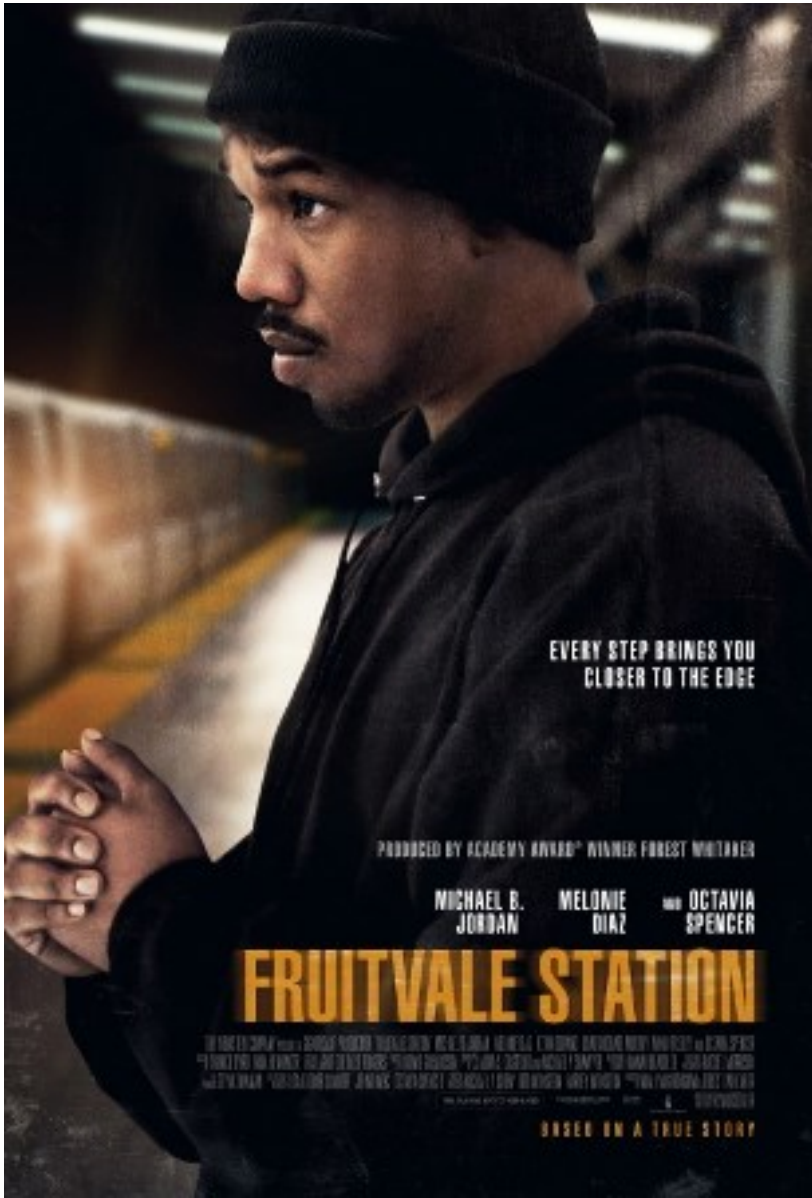
Instead of: Without any question, “Dallas Buyers Club” would be replaced by Cianfrance’s film. Craig Borten & Melisa Wallack’s script is one that lacks subtlety, not just because of the wholly external recreations it inspires in its performers, but clunky dialogue and sloppy assembling of a story that can’t create a full, non-manipulated picture of its hero.



**Best Adapted Screenplay: “The Spectacular Now” by Scott Neustadter and Michael H. Weber**

There is something to laud in a screenplay that somehow introduces a new episode to the near-universal high school experience, and this year’s “The Perks of Being a Wallflower” is “The Spectacular Now.” With careful character control and sincerity in its angst, this story of a teen boozier (played by Miles Teller), creates a great amount of empathy for someone on the fringes of adulthood. The script, an adaptation of Tim Tharp’s novel by Scott Neustadter and Michael H. Weber, makes for a rich tale even with its initially cliché framing device of a college essay. Granted, director James Ponsoldt’s direction is the home run that turns “The Spectacular Now” into a grand slam, but he has one hell of a setup to work with.

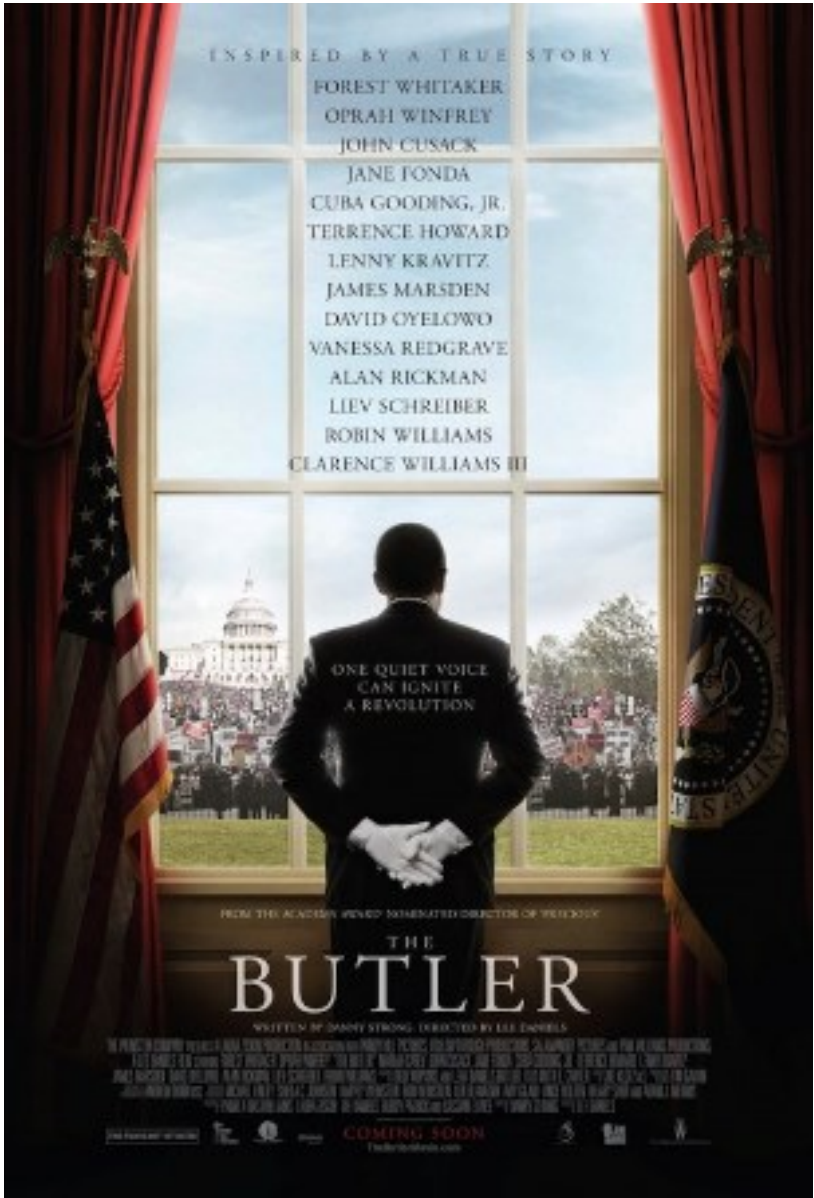
Instead of: In a category that certainly is not filling space with bad titles, I’d take out “Philomena,” despite its character dynamic cuteness and graceful dramatic dips. Paraphrasing Carly Simon, “The Spectacular Now” just does it better.



### **Best Supporting Actress: Octavia Spencer, “Fruitvale Station”**

In a film year not as strong as 2013, “Fruitvale Station” would likely have more of the Academy’s attention. While it has been shutout completely from nominations it would certainly be deserving of, perhaps its most frustrating is one that rightfully belongs to Octavia Spencer, despite the love she received for previously playing a snarky racial archetype in the awful “The Help.” Her role in “Fruitvale Station,” that of a crucial matriarch who finds a limit to loving her troublesome son Oscar (played remarkably by future star Michael B. Jordan) is a more diverse fit for golden kudos, especially when packing such force within a much less flashy and limited screen-time. As well, with the tragedy of the film, Spencer is the one who guides us through the film’s horrifying events without a hint of false emotion; Spencer helps keep Ryan Coogler’s incredible debut legit all the way to the third act’s end (the documentary epilogue is another story).

Instead of: In her place, the choice is easy - Jennifer Lawrence might have provided her own flamboyance to the soiree that is “American Hustle,” but the intrigue of her dysfunctional character only reaches so far to her trashy monologues about stinky nail polish. It’s funny when she talks about the “science oven” as well, but the competitiveness of this year is much too serious to be giving out nominations to roles that are simply amusing. Her work in “The Hunger Games: Catching Fire” is also more impressive, but that’s an issue for another list.

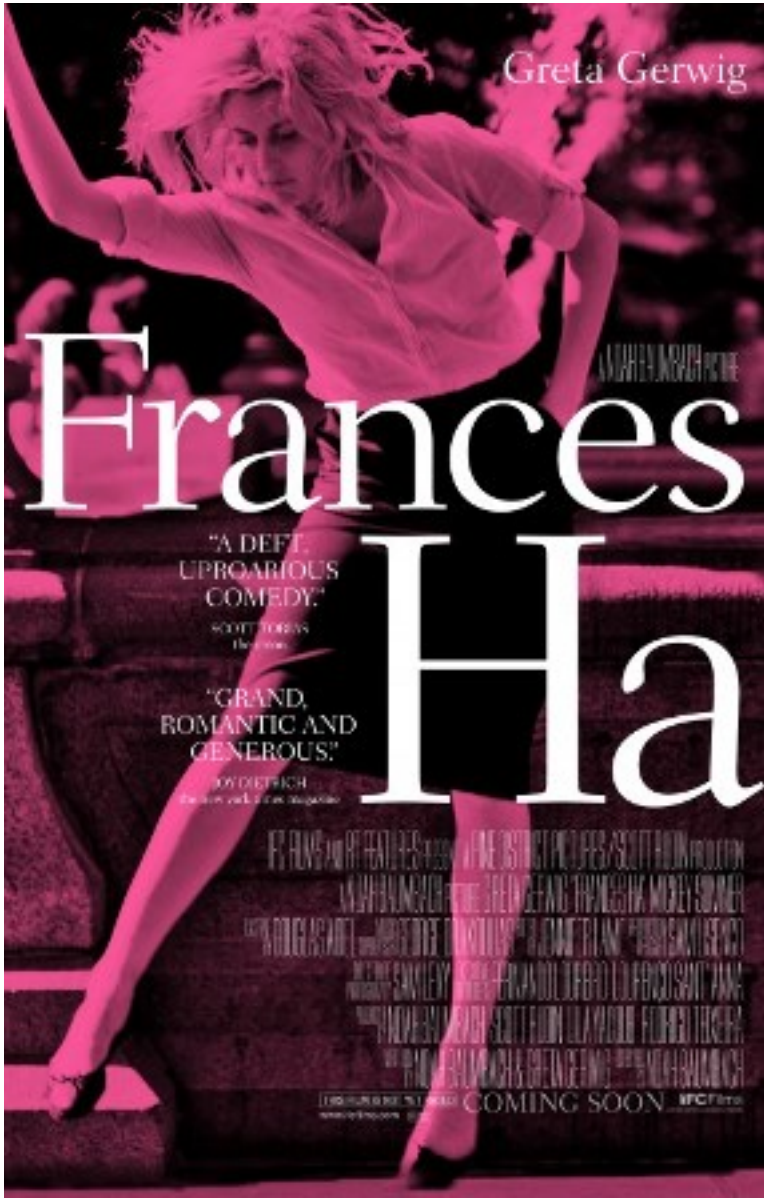


**Best Supporting Actor: David Oyelowo, “Lee Daniels’ The Butler”**

Any awards hype for “Lee Daniels’ The Butler” might have been pointed in the direction of Forest Whitaker and Oprah Winfrey, but the most necessary piece to Lee Daniels’ multi-decade puzzle is a Forrest Gump-ian performance from David Oyelowo. As the son of Whitaker’s title character Cecil, Oyelowo is the one who grounds the most inspired elements of Daniels’ observance of American history. Without Oyelowo’s stoicism to such a character through numerous transitions, the movie would be lacking the passion that prevents it from being more than a star-filled piece of regular awards bait.

Instead of: In his place within yet another tough category, I’d remove Jared Leto’s work in “Dallas Buyers Club,” a performance with some skilled finesse, but one that isn’t as sound as its competitors.

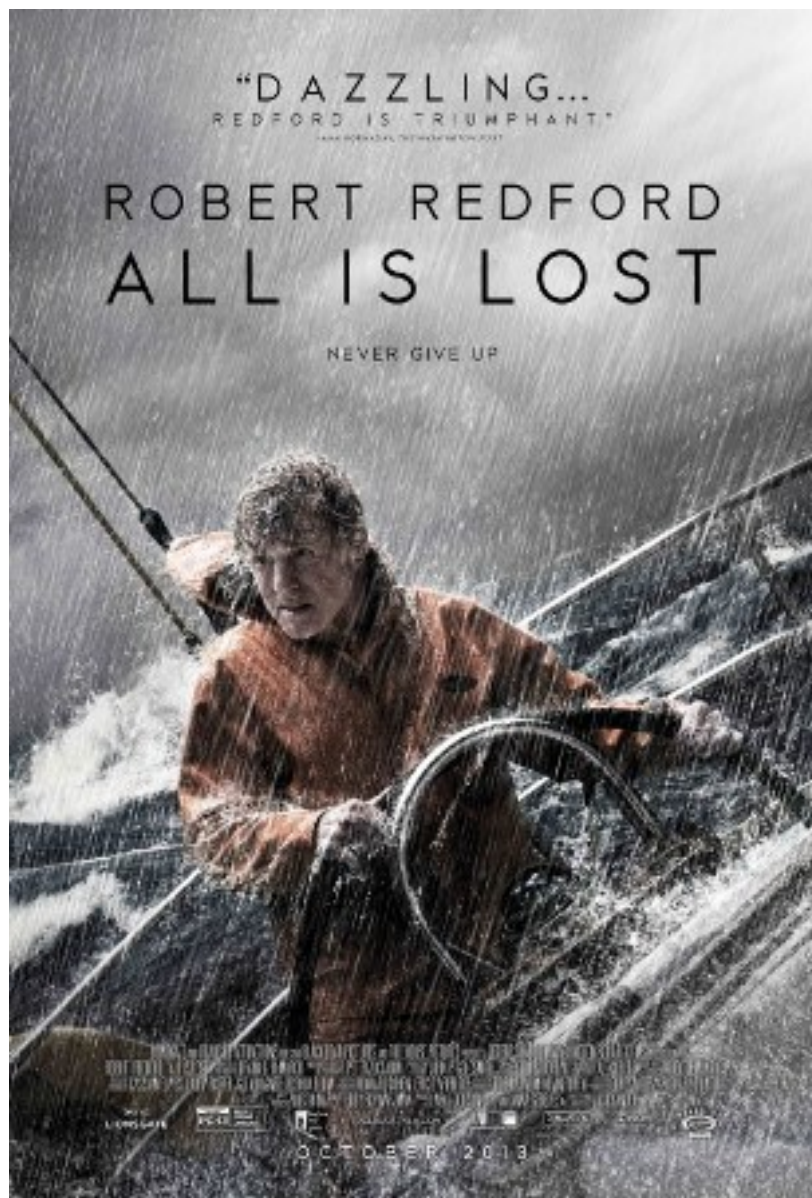




### Best Actress: Greta Gerwig, “Frances Ha”

The youthfulness of Academy members can only be spread so thin (according to a 2012 research by LA Times, only 14% are under 50) so I suppose their biggest hip statement this year was voting for a female performance in a science fiction movie. Though, while Bullock does deserve her nod, one actress that equally carries a film about her own survival in cramped spaces is Greta Gerwig in “Frances Ha.” Infusing her own genuine attitude to a story catered by Noah Baumbach like it is his mid-life crisis, she gives the film (a favorite amongst my Frances’ and Francis’ all around) a grandiose humility. Showing the subtle truths about self-reliance (from using your tax refund wisely to eating ice cream after going to the dentist) Gerwig makes this surrogate of life experience one to attach to, long after the Bowie has stopped.

Instead of: I’d take out Judi Dench, and I don’t think the multi-nominated, one-time winner would mind.

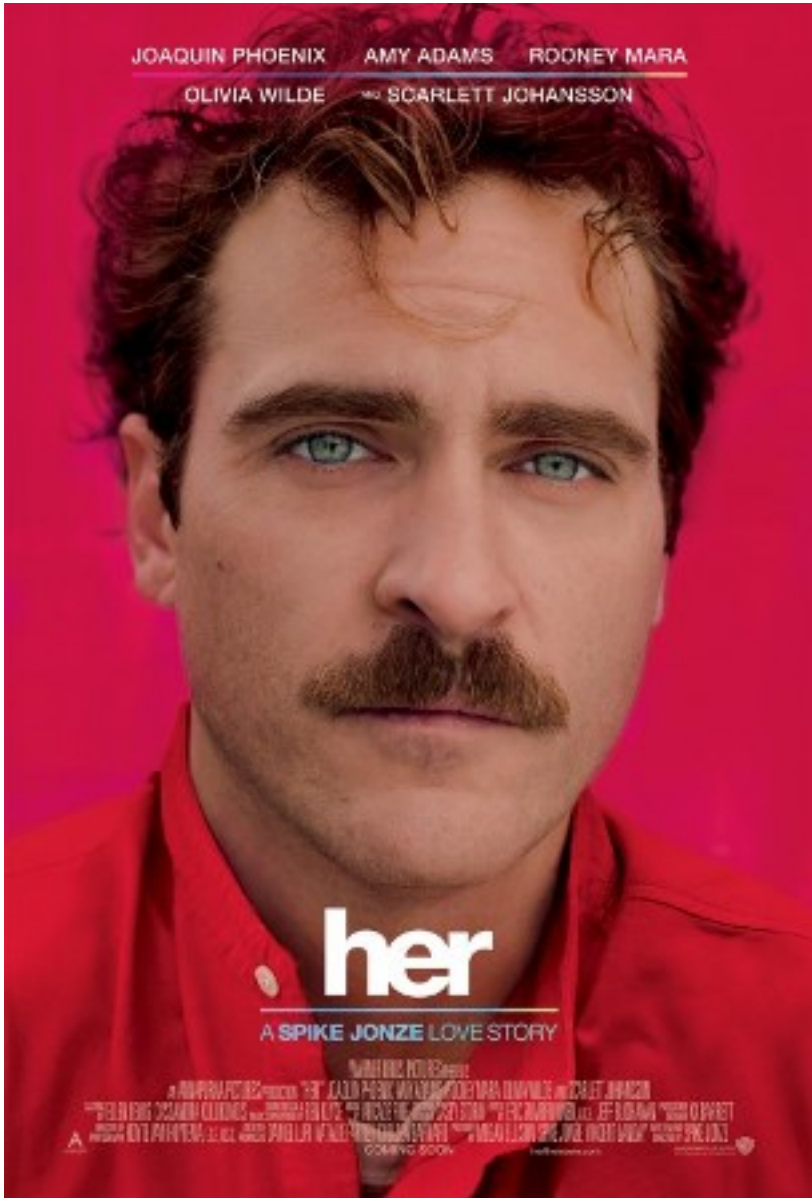


### **Best Actor: Robert Redford, “All is Lost”**

With numerous performances this year worthy of the coveted “Best Actor” nomination, Robert Redford’s work in J.C. Chandor’s “All is Lost” made for its biggest snub. Providing a survival saga even more accomplished than James Franco’s nominated work in “127 Hours,” Redford completed the ambition of Chandor’s story, while giving the audience a leader to follow through 90 minutes of extremely sparse dialogue and procedural survival. A striking physical feat as well, “All is Lost” shows the classic charisma of Redford at its most pure, one that earns his character name of “Our Man.”

Switch Out: Bruce Dern in “Nebraska.” Dern might be a legend, but this role is not one of them.

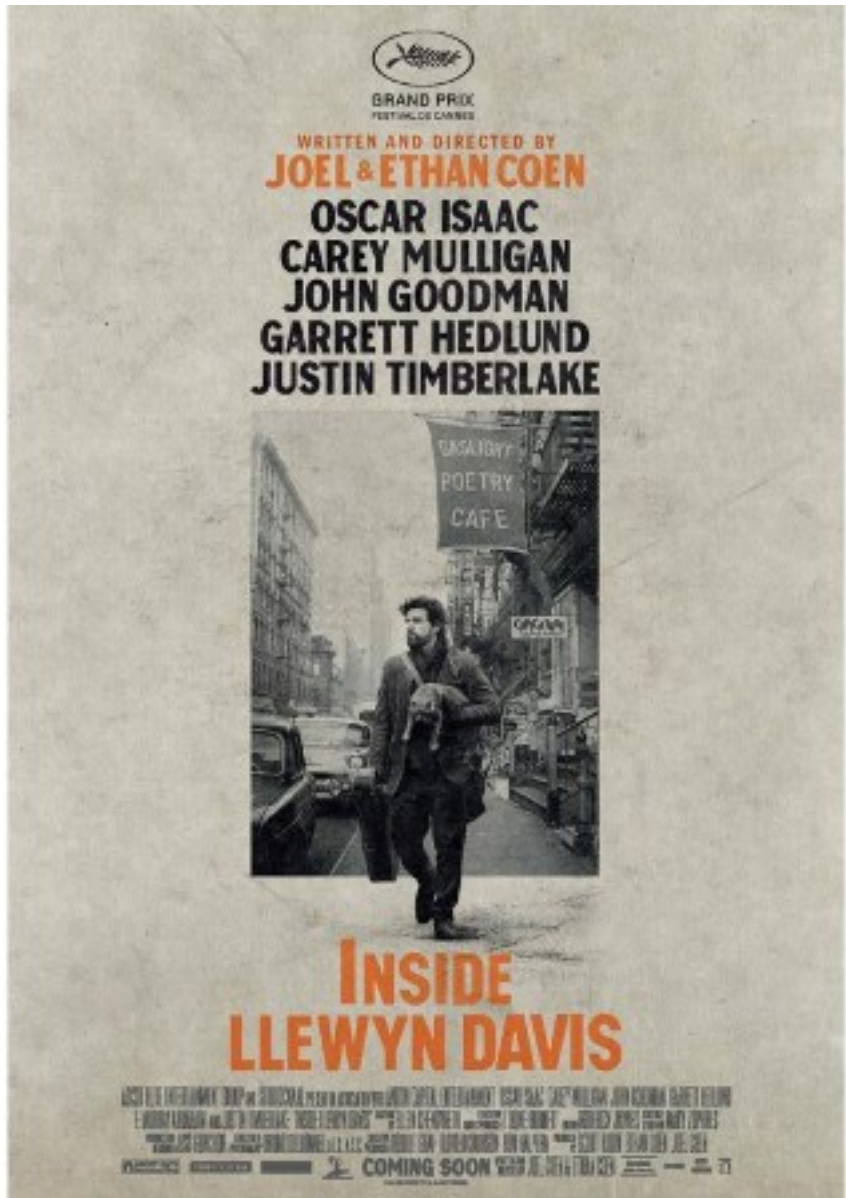




**Best Director: Spike Jonze, “Her”**

In a year of films defined by their strength, Spike Jonze’s “Her” is a particularly special one, one with a vision of the future as inspired by today, and one that takes viewers beyond the usual images of flashy metropolises or technology. It is a project of very specific choices (and no belts?) but with a constant softness in its presentation that allows its inspired concept to unfold earnestly.

Instead of: For those to whom Jonze lost a nomination, once again it is team “Nebraska” that should be switched out, with Alexander Payne’s sentimentality getting the best of him, in work that plays far below his previous strengths seen in “The Descendants.”



**Best Picture: “Inside Llewyn Davis”**

While it may feature titles that should certainly be in place (“12 Years a Slave,” “Gravity,”) the list of “Best Picture” nominees certainly has some extra weight that could be replaced with even stronger fare. Especially in the spot of something like “Dallas Buyers Club,” the Coen Brothers’ “Inside Llewyn Davis” is more than deserving of a shot, and from an institution that has so-loved them previously. Even without receiving nominations for acting, screenwriting, or direction, the strength of “Inside Llewyn Davis” is so sound that it deserves top billing as a full package, with thorough craftsmanship evident in all filmmaking aspects. Even the cat leaves a great, poetic impression. Were the Academy’s Coen lovers too busy voting for “Her”?

Instead of: “Nebraska” or “Dallas Buyers Club,” take your pick. But thank you, Academy members, for at least not taking the “Saving Mr. Banks” bait.

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