

## Oscar Week: HollywoodChicago.com 2018 Oscar Predictions

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on March 3, 2018 - 11:17am

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CHICAGO – Time to fill out the Oscar prediction ballots! The 90th Academy Awards are on Sunday, March 4th, 2018, and HC film critics Patrick McDonald, Michael “Spike” Walters and Jon Lennon Espino are ready to add their prognosticating powers to all the major categories, plus three wild cards. Let the predicting begin.

Nine films of 2017 – “Call Me By Your Name,” “Darkest Hours,” “Dunkirk,” “Get Out, Lady Bird,” “Get Out,” “Phantom Thread,” “The Post,” “The Shape of Water” and “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri” – will vie for the Best Picture Award. The HC team together will opine on BEST Picture, Actor, Actress, Supporting Actor/Actress, Director, Original Screenplay and Adapted Screenplay. As in previous years, the predictions are broken down into thoughts on who WILL WIN, SHOULD WIN and SHOULD HAVE BEEN NOMINATED (for one last gasp of anarchistic dissent). Separately, Patrick, Spike and Jon will comment on a WILD CARD guess for three other categories, and the latest odds on the rest of the field will be highlighted to fill out your ballot for Oscar Night. Have a great Oscar weekend...

PREDICTOR GUIDE: Patrick McDonald = (PM), Spike Walters = (SW) and Jon Espino = (JE)

### **BEST PICTURE**

NOMINEES: “Call Me By Your Name,” “Darkest Hours,” “Dunkirk,” “Get Out, Lady Bird,” “Get Out,” “Phantom Thread,” “The Post,” “The Shape of Water,” “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri”

Will Win: “The Shape of Water” (PM, JE) “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri” (SW)

Should Win: “The Shape of Water” (PM, JE) “Phantom Thread” (SW)

Should Have Been Nominated: “Wonder Woman” (PM) “Baby Driver” (SW) “The Florida Project (JE)



Floating: The Creature and Elisa (Sally Hawkins) in 'The Shape of Water'  
Photo credit: Fox Searchlight Pictures

Spike throws down the first counter punch!...

**SW:** It's a bit of a tossup in the Best Picture race. After last year's debacle, it's hard to figure out who the front runner is. "The Shape of Water" is stylish, a labor of love and has the most nominations, but "Three Billboards..." seems to be capturing more of the cultural zeitgeist. However, "Get Out" is chugging along and could pull an upset. But of all the movies, "Phantom Thread" has stuck with me the longest, with its richly nuanced characters. Honestly though, "Baby Driver" was the most fun and vibrant film I saw all of last year.

**JE:** I'll admit, "The Shape of Water" is one of the most overrated films of the year, but where it does stand above the rest of its peers is in the timely message it has about our current political state. It takes a love story about a creature and uses it as an allegory to highlight the "monstrous" nature of our government/president while praising the diversity that makes our country great. "The Florida Project" should have easily made the list. It takes vibrant destinations and child-like innocence, and subverts them by making you witness as they take on darker, more realistic hues.

**PM:** "The Shape of Water" is a perfect Academy Award Best Picture winner, despite the aquatic sex. It's a film that loves the movies, is a romance, is a thriller and comments on today's society through the Cold War Era. The Academy missed an opportunity to honor #metoo and #neveragain with a "Wonder Woman" nod.

#### **BEST ACTOR**

**NOMINEES:** Timothée Chalamet, "Call Me By Your Name"... Daniel Day-Lewis, "Phantom Thread"... Daniel Kaluuya, "Get Out"... Gary Oldman, "Darkest Hour"... Denzel Washington, "Roman J. Israel, Esq."

Will Win: Gary Oldman (PM, SW, JE)

Should Win: Oldman (PM, SW), Timothée Chalamet (JE)

Should Have Been Nominated: Sam Elliott "The Hero" (PM), Tom Hanks "The Post" (SW), James Franco, "The Disaster Artist." (JE)



Gary Oldman as Winston Churchill in "Darkest Hour"  
Photo credit: Focus Features

Start decorating the mantle Gary, it's a clean sweep...

**JE:** I have no doubts that Gary Oldman will win this category, but it would be more of a career-based Oscar instead of one solely for his performance in "Darkest Hour". If it were based on singular performances, Timothee Chalamet would take the award with his intimate and powerful performance in "Call Me By Your Name." An obvious snub in this category would be James Franco's transformative performance as eccentric filmmaker Tommy Wiseau in the hilarious "The Disaster Artist."

**PM:** It's Oldman's year, as many people see it as a career Oscar as well. Seriously, one of the most underrated performances of 2017 was Sam Elliott in the criminally under-seen "The Hero." He portrayed a version of himself, but took it to heights that were relatable and went everywhere the screenplay wanted him to go.

**SW:** Gary Oldman ticks all the Academy's boxes with this performance as Winston Churchill in "Darkest Hour." You could say he's carrying the film on his shoulders since he's far and away the most dynamic thing in it, and will serve as the basis for years for any Churchill impersonations to come.

#### **BEST ACTRESS**

**NOMINEES:** Sally Hawkins, "The Shape of Water"... Frances McDormand, "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"... Margot Robbie, "I, Tonya"... Saoirse Ronan, "Lady Bird"... Meryl Streep, "The Post"

Will Win: Frances McDormand (PM, SW, JE)

Should Win: Sally Hawkins (PM, SW), McDormand (JE)

Should Have Been Nominated: Diane Kruger, "In The Fade" (PM), Jessica Chastain, "Molly's Game" (SW), Sally Hawkins, "Maudie" (JE)



Frances McDormand Poses with the Boards in 'Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri'  
Photo credit: Fox Searchlight Pictures

Call your 'smith, tell him you found a real bolt action lock...

**PM:** This is a strong category, with all the performances notable, especially Sally Hawkins. I actually didn't like "Three Billboards," but understand Frances McD's interpretation, and she hasn't been denied this awards season. Overlooked is Diane Kruger, with an impressively nuanced and stark portrayal in the German/French film "In the Fade."

**SW:** In any other year, Sally Hawkins acting master class as a mute cleaning lady who falls in love with a fish man would run the table. However, McDormand's performance is the kind of hard charging grab-life-by-the-balls performance that makes it impossible to ignore. The Academy loves big personalities with a lot to say, and few can say it as dynamically as McDormand.

**JE:** This one is fairly straightforward. Frances McDormand gives a dynamic performance that challenges our perceptions every step of the way, forcing us (sometimes begrudgingly) to like her despite her rampant un-likability. I realize that Sally Hawkins was nominated already, but it shouldn't have been for "The Shape of Water," especially when she gave such a powerful performance in "Maudie."

#### **BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR**

**NOMINEES:** Willem Dafoe, "The Florida Project"... Woody Harrelson, " Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"... Richard Jenkins, "The Shape of Water"... Christopher Plummer, "All the Money in the World"... Sam Rockwell, " Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"

Will Win: Sam Rockwell (SW, PM, JE)

Should Win: Willem Dafoe (PM, SW, JE)

Should Have Been Nominated: Michael Stuhlbarg, "Call Me By Your Name," two others (SW, JE), Bill Nighy "Their Finest" (PM)



Woody Harrelson and Sam Rockwell are Both Nominated for 'Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri'  
Photo credit: Fox Searchlight Pictures

Will and Should is a group dynamic...

**JE:** Sam Rockwell seems to be sweeping the awards circuit with his impressive performance in "Three Billboards Outside of Ebbing, Missouri," but Willem Dafoe's understated performance does so much more with less. Michael Stuhlbarg had a great year in 2017 with roles in major films like "The Shape of Water" and "The Post," but his truly defining performance of the year was in "Call Me by Your Name." He has more than earned an Oscar for his monologue near the end of the film.

**PM:** Like Gary Oldman, Sam Rockwell is due for a career Oscar, and if the Awards season is any indication, he should win here. Christopher Plummer's nom is actually a pity party, and really, there are too many "Billboards" in this category. Bill Nighy would have been a nice nod in the "other Dunkirk" film, "Their Finest."

**SW:** Sam Rockwell seems ready to take home his first Oscar for his portrayal of the racist idiot deputy in "Three Billboards...", " even though he was my least favorite part of the movie, and it's Willem Dafoe who is far overdue. "The Florida Project" isn't everyone's cup of tea, but Dafoe infuses his character with a warmth and depth that rewards attention without calling attention to itself. Michael Stuhlbarg was featured in three of the best picture nominees, and could have been nominated for any of them.

#### **BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS**

**NOMINEES:** Mary J. Blige, "Mudbound"... Allison Janney, "I, Tonya"... Lesley Manville, "Phantom Thread"... Octavia Spencer, "The Shape of Water"... Laurie Metcalfe, "Lady Bird"

Will Win: Allison Janney (PM, JE), Laurie Metcalfe (SW)

Should Win: Laurie Metcalfe (SW, PM), Allison Janney (JE)

Should Have Been Nominated: Melissa Leo "Novitiate" (PM), Tiffany Haddish "Girl's Trip" (JE)



Allison Janney in 'I, Tonya'  
Photo credit: Neon

Spike goes rogue in a category of worthy candidates...

**SW:** This has always been effectively a two woman race, although there's not an egregiously bad performance in the bunch. Except that it is Allison Janney that is widely predicted to take home the statuette. I was no fan of her performance as the abrasive mother of disgraced figure skater Tonya Harding in "I, Tonya." It was too much of a one note boogeyman for me, although Janney gave it plenty of gusto. Metcalfe provided the more nuanced and lived-in performance, and may come from behind for a late upset.

**PM:** Although Allison Janney's portrayal of monster mother in "I, Tonya" was expressly over the top, the trend says she takes the gold. I preferred Laurie Metcalfe's creative interpretation of "Mom" in "Lady Bird." And to round out the mothering, Melissa Leo's Mother Superior nun in "Novitiate" was a stunner, and deserved a nod.

**JE:** This is a tough category since every actress deserves it, especially Mary J. Blige, but Allison Janney has earned it with her bitter portrayal of Tonya Harding's mom in "I, Tonya"... she also earned it for having to deal with a bird attacking her ear the entire time. The Academy tends to look down on comedies (see: James Franco's Best Actor snub), but Tiffany Haddish's breakout performance in "Girls Trip" is more than worthy of consideration.

#### **BEST DIRECTOR**

**NOMINEES:** Christopher Nolan, "Dunkirk"... Get Out, "Jordan Peele"... Greta Gerwig, "Lady Bird"... Paul Thomas Anderson, "Phantom Thread"... Guillermo Del Toro, "The Shape of Water"

**Will Win:** Greta Gerwig (PM) Guillermo Del Toro (SW, JE)

**Should Win:** Del Toro (SW, PM, JE)

**Should Have Been Nominated:** Patty Jenkins "Wonder Woman" (PM), Dee Rees "Mudbound" (JE)



Guillermo Del Toro Directs Humans & Beasts in 'The Shape of Water'  
Photo credit: Fox Searchlight Pictures

The Über Critic calls the upset...

**JE:** This is easily the hardest category to pick, especially with the likes of Greta Gerwig and Jordan Peele. If either of them wins, I will be just as happy. But I think Guillermo del Toro's odd creature of a love story deserves a win solely on how it handles and praises "otherness." One of the biggest snubs in this category is Dee Rees' powerful and beautiful film "Mudbound," which didn't get even the fraction of attention it should have gotten.

**SW:** You couldn't go wrong giving this award to either Del Toro, Christopher Nolan, or Paul Thomas Anderson. Each has proven themselves to be among the most interesting and visionary directors in film, although you'd be hard pressed to find anyone who found their 2017 nominated offerings to be their favorite films. However, Guillermo Del Toro has wrapped up all the precursor awards and is assured to go home with at least one statue Sunday night.

**PM:** My "upset" special... in the year of #metoo and #neveragain, the Academy will make a statement and confers gold onto Greta Gerwig, who in her major film debut deserves it as much as the dudes. Interestingly, each of the nominees also wrote their films. And where was director Patty Jenkins (see "Wonder Woman" comment above)?

#### **BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY**

NOMINEES: "The Big Sick" "Get Out" "Lady Bird" "The Shape of Water" "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"

Will Win: "Get Out" (SW, PM), "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" (JE)

Should Win: "Get Out" (PM, JE), "Lady Bird" (SW)

Should Have Been Nominated: Brett Haley and Marc Basch "The Hero" (PM), Steven Rogers "I, Tonya" (JE)



Daniel Kaluuya's Character Experiences a Memory in 'Get Out'

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

#### **WILD CARD**

We took assignments on some other individual categories, just to comment upon some favorite gems buried in the mass of Oscar beyond the above-the-line interest.

#### **BEST ANIMATED FEATURE** (Spike Walters)

NOMINEES: "The Boss Baby" "The Breadwinner" "Coco" "Ferdinand" "Loving Vincent"

Will Win: "Coco"

Should Win: "Coco"



Hector and Miguel in 'Coco'

Photo credit: Walt Disney Studios

2017 was a down year for animated films. Pixar Studios is the studio to beat, and "Coco" lives up to the studio's rich artistry... however, I felt



Coco's story was largely derivative. Yet in a year when somehow "Boss Baby" makes the cut, you know there's not that much competition. (SW)

**BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY** (Jon Lennon Espino)

NOMINEES: "Blade Runner 2049" "Darkest Hour" "Dunkirk" "Mudbound" "The Shape of Water"

Will Win: "Blade Runner 2049"

Should Win: "Blade Runner 2049"

Should Have Been Nominated: "Wonder Woman"



The Ethereal Imagery in 'Blade Runner 2049'

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

Much like early Meryl Streep, Roger Deakins has been always the Oscar bridesmaid, but never the bride. The fantastic and visual world building he did in "Blade Runner 2049" is awe-inspiring. He not only was able to continue what the original "Blade Runner" imagined, but also evolved it enough to leave his signature on it... without making it unrecognizable to the original. Another film that should have made the list was the revolutionary "Wonder Woman," which broke records in many ways, but not when it comes to the Academy's negative view on comic book films as a whole. (JE)

**BEST LIVE ACTION SHORT** (Patrick McDonald)

NOMINEES: "DeKalb Elementary" "The Eleven O'Clock" "My Nephew Emmett" "The Silent Child" "Watu Wote: All of Us"

Will Win: "Watu Wote:All of Us," Directed by Katja Benrath

Should Win: "Watu Wote:All of Us"



Chaos and Redemption in 'Watu Wote: All of Us'

Photo credit: Ginger Ink Films

It's an incredible line-up of shorts (which are available for digital download if you want to see a unique program), with "DeKalb Elementary" being the most contemporary in its message. Also, a shout out to "The Silent Child," for dramatically advocating a cause and "The Eleven O'Clock," which in less than 10 minutes creates a circumstance which hilariously unfolds and neatly concludes. But "Watu Wote: All of Us" is a plea to end the madness of "the other," and it's based on a real incident, which provides a lesson of emotional truth. (PM)

### **ODDS FOR THE REST**

To complete the rest of the categories, here are the latest odds for each...

#### **BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM**

A Fantastic Woman (Chile) 5/9  
The Square (Sweden) 2/1  
The Insult (Lebanon) 9/1  
Loveless (Russia) 10/1  
On Body and Soul (Hungary) 33/1

#### **BEST ANIMATED SHORT**

Dear Basketball 2/5  
Garden Party 9/2  
Lou 18/1  
Negative Space 22/1  
Revolting Rhymes 80/1

#### **BEST ORIGINAL SONG**

Remember Me (Coco) 5/8  
This Is Me (The Greatest Showman) 3/2  
Mighty River (Mudbound) 11/1  
Mystery of Love (Call Me by Your Name) 16/1  
Stand Up For Something (Marshall) 22/1

#### **BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE**

Faces Places 2/7  
Icarus 4/1  
Last Men in Aleppo 6/1  
Strong Island 20/1  
Abacus: Small Enough to Jail 25/1

#### **BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT**

Heaven Is a Traffic Jam on the 405 3/2  
Edith+Eddie 9/4  
Heroin(e) 10/3

Knife Skills 20/1  
Traffic Stop 80/1

#### BEST ORIGINAL SCORE

Alexandre Desplat (The Shape of Water) 1/4  
Hans Zimmer (Dunkirk) 5/1  
Jonny Greenwood (Phantom Thread) 7/1  
John Williams (Star Wars: The Last Jedi) 15/1  
Carter Burwell (Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri) 15/1

#### BEST FILM EDITING

Dunkirk 4/9  
Baby Driver 3/1  
The Shape of Water 18/1  
Tonya 66/1  
Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri 80/1

#### BEST VISUAL EFFECTS

War for the Planet of the Apes 5/6  
Blade Runner 2049 10/11  
Star Wars: The Last Jedi 16/1  
Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2 22/1  
Kong: Skull Island 33/1

#### BEST COSTUME DESIGN

Phantom Thread 1/9  
Beauty and the Beast 11/2  
The Shape of Water 15/1  
Darkest Hour 18/1  
Victoria & Abdul 30/1

#### BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN

The Shape of Water 1/4  
Blade Runner 2049 11/2  
Beauty and the Beast 66/1  
Dunkirk 66/1  
Darkest Hour 100/1

#### BEST MAKE-UP AND HAIR STYLING

Darkest Hour 1/10  
Wonder 16/1  
Victoria and Abdul 50/1

#### BEST SOUND EDITING

Dunkirk 1/5  
Baby Driver 11/1  
Blade Runner 2049 18/1  
The Shape of Water 66/1  
Star Wars: The Last Jedi 100/1

#### BEST SOUND MIXING

Dunkirk 1/4  
Baby Driver 7/1  
Star Wars: The Last Jedi 22/1  
Blade Runner 2049 50/1  
The Shape of Water 66/1

*The 90th Academy Awards, hosted by Jimmy Kimmel, will take place on March 4th, 2018, at Hollywood's Dolby Theater, and will be broadcast on ABC-TV beginning at 7pm ET/6pm CT. Odds were determined from [click here](#) [22] and [click here](#). [23] Please, no wagering.*



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