

Nave: 'Revenant' best movie of 2015

By **Howie Nave**

It's that time of year again folks, the Super Bowl of the motion picture industry known as the Academy Awards. This year promises to be what I think will be an exciting one in part because of its host: comedian Chris Rock. Talk about perfect timing, huh?

First the old farts who decide who gets nominated virtually overlooked every African-American contender, which sparked not only outcries from those in the acting community, but also wanted Chris Rock to boycott the Academy as well (for those who don't know, Chris Rock is black).

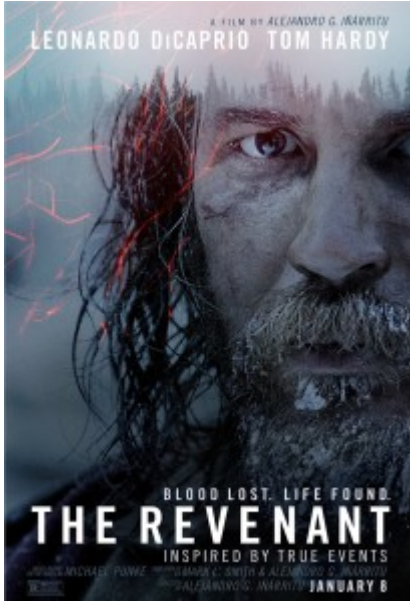
Rock is not only one of my favorite comedians, but has also refused to work college campuses because of the students' politically correct attitude which means I think he's gonna go straight for the funny this Sunday in the most ruthless and hilarious way.

I hope the members of the Academy get slammed too because they always overlook sci-fi flicks even when they are the biggest box office generators. Can anyone say, "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" that is now the biggest box office hit of all time? And what about director J.J. Abrams' reboot of "Star Trek" in 2009 propelling that movie into the top 5 box office earners? Did the Academy appreciate the millions it generated and millions of filmgoers who went to see that movie? No!

So, c'mon Chris Rock, channel all of that rage into a biting night of satire making this night one of the best Oscar nights ever.

That said it has been a pretty good year for movies with some

exceptional performances.



Let's start with the Best Picture category where we have:

"Spotlight"

"The Revenant"

"The Big Short"

"The Martian"

"Mad Max: Fury Road"

"Bridge of Spies"

"Room"

"Brooklyn"

I loved "The Martian" (and Matt Damon's performance) and Tom Hanks' "Bridge of Spies." "Room" and "Brooklyn" don't stand a chance leaving "Mad Max: Fury Road," "The Big Short," "Spotlight" and "The Revenant," as the ones that count. I don't know how "Mad Max" got in (still prefer the original), but the others? Wow. I was split between "The Big Short" and "The Revenant," but the cinematography by Emmanuel Lubezki and acting by Leonardo DiCaprio for me sealed the deal so going

with **"The Revenant" for Best Picture.**

In the Best Actor category we have:

Leonardo DiCaprio ("The Revenant")

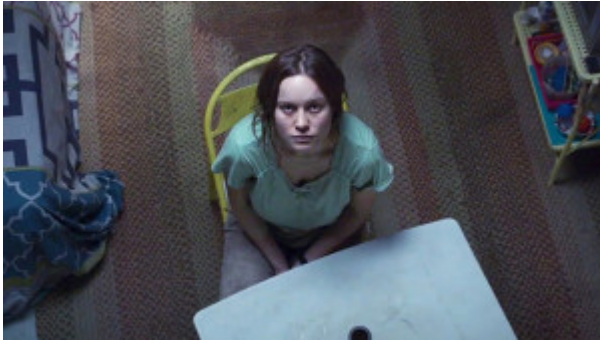
Michael Fassbender ("Steve Jobs")

Eddie Redmayne ("The Danish Girl")

Matt Damon ("The Martian")

Bryan Cranston ("Trumbo")

OK, first off we have Eddie Redmayne who won the Oscar last year for "The Theory of Everything" who was exceptional, yes, but lightning won't be striking twice this time. As I mentioned earlier, I loved Matt Damon in "The Martian," but the Academy hating all things sci-fi (even if it is on the fringes of a good drama) will bypass him. Michael Fassbender was exceptional and usually the Academy likes to reward those who do biopics, but because Apple won't give the Feds the application to break into that terrorist's iPhone they're gonna pass (sorry Magneto). Bryan Cranston plays the character of 1940s blacklisted screenwriter Dalton Trumbo and guess what? The Academy is going to blacklist him once again, which leaves Leonardo DiCaprio for his virtually doing the impossible being in every scene (almost like a one-man show) as 19th-century American frontiersman Hugh Glass, who is left for dead after being mauled by a bear during a winter expedition in "The Revenant." So I'm going with **Leonardo DiCaprio for Best Actor.**



The nominees in the Best Actress category are as follows:

Brie Larson ("Room")

Saoirse Ronan ("Brooklyn")

Cate Blanchett ("Carol")

Jennifer Lawrence ("Joy")

Charlotte Rampling ("45 Years")

I was so impressed with the versatility of Jennifer Lawrence that my first instinct was to go with her, but upon settling down some I realized there can be only one (to quote "The Highlander") and that's Brie Larson for "The Room." I mean, c'mon she's already won the trifecta of awards: the Golden Globe, SAG Award, and BAFTA for Best Actress. The movie made me feel so claustrophobic and Larson's performance was so amazing you felt so liberated at the end of the movie I was literally cheering for her (and her son played brilliantly by 9 year old Jacob Tremblay). Larson's stiffest competition is going to be Cate Blanchett, who's already won Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress. However, the early buzz that Blanchett received around her Oscar-nominated performance in "Carol" has quickly faded in the fickle world of Hollywood and nobody can pronounce Saoirse Ronan's name for her role in "Brooklyn" and nobody saw "45 Years," so I'm going with **Brie Larson for Best Actress.**



The Best Supporting Actor category includes:

Sylvester Stallone ("Creed")

Mark Rylance ("Bridge of Spies")

Tom Hardy ("The Revenant")

Mark Ruffalo ("Spotlight")

Christian Bale ("The Big Short")

Oh, how the Academy loves to reward those who've had a long running history and in a year or round numbers, this case 40 years. Yes, Sylvester Stallone deserves winning in this category for his movie, "Creed" not just because of his powerful performance and the sentimentality behind his beloved character (as that of Rocky Balboa) but also because the Academy did us all a disservice for overlooking the film's director, Ryan Coogler and the movie's incredibly acted lead character of the title name, Michael B. Jordan. Two spoilers in this category would be Mark Rylance and Christian Bale, but hands down I'm going with **Sylvester Stallone as Best Supporting Actor.**



Actress Jennifer Jason Leigh and Howie Nave circa 1995. Photo/Provided

In the “anything goes” category the nominees for Best Supporting Actress include:

Rooney Mara (“Carol”)

Kate Winslet (“Steve Jobs”)

Alicia Vikander (“The Danish Girl”)

Jennifer Jason Leigh (“The Hateful Eight”)

Rachel McAdams (“Spotlight”)

This category spotlights an incredible range of talent and is wide open (and deserving) for any of them. Kate Winslet received a Golden Globe for her performance in “Steve Jobs” as former Mac marketing executive Joanna Hoffman, but even with her surprise Globe win, this category is far from a done deal. Alicia Vikander and Rooney Mara turned in solid performances and the other two nominees, Jennifer Jason Leigh (“The Hateful Eight”) and Rachel McAdams (“Spotlight”), blended well in their perspective ensemble, movies though Leigh’s intense performance as Daisy Domergue, a female outlaw in the 19th century has many (including myself) believing she might be

bring home Oscar. Boy, and if that weren't enough, Leigh is also the voice of the title character in the Oscar-nominated stop-motion animated film, "Anomalisa" so, as much as a long-shot as it may be, I'm going for **Jennifer Jason Leigh as Best Supporting Actress.**



In the crowning jewel for Best Director we have the following:

Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu ("The Revenant")

Tom McCarthy ("Spotlight")

Adam McKay ("The Big Short")

George Miller ("Mad Max: Fury Road")

Lenny Abrahamson ("Room")

All five directors have been to the Academy before, but leading the nominees is 70-year-old veteran George Miller. What still shocks me is the absence of director Ridley Scott for "The Martian." Director Lenny Abrahamson did a fabulous job in his self-contained direction of "Room," as did Tom McCarthy. The spoiler could be Adam McKay for his very smartly acted "The Big Short," but I'm going with a sweep here with **Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu for Best Director.**



For Best Original Screenplay the nominees are:

Matt Charman, Joel and Ethan Coen ("Bridge of Spies")

Pete Docter, Meg LeFauve, Josh Cooley ("Inside Out")

Tom McCarthy and Josh Singer ("Spotlight")

Alex Garland ("Ex Machina")

Jonathan Herman, Andrea Berloff, S. Leigh Savidge and Alan Wenkus ("Straight Outta Compton")

I'm going with Tom McCarthy and Josh Singer for "Spotlight".

For Best Adapted Screenplay the nominees are:

Emma Donoghue ("Room")

Drew Goddard ("The Martian")

Nick Hornby ("Brooklyn")

Adam McKay and Charles Randolph ("The Big Short")

Phyllis Nagy ("Carol")

And the winner will be Adam McKay and Charles Randolph "The Big Short".

In the Best Animated Feature department we have:

"Anomalisa"

“Boy and the World”

“Inside Out”

“When Marnie Was There”

“Shaun the Sheep”

Hands down the winner will be **“Inside Out” for Best Animated Feature.**

In the Best Documentary Feature category the nominees are:

“Amy” (Asif Kapadia)

“Cartel Land” (Matthew Heineman)

“The Look of Silence” (Joshua Oppenheimer)

“What Happened, Miss Simone?” (Liz Garbus)

“Winter on Fire: Ukraine’s Fight for Freedom” (Evgeny Afineevsky)

Need I even bother? Big win for **“Amy”as Best Documentary.**

For Best Cinematography the nominees are:

“Carol” (Ed Lachman)

“The Hateful Eight” (Robert Richardson)

“Mad Max: Fury Road” (John Seale)

“The Revenant” (Emmanuel Lubezki)

“Sicario” (Roger Deakins)

His work was absolutely brilliant in “The Revenant” so going with **Emmanuel Lubezki for Best Cinematography.**

For Best Film Editing the nominees are:

"The Big Short"

"Mad Max: Fury Road"

"Spotlight"

"The Revenant"

"Star Wars: The Force Awakens"

And the winner is **"The Big Short"**.

For Best Original Score the nominees are:

"Carol" (Carter Burwell)

"Sicario" (Jóhann Jóhannsson)

"The Hateful Eight" (Ennio Morricone)

"Bridge of Spies" (Thomas Newman)

"Star Wars: Episode VII–The Force Awakens" (John Williams)

I am picking **Ennio Morricone for "The Hateful Eight"**, but John Williams might be the spoiler for "Star Wars: Episode VII–The Force Awakens".

And finally for Best Original Song the nominees are:

"Earned It" from "Fifty Shades of Grey"

"Manta Ray" from "Racing Extinction"

"Simple Song #3" from "Youth"

"Til It Happens To You" from "The Hunting Ground"

"Writings on the Wall" from "Spectre"

I am going with the song, **"Earned It" from "Fifty Shades of Grey"**.

Howie Nave is host/emcee/manager of The Improv at Harveys. You can hear him Monday-Friday 6 to 10am on KRLT FM-93.9.