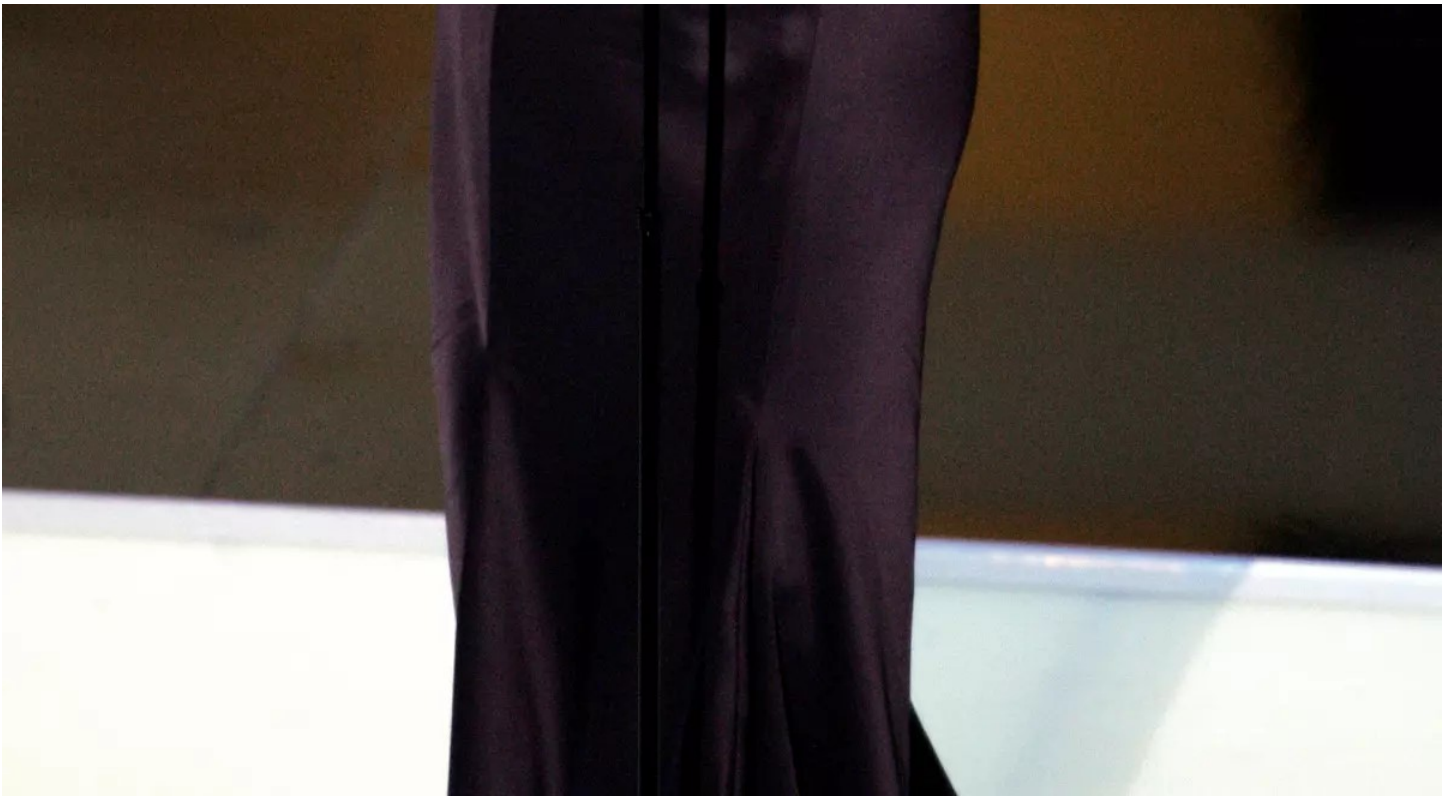




AWARDS

Oscars rewind -- 2004: Sofia Coppola follows in Dad's footsteps





Sofia Coppola, original screenplay Oscar winner, one of the few winners not associated with “The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King.” (Brian van der Brug / Los Angeles Times)

BY RANDEE DAWN

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For winners and nominees at the 76th annual Academy Awards, the original screenplay category was a true family affair. Not only did a win for Sofia Coppola — who earned her first Oscar that night for writing “Lost in Translation” — make her the third-generation Coppola to take home an Academy Award — but the writers of the nominated “In America” included a father and two of his two daughters.

Coppola, the daughter of five-time winner Francis Ford Coppola and granddaughter of Carmine Coppola (who won his Oscar for original score in 1975 for “The Godfather Part II” with Nino Rota), was attached to her family filmmaking business from infancy. She’d appeared as a baby in her father’s “The Godfather” (1972), was in “The Godfather II” as an immigrant child, and had a more substantial role in 1990’s “The Godfather Part III,” a performance that earned her few fans. Earning her Oscar for writing her second feature (Coppola also directed) on the Feb. 29 show, then, must

have felt particularly sweet.



AWARDS

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Feb. 12, 2024

Coppola accepted the award from presenters Susan Sarandon and Tim Robbins (who'd won his own Oscar earlier in the evening) while wearing a Marc Jacobs floor-length plum gown, and was truly all smiles.

She thanked the academy and her father “for everything he taught me,” along with her brother Roman and “all my friends who were there for me when I was stuck at 12 pages and encouraged me to keep writing.” She also mentioned several filmmakers who had been inspiring to her: Michelangelo Antonioni, Wong Kar-wai, Bob Fosse and Jean-Luc Godard. “Every writer needs a muse,” she added. “Mine was [‘Translation’ star] Bill Murray.”

One person who didn't get thanked — and it came as no real surprise — was her former husband (and fellow director) Spike Jonze, who she had divorced the year before. In interviews she gave that year, she noted that he'd been a factor in creating one of the “Translation” characters. “It's not Spike,” she told Entertainment Weekly at the time. “But there are elements of him there. Elements of experiences. There are elements of me in all the characters.”

Her competition also included a few relations, specifically Jim Sheridan and two of his daughters, Naomi and Kirsten. Their lives also proved an inspiration for the nominated film “In America,” on which all three shared writing credit. It was the sixth nomination for the elder Sheridan, who has no wins, and the first for Naomi and Kirsten. Since then, both women have continued to direct.



AWARDS

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Dec. 20, 2023

The other nominees shared no particular family connection, however. Denys Arcand received his first nomination for “The Barbarian Invasions,” which he wrote and directed. “Barbarian” did end up going on to win an Oscar for what was then called foreign language film. Steven Knight (“Dirty Pretty Things”) was also on his first nomination, and failed to win — but he’s clearly found a strength elsewhere: He’s a co-creator of the “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” game show franchise. And Pixar’s Andrew Stanton, Bob Peterson and David Reynolds were nominated for “Finding Nemo,” but went home empty-handed. Stanton did pick up an Oscar earlier that evening when “Nemo” won top animated feature, and would win a second one in 2009 for writing “Wall-E,” while Peterson has been nominated twice for Oscars. This was Reynolds’ one and only nomination thus far.

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