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2025 nominees

Snubs and surprises

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AWARDS

Oscars flashback: Hilary Swank goes 2 for 2



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"I'm just a girl from a trailer park who had a dream," Hilary Swank said after winning an Oscar for "Million Dollar Baby" in 2005. (Mark J. Terrill / Associated Press)

By Randee Dawn

Feb. 5, 2025 3 AM PT

Even when an Oscar moment is meant to focus on the best actresses in the business ... it often becomes about the actors.

Early in the opening monologue for the 77th Academy Awards, held at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood on Feb. 27, 2005, host Chris Rock struck a chord with at least a few actors in the audience. He compared Tom Cruise with Jude Law and then asked, "Who is Jude Law? Why is he in every movie I have seen in the last four years? ... He's in everything."

It was a callout that much later in the show Sean Penn, who was onstage to read out the nominees for lead actress, decided to address. Going off-script, Penn said, "Forgive my compromised sense of humor, but I did want to answer [Rock's] question about who Jude Law is. He's one of our finest actors." Only then did he pivot to focus on the women: "What Jude and all talented actors know is that for every greatly talented actor, there are five actresses who are nothing short of magic. And the Academy's favorite five this year are..."

After that segue, it was time for a small bit of history to be made, when Hilary Swank earned her second Oscar.

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She hits, she scores

By winning that award, Swank became the first woman in academy history to win for playing a boxer, in “Million Dollar Baby.” (She’d already become the first nominated.) After giving husband Chad Lowe a hug in the audience (they would divorce two years later), Swank took the stage to accept the award. It was her second win on her second nomination; she’d won her first Oscar in 2000 for “Boys Don’t Cry.”

“I don’t know what I did in this life to deserve all this,” she said in her Nebraska twang. “I’m just a girl from a trailer park who had a dream.”

She gave Lowe thanks, calling him “my everything,” and made sure to thank the cast and crew from “Million,” which had already earned co-star Morgan Freeman an Oscar for his role in the film and would shortly thereafter earn director-producer Clint Eastwood two more Oscars (for directing and best picture). Swank also thanked her mother “for believing in me from the beginning; my dad for support,” then saved special thoughts for Eastwood, calling him her “mo chuisle,” an Irish phrase meaning “pulse of my heart” that was used in the film.

A familiar pairing

Surely, Annette Bening, who also was nominated in the category for playing an actor in “Being Julia,” was having déjà vu. She and Swank had been opposite one another in the lead actress nominee list in 2000. At that time, Bening was up for “American Beauty,” and Swank won it then too, for “Boys Don’t Cry.” Bening has been nominated five times for an Oscar (1991, 2000, 2005, 2011, 2024) with no wins; all of them were leading nominations except one, in the supporting category.

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there and I've done that, and that's also not so bad.”

Also up for the award were first-time nominee Catalina Sandino Moreno, who played a drug mule in “Maria Full of Grace”; fellow first-timer Imelda Staunton, who played the title character, an abortion provider, in “Vera Drake”; and Kate Winslet, for playing a woman who's had her memories erased in “Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind.” Winslet is a seven-time nominee (1996, 1998, 2002, 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2016), which includes her one win in the category in 2009 for “The Reader.” Winslet missed a nomination this year for her biopic “Lee,” based on American photographer Lee Miller.

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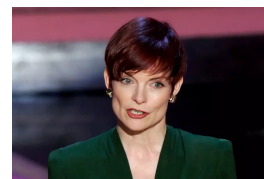
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