

'No Country' likely winner of Best Picture

Lack of a Best Picture nomination for 'Eastern Promises' is one of this year's disappointments.

A little advice for those of you placing bets on this year's Academy Awards; 17 of the past 23 Best Picture Golden Globe winners have also won the Academy Award for Best Picture.

However, it is important to know that three of the six mismatches have come in succession, starting with Clint Eastwood's "Million Dollar Baby" (2004), followed by Paul Haggis' "Crash" (2005), and last year's best picture winner "The Departed," (2006) directed by Martin Scorsese.

Joel and Ethan Coen's "No Country for Old Men" did not win the best picture Golden Globe this year, which I think guarantees a Best Picture award at the Academy Awards this year.

"No Country" along with director Paul Thomas Anderson's "There Will Be Blood," garnered eight nominations each, including a best lead actor nomination for "There Will Be Blood's" Daniel Day-Lewis and a best supporting actor nomination for "No Country's" Javier Bardem.

"No Country for Old Men" has been awarded Best Picture 16 times this year by various associations which include the Broadcast Film Critics Association, the Online Film Critics Society, the Satellite Awards, the Toronto Film Critics Association, the Washington DC Area Film Critics Association, and the National Board of Review, USA.

As for acting, Daniel Day-Lewis is a solid favorite, with his performance in "Blood" earning him 15 best actor awards from various film critics associations, as well as the Golden Globes. This is Lewis' fifth Oscar nomination, and his first since 2002's "Gangs of New York." His last win was in 1989 for his performance in

INSIDE THE MOVIES

by MATTHEW HEMENWAY



Jim Sheridan's "My Left Foot," which was also Lewis' first ever Academy Award nomination.

Julie Christie is perhaps as well on her way to winning her second Academy Award, having won 14 Best Actress awards so far for her performance in Sarah Polley's "Away from Her," which includes a Golden Globe award.

Diablo Cody is poised to win the Oscar for Best Original Screenplay for Juno. In recent years the Academy has taken a liking to similar trendy indie films. 2006's "Little Miss Sunshine," directed by Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Farisk, was the last indie film to receive widespread acclaim, earning four Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture.

Other best original screenplay nominations include Brad Bird for "Ratatouille," Tamara Jenkins for "The Savages," Tony Gilroy for "Michael Clayton," and Nancy Oliver for "Lars and the Real Girl."

Some notable cuts this year include Tim Burton's "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street", which despite winning the Golden Globe for Best Picture-Musical or Comedy received no best picture Oscar nomination. The film received a total of three nominations, which consist of a much deserved Best Actor in a Leading Role nom for Johnny Depp, a Best Achievement in Art Direction nom for Dante Ferretti and Francesca Lo Schiavo, and a Best Achievement in Costume Design nom for Colleen Atwood.

James McAvoy and Keira Knightly seemed like a lock for a Best Actor/Actress nomination for "Atonement," but surprisingly missed out. I happen to agree with the

Academy's decision here, but I don't agree with three of their seven nominations for "Atonement," or the four noms for "Juno" for that matter. Ridley Scott's "American Gangster," nominated for three Golden Globes, which include Best Director, Best Motion Picture-Drama, and Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture-Drama, received only two Academy Award nominations.

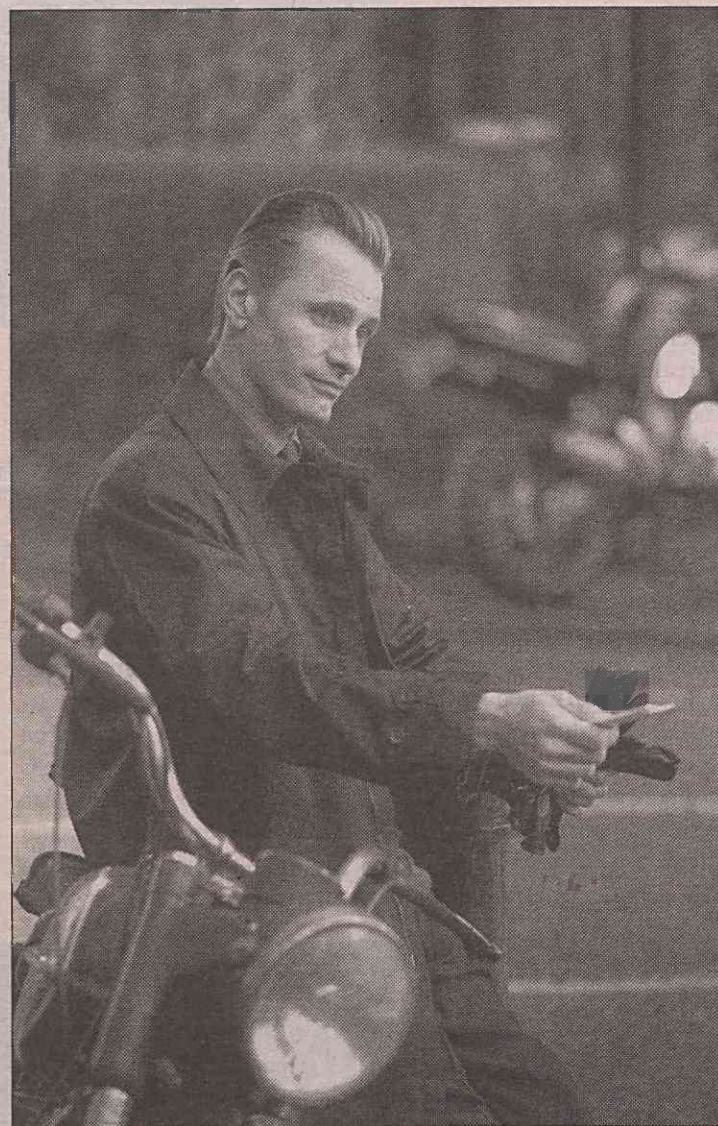
Oddly enough, the Oscar noms went to non Golden Globe nominated Ruby Dee for acting, and Arthur Max and Beth A. Rubino for Art Direction.

David Cronenberg's "Eastern Promises" is, in my opinion, the most under recognized film this year, garnering only one Oscar nom for Viggo Mortenson for

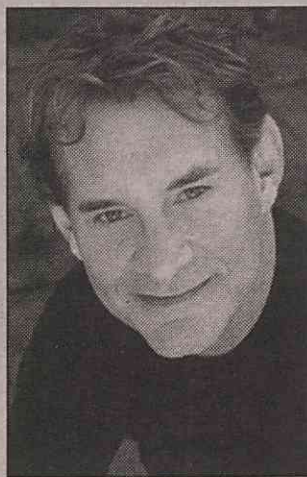
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Right: Viggo Mortenson starred in "Eastern Promises." Though not nominated for Best Picture, it was easily one of the best movies of the past year.



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