As I only predicted 15 out of 24 categories correctly for the previous Academy Awards, obviously I have some making up to do for my prognostic abilities to again be taken seriously.

Of all freakin' times to attempt a comeback ... !

Seriously, this is one of those wacky, anomalous years in which nearly anything could happen at the annual Oscar ceremony. (This year's is scheduled to air locally on ABC's WQAD-TV affiliate on Sunday, February 24, beginning at 7 p.m.). *Argo* could win the big prize despite its lack of a Best Director nod, or it could be shut out entirely. (I'm guessing the former.)
Lincoln
could sweep, or it could be relegated to one lone win from 12 nominations. (Sadly, I'm guessing the latter.)
Silver Linings Playbook
could score in numerous categories because – like 2011's
The Artist
and 2010's
The King's Speech –
it has producer and legendary Oscar hunter Harvey Weinstein on its side, or it ... .

Hmm. Maybe I should've given the Weinstein thing more consideration before making these predictions.

Alas, the predictions have been made, and in boldface no less, so I guess there's no turning back now. I urge you to employ caution if you're planning to use them for your office's annual Oscar pool. And you may as well flip a coin on Best Supporting Actor. Preferably a five-sided coin.

BEST PICTURE
Amour
Argo
Beasts of the Southern Wild
Django Unchained
Les Misérables
Life of Pi
Lincoln
Silver Linings Playbook
Zero Dark Thirty

At present, Ben Affleck is so beloved in the industry that he probably could've directed that tacky, sci-fi script-within-the-script version of *Argo* and it *still* would've won Best Picture.

BEST DIRECTOR
Michael Haneke, *Amour*
Ang Lee, *Life of Pi*
David O. Russell, *Silver Linings Playbook*
Steven Spielberg, *Lincoln*
Benh Zeitlin, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*

Though if, through some miracle, this award's presenter exclaims, "And the Oscar goes to ... *Ben Affleck*
!", I won't be the least bit surprised.

BEST ACTOR

Bradley Cooper, *Silver Linings Playbook*
Daniel Day-Lewis, *Lincoln*
Hugh Jackman, *Les Misérables*
Joaquin Phoenix, *The Master*
Denzel Washington, *Flight*

Hail to the chief.

BEST ACTRESS
Jessica Chastain, *Zero Dark Thirty*
Jennifer Lawrence, *Silver Linings Playbook*
Emmanuelle Riva, *Amour*
Quvenzhané Wallis, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*
Naomi Watts, *The Impossible*

“Gee ... Emmanuelle turns 86 on February 24 ... . We really should get her something *nice* this year ... .”

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR
Alan Arkin, *Argo*
Robert De Niro, *Silver Linings Playbook*
Philip Seymour Hoffman, *The Master*
Tommy Lee Jones, *Lincoln*
Christoph Waltz, *Django Unchained*

And if this happens, De Niro will have beaten Day-Lewis to a third Oscar by at least an hour. Take *that*, Brits! *USA! USA!*

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS
Amy Adams, *The Master*
Sally Field, *Lincoln*
Anne Hathaway, *Les Misérables*
Helen Hunt, *The Sessions*
Jacki Weaver, *Silver Linings Playbook*

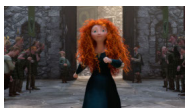
One song plus one unbroken take equals one Oscar.

BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY
***Amour*, Michael Haneke**
Django Unchained, Quentin Tarantino
Flight, John Gatins
Moonrise Kingdom, Wes Anderson, Roman Coppola
Zero Dark Thirty, Mark Boal

After big wins from Critics Choice Award (CCA), Golden Globe, and British Academy of Film & Television Arts (BAFTA) voters, Tarantino should be the no-contest choice here. But *Amour*'s unexpectedly powerful showing in numerous Oscar categories makes me think otherwise. Take *that*
, Americans!
Aus-tri-a! Aus-tri-a!

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY
***Argo,* Chris Terrio**
Beasts of the Southern Wild, Lucy Alibar, Benh Zeitlin
Life of Pi, David Magee
Lincoln, Tony Kushner
Silver Linings Playbook, David O. Russell

Kushner's script, I'm convinced, is a thing of genius, and Russell, despite heavy competition, recently won the BAFTA prize in this category. But *Argo* is about hostages who are rescued, in part, by a screenplay titled *Argo*. Academy voters should just give Terrio's script the Oscar *and* miniature tights and a cape.



BEST ANIMATED FEATURE
Brave
Frankenweenie
ParaNorman
The Pirates! Band of Misfits
Wreck-It Ralph

Frankenweenie would be welcome, long-delayed acknowledgment of Tim Burton, and *Wreck-It Ralph* would be a relatively hip option for a generally unhip Academy. *ParaNorman*, meanwhile, would just be *my* choice, so obviously *that's* not gonna happen. (Nor will *The Pirates!*

) Let's go with the Golden Globe and BAFTA winner in this category – maybe not a brave prediction, but a
Brave
prediction nonetheless.

BEST ORIGINAL SONG
"Before My Time," *Chasing Ice*
"Everybody Needs a Best Friend," *Ted*
"Pi's Lullaby," *Life of Pi*
"Skyfall," *Skyfall*
"Suddenly," *Les Misérables*

I wonder if Adele's new Grammy is looking for a dance partner ... ?

BEST FOREIGN-LANGUAGE FILM
***Amour,* Austria**
Kon-Tiki, Norway
No, Chile
A Royal Affair, Denmark
War Witch, Canada

"Amour" is French for "love." What's French for "such a done deal that there's no point discussing it"?

DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

PRODUCTION DESIGN

VISUAL EFFECTS

BEST ANIMATED SHORT

Oscar-a-a-azinest