

Oscar Live Shorts!

Written by Dave Howard

Hedge your Oscar pool bets! "Slumdog Millionaire" will probably take the big prizes and everyone knows it. Winning your Oscar pool rests on correctly picking Documentary and the Shorts. Live action and animated shorts are coming to the following theaters:

The Landmark, West Los Angeles
Laemmle's Sunset 5, West Hollywood
South Coast Village, Costa Mesa
Laemmle's Playhouse 7, Pasadena

However, if you don't live near L.A. you need me, the Grand Poo-bah of Oscar Shorts. Resting firmly on last year's laurels, I have sorted it all out for you. Here is the live action round up.



Manon on the Asphalt - dirs. Elizabeth Marre and Olivier Pont - France - 15 min

A girl gets killed in a bicycle accident. Mostly shot from her POV, she remembers her friends and family. While she lies dying, her friends go through the motions of their lives, oblivious. I didn't care for this one at all. While well shot and performed, it was very French pretentious, striving to find some depth in the ordinary. Odds of Winning: 5 to 1

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f Der Strecke (On the Line) - dir. Reto Caffi - Germany/Switzerland - 30 min

A lonely department store security guard uses his cameras to spy on his muse, a pretty cosmetic saleswoman. They ride the same train home every day, where they have a mild commuter relationship. When he witnesses a potential rival being attacked on the train, he chooses to leave the train rather than saving him. The next day he learns that it was her brother who was killed. He now has to deal with his conscience. As with all of these films, it is well done, and features a brilliant and restrained performance by Janic Halioua. It's a solid piece of filmmaking; it just doesn't quite measure up to the others.

Odds of Winning: 4 to 1

New



Boy - dir. Steph Green - Ireland - 11 min A

After his father's arrest, a black child finds himself attending an all-white South African school. He is tormented by bullies. When he defends himself, all the boys are detained for fighting. While being singled out, a fast friendship develops among them. Loved this one! It reminded me of my grammar school days where punching it out often led to great friendships. Underneath it all, we are all the same. This concise, sharp piece of filmmaking cuts the fluff and gets right to the point. Odds of Winning 3 to 1.

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