

# OSCARS

## Something was amiss Oscar night

**GREG HAMILTON**  
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

Am I the only one to think that the Academy Awards ceremony for 1994 was a bit odd, even peculiar in comparison to previous years? Perhaps it was the fact that host David Letterman looked more than a mite out of sorts, or maybe it was the pat filler of the show that consisted of a decidedly unfunny tribute to comedy?

I don't rightly know. Something was amiss, turning a fairly predictable awards brooha (unless you were using my predictions) into an oddly tense and sublimely weird event.

In some senses, I think Letterman had a lot to do with it. The late-night host displayed all the humor and charisma of a stoned hyena, laughing at his own writer-contrived jokes and lapsing into moments of bizarre neurosis. This, of course, is nothing new for Dave, but his after-hours bravado seemed stilted and queer in the face of the Hollywood hopefuls and their one billion fans.

Perhaps they didn't get his jokes or were confused by his ham-handed attempts at *Late Show* absurdity. From takes on *Stupid Pet Tricks* to the infamous Top Ten, the tenor of the ceremony felt more like a hubris-inspired rehash of our favorite CBS yokel than anything even vaguely Hollywoodish.

In retrospect, it's a small miracle that Paul Schaefer didn't make a cameo along side *Lion*

King maven Elton John; God knows the two bear an eerie resemblance to each other.

That's not to say that there weren't a few funny moments for the new master of ceremonies. Aside from Dave's canned attempts at mimicking his other job, the prerecorded "Taxi Oscar Performances" and "Cabin Boy Star Auditions" were nothing but sheer genius. Just the opportunity to see Paul Newman, Madonna and Barry White all say "You wanna buy a monkey?" (Dave's one line in the film *Cabin Boy*), was worth watching the entire show.

Aside from the distraction of Letterman, the evening created its own brand of memorable moments.

### Keanu Reeves

Keanu Reeves proved once again the vast range of his acting expertise by squeezing out a few moon-faced and painful lines while introducing *Pulp Fiction*.

### Tom Hanks

Tom Hanks debuted his new career in carpet-laying after Letterman coaxed him into a rousing but less-than-awing version of *Stupid Pet Tricks*. Hanks seemed aloof of the acerbic host, preferring not to shake Dave's hand and fleeing back to his seat after the little pet show turned lame.

### Paul Newman

For all of Paul Newman's male charisma, the man must have a

lousy short-term memory. After introducing *Forrest Gump* in the Cinematography category, the wrinkled icon blanked on the rest of the contestants, leaving an uneasy silence as he stared blindly into the teleprompter. Eventually he managed to gravitate back to earth long enough to announce the winner (*Legends of the Fall*), which he failed to mention the first time around. Flashbacks are a bitch, eh Paul?

### 'Pulp Fiction'

Give the candor award to the *Pulp Fiction* writing team of Quentin Tarantino and Roger Avery. After garnering their award, the terrible twosome looked on the verge of a psychotic freak out, with the veritably toasted Tarantino shrieking and gesticulating to the crowd, leaving Avery only to confess the tension of his bladder.

### 'Forrest Gump'

In the end, *Forrest Gump* performed as expected, raking in most of the majors and virtually all of the attention. Tom Hanks wept shamelessly, *Gump* director Robert Zemeckis flaunted his recent hair implants, and the words "life is a box of chocolates" was banded around far to often.

*Gump* happened, and the juggernaut rolled.

Thank the Heavens that Letterman had the decency to leave Larry "Bud" Melman at home, or the dumbing of America would have been complete.

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