

'Moonlight' wins best picture at botched Academy Awards

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Oscar winner, take two.

Barry Jenkins' 'Moonlight' — not, as it turned out, 'La La Land' — won best picture at the Academy Awards in a historic Oscar upset and an unprecedented fiasco that saw one winner swapped for another while the 'La La Land' producers were in mid-speech.

Presenters Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway apparently took the wrong envelope — the one for best actress winner Emma Stone — onto the stage for the final prize. When they read 'La La Land' as the winner, representatives for ballot tabulators PwC — formerly Price Waterhouse Coopers — realized the mistake and raced onstage to try to stop the acceptance speeches. Host Jimmy Kimmel came forward to inform the cast that 'Moonlight' had indeed won, showing the inside of the envelope as proof. 'I knew I would screw this up,' said Kimmel, a first-time host.

Gasps were heard around the auditorium. Presenters, winners and Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences huddled to discuss the debacle. Beatty refused to give up the envelopes until he could hand them first to Jenkins. 'La La Land' director Damien Chazelle and Jenkins hugged amid the chaos.

'Even in my dreams this cannot be true,' said an astonished Jenkins, once he reached the microphone. 'To hell with dreams! I'm done with it because this is true.'

Backstage, Stone said she was holding her winning envelope at the time. 'I think everyone's in a state of confusion still,' said Stone. Later the actress, who pledged her deep love of 'Moonlight,' added, 'Is that the craziest Oscar moment of all time? Cool!'

It was, nevertheless, a shocking upset considering that 'La La Land' came in with 14 nominations, a record that tied it with 'Titanic' and 'All About Eve.' Jenkins' tender, bathed-in-blue coming-of-age drama, made for just \$1.5 million, is an unusually small Oscar winner. Having made just over \$22 million as of Sunday at the box office, it's one of the lowest grossing best-picture winners ever — but also one of the most critically adored. 'Moonlight,' released by indie distributor A24, also had some major muscle behind it, including Brad Pitt's Plan B, which also backed the 2015 winner '12 Years a Slave.'

'It was unfortunate that things happened as they did but, goddamn, we won best picture,' the still cool and composed Jenkins told reporters.

The 'La La Land' team was celebrating onstage when producer Jordan Horowitz took to the microphone to say: 'There's been a mistake. 'Moonlight,' you guys won best picture.' He then graciously passed his statue to the 'Moonlight' producers, saying, 'This is not a joke.'

'I noticed the commotion that was happening and I thought that something strange had occurred,' Jenkins said backstage. 'The last 20 minutes of my life have been insane.'

'Moonlight' co-star Mahershala Ali, the supporting actor winner, said the conclusion 'threw me a bit. I don't want to go up there and take anything from



Jordan Horowitz, producer of 'La La Land,' shows the envelope revealing 'Moonlight' as the true winner of best picture at the Oscars on Sunday at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. Presenter Warren Beatty and host Jimmy Kimmel look on from right.

someone,' he said afterward. 'It's very hard to feel joy in a moment like that.'

In a statement, PwC apologized to each film, Beatty, Dunaway and Oscar viewers. 'The presenters had mistakenly been given the wrong category envelope and when discovered, was immediately corrected,' said the accounting firm. PwC, which has long watched over the Oscar ballots, said it was currently investigating 'how this could have happened.'

Up until the frenzied end, the telecast had seasawed between jabs at Donald Trump and passionate arguments for inclusivity. 'All you people out there who feel like there isn't a mirror out there for you, the academy has your back, the ACLU has your back and for the next four years we will not leave you alone, we will not forget you,' said Jenkins, whose film is, in three chapters, about a young black kid growing up poor and gay in impoverished Miami.

Kenneth Lonergan, the New York playwright whose last film ('Margaret') was beset by lawsuits and conflict, won best original screenplay for 'Manchester by the Sea.' 'I love the movies. I love being part of the movies,' said Lonergan. After the wild ending, Lonergan deadpanned to reporters, 'It turned out that we actually won best picture.'

Shortly later, Affleck — in one of the night's most closely watched races, won best actor — his first Oscar — for his soulful, grief-filled performance in Lonergan's film. Affleck and Denzel Washington ('Fences') were seen as neck-and-neck in the category. An admittedly 'dumbfounded' Affleck looked shocked when his name was read. 'Man I wish I had something bigger and more meaningful to say,' said Affleck, who hugged his more famous brother, Ben, before taking the stage.

The show kicked off with Justin Timberlake dancing down the Dolby Theatre aisles, singing his ebullient song, 'Can't Stop the Feeling,' from the animated film 'Trolls.' It was an early cue that the Oscars would steer, at least in part, toward festiveness rather than heavy-handedness. Protests, boycotts and rallies have swirled ahead of Sunday night's Oscars. But Kimmel, in his opening monologue, quickly acknowledged that he 'was not that guy' to heal a divided America.

But he pointedly led a standing ovation for the 'overrated' Meryl Streep and later tweaked the president by tweeting to him on air, including telling him that Streep 'says hi.'

Viola Davis, co-star of Denzel Washington's August Wilson adaptation 'Fences,'

won best supporting actress. She and Ali, both widely expected winners, marked the first time in more than a decade that multiple Oscar acting honors went to black actors.

89th Academy Awards winners

Best Picture: 'Moonlight.'

Actor: Casey Affleck, 'Manchester by the Sea.'

Actress: Emma Stone, 'La La Land.'

Supporting Actor: Mahershala Ali, 'Moonlight.'

Supporting Actress: Viola Davis, 'Fences.'

Directing: Damien Chazelle, 'La La Land.'

Foreign Language Film: 'The Salesman,' Iran.

Adapted Screenplay: 'Moonlight,' screenplay by Barry Jenkins, story by Tarell Alvin McCraney.

Original Screenplay: Kenneth Lonergan, 'Manchester by the Sea.'

Cinematography: Linus Sandgren, 'La La Land.'

Production Design: 'La La Land,' Production Design: David Wasco; Set Decoration: Sandy Reynolds-Wasco.

Sound Mixing: 'Hacksaw Ridge,' Kevin O'Connell, Andy Wright, Robert Mackenzie and Peter Grace.

Sound Editing: 'Arrival,' Sylvain Bellemare.

Original Score: 'La La Land,' Justin Hurwitz.

Original Song: 'City of Stars' from 'La La Land,' music by Justin Hurwitz, lyric by Ben Pasek and Justin Paul.

Costume Design: Colleen Atwood, 'Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them.'

Documentary (short subject): 'The White Helmets,' Orlando von Einsiedel and Joanna Natasegara.

Documentary Feature: 'O.J.: Made in America,' Ezra Edelman and Caroline Waterlow.

Film Editing: 'Hacksaw Ridge,' John Gilbert.

Makeup and Hairstyling: 'Suicide Squad,' Alessandro Bertolazzi, Giorgio Gregorini and Christopher Nelson.

Animated Feature Film: 'Zootopia,' Byron Howard, Rich Moore and Clark Spencer.

Animated Short Film: 'Piper,' Alan Barillaro and Marc Sondheimer.

Live Action Short Film: 'Sing,' Kristof Deak and Anna Udvardy.

Visual Effects: 'The Jungle Book,' Robert Legato, Adam Valdez, Andrew R. Jones and Dan Lemmon.

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