

Will Underdog Richard Rossi Upset Best Actor Oscar Race? by Vanessa Farraday

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HOLLYWOOD, CA., UNITED STATES, January 23, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Unknown actors usually don't have a prayer when it comes to snagging an Oscar nomination. Minister-turned-moviemaker Richard Rossi may get a miracle on the strength of his portrayal of con man preacher Brother Billy in *Canaan Land*.

Rossi is competing for a 2021 Oscar with his controversial film "*Canaan Land*" about a con man preacher named Brother Billy (played by Rossi) who falls in love with a sincere Christian (Rebecca Holden). Rossi's portrayal lays bare Billy's secrets. His performance as an aging grifter who lives off the kindness of women is a master class on acting. It is the greatest acting performance of the year. "*Canaan Land*" can be seen for a limited time on Vimeo.com here:

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/canaanland>

"Media is in financial trouble due to covid," a former award winner said. "The studios spend to get their A-listers a Best Actor nod, so it's near impossible for an unknown actor without marketing money to fight that."

"*Canaan Land*" comes out of my past experiences as a minister," Rossi said. "I met some big name televangelists who faked miracles to get money. I was so angry, I started writing *Canaan Land*, about the differences between the fake and the real."

Rossi's performance draws you in from the beginning and takes you on a roller coaster until the end. I cherished every moment and actually came to feel bad for Brother Billy, despite his being the consummate charismatic con man.

IMDB is giving *Canaan Land* a 9.5 and reviews are pouring in:

"As Billy is revealed to have a trail of women he used for sex or money, I find myself despising his behavior. Yet, as his backstory is revealed, and the tone of the film changes, from comedy to drama, my heart breaks for Billy and I understand why he does what he does. I cried for Billy." (IMDB, Brooke, Boston)

"Although I love Burt Lancaster who won an Oscar for Elmer Gantry in 1960 playing a similar religious con man, I think Rossi was better in this 21st century equivalent. Burt Lancaster's phoniness was so over-the-top. Rossi's Brother Billy Gantry was over-the-top when it was called for in the TV preaching scenes, but he created a character more subtle, layered with subtext in his ability to manipulate the gullible. It is a small film, a David vs. Goliath, but if it is given a fair chance, it deserves nominations..." (IMDB, Catholic Newswire)

"Rossi's nuanced acting was stellar. His hustling was despicable, yet somehow his childlike qualities and brokenness made me want to see him redeemed. I support this underdog Oscar contender because it tells a real story based on minister-turned-moviemaker Rossi's pain and past as a former faith healer. Rossi takes the concept of a faith-based film and turns it on its head." (IMDB, Indie Film Judge)

"Get the gold dust!" Brother Billy yells, in his gold jacket that has spawned a fashion trend and is sold in stores worldwide as the "Brother Billy Canaan Land jacket." There is a reason Billy's look and eccentricities have become iconic. Rossi has tapped into archetypes in his character..." (IMDB, Jack Bernstein)

Canaan Land is a small film made as a labor of love going against studios spending \$40 million with a staff of 65 marketing to get nominations. But Rossi's fellow actors who watch Canaan Land, from beginning to end, have an obvious choice. Rossi's performance captivates with an arc of a performance that deserves a Best Actor nomination.

OSCAR HOME STRETCH

"Canaan Land is an outsider climbing ranks," Kelly Tabor Cromer said, who runs a fan club for Rossi's work. "Like a Kentucky Derby homestretch, on the bit with full strides, pulling with momentum, pushing out, ahead, clearing it's rivals as the closer, to the Winner's Circle for the prize, there's the late-breaking indie newcomer, Canaan Land."

Canaan Land, is now screening in the Academy Screening Room for voting members, under consideration for Best Picture, Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Actress (Rebecca Holden), Best Actor (Richard Rossi), Supporting Actor (Isaac Bar-jonah), Best Supporting Actress (Jozy Pollock, Rosetta Walker), and Best Song (A Much Much Greater Love, Vagabond, Canaan Land, Santa Monica, The Kingdom Is Near, and Street Preachin' Man).

Vanessa Farraday
Oscar Predictions
+1 310-276-2251
[email us here](#)

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