

The Ten Biggest Non-Sports Upsets of the Last 25 (or so) Years, Part II

by Joe Mulder

Welcome back. If you missed Part I, you can find it [here](#).

Let's finish this: Mike Myers over Dana Carvey

I like Dana Carvey. I always did. And yes, we all think Mike Myers is lame now, what with *The Love Guru* and all. Though to be fair to Mike Myers, I never saw *The Love Guru*, I just took everyone's word for it. But back in the late-'80s, when "Wayne's World" first hit TV screens on "Saturday Night Live," I don't know who would have supposed that in ten years Dana Carvey would be playing "Referee" in *Little Nicky* while Mike Myers would arguably be the biggest star in comedy.

So what happened? Well, for one thing, Dana Carvey happened to appear in a few duds in a row, like *Clean Slate* and *Trapped in Paradise*, followed by a failed sketch comedy show that by all accounts was brilliant – and which introduced the world to the likes of Stephen Colbert and Steve Carell. "The Dana Carvey Show" is available in full on [Hulu.com](#), in fact, and one of these days I swear I'm going to get around to watching it.

Meanwhile, Mike Myers rode a "right place, right moment in the pop culture space-time continuum" wave to comedy superstardom on the back of his Austin Powers character. And that was that.

In any case, I'd be happy to see a nice comeback from both of these guys. Am I saying I'd pay to see *Wayne's World 3*? Yes. That's exactly what I'm saying. *Shakespeare in Love* over *Saving Private Ryan*

This, more than anything else, was the impetus for my Oscar "[Five Year Rule](#)," whereby I suggest that most Academy Award bestowals would better stand the ultimate test of time if every year we gave out Oscars for the films that had come out five years earlier.

There was basically a ten-day window in March of 1999 during which *Shakespeare in Love* had any hope whatsoever of garnering anyone's Best Picture vote over *Saving Private Ryan*, but that ten-day window just happened to be during the height of Miramax's Oscar campaign for *Shakespeare*, and that ten-day window just happened to be when the bulk of the 1998 Best Picture votes were cast (note: I can't prove any of that, but it's just common sense). For about a week-and-a-half Hollywood went collectively mad, [Dutch tulip bubble-style](#), and decided that, going by the results of the Oscars, *Saving Private Ryan* was the best photographed, best edited, best directed movie of the year, but was somehow not the best movie overall. I guess that's possible. But you still hear people remark with wonder about *Saving Private Ryan's* Omaha Beach sequence these ten years later,

and you really don't hear much about *Shakespeare in Love*.

And yet, when you walk into the Hollywood & Highland complex, toward the Kodak Theatre, where the Oscars are held, and the columns on either side of the aisle list all of the Best Picture winners in history, you see *Shakespeare in Love*, not *Saving Private Ryan*... and that's about as upsetting as upsets get. Jerry O'Connell over the rest of the cast of *Stand By Me*

This one only works if we consider who's doing the best *now*, as River Phoenix was nominated for an Oscar, and therefore can't really be topped unless one of the other *Stand By Me* kids ends up winning one.

But the fact remains that as you read this (well, as long as you're reading it within a few weeks of its publication; I can't predict the distant future), Jerry O'Connell has the best show biz career of anybody in the cast of *Stand By Me* (this assumes you don't count John Cusack or Keifer Sutherland, which I don't. I'm just talking about the four main kids).

Wil Wheaton had a nice run on "Star Trek: The Next Generation," but hasn't really been seen since. Corey Feldman pretty much followed the Former Child Star F-Up playbook, and River Phoenix, sadly, has passed away. So we're left with the Fat Kid, Jerry O'Connell, and while admittedly the bar hasn't been set particularly high by his *Stand By Me* castmates, *Jerry Maguire*, *Tomcats*, that sitcom I swear I remember him having last year, and a marriage to Rebecca Romijn make him the clear winner.

Personally, I think it has to do with the Shatner/NPH Rule, which may be second only to the Five Year Oscar Rule in terms of brilliant concepts I've pioneered over the course of my life. I've hashed it out before, but it goes like this: a typecast actor or actress can and/or will only succeed again once he or she no longer looks like the character he or she was typecast as. It was named after William Shatner and Neil Patrick Harris, both of whom found lasting TV success once they didn't look so much like Captain Kirk and Doogie Howser, respectively. Jerry O'Connell grew up to be a big, strapping beefcake, so even though he was the fat kid in *Stand By Me*, it's very easy for even the most unsophisticated viewer to no longer regard him as such.

Meanwhile, if you slap a pair of Buddy Holly glasses on Corey Feldman, he's still the spitting image of a twelve-year-old Teddy Duchamp. "30 Rock" over "Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip"

Aaron Sorkin's "Studio 60," an hour-long drama set behind the scenes of a "Saturday Night Live"-esque sketch comedy show, came on the heels of "The West Wing" and "SportsNight," two TV shows created by Sorkin and, not coincidentally, two of the best TV shows of the last several years. NBC won a bidding war with CBS over the show, paying a near-record fee to acquire the rights. Fans of good

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TV (like me), as well as people who like to feel smug about how the TV they watch is better than the TV most people watch (again, like me), were giddy with anticipation.

We also wondered why NBC would choose to unveil *another* show set behind the scenes of a "Saturday Night Live"-esque sketch comedy show, Tina Fey's "30 Rock," just a few weeks later. It seemed like you'd have been better served to try to open up a movie about Indiana high school basketball three weeks after the debut of *Hoosiers*.

And then it happened. "30 Rock" shook off a relatively lackluster pilot to become the best show on television, and "Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip" quickly – and I mean *very* quickly – went from "Hmm, that wasn't as good as I'd anticipated" to "You know, I actually think this show is bad" to "this show is so bad it's literally making me angry" to "I sincerely hope this show dies a quick and painful death." Nobody, and I mean nobody, saw that coming.

And now, almost three years later, "30 Rock" has won multiple Emmys and is considered by those who know their TV to be among the best shows ever, while the very mention of the name "Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip" causes most people to shudder like they just remembered that time they accidentally saw their grandma naked. Jay Leno over David Letterman

Letterman fans have run out of excuses: Jay beat Dave head-to-head in the ratings, consistently, for a solid decade-and-a-half, no matter how badly NBC's prime time schedule was faring. It didn't matter how well-regarded Letterman was among the self-proclaimed comedy intelligentsia, or how tired Leno's monologue schtick might have been.

It's almost as if innate broadcasting talent isn't all there is to it; maybe a tireless work ethic and a genuinely nice personality will come across to viewers eventually, and make something of a difference. In any case, for better or worse, America voted with its remote control, and Leno left on top.
