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NEWS/ Cannes Notebook: Jennifer Hudson Talks Baby and Wedding

by JOSH GROSSBERG

Sun., May. 16, 2010 8:30 PMPDT



John Shearer/WireImage.com

Long engagement or not, **Jennifer Hudson** is getting married, folks.

In fact, she says it's "coming up."

E! News caught up with her at the **Cannes Film Festival**, where she was promoting her upcoming biopic about **Winnie Mandela**. Our favorite Dreamgirl was looking ravishing in blue as she talked about how much this new film means to her personally.

"I am so excited and so honored and can't wait to get started. We start in the next week and I'm ready to go to Africa for the first time," Hudson said at a reception held along the Croisette at the Terrazza Martini tent.

She and costar **Terrence Howard** hadn't met face-to-face to discuss the role until today, but both stated they plan to do some rehearsing before principal photography gets under way.

Read on for what she had to say about the wedding...

The actress also gave us an update on her new baby with fiancé **David Otunga**, **David Daniel Otunga Jr.**

"He's very good. He just turned nine months and he has three teeth now," she said.

And while 20 months may seem like a long time to be engaged, Jennifer said the couple still has every intention of getting married, though she declined to reveal a date for the big day and her camp recently confirmed that the nuptials were getting pushed back.

"It's coming up. Everything's all ready to go," she said.

We wish her the best.



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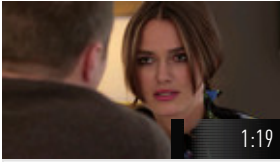


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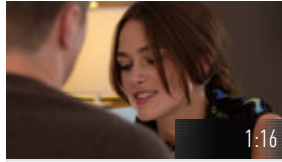
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NEWS/ Tyler Perry Sued Over *Temptation* Movie

by JOSH GROSSBERG

Fri., Apr. 26, 2013 2:24 PMPDT

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If this were a movie, maybe it should be called *Why Did I Get Sued?*

Tyler Perry is on the receiving end of a lawsuit filed by an Indiana man who's accused the famed writer-director of ripping off his script for the film *Temptation: Confessions of a Marriage Counselor*.

In the complaint, filed Wednesday in federal court in Indiana and a copy of which was obtained by E! News, William James says he wrote a script titled *Lovers Kill*, which centers on a married couple and the wife's affair that destroys her marriage.

WATCH: Oprah Winfrey and Tyler Perry team up for hilarious OWN parody video

According to court docs, the plaintiff gave a copy of the work to "an associate" of **Oprah Winfrey** at Harpo Studios who informed him that she would give it to Perry for his "review and consideration."

James goes on to claim that Perry subsequently used his ideas in his marital drama-thriller, which has grossed a solid \$50 million since hitting theaters a month ago.

DOCUMENTS: Read the complaint

Even though he was "never apprised" as to whether the filmmaker was interested in his project, James is demanding he be credited in the film, alleging that the *Temptation's* plot is substantially similar to the plot of *Lovers Kill*.

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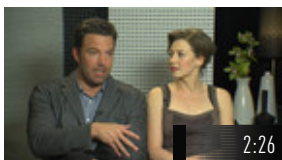
The suit seeks unspecified damages and other relief.

Perry's camp declined to comment.

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NEWS/ Michael Jackson Tribute: Off the Wall!

by JOSH GROSSBERG

Sat., Sep. 8, 2001 4:30 AMPDT

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Michael Jackson threw a party and everyone came.

With all the pomp and circumstance one would expect from the self-proclaimed King of Pop (and a star-studded guest list matched only by the Oscars), Jackson launched his long-awaited comeback Friday night as his 30th anniversary celebration took over New York's Madison Square Garden.

As promised, Jackson wowed the fans--both with a long-awaited Jackson 5/Jacksons reunion with his brothers, and with his own set of past hits. A who's who of Michael's pals and big-name celebs showed up to see it for themselves, including 'N Sync, Macaulay Culkin, Natalie Cole, Gloria Estefan, Marc Anthony, Aaron Carter, Nelly, Donald Trump, Teddy Riley, Jill Scott, Dionne Warwick, Gladys Knight, Kenny Rogers, Sean "Puffy" Combs, Chris Tucker, Naomi Campbell and Samuel L. Jackson.

But while the tribute to the Gloved One looked invincible on paper, it initially didn't come off as the thriller everyone had hoped for. In fact, parts were downright off the wall (and we mean goofy here, folks).

The show itself lasted nearly five hours and was plagued by technical miscues and stop-and-start delays between the numbers. The complications didn't go over too well with the crowd, who may have expected to see a jam-filled concert instead of something more akin to a television taping. (The Friday and Monday shows will be edited and aired as a CBS special in November.)

The show started with R&B singers Usher and Mya appearing alongside a troupe of dancers wearing African tribal dresses, for a rendition of Jackson's classic "Startin' Somethin'." In the night's first big surprise, they were joined halfway through the song by pop diva Whitney Houston, who brought the packed house immediately to its feet.

What followed was the first in a series of bizarro onstage spectacles. After the opening number and a five-minute break, the house lights finally came up to reveal a portly Marlon Brando lounging in a leather recliner onstage and donning dark shades.

"I'm Marlon Brando," Brando began, in what's become his customary soliloquy. "In any event while your...wondering who that old fat fart is sitting there...I wanted you to realize that in that minute there were hundreds if not thousands of children hacked to death with a machete, beaten to death by their parents, got typhus and died of a disease."

After jarring the audience to attention, the legendary film star then plugged the popster's Website, MichaelJackson.com, while Jackson himself looked on, sitting beside the stage with best pal Elizabeth Taylor.

The first half of the show was dominated by big-name performers doing their takes on Jackson classics, including Shaggy, 13-year-old country prodigy Billy Gilman, Ray Charles and Marc Anthony, who did a rousing rendition of "She's Out of My Life." Destiny's Child, meanwhile, performed its own song, "Bootylicious."

"He's been a huge influence on all of us--especially on 'Bootylicious,' " Beyoncé Knowles

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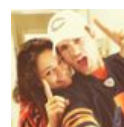
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told *E! News Daily* from the red carpet. "I had him in mind when I wrote the song."

Next up, Jill Scott played the Scarecrow, Al Jarreau the Tin Man, Deborah Cox the Cowardly Lion, and Monica was Dorothy as they performed a medley of songs from Jackson's film *The Wiz*. Gloria Estefan and James Ingram followed with a beautiful duet of "I Just Can't Stop Loving You."

After what appeared to be an interminable break, Liza Minnelli—much improved health-wise since her bout with encephalitis last year—appeared on stage to sing "You Are Not Alone," backed by a full gospel choir walking through the stadium aisles holding candles.

But while the stars came out on this night to honor the "entertainment ambassador," some fans initially felt shorted on the entertainment—especially given the ridiculous cost of tickets (ranging from \$228 for nosebleeds to \$2,500 on the floor).

"I grew up on Motown and this isn't cutting it," said fan Vito Maur of New York. "It's like a variety show."

Fans even resorted to booing at times, and chanted for the Gloved One to take the stage.

Finally, he did. And what seemed like impending disaster for the disorganized affair soon turned into HIStory, as the King of Pop reclaimed his title as one of the greatest entertainers in the music biz.

With an introduction by Dame Taylor, Jackson popped onstage looking more like MTV's Moon Man than a pop star—wearing a matching white suit and biker helmet and standing motionless amidst the roar of the crowd. He was immediately joined on stage by his brothers for what would be the Jackson 5's highly anticipated reunion, their first since 1984's Victory Tour.

The Motown legends, featuring brothers Jermaine, Tito, Marlon, Randy, Jackie and Michael, got the crowd moving to a medley of classics, including "ABC," "I'll Be There" and "I Want You Back." And, linking both old and new, 'N Sync came out and joined the group to get down to "Dance Machine."

"I love you...I love you," Jackson shouted twice to the audience, as his brothers left the stage after their 20-minute performance.

Jackson went on to team with Britney Spears for a sexy rendition of "The Way You Make Me Feel." And he was joined onstage by Slash playing guitar for "Black and White" and a scorching version of "Beat It," replete with ghetto dancers and choreography straight from the video.

At one point, Michael asked the pumped up crowd what it would like to hear, before being drowned out by the inaudible roar of requests. He then launched into his new single, "You Rock My World," off his new *Invincible*, due out at the end of October.

But perhaps Michael's finest moment came when he walked out on stage with only a small carrying case and pulled out his black sequined jacket, hat and white glove for an almost exact recreation of his Motown anniversary performance of "Billy Jean," moonwalk and all.

The tribute stretched well past midnight and closed with the legendary Quincy Jones, Michael's producer on the *Thriller* and *Bad* albums, leading an all-star cast singing "We Are the World."

"I want to thank everyone who came tonight," Jackson told the crowd. "It was an incredible experience. I love you all. Thank you so much."

For Jackson, the night was just beginning. Following the performance, the pop legend took over New York's Tavern on the Green for a *Wizard of Oz*-themed post-party, featuring stilt walkers and a cast of Munchkins.

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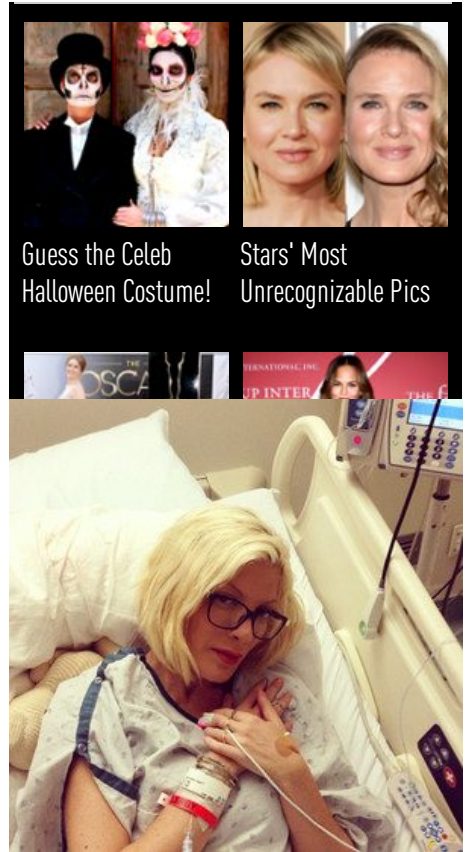
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B R E A

NEWS/ *Columbo* Star Peter Falk Dead at 83

by JOSH GROSSBERG

Fri., Jun. 24, 2011 11:00 AMPDT

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NBCU Photo Bank via AP Images

Peter Falk, the legendary actor who graced both big screen and small over a 50-year career but will perhaps best be remembered for his Emmy-winning role as the shabby-dressed, wisecracking homicide detective on TV's *Columbo*, has died. He was 83.

Falk's family [confirmed](#) to CBS News the two-time Academy Award nominee passed away last night, though no cause of death has been announced.

MORE: No Conservatorship for Peter Falk for Now

Falk had been suffering from dementia and apparent Alzheimer's disease since 2007, with his condition worsening after a series of dental surgeries. His daughter, **Catherine Falk**, sought to be appointed his guardian in 2009, but in a [conservatorship trial](#), a judge appointed that duty to his wife, **Shera Danese Falk**.

As the cigar-chomping, seemingly slow-witted lieutenant Columbo, Falk was the epitome of cool as he went about solving some of TV's most perplexing mysteries with the classic catchphrase, "Just One More Thing." Episodes aired regularly from 1971 to 1978 on NBC, before appearing sporadically as made-for-TV movies on both the Peacock net and ABC in subsequent years. The last *Columbo* episode was broadcast in 2003 and the iconic part nabbed the thesp four Emmy Awards (the fifth came in 1962 for the Dick Powell TV drama *The Price of Tomatoes*).

Early on his career, Falk also made a name for himself on celluloid, scoring two Oscar nominations—for 1960's *Murder Inc.* and for **Frank Capra's** comedy *Pocketful of Miracles* a year later.

He also costarred in **Stanley Kramer's** all-star 1963 comedy *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*, playing a cab driver with a loathing for cops. He followed up the next year with the Rat Pack musical *Robin and the 7 Hoods*, opposite **Frank Sinatra**, **Dean Martin**, **Sammy Davis Jr.**, **Bing Crosby** and **Edward G. Robinson**.

Falk also appeared in some of pal **John Cassavetes'** most memorable dramas, from 1970's *Husbands* to 1974's *A Woman Under the Influence*, while younger viewers may remember him best as the grandfather who introduced Buttercup and Wesley to a young **Fred Savage** in **Rob Reiner's** 1987 classic, *The Princess Bride*.

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Falk was born Sept. 16, 1927, in New York City. His Polish father ran a clothing store, and his mother, from Russia, was an accountant.

As a child, he excelled at sports—despite having an operation to remove his right eye when he was 3 because of a cancerous tumor. A glass eye was put in its place, which in his later years lent his detective alter-ego that famous squinty-eyed gaze that often let the guilty know he was on to them.

Falk's first stab at acting came at age 12 when he was cast in a summer-camp production of *The Pirates of Penzance*.

After high school graduation, he spent some time in the Merchant Marine; however, due to his glass eye, he was relegated to serving as a cook.

After getting his bachelor's degree in literature and political science at the New School in New York, Falk traveled in Europe before returning to earn his master's in public administration at Syracuse University.

Around this time, he pursued theater with a passion, appearing in several Off Broadway productions including *The Iceman Cometh*.

It was not long before Hollywood came calling and Falk made his feature debut in 1958's *Wind Across the Everglades*.

He would alternate between film and television throughout much of his long career, appearing in episodes of *Have Gun Will Travel*, *The Untouchables* and *The Twilight Zone*.

In his later years, while the *Columbo* movies tapered off, he still maintained a busy work schedule, starring in **Wim Wenders'** 1987 drama *Wings of Desire* and its subsequent sequel, *Faraway, So Close!*. In the late '90s, he returned to his theater roots as well, appearing in an Off Broadway production of **Arthur Miller's** *Mr. Peter's Connections*.

In the early 2000s he appeared in the holiday-themed TV movies *A Town Without Christmas*, *Finding John Christmas* and *When Angels Come to Town*. In his final film role, he played Father Randolph in the 2009 indie film, *American Cowslip*, starring **Val Kilmer**, **Diane Ladd** and **Cloris Leachman**.

Falk is survived by his wife, Shera, and two daughters. No word yet on funeral plans.

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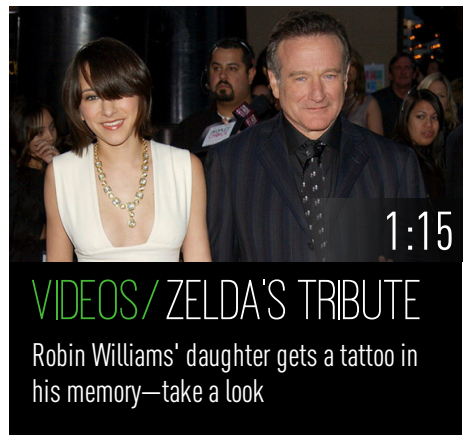


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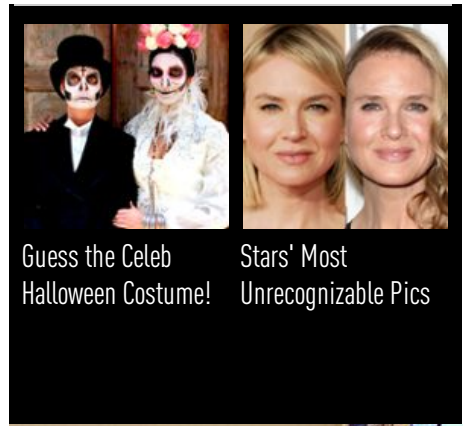
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NEWS/ Baz Not Bagging "Alexander"

by JOSH GROSSBERG

Tue., Jul. 13, 2004 9:30 AMPDT

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Alexander the Great's future is up in the air.

Contrary to published reports, Baz Luhrmann has not--repeat *not*--pulled the plug on his big-budget historical biopic on the Macedonian conqueror--at least not yet.

London's *Daily Telegraph* reported that Luhrmann decided to scrap the flick because he wanted to take a year off and spend more time with his production designer wife, Catherine Martin, and their new daughter, Lillian, born last October. The story was subsequently picked up by the *New York Post*.

However, disputing those accounts, Luhrmann's Australia-based rep, Maria Farmer, said the filmmaker has not scuttled *Alexander* and is still firming up plans for his next cinematic outing.

"Baz is currently in Europe working on the final draft of his script for *Alexander the Great*. When he completes that draft he will decide whether *Alexander* is the next film on his slate," Farmer told E! Online. "We do not know where these reports have originated from. They certainly did not come from Baz."

A coproduction of Universal Pictures and DreamWorks, *Alexander the Great* is supposed to star Leonardo DiCaprio as the boy king and Nicole Kidman as Alexander's mother, Olympia. It had been scheduled to start shooting this spring in the director's native Australia and hit theaters sometime in 2005.

Ever the perfectionist, Luhrmann had already postponed shooting on the film once, opting not to rush work on the film simply to "be drawn into a race," as he put it to the *Los Angeles Times* last year.

The initial delay ensured that a competing project from Warner Bros. and helmer Oliver Stone, simply titled *Alexander*, would be the first one into production. That film, budgeted at \$150 million and starring Colin Farrell, Angelina Jolie and Anthony Hopkins, is scheduled for release on Thanksgiving.

Luhrmann had scouted locations in Jordan, and producer Dino De Laurentiis signed a deal with Morocco's King Mohammed VI to build three soundstages there in exchange for the king putting more than 4,000 soldiers and 8,000 horses at Luhrmann's disposal.

But after a series of suicide bombings in Casablanca in May 2003, Luhrmann opted to shoot *Down Under* as a safeguard against terrorism.

The filmmaker forged ahead with preproduction, beginning work on the flick's digital effects, filming some background shots in the Himalayas, and even shooting a promo reel, featuring DiCaprio in full gladiator garb, to hype *Alexander the Great* at last year's Cannes Film Festival.

In an article last year, however, *Variety* hinted that Luhrmann was considering shelving *Alexander the Great* and taking on another project instead. Much of that decision hinged upon the latest draft of the script by David Hare, which was delivered in February, and



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which Luhrmann working on right now.

The *New York Post*, meanwhile, reported that Kidman was "downhearted" about the cancellation.

DiCaprio's rep, Ken Sunshine, had no comment on the report. Despite shooting the preview footage, the *Titanic* star reportedly has yet to sign a contract.

DiCaprio, who recently finished filming on Martin Scorsese's *The Aviator*, will next segue into *The Good Shepherd*, a historical film about the CIA to be directed by Robert De Niro. So even if Luhrmann were able to get things moving again with *Alexander*, he'd have to find time in Leo's ever-busy schedule or find another actor.

Luhrmann is best known for his "Red Curtain trilogy"—1992's *Strictly Ballroom*, 1996's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* and 2001's Oscar-nominated *Moulin Rouge!*

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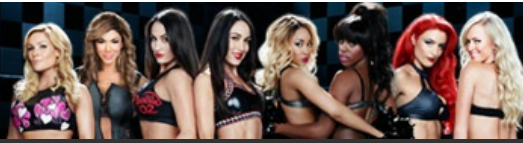
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NEWS/ *The Hobbit* World Premiere: Peter Jackson, Martin Freeman, Cate Blanchett Celebrate in New Zealand

by JOSH GROSSBERG

Wed., Nov. 28, 2012 7:22 AMPST

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Mark Tantrum/WireImage

One premiere to rule them all and in the darkness bind them.

Middle-earth mania was in full force as an estimated 100,000 Kiwis turned out to hail Peter Jackson and stars Martin Freeman, Hugo Weaving, Andy Serkis and Cate Blanchett at the world premiere of *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* Wednesday night in the New Zealand capital of Wellington.

[Animal cruelty allegations cast shadow over Hobbit premiere as Peter Jackson again denies claims](#)

The blockbuster, the first installment of a new trilogy that's serving as a prequel to the director's trio of Oscar-winning *Lord of the Rings* films, earned rave reviews from those in attendance at its first showing at the Embassy Theatre, whose entrance was decorated to look like a Hobbit house.

Excited fans—many of whom wore homemade hobbit feet, elven cloaks and wizard costumes—cheered as Jackson and company walked a massive red carpet. Along with new cast members including Richard Armitage, who plays the dwarf leader Thorin Oakenshield, were veterans of the first trilogy, among them Elijah Wood, who briefly reprises his role as Frodo in *The Hobbit* and lavished praise on Freeman in the lead as Bilbo Baggins.

"He was brilliant, the right amount of funny," Wood told *The Hollywood Reporter*. "He has strange qualities but also real heart. He is the heart of the movie, and he really pulled it off."

For his part, Jackson was extremely humbled by *The Hobbit's* reception.

"It's great to have so many people come out to celebrate the movie," the filmmaker told the *New York Daily News*. "It's very humbling. New Zealand is a very small country, it's a very young country. I just think we like to celebrate when we punch above

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our weight. We sometimes do quite well in sports, and now we're doing OK in moviemaking too."

It was quite a welcome switch-up from the mood a few hours earlier at a *Hobbit* press conference, where Jackson again [denied claims](#) that two-dozen animals died during production due to poor conditions on a farm where they were housed.

The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey hits theaters in the U.S. on Dec. 14.

[See stars arrive at *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* world premiere!](#)



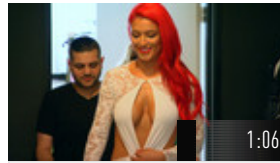
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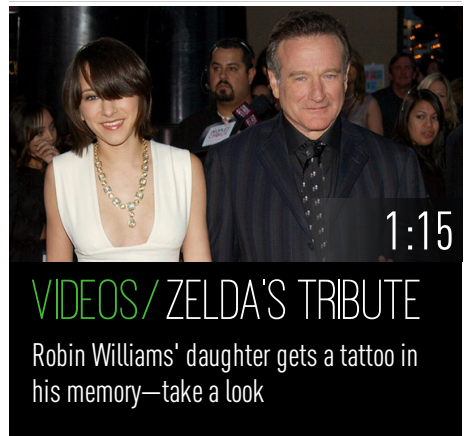


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NEWS/ Officials Find What's Ailing Oscar

by JOSH GROSSBERG

Wed., Mar. 13, 2002 9:20 AMPST

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And the Oscar goes to...*Outbreak*.

Los Angeles County health officials have figured out the source of those freak illnesses that hit the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Scientific and Technical Awards last Saturday. And it ain't pretty.

For outstanding technical achievement in making nearly one-third of the 550 guests at the Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel sick, the Health Department singled out the Norwalk virus, a class of infectious agents that spread like wildfire through guests' meals and typically causes gastroenteritis, according to the *Hollywood Reporter*. Symptoms include "a short incubation period and a fairly short-lived illness" characterized by vomiting, diarrhea, nausea and low-grade fever.

Public health director Jonathan Fielding told the *Reporter* the Norwalk virus usually spreads through food contaminated with feces or vomit. Health officials examined the posh ballroom where the low-key black-tie affair was held, as well as the Beverly Wilshire's food preparation and service areas to rule out any health-code violations.

"We performed a very careful inspection, and we have no reason to believe it is a continuing problem at the hotel," Fielding said, adding that the outbreak most likely came from distributors and not the hotel kitchen staff preparing the food.

According to epidemiologists at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Norwalk virus typically spreads through shellfish that's tainted by fecal matter from sick food workers who handle the food before being shipped out to restaurants and hotels. The nasty ailment could also have been picked up in seafood that mixed with raw sewage dumped overboard in the ocean by harvesters and recreational boaters. (Lovely.)

That night's menu featured salad, lobster bisque, roast beef with a side of halibut, and assorted vegetables and various desserts.

All told, it's not a particularly pleasant thought for all the guests who were stricken by the bug. About 24 hours after the ceremony, about 250 people (everyone from this year's Oscar producer Laura Ziskin to some 20 Motion Picture Academy employees) called in sick and were ill for up to two days. The evening's host, actress Charlize Theron, was not stricken.

The Oscars' technical awards are handed out a few weeks before Hollywood's big night to honor the "devices, methods, formulas, discoveries or inventions of special and outstanding value to the arts and sciences of motion pictures."

Academy officials are no doubt hoping to avoid a repeat bug at other Oscar events. For that, they've enlisted famed gourmet chef Wolfgang Puck to once again cater the post-Oscar Governor's Ball, which will take place at the new Kodak Theater following the show March 24.

And maybe next year they can lay off the lobster.

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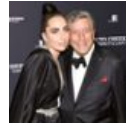
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