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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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Are Oscar Winners Worth The Money?

Popsurfer Joe pointed me to this article on CNN about a study that decided casting Oscar winners in a new movie won't guarantee financial success. Well, duh. No one in their right minds would think an Oscar winner was a guarantee of financial success. In fact, NOTHING is a guarantee of financial success when making a movie and if there was such a formula, everyone would use it.

This professor at Rutgers decided that having a "star" in your film -- which he defined as being someone who had won an Oscar -- was only marginally helpful. First, any marginal help is welcome. Second, who decided a "star" was someone who had won an Oscar. No, a "star" is someone who sells tickets. Tom Cruise is a star. Eddie Murphy is a star. Julia Roberts was a star even before she won an Oscar for "Erin Brockovich." And so on. Winning an Oscar is nice. Being a star is better and the two may occasionally cross paths, but they have nothing whatsoever to do with each other.

Then why does the price of someone who just won an Oscar go up? Because they've just been placed in front of tens of millions of movie-lovers and that can't hurt. But it's not everyone who wins an Oscar who suddenly gets a huge paycheck. Many are glad just to keep working. And their choice to illustrate the study -- Jennifer Hudson -- is way off. Has Hudson's salary gone way up? Of course it has and rightly so. Is she a proven box office commodity? Nope. But she was in the pivotal role in the top-grossing black drama/musical OF ALL TIME. She has huge awareness thanks to American Idol. And she's working on a debut album with top producers that will keep her in the spotlight a la J-Lo, regardless of how her next movie does. And in the right role, Hudson is definitely worth the \$1 mil+ she'll get. Will it pan out? No one knows. But that would be money well spent.

POSTED BY MICHAEL IN NEW YORK AT 1:56 PM



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