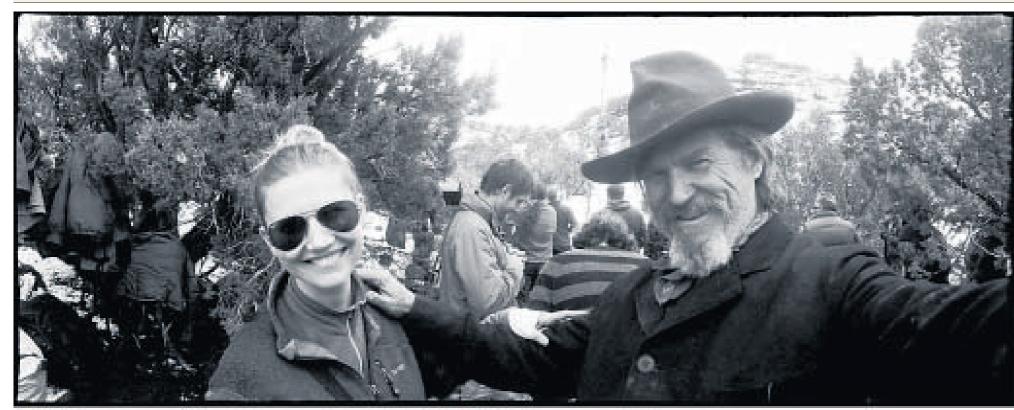
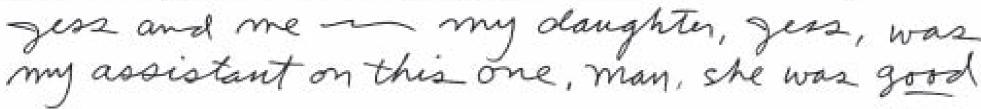
News Oscars

















Point and shoot? No. this gunslinger has a true eye for detail

Loyd Cathett Are been my

When Jeff Bridges wasn't in front of the True Grit cameras. he was behind his own. The actor discusses his portfolio with **Tim Teeman**

when considering his Oscar nomination for Best Actor for True Grit, one of ten nominations that the film has scooped, including Best Picture.

"I never held any ambition for making it as an actor," the 61-year-old star told The Times in New York, in his gravelly, genial voice. "Awards like the Oscars are all whipped cream and cherries to me. I don't think I'm going to win. I'm not counting on anything.

He has already been warned to keep any victory speech to 45 seconds. "But if I get up there, I'm gonna let rip, ha-

If he wins tomorrow for his role as the one-eyed US marshal Rooster Cogburn — unlikely, if predicions of Colin Firth's coronation for his role in The King's Speech only the third actor after Spencer Tracy and Tom Hanks to win two

Oscars in consecutive years.

He won Best Actor last year for Crazy Heart — "and this year I've invited my daughters and their boyfriends as my guests," he says. "The parties are ned and too loud, but a great opportunity to catch up with old friends.

What separates Bridges from his fellow nominees, indeed most big-name actors, are his impressive skills as a photographer, hitherto untrumpeted but immediately apparent if you click on his website jeffbridges.com and scroll through the stunning, playful black-and-white images he took while working on True Grit.

They transport the viewer from a soulless rehearsal room to the breathtaking wilderness vistas that the direc-

tors, Joel and Ethan Coen, used as the Edge, The Fisher King and The Big Lebbackdrop to their reversioning of the classic John Wayne film, alongside inowski (also directed by the Coens), uses a Widelux camera with a 28mm swingformal moments featuring Bridges, his co-stars and family. The website in-cludes photographs from the shoots for ing lens. He has used similar cameras for the past 33 years.
"My wife [Susan] bought me my first

about them is they give that wide, panoramic perspective," he says. "The end

result is like the missing link between

movie images and still photography

This camera lends itself to capturing

action, for my money it's like a human eye. At school I heard the photo-

grapher used to take group shots with it

and I remember hearing if you ran fast

enough you could appear twice in the

Bridges, who has three daughters

comes from solid Hollywood stock: his

father, Lloyd, and mother, Dorothy

were actors and his brother Beau is too

He began taking photographs as a "kid

in high school, I had a dark room and

all that". He was particularly inspired

by the French photographer and paint-

er Jacques Henri Lartigue (1894-1986), "who was so brilliant at capturing

moments, rather than stiff formality

Music is another passion: the actor is

He is a spokesman for the latest

He helped change how we saw photo

Tron: Legacy and Crazy Heart.
On the True Grit set, Bridges captures Hailee Steinfeld, 14 — who is appearing in her debut film and has been

nominated for Best Supporting Actress

— Matt Damon and Josh Brolin smiling and scowling in a series of "comedia/ tragedia" double-takes; we see Loyd Catlett, Bridges' stand-in for 56 films ("a wonderful relationship and thread through all that time"); and his daughter, Jessica, who for the first time acted as his assistant on a film — "and thank goodness she did, she was brilliant and her being there made it all the more special for me"

Stepladders mysteriously photographed in the middle of fields were stand-ins for the characters' horses, Bridges explains. His favourite images feature the Coen brothers moodily attired in cowboy hats and one of himself looking into the camera, with a man hanging above him from a tree in one of the film's most chilling scenes.

The landscapes of rocky precipices, working with the songwriter and prograssy plains and spooky woodland are not only wide and open but alive with ducer T-Bone Burnett on his first alactivity. Steinfeld is photographed with hum, which will be released this year her stand-in and stunt double: Damon "I've written a lot of stuff and he is applies a special "tongue" to his mouth amazing," Bridges says of Burnett. "He's got an amazing band together. We're having a wonderful time. I'm Bridges' wife pays him a visit; and the behind-the-camera team holds booms puzzles over close-ups and applies concentrating more on that than actmake-up. Bridges, whose films include ing right now The Last Picture Show, Tron, Jagged

campaign, beginning next month, for No Kid Hungry, an organisation for eradicating child hunger in the United States, "which affects 17 million children. which is remarkable in a country as fortunate as ours". one as a wedding gift. What I love

Bridges laughs when asked if he minds becoming the subject of internet parody: his *True Grit* character's sometimes indecipherable diction has been subtitled by one online wag. "I was building a character," he says.

"I was checking in with the guys [the Coen brothers] all the way through and they thought it was fine. But you know, in life sometimes, some things people say to you or what you say to other people are unintelligible. I've seen the movie two or three times and it isn't a

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Prized contents of the losers' goodie bags

Who would want to win an Oscar? No, really. Because the morning after, when all you are left with is a golden statuette, wouldn't vou rather be waking up to the \$75,000 (£46,000) goodie bag that every losing nominee will receive on Monday morning. The goodie bags contain treats such as a stay at a luxury Connecticut hotel, a holiday in the Maldives, clothes, jewelery and "lots of chocolate".

"Let's face it, you're going to need that after losing, although technically you're gaining," says Dina Rezva-nipour of Distinctive Assets, the gift company that for the past nine years has sent luxury goodie bags to losing

The losers' gift bag, according to Distinctive Assets, is "meant to titillate and indulge those who may have everything but still enjoy experiencing one of the industry's greatest rewards: swag". Indeed, Hollywood is awash with swag, but not in the places where you expect to find it. The Academy Awards does not allow "any gifting or gift bags" within the Kodak Theatre.

There are also no gift bags at the Vanity Fair Oscars party, held at the Sunset Tower Hotel, or at the Elton John Aids Foundation Party, at the Pacific Design Centre. The latter used to be famous for its goodie bags but a source reveals: "They were seen as inappropriate within a charity event."

The canny celebrity freeloader knows, however, that the top-dollar swag is to be found in the days running up to the Oscars in Beverly Hills's swankiest hotels. During awards season, hotel suites are occupied for days at a time by "gifting" companies.

Celebrities and nominees come along and take whatever they like. The quid pro quo: the celebrity is typically photographed with whatever item they choose, which the maker can use for publicity purposes. The biggest prize for the gift givers is to get a pair of shoes, a piece of jewellery, a handbag

problem for me, but to those who have found it a problem, I apologise."

He told *The Hollywood Reporter* re-

cently of his enjoyment in getting "trashed" after working hard and of his lifelong love of liquor and drugs. When "I've worked my ass off in a movie, [I'll] say, 'You want to get drunk? You do whatever you want'. There was always relationship, you know, between booze and pot and drugs and all those things. It's an element in my life. I'm not in AA or anything now, but I do drink occasionally.

But he is not an ugly hellraiser. Indeed he has been described as the nicest man in Hollywood. Is he? "I like to be open with who I work with and acknowledge them. I guess that could be seen as nice," he says quietly.

Acting, he adds, "is my life. I'll make movies till the day I die. At different moments I'm passionate and dispassionate about it. I've thought 'I' Il never do it again', then do it again. I can see myself doing it

when I'm an old man. "Your mortality is a significant thing, you only have a certain amount of time to do what you want o do, so vou've got to enjoy it, so do, do, do." He pauses breathes heavily go and get on with some



Some consolation: a trip to the Maldives or the Winvian resort in Connecticut

or even a dress photographed on the red carpet. "That's maximum expo-sure," says Gavin Keilly, president of GBK Productions, whose two-day "Golden Oscar Lounge" at the W Holly-wood Hotel features \$50,000 worth of

One Hollywood events specialis said: "Gifting fell out of fashion in the recession. Celebrities didn't want to be seen as greedy and companies didn't want to give anything away, but we're coming out of that. Having said that, know a lot of us are shocked to see privi leged celebrities helping themselves in

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