

# Josie Brown's Red Carpet Extravaganza...plus a book giveaway

We're pleased to have Josie Brown here today to talk about her recent Oscars experience. We love Josie and her books (especially the Totlandia series) and we think you'll enjoy what she has to say. She even has an e-book giveaway at the end.

## I'd like to thank...

Contrary to anything you may have heard from Chick Lit Central's Melissa Amster, *I had nothing to do with the envelope mix-up at the Oscars.*

But yes, I was on the scene—at least, on the red carpet (before and during); and in the Green Room (a day before); and in Press Room during the one Academy Awards ceremony that will go down in history for the sole purpose that, for the first time in this eighty-nine-year event, a wrong winner was called in the most important category of all: “Best Picture.”

If you don't already know, *Moonlight* won, although the envelope for Best Actress was handed to Warren Beatty, which is why Faye Dunaway, who presented it with him, called out *La La Land*.

At the time, I was backstage in the Press Room. EVERYONE gasped.

Almost every question asked of Emma Stone and anyone with a *La La Land* Oscar grasped in their hands—or for that matter, to *Moonlight's* director, Kevin Johnson, its screenwriter, Tarell Alvin McCraney, or Mahershala Ali, the

film's stars and the winner of Best Supporting Actor—was about the envelope mix-up.

It may have been the most talked about incident, but for someone like me, who was attending the Academy Awards for the very first time, this historical event was just the icing on the gooey confection of flashing cameras, screaming fans, and glamorous stars.

I was invited as the guest of a journalist friend. My role there was to help him with his social media. In return, I'd get great background research for any future glam lit novels (in fact, both *Hollywood Hunk* and *Hollywood Whore* have Oscar scenes in them) and I certainly got up close to some folks emitting enough star wattage to send a message to Mars.

The Academy Awards take place at the Dolby Theatre, which is part of a multi-level outdoor mall complex (with more than three-hundred days of sunshine, of course it would be outdoors!) at the corner of Highland and Hollywood Boulevards. Flanking all of this is Loews Hollywood Hotel, which is essentially Ground Zero for all the action when it's not on the red carpet or in the theater.

Yes, I was impressed. Make that mesmerized.

Every day—several times a day, in fact—I'd be running from the hotel through the mall and onto the red carpet: the length of several football fields. This gauntlet has numerous security checkpoints, for which the proper passes are needed.

Wednesday

The press shows up as early as the Wednesday prior to the event. By then, the bleachers are in place for fans on one side, and risers for the press on the other, along the "boulevard"—the path between the underground garage and the theatre. The red carpet has also been laid down, although you wouldn't know it, considering the layers of plastic covering it, so that workmen, camera people, and the news talent can't sully it before the first stars make his or her appearances on Sunday.

To add to the mystique, a three-story curtain blocks that end of the mall.

The only way onto the red carpet—or for that matter, into the Dolby Theatre—is through several layers of security. If you don't have a pass, forget about it. It truly is the golden ticket!

## Thursday

By now, news crews from all over the world are arriving. Each has been given a small piece of real estate—at the most three feet by three feet—on one of the press risers that runs the full length of the red carpet. And yet, my friend was able to make "entertainment news magic," despite my fumbles and lack of a learning curve).

(By the way, the red carpet is not a straightaway. It bends, like an elbow, in front of the largest of the two stages set up for the sponsoring network's news talent: in this case, ABC's *Good Morning America*.

Between now and Saturday, several times a day the news talent and his or her camera crew will shoot and edit short segments and teasers in order to excite their networks' audiences. Remember: the Oscars are the entertainment industry's equivalent to the Superbowl. Just as much ad

revenue is on the line. The more viewers you can get, the more money you can demand from advertisers.

They will also rehearse what they'll say to the stars. For example, an assistant will hold up a placard that says "Emma Stone" and the on-air talent will reel off a question or two he hopes will be original enough that she'll be delighted to answer it. (Even if it's not so original, she'll pretend it is. It isn't much of a stretch for a great actress.)

## Friday

With each passing day, something new is revealed on the red carpet: a change in the backdrop, say; or how the lights are hung. Workmen are everywhere, doing the tiniest of things, including polishing every surface to a far-thee-well.

We were allowed a full hour in the Green Room (in this case, it truly is green) which gave us time to give my friend's audience a walkthrough teaser. Think of it as an elegant party room that looks out onto a beautiful forest—an optical illusion, really, since the room has no exterior windows. However, the walls are lined with backlit photographic panels of copses of trees. Besides a wet bar and healthy buffet, there are several couches and comfortable chairs. A few photos of past winners line one wall. The Green Room is an oasis of calm: much appreciated, I'm sure, considering the energy level throughout the big night.

## Saturday

For the next forty-eight hours leading up to the event, the Lowes Hotel goes into lock-down for anyone NOT connected to the Oscars—staff, press, publicist, handler, or star.

Every day came with new instructions from the journalist's producers as to suggestions on story angles. For example: what fashion trends could the audience expect to see? And, how much would politics affect this year's event?

As it turns out, politics were big—and not just in the speeches given on stage. One of the talent agencies, UTA, actually held a demonstration in its parking lot. Yes, we covered it. The next morning, a pro-Trump group held one on the mall side of the red carpet. Again, we were there, getting photos. Talk about a different spin on an entertainment story...

Sunday

On the day of the big event, I got up early in order to get ready: make-up, gown, French Twist.

Had I been the one walking the red carpet instead of standing on the sidelines, believe me, I would have had an entourage to help me. (It takes a village to get me into fashion plate mode.)

Everyone must dress up, even the cameramen and women. That means the guys wear tuxes (some of the ladies, too) but at least they can wear sneakers.

My biggest dilemma was deciding which shoes to wear. I'd been told: *make sure they are comfortable.*

Really? Sneakers under a gown, when I bought some beautiful sparkly ones, just for the occasion? I just couldn't....

*I'd been forewarned.*

Fans lucky enough to hold a lottery ticket to get them into the bleachers were already there. Their shouts would crescendo with the arrival of the stars. Then things happened fast. From our little sliver of riser, we took pictures quickly and uploaded them onto Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. In the ninety minutes of red carpet fanfare time flew by.

And then it was over.

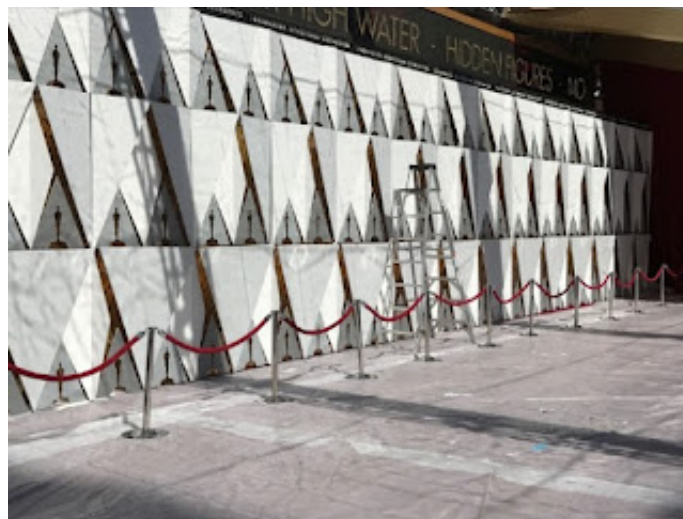
Onto the Press Room...

Food. YES!

Shoes: OFF! I wasn't alone. Practically ever woman had yanked them off by the time I reached the Press Room—unless they were smart enough to just wear booties, flip-flops, or sneakers under their dresses.

Comfortable chairs. I grabbed one in the second row, which was great for catching all the interview questions.

By the way, no photos or video can be taken in the Press Room unless you're one of the few photographers licensed to do so. At this point, my role is strictly transcription.



Truly, there aren't words in which I can describe this experience—

Okay, I'll try. Let's start with

- *EXHILARATING*. The Academy prides itself on glitz and glamor. It never fails.

- *MESMERIZING*. There is an energy coming off the stars walking the red carpet to stop you in your tracks. Forget yoga pants and sans makeup, as you'll probably catch them in the Verve coffee bar in WeHo. While the Oscars Red Carpet in all their finery, they look exactly like you'd hope to see them: emitting enough star power to light up a galaxy.

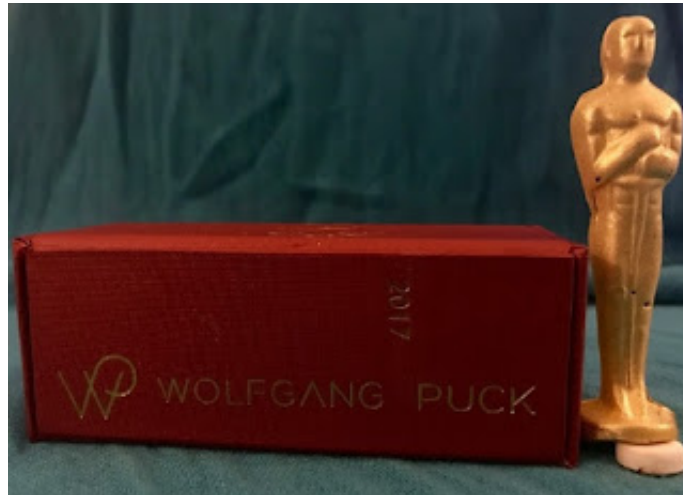
- *The PERFECT place for stargazing* (if you aren't under eight different media deadlines within a two-hour period).

- *FREEZING*, especially if it's unseasonably chilly, and you're wearing a dress with either a plunging neckline or a scoop back. (Since you asked, mine had the latter.)

And last but in no way least...*UNFORGETTABLE*.

And yes, I came home with a chocolate Oscar, courtesy of the Governor's Ball and Wolfgang Puck.

Will I eat it? No way! I'd rather hold it and while I give an acceptance speech.



In honor of my Oscars experience, I'm giving away two digital copies of my 3-episode novella set, *Hollywood Hunk*. To enter this drawing, you must [read the excerpt here](#), and correctly answer this question: *What is the name of Louis's talent agent?*

**\*\*Send your answer to [MailFromJosie@gmail.com](mailto:MailFromJosie@gmail.com), SUBJECT: Oscars Answer, by March 20th at midnight EST\*\***

You can also get a copy of another *True Hollywood Lies* novel, *Hollywood Whore*, [just by signing up for my eLetter](#).

*Thank you, Josie, from all of us at CLC!*

***\*\*All photos courtesy of Josie Brown.\*\****