

Culture Desk

# ST ANGE, UNEVEN O/C NIGHT IN THE YE OF #METOO

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March 5, 2

My night at the Oscars ended on Melrose, around 1 . . . , teetering on the curb in  
 clean cold air of Los Angeles after a winter snap and a rainstorm, offering  
 girlfriend-outside-the-dub encouragement to the beloved actress in her fifties  
 whose stilettos had sunk into the grass outside the *Verity Fair* party at the same  
 time as mine. She'd pulled me onto the curb with her. "The grass is *terrible*" she  
 said. Behind us were perpetual ashbulbs, heat lamps, a cluster of models dressed  
 like exotic birds. In front of us, black S.U.V.s crawled down the street with their

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Trussed into my dress like a chicken, I arrived at the Hot Topic around 1:30 . . . and stood there for a while, observing the red carpet from a distance: limos dropped the celebrities off in a holding pen, from which they were escorted by handlers to the step-and-repeat, and then through the main press section, which featured bleachers of fans who'd been in place since the morning. Each person who walks is on a timetable, the camera angles are planned, as are many of the interview questions. A cheerful sweetheart of a man told me that he'd been onsite for the last three days doing "standing work"—walking the carpet as a celebrity placeholder so that the camera people could figure out their shots. "It's even more fun when you get to be inside the theatre pretending to be the nominees, because you always get to pretend to be the winner," he told me. "No one knows what's going to happen except for PricewaterhouseCoopers, so they have to practice every possible shot."

I went down to the red carpet—a blur of sequins and satin and glitter and foundation—saw the thick line of publicists, a line of tuxedoed security guards, and a trickle of celebrities accompanied by handlers. "Would you be interested in talking to Paz Vega?" a woman asked, as she walked down the press row holding a sign that said " i . ." Waves of cheering passed

cocktail shrimp. "I'm here with Bulgarian television, but they didn't pay for Internet," one young woman said. "Please—it's been such a long day already—can anyone help?"

**T**he great masses of beautiful people started migrating into the

prompted by the sudden cultural focus on equality than to pretend that the narrative has already been resolved.

The glittering rock-candy arch that spanned the Dolby stage framed a lot of erce, uneven change as the night progressed. Frances M

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trays with true mac and cheese, c



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FINANCE, COMMON MARKET, THE OSCAR WEIGH IN

By Michael Schaefer

Video

THE OSCAR, THOUGH THE BEST OF THE DO, THE BEST OF THE OSCAR

A look at the nominees for best picture at the Oscar through the decades



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