

The Oscars, James Franco (did I tell you he's my cousin?) and me.

✖ OK, I guess it's time for me to weigh in on Sunday's Oscar ceremonies. My friends R, A and I could not help but notice that many of the be-gowned stars had bad hair: it was either stringy, in their faces or matted down, in patches. Watching from anything-goes Cambridge, even we were shocked. We liked Jennifer Hudson's red dress and new figure and Oprah's hair and straightforward presence (if not the boxiness of created by the stitching in her black bodice). We were a bit creeped out by Kirk Douglas and relieved when he made it through. I thought Anne Hathaway was great in *Love and Other Drugs*, did a great job with her song, and was a clear winner in the best gushiness category.

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Which brings me to the point: James Franco. (Full disclosure—which I repeat whenever I get the chance—he is a cousin. Don't ask me how—but my mom grew up in Cleveland with Mitzi, his grandmother, and somehow, their grandparents were related or perhaps two and the same). James' Oscar appearance has been the topic of much discussion.

As my friend D wrote on Facebook: *Can't help it – after seeing Bob Hope and Billy Crystal, who can take Anne Hathaway and what's-his-name seriously as Oscar hosts? At least bring back Alex Baldwin.*

I wrote: *That's my distant cousin James Franco you're talking about. I thought he did pretty well...considering the awful material they gave him. Had the sense that he thought it was a*

load of BS and couldn't bear Anne Hathaway's gushing. (I've never met him...tho he was at our family reunion, in Cleveland before he got famous).

D. OK, Anita. I guess I stepped in it on that one. My wife has admonished me that James Franco is in fact a "Renaissance man" with many varied accomplishments to his credit. My apologies. And I promise to see "127 Hours".

R Chimes in: Yeah she was way too 'enthusiastic' if I hear one more 'whoo hoo' I'm turnin it off.

Then S: I think James Franco was way stoned.

Me: I thought he seemed way bored, anxious to the point of distancing himself or able to see the ridiculousness of it all. Maybe he was stoned...or just exhausted. The guy has published a book of short stories, is a painter studying at RISD and is getting his PhD in English at Yale.

His grandmother, Mitz, is yet another story. She's on twitter, of all things, and, when I searched for her on Google, found she heads an art museum and is going to appear on Oprah! I tweeted her an invite to my mom's 90th/our family reunion in July. I'm hoping she'll bring what's his name. But NOTHING could induce me to see 127 hours.

Still, I am a total fan. My friend Ray thought Franco's "can you believe this?" shtick played well against Hathaway's over-exhuberance. And I thought his appearance in the red dress and blond wig was funny.



Franco was especially wonderful when he appeared on John Stewart, who asked if he were nervous about hosting the Awards.

James said, "no."

Why not?

"Because the expectations are so low. Everyone will be wondering why HE's doing it."

And so, like my friend D and thousands of viewers and self-anointed critics, they WERE!

James: the reunion is at my mom's on July 3. Dressing in drag is optional.

–Anita M. Harris *Anita Harris is president of the [Harris Communications Group](#), a marketing communications firm in Cambridge, MA. And a cousin of James Franco.*