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My New Dream Job: Member of the Hollywood Foreign Press

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It's time for a career change, and I've found the perfect job.

I'm joining the Hollywood [Foreign](#) Press Association. They're the group who gives out the Golden Globe Awards every year and they have an *unbelievably sweet* gig. Being a member of the HFPA has everything I like in a job, namely free swag and proximity to Matt Damon.

Now, being a foreign film critic wasn't always such a plum position. Back in the '40s, they didn't have much clout in town or the ability to cuddle up to big stars, so the original pioneers of the HFPA decided to throw an awards show, hoping that studios and performers would pay them attention and throw some perks their way in order to win some publicity.

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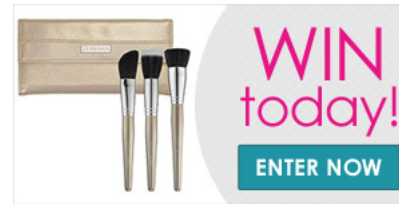
And you would not even believe the perks. See, what everyone really wants is an Oscar. (Or an Emmy, for TV people). Studios

want an Oscar because it means movies do better on the back end. Stars want an Oscar because it enhances their personal brand. The Golden Globes are cannily scheduled first in the awards season, setting a precedent for all the other awards, so the studios are willing to spend whatever it takes to convince members of the HFPA that their movie or actor should be nominated and win. Dinners, vacations, jewelry, trips to Cannes—whatever it takes to make a favorable impression. The first rule of foreign film journalism is that even the most worthless movie gets better after a few free dinners at Matsuhisa and a trip to Cabo. (Note to movie studios: I would love to discuss your picture's merits poolside in Palm Springs. Can you bring Ryan Gosling? There are some things I'd like to chat with him about as well.)

As for the "job" part of this plan, I'm not worried about having only tenuous press credentials. Most of the Hollywood Foreign Press does, too! The only requirements to join are living in Southern California and having four articles published per year in a foreign country. A lot of people think that the HFPA is made up of big-time foreign critics like the reviewers from *Figaro*, *Le Monde*, or *Pravda*. Not so. It's actually **made up of people** like Janet Nepales, who's published a few fawning profiles of stars for a Philippines-based website, but mostly (judging from her Google results) spends her time getting her picture taken with Robin Williams and Glenn Close. If you live in your parents' basement in Temecula and run a Malaysia-based Reese Witherspoon fan site on the side, you're qualified.

The members of the HFPA have a reputation for really, really liking [celebrities](#). That's the only possible explanation for why *The Tourist* (a film called "crapectacular" by Peter Travers) was nominated for Best Picture last year. But Johnny Depp and Angelina Jolie showed up to the awards, and that's what counts. There are only about ninety members of the HFPA, so I may have some trouble getting in. They like to keep the membership small so they don't have to share the loot, you see. Also, "real" critics have historically not even been allowed to join, probably because they'd be more interested in actually reviewing the movies than in taking the [free stuff](#). I promise I won't be stuck-up like that.

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Yes, the HFPA and the Golden Globes are considered to be a worthless charade by most of Hollywood, but don't forget that for the members of the HFPA, they're an extremely *lucrative* worthless charade. Besides all the gladhanding and perks that the members receive, the organization itself gets millions of bucks from NBC to broadcast the show every year. They say they donate to charity, but that's [debatable](#).

Basically, being in the HFPA means getting treated like a king and hanging out with celebs without having to do any work. I was born to do this job. Suck it, Roger Ebert!

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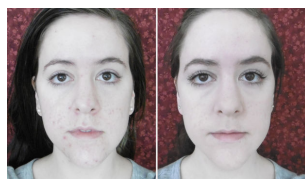
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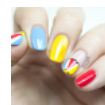
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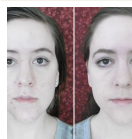
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