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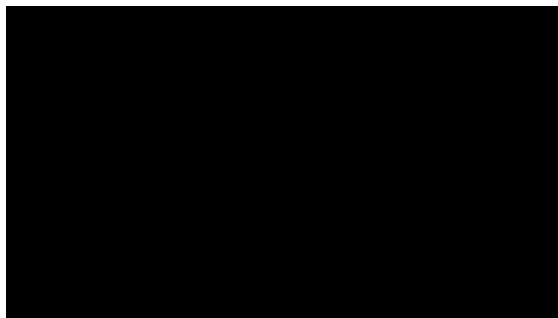
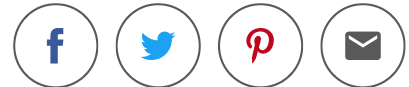


MOVIES

The 21 best journalism movies

EW takes a look at some of the best journalism-centric films of all time, spanning classics like "Network" to modern movies such as "The French Dispatch."

By **Robert English** | Updated on November 25, 2023



Sometimes the story behind a story can be just as compelling as the actual narrative itself. Cinema's rich history of films chronicling the real and fictionalized accounts of journalists chasing the stories they believe deserve to be told have continued to entertain us for years – investigating imbalances in power, newsrooms generating fraught relationships, and cynical writers learning to look at the world in a new way from the idealization of their subject. Through it all, tales of journalism are ripe for dramatic tension and complex characters.

When *She Said* hit theaters in November 2022, detailing the shocking story of the *New York Times* report by Megan Twohey and Jodi Kantor that exposed the sexual assault allegations against Harvey Weinstein and kick-started the #MeToo movement, we took a look at some of the best movies with

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the newsroom and reporting at the forefront. The films range from dramatic retellings of history's biggest breaking news stories, like [Spotlight](#) and *All the President's Men*, to 20th-century classics such as [Citizen Kane](#) and modern-day marvels like [The Post](#). These are EW's picks, in no particular order, for the most memorable journalism movies.

01 | **Spotlight (2015)**
of 21



PHOTO: EVERETT COLLECTION

Winner of the Oscar for Best Picture, *Spotlight* is an outstanding dramatization of the tenacious *Boston Globe* writers who investigated the



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shocking revelations of child molestation and cover-up in the Catholic Church. [Rachel McAdams](#), [Mark Ruffalo](#), [Michael Keaton](#), [Liev Schreiber](#), [Stanley Tucci](#), and [John Slattery](#) are some of the high-profile actors who embody the true-to-life, painstaking journalistic efforts that shocked the world. *Spotlight* does an incredible job of showing the lengths investigative reporters go to when they feel passionate about a story.

[Where to watch *Spotlight*: Max](#)

02 *Almost Famous* of 21 (2000)



Patrick Fugit, Kate Hudson in 'Almost Famous.'
PHOTO: EVERETT COLLECTION

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William Miller is a teenage boy who gets the chance of a lifetime to go on tour and write a *Rolling Stone* article about up-and-coming rock band Stillwater, but he soon learns that the real life of a rock star isn't as glamorous as it appears in this funny, heartfelt, 1970s-set coming-of-age story.

[Patrick Fugit](#) stars as William accompanied by a perfect ensemble cast featuring [Kate Hudson](#), [Billy Crudup](#), [Jason Lee](#), [Frances McDormand](#), and [Zooey Deschanel](#).

Almost Famous captures the complexity of writing so well in its excitement and disappointment that can come along with a story that isn't what it first seemed. Still, watching a frustrated band come together to sing [Elton John](#)'s "Tiny Dancer" on their tour bus is a timeless moment of movie magic from writer-director [Cameron Crowe](#).

[Where to watch *Almost*](#)

[Famous: Paramount+](#)

03 | **Network (1976)**

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Posthumous Oscars

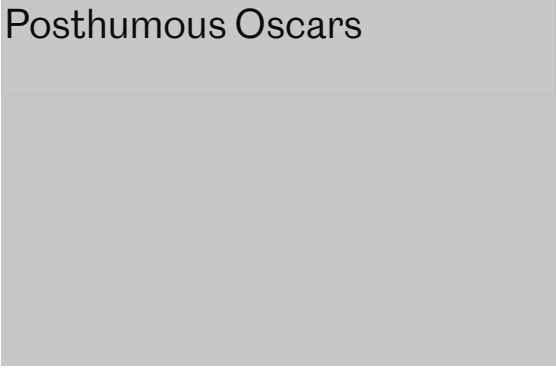


PHOTO: EVERETT COLLECTION

[Network](#) follows a fictional television network, UBS, and the producers who exploit a deranged former anchor, Howard Beale, to continue his ravings and rantings about the media for their own profit.

[Peter Finch](#) (who won the first, and still only, posthumous Best Actor Oscar for his portrayal of Beale), [Faye Dunaway](#), William Holden, [Robert Duvall](#), Beatrice Straight, and [Ned Beatty](#) are some of the stars that each give a tour de force performance in this Sidney

Lumet-directed classic satirical dramedy that helped shape American film as a medium and remains one of the quintessential movies from the 1970s.

[Where to watch *Network*:](#)
[Amazon Prime Video \(to rent\)](#)

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***Safety Not
Guaranteed***
(2012)



PHOTO: EVERETT COLLECTION

"WANTED: Someone to go back in time with me. This is not a joke. You'll get paid when we get back. Must bring your own weapons. Safety not guaranteed." Three magazine

employees ([Aubrey Plaza](#), [Jake Johnson](#), Karan Soni) go on an assignment to interview a man ([Mark Duplass](#)) who placed an advertisement seeking a companion for time travel in this indie flick from [Colin Trevorrow](#) and Derek Connolly, the team behind [Jurassic World](#). [Safety Not Guaranteed](#) puts characters first, allowing them to discover joy in pursuing the unimaginable, both physically and emotionally.

[Where to watch Safety Not Guaranteed: Amazon Prime Video \(to rent\)](#)

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Citizen Kane **(1941)**

Orson Welles in Citizen Kane



'Citizen Kane' drops below 100% for its Rotten Tomatoes score. PHOTO: EVERETT COLLECTION

[Orson Welles](#)' magnum opus is well remembered for its pioneering cinematography and ambitious plot structure. The use of flashbacks effectively allows the audience to follow reporters trying to uncover the meaning of Kane's final word: "Rosebud."

With interviews and countless hours of research in the high-vaulted library room, *Citizen Kane* employs journalistic investigation to help propel the mystery forward in its discovery. It's easy to feel like an investigative journalist while trying to find out for ourselves what made the publishing tycoon tick.

[Where to watch *Citizen Kane*: Amazon Prime Video \(to rent\)](#)

06 *The Insider* of 21 (1999)

Michael Mann movies

Al Pacino as Lowell Bergman and Russell Crowe as Jeffrey Wigand in 'The Insider'.
PHOTO: EVERETT COLLECTION

[Russell Crowe](#) and [Al Pacino](#) shine in this earnest and entertaining thriller about ex-tobacco industry chemist Jeffrey Wigand (Crowe), who comes under attack after breaking an NDA and appearing in a *60 Minutes* piece on Big Tobacco produced by the show's Lowell Bergman (Pacino).

Director [Michael Mann](#) is a master of the crime drama, and [The Insider](#) is no exception in his catalog of intriguing films that peel back the layers of those in power trying to stifle

stories before they are told.

[Where to watch *The Insider*:
Apple TV \(to rent\)](#)

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***The Year of
Living
Dangerously
(1982)***

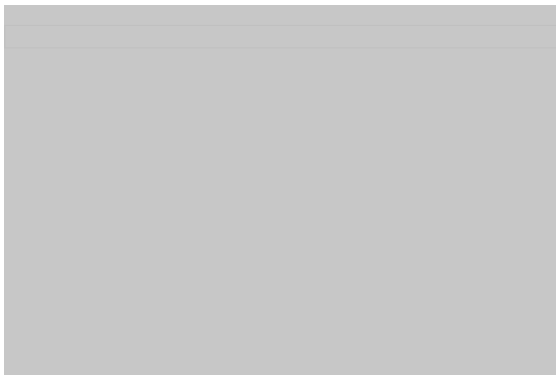


PHOTO: EVERETT COLLECTION

A year after his war film [Gallipoli](#), director [Peter Weir](#) reteamed with his Australian star, [Mel Gibson](#), in this historical drama about a reporter covering the political turmoil in Indonesia in the 1960s.

Gibson plays a foreign reporter who falls in love with a British

photographer, played by [Sigourney Weaver](#). Juggling professional romance with political intrigue, *The Year of Living Dangerously* is a complex film about the lengths reporters will go to get the story they're after.

[Where to watch *The Year of Living Dangerously*: Amazon Prime Video \(to rent\)](#)

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***Good Night, and Good Luck*
(2005)**



PHOTO: MELINDA SUE GORDON/WARNER INDEPENDENT

[George Clooney](#) co-wrote, directed, and starred in this biopic about CBS reporter

Edward R. Murrow (in a career-best performance from [David Strathairn](#)) who challenges the fear-mongering of Senator Joseph McCarthy. Clocking in at just above 90 minutes, [Good Night, and Good Luck](#) tidily and expertly showcases the integrity of Murrow during a restless 1950s. Using archival footage of McCarthy helps place the film in a time and place and accurately displays broadcast news in the middle of the 20th century.

[Where to watch *Good Night, and Good Luck*: Amazon Prime Video \(to rent\)](#)

09 | ***The Post* (2017)**

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The Post
Meryl Streep

PHOTO: NIKO TAVERNISE/FOX

When modern day events mirrored a similar threat to journalism and truth, director [Steven Spielberg](#) fast-tracked his dramatic retelling of *The Washington Post's* involvement in the publishing of the Pentagon Papers that declassified over 20 years of government documents relating to the Vietnam War.

Starring [Meryl Streep](#), [Tom Hanks](#), [Bob Odenkirk](#), [Sarah Paulson](#), [Tracy Letts](#), and [Matthew Rhys](#), *The Post* is a powerful film of the first female newspaper publisher and her editors to ensure democracy took precedence over power and corruption.

[Where to watch *The Post*: Freevee](#)

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Nightcrawler
(2014)

Nightcrawler

PHOTO: CHUCK ZLOTNICK/OPEN ROAD FILMS

[Jake Gyllenhaal](#) stars as a sociopathic con man who, armed with a video camera and a police scanner, dives into the LA crime world to make money and a name for himself. He deals with a TV executive ([Rene Russo](#)) to sell exclusive crime videos straight to the news, no matter the cost.

[Nightcrawler](#) provides a thrilling look into the shady secrets of modern-age news with a pulse-pounding third act that shows all that can go wrong.

[Where to watch Nightcrawler:](#)
[Max](#)

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***The Parallax View* (1974)**



PHOTO: EVERETT COLLECTION

While investigating the assassination of a presidential candidate, reporter Joseph Frady ([Warren Beatty](#)) uncovers a secret organization that lurks in the shadows and deals in political assassinations. *The Parallax View* is a taut political thriller that puts a resolute reporter at the center of a story that shows the crucial role journalism plays in thwarting corruption.

[Where to watch *The Parallax View*: Kanopy](#)

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Shattered Glass **(2003)**

Shattered Glass (2003)



PHOTO: JONATHAN WENK/LIONSGATE

Stephen Glass was a hotshot young reporter at *The New Republic* until it was discovered that he had fabricated over half of his articles. [Hayden Christensen](#) traded in his lightsaber for reading glasses as the infamous reporter who fell from grace in this impressively acted and intense drama – also starring [Chloë Sevigny](#) and [Peter Sarsgaard](#) – that sheds light on the importance of integrity and consequences of lacking any.

[Where to watch *Shattered Glass*: Freevee](#)

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***The French Dispatch* (2021)**



Elisabeth Moss, Owen Wilson, Tilda Swinton, Fisher Stevens, and Griffin Dunne in 'The French Dispatch'. PHOTO: SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

Distinctly [Wes Anderson](#), [The French Dispatch](#) follows an American newspaper in a French town and the eclectic lives of the citizens that unfold in three uniquely charming tales. Hailed as a "love letter to journalists," Anderson's film is one of his best, weaving the prose and stories that makes journalists breathe.

The story unfolds in multiple acts that features an impressive cast including [Timothée Chalamet](#), [Benicio Del Toro](#), [Tilda Swinton](#),

[Frances McDormand](#), [Jeffrey Wright](#), [Owen Wilson](#), and too many others to name.

[Where to stream *The French Dispatch*: Amazon Prime Video \(to rent\)](#)

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***His Girl Friday* (1940)**

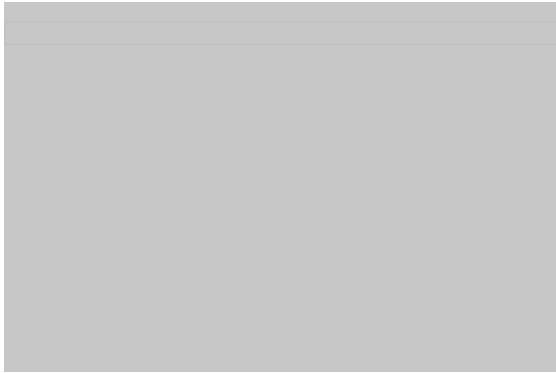


PHOTO: EVERETT COLLECTION

Cary Grant and [Rosalind Russell](#) star in this workplace comedy about a newspaper editor who does everything in his power to stop his ex-wife, who is also one of his reporters, from remarrying. Aside from its famous and utterly memorable star leads, [His Girl Friday](#) was innovative

for its sound design and the use of the now-commonplace overlapping dialogue. Eighty-plus years later and the film's comedy and depiction of the newsroom holds up well.

[Where to watch *His Girl Friday*: Amazon Prime Video](#)

15 | ***Zodiac* (2007)**

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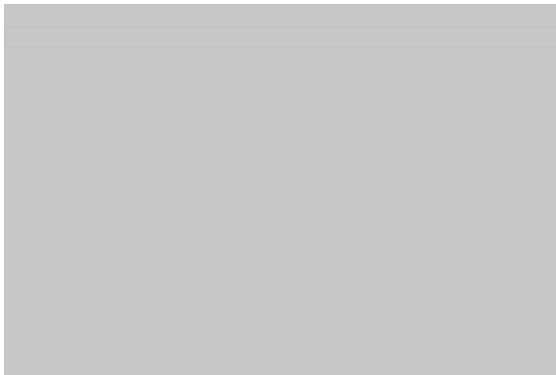


PHOTO: EVERETT COLLECTION

When a serial killer in the Bay Area taunts police by sending letters and cryptic messages, an amateur cartoonist joins the investigative reporters in the spine-tingling case to find the murderer, starting an obsession that leads him to the

brink of becoming a victim.

Jake Gyllenhaal joins [Robert Downey Jr.](#), Mark Ruffalo, and [Brian Cox](#) in this expertly crafted thriller from [David Fincher](#), which centers on the journalists in the newsroom in their terrifying quest for the unknown identity of the namesake killer that plays out with such tension that it haunts us long after the credits roll.

[Where to watch *Zodiac*:
Amazon Prime Video \(to rent\)](#)

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All the President's Men (1976)

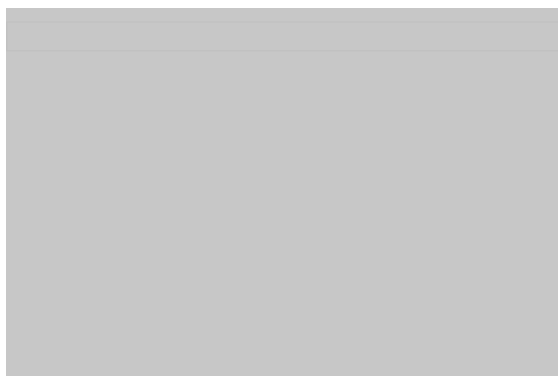


PHOTO: EVERETT COLLECTION

Telling the infamous story of the breaking of the Watergate scandal, [All the President's Men](#) is a richly detailed and exhaustive fictionalization of the two famed reporters from *The Washington Post*, Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward. [Dustin Hoffman](#) and [Robert Redford](#) step into the shoes of the inspirational journalists in a classic film that deftly walks us through the determination of Woodward and Bernstein as they unravel their story.

[Where to watch All the President's Men: Amazon Prime Video](#)

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Frost/Nixon **(2008)**

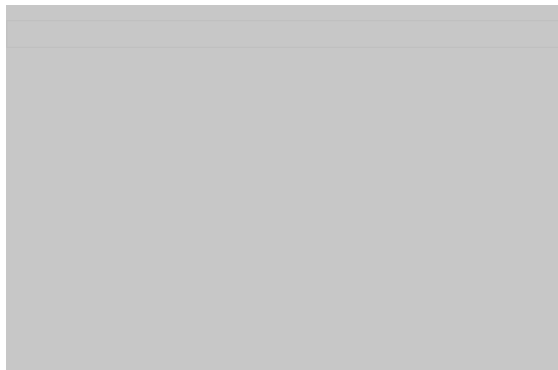


PHOTO: RALPH NELSON/UNIVERSAL

On the other side of the Watergate scandal is [Frost/Nixon](#), [Ron Howard](#)'s exhilarating drama about the post-Watergate interviews between former President Richard Nixon ([Frank Langella](#)) and British talk show host David Frost ([Michael Sheen](#)).

The two actors who originated the roles in London and on Broadway came to the big screen in a film that is superbly acted and earnestly detailed. *Frost/Nixon* smartly interweaves archival footage within these complex characters and their game of cat-and-mouse for the truth amidst political scandal.

[Where to watch *Frost/Nixon*: Amazon Prime Video \(to rent\)](#)

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Philomena
(2013)

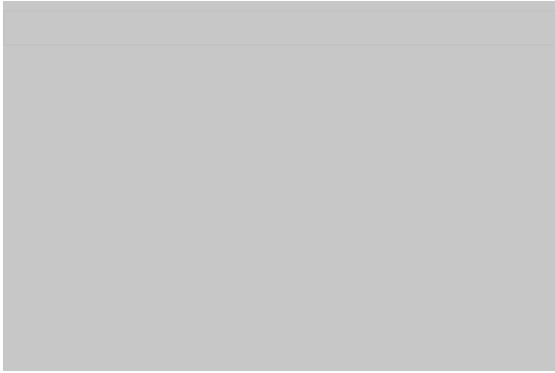


PHOTO: ALEX BAILEY/TWC

A septuagenarian joins a world-weary journalist to find her long-lost son who she was forced to give away by the Catholic Church more than 50 years ago in this powerful true story. [Judi Dench](#) and [Steve Coogan](#) star in [Philomena](#), an Oscar-nominated tale about two vastly different protagonists that sheds light on important societal differences in a lighthearted way. No matter how spent and over it the journalist Martin Sixsmith becomes, his profile subject has the power to inadvertently change his heart.

[Where to watch *Philomena*:
Max](#)

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Broadcast News **(1987)**

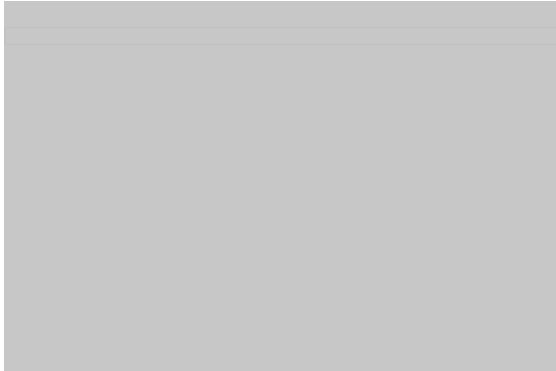


PHOTO: EVERETT COLLECTION

[*Broadcast News*](#) interweaves complex narratives about the behind-the-screens dealings that make broadcast TV happen and the dimensional characters at the heart of the story. [William Hurt](#), [Albert Brooks](#), and [Holly Hunter](#) play three journalists in a love triangle, delivering memorable characters and an insightful look into the industry.

[Where to watch *Broadcast News*: Amazon Prime Video \(to rent\)](#)

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Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy (2004)

ANCHORMAN



PHOTO: FRANK MASI/DREAMWORKS

Great Odin's raven! Is there a fictional anchor more of a big deal than the classy, mustachioed, number one local news anchor in San Diego? [Will Ferrell](#)'s Ron Burgundy immediately became a pop culture phenomenon in this quirky comedy from [Adam McKay](#) about an old-school news anchor who falls in love with his ambitious coanchor, Veronica Corningstone ([Christina Applegate](#)) in a male-dominated field. [Steve Carell](#), [Paul Rudd](#), [David](#)

[Koechner](#), [Kathryn Hahn](#), and [Fred Willard](#) round out the stellar cast in this oft-quoted comedy that is a surprisingly astute observation of the chauvinistic '70s workplace (and beyond).

[Where to watch *Anchorman*:](#)
[The Legend of Ron Burgundy:](#)
[Netflix](#)

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***She Said* (2022)**



Zoe Kazan and Carey Mulligan in 'She Said'.
PHOTO: UNIVERSAL PICTURES/COURTESY
EVERETT COLLECTION

She Said is unique in that it's a movie about journalism released almost immediately after the incidents it depicts.

[Zoe Kazan](#) and [Carey Mulligan](#)

play New York Times investigative journalists Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey – both of whom are credited as co-writers – as they turn an eye toward Hollywood in their "Me Too"-era coverage. What starts as hushed rumors becomes a bombshell report about the sexual abuse women endured at the hands of famed producer Harvey Weinstein. It's a difficult story, especially when it was produced so close to the time survivors chose to speak out. –*Dustin Nelson*

[Where to watch *She Said*:
Amazon Prime Video](#)

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She Said

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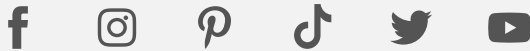
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