

## 2017 in Cinema: The World Turned Upside Down

History gets changed when conventions change and expectations shift. For better or worse, 2017 was a year of dramatic revelations - in social circles, in the news, in politics (especially *politics*), and of course, the world of entertainment. And Hollywood saw more than one wake-up call.

Several new trends and patterns emerged in the movies this year, both making them and in the theatres where audiences watch them. It was a year of unexpected hits and box office disasters, along with a new stars quo and bar of moral integrity that's going to last for a long time.

You could argue it began last February; last year's Academy Awards ended with an unexpected twist and a wrong envelope. The stunning mistake of last year's Best Picture winner was just an amuse bouche ahead of a year filled with astounding surprises.

Franchises were destroyed, with sequels and remakes tanking nearly every week. The Nut Job 2, TP's Boo! 2, Daddy's Home 2 and Bad Moms 2, Despicable Me and Cars 3, Transformers 5, even Pirates of the Caribbean 5. (Nothing made me personally happier to see Get Out outgross Pirates 5 at the domestic box office.)

They all featured disappointing reviews, ticket sales or both. The highest grossing and best reviewed movies this year were original stories. They won over audiences, with some of the highest openings coming in the strangest weekends. *It*, *Kong: Skull Island*, and *Get Out* all proved blockbusters can open any time of year.

Even with some opening weekend records and runaway hits, ticket sales and grosses were *way* down. Despite average ticket prices going up 32 cents, grosses were down 3% from last year. More shocking is the total number of tickets sold: 1.23B tickets represents the lowest number since 1992. Unfortunately, that's expected to continue in 2018, currently pacing to even less.

This is likely attributed to less interesting movies that people want to see. Studios are tending to take less risks on new properties, instead producing adaptations of books, TV and older films. This isn't going to fix the problem: Hollywood's sequel-itis has settled and is only getting worse. Audiences proved that quality prevails; if you make it, they will come.

On top of the decreasing business and ominous trends, there's still an elephant in the room about how movies are being made. The #MeToo has changed how we talk about the personal and professional lives of dignitaries of all disciplines, though we aren't going to look at certain filmmakers the same way.

The last 12 months have been a tumultuous, divisive time across the globe. Even with business slipping, maybe we should be less surprised by the escapism multiplexes offer and audiences are still desperate for. I, for one, see my movie watching only continue to grow, along with my journaling and list of observations.

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Three years ago I spent the year chronicling my tickets and experiences at the movies for the first time. After returning to keeping full records of my movie-viewing habits last year, I've continued to grow and expand the tickets and records I've kept, seeing nearly 200 movies this year.

This (now annual) essay is just as precise and astute as many of my thoughts and musings about movies usually are, but this is also not a professional publication. Above all else, this remains an unfiltered testimony of my year in movies.

I've been lucky to have a platform sharing my thoughts about the movies with Oakville News - but this is still my definitive essay that looks at the year as a whole. This year also marks my longest essay to date. And yes, my predictions and guesses for the Academy Awards on March 4th is at the end.

So where to begin? It started with the wrong envelope. But it went flat out crazy from there.

### **PART ONE - A SHORT HISTORY AND RECOUNT OF THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS**

After resuming my full ticket journals in 2016, I started a new library with previous years and ongoing tickets. It was somewhat nice to re-start my old habits last year, and was immediately gratifying to see my collection. Most of this year was based in Oakville, Ontario (where I live, just outside Toronto.) While there was fewer different trips than last year, one month was defined by a cross-country train trip from coast to coast across Canada.

As a result, I saw movies in more individual cities than any other year previously. I saw movies at 28 different theatres in 21 different cities, spanning eight provinces and states in two countries.

I used to be plan trips avoiding movies, maximizing my vacation time. Last year I started doing the opposite, making it a point of visiting a theatres while in different places. It became something of an experiment to see what movie going and movie watching was like in different cities, parts of the country, and even parts of the world. Some new highlights this year included Vancouver, Montreal, Lincoln Park in New York.

There was a surprising diversity in style, price, and attitudes wherever I went, but found the biggest differences mostly between different parts of the United States. In the USA, going to the movies is more expensive and touted as special event than in Canada. But the intensity and pressure of spectacle didn't vary. Theatres in Buffalo, NY and Niagara Falls had the same vigour and pizzazz that I experienced at Universal Studios in Hollywood.

My Toronto movie going also continued and intensified this year, most notably in September, beginning with the Toronto International Film Festival, and continuing to now. The dramatically increased prices at TIFF limited the number of movies I saw, but saw great premieres anyway.

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TIFF also marked my first anniversary as the film critic for Oakville News, leading to more invitations to screenings in the downtown area. This also became true for special events and new release films in the city.

Movie going was a regular event about every twice a week in the spring and early summer. I continued at a consistent pace while traveling in July and August, though at a much longer list of different theatres in different places.

But starting in September, my rapid pace returned like previous fall seasons, sometimes seeing as many as five movies every seven days. (I also had several double feature days, helping to balance my work schedule. There wasn't really any pattern between viewing dates.) With far less travel around the holiday season this year, I was able to watch considerably more Oscar-hopeful films ahead of Christmas.

Lastly, it's worth noting how widely my diversity of films and events in cinemas became this year. I attended several live events and feature shows, as well as six repeat movies. It was a far more concentrated year than ever before. I expected and hoped to maintain this pace for the future, and I'm happy to say I have done so.

### **PART TWO - THE NUMBERS AND STATISTICS, PREFERENCES, AND COMPANIONS**

Listed below are some of my habits, and some small details I found interesting. To save some space and not bore you with overly specific statistics, I have stuck to the standout points and general comments. It should be also noted special events on screen and repeat viewings of the movies are not included in this set of data. This is an account of the one hundred and seventy-eight (178) different films I saw this year.

There are more observations than last few years as my records have become more complete. All facts come from my saved movie tickets and journals from my diverse experiences. Some categories, like genre and days of week, I again omitted this year, mainly for fluidity here in this essay. Neither have been particularly missed when they were not included.

Briefly for those curious, I had the most shows this Tuesdays and Thursdays, and the least on Saturdays. Tuesdays are a popular discount night, and Thursdays often have preview screenings for new movies. Saturdays were my most popular last year, but now it's overly crowded and most of my movie watching is midweek.

For the second year in a row, my most common genres were Drama and Animation. My least common was Western because so few were made. My greatest increase was Horror, if only because so many great ones were made, and I now see more when writing for the newspaper.

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## MY PERSONAL RATINGS

After my initial viewing of each film, I would grade them on a scale between zero and four stars, going up in half star increments. This is the same rating scale used by many acclaimed journalists, including the late Pulitzer Prize winner Roger Ebert, hailed perhaps as the greatest movie writer in the history of film. Below are the averages of the 178 seen films this year.

Simply because I saw a 50% increase on the number of movies from last year, the number of exceptional films was diluted. There's still an overwhelmingly obvious trend to scores higher on list, because I prioritize seeing films I have better senses (or reviews) will be good movies as opposed to less so. I was surprised by the tightened balance from movie between 2 and 3 stars, but also seeing no category had more than 20% of the total for the first time ever.

4 Stars (Near Perfect) :	7.4%
3 1/2 Stars (Excellent) :	12.6%
3 Stars (Great) :	19.2%
2 1/2 Stars (Good) :	18.4%
2 Stars (Okay) :	12.3%
1 1/2 Stars (Bad):	10.6%
1 Star (Very Bad):	9.7%
1/2 Star (Dreadful):	6.8%
0 Stars (Brendan Fraser):	4%

It may also be worth mentioned since the movie watching year has ended, I have caught up with some movies I missed on Netflix. If these titles were included, the whole scale would be far more balanced, and that percentage of 1/2 - 1 1/2 star movies would skyrocket.

## SHOWTIMES

The other major detail I noted was the time of day in which I watched these movies. I put them into five categories of times of the day: Before 2:00PM, between 2:00 and 6:00PM, between 6:00 and 8:00PM, between 8:00 and 10:00PM, and after 10:00PM. My first two essays had the late night time begin at 9:30PM, but it made the count disproportionately low, and when I wanted was a number reflecting the number of late night shows, it wasn't being accurately reflected.

These numbers were sourced far more thoroughly than last year with a collection of tickets to show the data. The patterns, oddly enough, were much different from my findings 2014-2016. Most of the shows (almost a quarter) began between 6:00PM and 8:00PM, different from last year's trend of afternoon shows. What was different this year was the greater number of morning shows across the year that began before 2:00PM. There was no instant source I could detect on the reason, other than the reliable smaller crowds and discounted prices.

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For the third year in a row, the most found tickets documented was between 7:00 and 7:15. This is because many event screenings and special preview shows (one of my favourites to attend) usually have a start time in this window.

### PEOPLE AND VIEWING COMPANIONS

Like the last two years, this section has been cut from the essay due to privacy in the digital world, and to protect the names of those featured as part of my movies this year. This is a forced quality of the writing when I make this essay available for public viewing to everyone. It's important we all stay safe.

I will say like last year, I went to the movies this year with a wide range of people, from grandparents, friends, neighbours, siblings, co-workers, and classmates. The main category missing this year is girlfriends (which has been mainly absent since early 2015.)

Instead, my most frequent companion was another good friend of mine who also enjoys his movie-going habits. To put a name, we'll call him the generic "Chris", with twenty-two movies seen with me this year.

While not as extensive as my past work may have been, this concludes the numerical analysis for my movie-going in 2017. Now on to the fun part...which ones were the best.

### **PART THREE - MY FAVOURITE MOVIES, AND WHAT I THINK ARE THE BEST**

A staple fixtures of anyone writing about movies is their annual Top 10 List. These lists are the most concise and straightforward way to talk about the best movies of the year. It's easy to compare lists side by side, it's fun to look for similarities and differences, and it's an exciting challenge to hold the list year after year.

Having now done this several years, it's also fun going back and looking at my previous lists and how they've held up. For the time being now, I'm trying not to think about how the list may look in the future. The most important thing is how I feel about them now, and also how I felt right after watching them for the first (and sometimes the second) time.

The first part of this section is my list of this year's best movies; including any movies I gave my highest score to (4 of 4 stars; a 9.5/10 or higher.) Following that is my Top 10 List of the ten best movies from 2017.

This is the first year I'm creating only one definitive list. In previous years, this list appeared with either two or three different versions, ranging from my personal favourites, personal bests and unbiased 10 best. As I've gained confidence publishing and writing my observations in film, I've decided I can now write one concise list.

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## FOUR STAR MOVIES

When reviewing my list of the movies I've seen and my scores from this year, I looked to see what movies I had - upon my initial viewing - deemed worthy of a perfect score. This does not mean they were the best movies of the year, but simply that I reviewed them at four stars out of four. This also doesn't mean movies with a lower rating may be inferior.

I was stunned to find, after counting, exactly 11 movies reached a four star merit for the third year in a row. The total was the same for 2015 and 2016, despite having seen about the same number of movies this year than the last two combined.

Throughout the year, I see fewer bad movies than I do commonly recommended and/or acclaimed ones. I suppose, however, with the greater quantity of films I've seen of both good and bad, the majority of them are either good or average ones.

It's also true that as Hollywood releases an increasing total number of new movies (with each year setting new records, and 2017 releasing more than 700 titles for the first time) the number of good and bad movies will also increase proportionally.

The movies are listed below in chronological order of their release dates from the year. These are my four star movies for 2017. (A \* marks a Best Picture nominee).

GET OUT\*  
YOUR NAME  
THE CASE FOR CHRIST  
WONDER WOMAN  
WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES  
DUNKIRK\*  
MUDBOUND  
COCO  
CALL ME BY YOUR NAME\*  
THE SHAPE OF WATER\*  
STAR WARS: THE LAST JEDI

There were particular qualities of each that earned them the designation here, but all listed showed a number of exemplary qualities. They were entertaining, engaging, important, poignant, palatable and well produced motion pictures, and I'm glad to have seen all of them.

One thing unique to my list this year is only four of the nine Best Picture nominees made the list. This is unusually small for my reviews, though it should be noted all these other candidates received either a 3/4 or 3.5/4.

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In previous years, I've also listed broadcasts, plays, events, and special screenings I gave a perfect score to in this section. This year, only one event scored a perfect rating: the National Theatre Live screened Marianne Elliot's new production of ANGELS IN AMERICA from London. There were three screenings throughout the summer, consisting of both parts of Tony Kushner's famous 1992 and 1993 play.

The show is divided into two parts, and the total run times with intermissions lasts about nine hours. (It is by the far the longest theatrical broadcast in the National Theatre's history.) The play is an astounding achievement both as theatre and film, and it was an unforgettable event.

### TYLER'S TOP TEN FAVOURITE MOVIES OF 2016

This is it. The best of the best. Factoring skill, art, enjoyment, quality, technique, and legacy thus far, these are what I believe to be the best movies of 2017.

As mentioned earlier, this list is my "official top 10", combining both my ten personal favourite movies this year and the best in all. This accounts for extreme preferences and opinions that may skew my ratings or thoughts in movies. This was an ongoing list I kept, adjusted, and changed as I saw new movies throughout the year.

Here are my ten favourite movies of 2017.

1. Get Out
2. Lady Bird
3. The Shape of Water
4. Dunkirk
5. Call Me By Your Name
6. Coco
7. Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
8. War for the Planet of the Apes
9. The Post
10. The Big Sick

### Honourable Mentions: (Movies that almost made my Top 10)

Baby Driver, Battle of the Sexes, The Case for Christ, Detroit, Molly's Game, Mudbound, Phantom Thread, Wonder Woman, and Your Name.

Starting at the top, I truly believe *Get Out* is the most complete and excellent piece of filmmaking from 2017. It was creative beyond entertaining, redefining the conventions and possible gravitas of several genres. It wasn't just a effectively suspenseful horror movie; it was equally tasteful and creative. It wasn't just an intelligent satire - it was approachable and palatable for all audiences.

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A quick word about the humour worth mentioning: some elitist audiences have criticized the film for not being either funny or even humorous in nature. This is wholly untrue, whether you laughed or not. Speaking delicately, the film is a satire of how racism is spread and shared in our contemporary society.

I argue that commenting the film is empty of any humorous tone reflects the writer more than the film. It shows you are the very problem *Get Out* suggests is thriving today so well.

There was no more entertaining and excellent crafted film than *Get Out*. That being said, every the sheer entertainment value of all ten best titles this year was unparalleled. Three of them were astoundingly unique romances - *The Shape of Water*, *The Big Sick* and *Call Me By Your Name*.

The first had the added benefit of a great scientific conflict and fantastic production design. The second soared on the merits of four lead actors and one of the most inventive romantic screenplays ever produced. The last was just beautiful - in its people, location, and soul.

My list also strangely contains *Coco* and *War for the Planet of the Apes*, two large, sterilized blockbusters from Holiday weekends this year. I included them both for their captivating performances and clear attention and focus to be more relevant than a mere afternoon diversion.

Most critically, both had a great skill in their plots to pleasantly surprise audiences with their hidden moral lessons and clever, enjoyable twists. These only get harder as new stories are written, and it's a challenging task that I will always reward and value greatly.

That same reason to create smooth surprises is the same reason *Three Billboards* is so low on my list. While an excellent film, it's far too intense and occasionally cruel to be truly spectacular. It's weird to have really great movies where the first hour is the strongest section. Eventually a clear decision has to be made about focal characters on where they stand.

In terms of personal favourites, I was most attracted this year to movies that tried to do something different. This is part of why *Lady Bird* and *Dunkirk* are so close to the top. I know *Dunkirk* has been mildly over-acclaimed, and we don't need too many new movies about the young, white men fighting in WW2 Europe. But to make the story so action-driven, and so tightly edited? It's the perfect way to showcase the storyboard of war on film. It's amazing it took so long for someone to film it this way.

Yes, there's a clear trend this year of finding new ways to tell stories we think we already know. What I also liked was some of the movies that had unintentional companions. These were movies that actually added some context or perspective to each other unknowingly.

*Dunkirk* and *Darkest Hour* is the best case, but also think of *Lady Bird* and *Three Billboards*, for example, examining the perils between mothers and daughters. Another one is *Get Out* and *Baby Driver* - two action packed stories about escaping a hidden social threat.



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## THE ACTORS

Next up is my list specifically about acting. This is the area I have the most insight to being a performer and actor myself, and find there is the most worth mentioning here than any other job. (Movies need one director, for instance. But they need a lot of actors).

There's no maximum, minimum, ranking, order, or restriction to this list. Any actor whom I found exceptional, noteworthy, memorable, or worth making an effort to see I've included below. Each of these is organized into one of five categories - lead and supporting roles for either gender, and then cameo appearances (smaller, memorable roles.)

I've also included a list of "Winners" and "Losers" - these are actors from multiple projects this year who were either featured in a number of great things...or a number of bad things. You'll find both examples later. (Of note: If they are listed in these sections, you'll find them omitted from the regular lists of individual performances.)

One thing that helped considerably this year was keeping an ongoing list throughout the year. I've reviewed my choices more recently to make my final list from any suggested name I made throughout the year.

The lists are also much longer than they've been in previous years; this is a natural side effect of seeing more movies each subsequent year. Still, everyone listed below has more than earned their right to be featured, and some overdue for the unrecognized work. You can see all the names and their characters below. These are my favourites of the year, listed and organized alphabetically.

## LEAD ACTOR

Alec Baldwin as Theo Templeton/The Boss Baby (The Boss Baby)  
Jackie Chan as Ngoc Minh Quan (The Foreigner)  
Tom Cruise as Barry Seal (American Made)  
Michael Fassbender as David 8/Walter One (Alien: Covenant)  
James Franco as Tommy Wiseau (The Disaster Artist)  
Jake Gyllenhaal as Jeff Bauman (Stronger)  
Tom Hanks as Ben Bradlee (The Post)  
Hugh Jackman as Logan/Wolverine (Logan)  
Daniel Kaluuya as Chris Washington (Get Out)  
James McAvoy as Kevin (Spilt)  
Kumail Nanjiani (The Big Sick)  
Gary Oldman as Sir Winston Churchill (Darkest Hour)  
Demetrius Shipp Jr. as Tupac Shakur (All Eyez on Me)  
Andy Serkis as Caesar (War for the Planet of the Apes)  
Miles Teller as Brendan "Donut" McDonough (Only the Brave)  
Denzel Washington as Roman Israel (Roman J. Israel Esq.)

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### LEAD ACTRESS

Cristela Alonzo as Cruz Ramirez (Cars 3)  
Évelyne Brochu as Alice (Le Passé Devant Nous)  
Zooey Deutsch as Samantha Kingston (Before I Fall)  
Gal Gadot as Diana (Wonder Woman)  
McKenna Grace as Mary Adler (Gifted)  
Sally Hawkins as Eliza (The Shape of Water)  
Salma Hayek as Beatriz (Beatriz at Dinner)  
Dafne Keen as Laura/X-23 (Logan)  
Sophia Lillis as Beverly Marsh (It)  
Kate Mara as Corporal Megan Leavey (Megan Leavey)  
Frances McDormand as Mildred Hayes (Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri)  
Margot Robbie as Tonya Harding (I, Tonya)  
Emma Stone as Billie Jean King (Battle of the Sexes)  
Meryl Streep as Kay Graham (The Post)

### SUPPORTING ACTOR

Kevin Costner as Larry Bloom (Molly's Game)  
RJ Cyler as Billy Cranston/Blue Ranger (Power Rangers)  
Willem Dafoe as Bobby (The Florida Project)  
Luke Evans as Gaston (Beauty and the Beast)  
Mark Hamill as Luke Skywalker (Star Wars: The Last Jedi)  
Woody Harrelson as The Colonel (War for the Planet of the Apes)  
Jonny Lee Miller as Spud (T2: Transpotting)  
John Lithgow as Doug Strutt (Beatriz at Dinner)  
Ben Mendelsohn as King George VI (Darkest Hour)  
Alex Sharp as Luke (To The Bone)  
Michael Rooker as Yondu (Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2)  
Will Tilston as Young Christopher Robin (Goodbye Christopher Robin)

### SUPPORTING ACTRESS

Mary J. Blige as Florence Jackson (Mudbound)  
Erika Christensen as Leslie Strobel (The Case for Christ)  
Iza González as Darling (Baby Driver)  
Sylvia Hoeks as Luv (Blade Runner 2049)  
Holly Hunter as Beth Gardner (The Big Sick)  
Alison Janney as Lavona Golden (I, Tonya)  
Tiffany Haddish as Dina (Girls Trip)  
Laurie Metcalf as Marion McPherson (Lady Bird)  
Kate McKinnon as Pippa (Rough Night)  
Michelle Rodriguez as Letty Ortiz (The Fate of the Furious)  
Keala Settle as The Bearded Woman (The Greatest Showman)  
Izabela Vidovic as Olivia "Via" Pullman (Wonder)

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### CAMEO APPEARANCE

Orlando Bloom and Kiera Knightley as Will and Elizabeth Turner (Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales)

Matt Damon as Stage Actor (Thor: Ragnarok)

Lily Day as Nina (Ferdinand)

Daveed Diggs as Mr. Browne (Wonder)

David Hasselhoff as David Hasselhoff (Baywatch)

Elton John as Elton John (Kingsman: The Golden Circle)

Robert Loggia as Patrick Adams Sr. (The Red Maple Leaf)

Audra MacDonal as Madame Garderobe (Beauty and the Beast)

TJ Miller as SportsDesk Anchor (Goon: Last of the Enforcers)

Helen Mirren as Magdalene Shaw (The Fate of the Furious)

Paul Newman as Doc Hudson (Cars 3)

Kathryn Newton as Angela Hayes (Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri)

Jeremy Renner as Gangster Tommy (The House)

Sia as Songbird Serenade (My Little Pony: The Movie)

Tilda Swinton as German Politician (War Machine)

Katharine Waterston as Sylvia Harrison (Logan Lucky)

Zach Woods as Anthony Essaye (The Post)

### THE ENTIRE CAST

Beatriz at Dinner

Molly's Game

Bon Cop Bad Cop 2

Murder on the Orient Express

Call Me By Your Name

Only the Brave

Get Out

Pokemon: I Choose You!

Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle

Star Wars: The Last Jedi

Lady Bird

To the Bone

The LEGO Batman Movie

Wonder

Logan

### WINNERS

Timothée Chalamet (Call Me By Your Name, Lady Bird, Hostiles)

Michael Cera (The LEGO Batman Movie, Molly's Game)

Lucas Hedges (Lady Bird, Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri)

Lily James (Baby Driver, Darkest Hour)

Caleb Landry Jones (Get Out, American Made, Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri)

Kumail Nanjiani (The Big Sick)

Elizabeth Olsen (Ingrid Goes West, Wind River)

Christopher Plummer (The Star, The Man Who Invented Christmas, All the Money in the World)

Saoirse Ronan (Loving Vincent, Lady Bird)

Keanu Reeves (John Wick 2, To the Bone)

Michael Stuhlbarg (The Shape of Water, Call Me By Your Name, The Post)

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### LOSERS

Ike Barinholtz (Snatched, Mark Felt: The Man Who Brought Down the White House, Bright)  
Matt Damon (The Great Wall, Suburbicon, Downsizing)  
Dane DeHaan (A Cure for Wellness, Leap!, Tulip Fever, Valerian...City of a Thousand Planets)  
Ed Harris (Mother!, Geostorm)  
Katharine Heigl (Unforgettable, The Nut Job 2: Nutty by Nature)  
Charlie Hunnam (The Lost City of Z, King Arthur: Legend of the Sword, Papillon)  
Julianne Moore (Suburbicon, Kingsman: The Golden Circle)  
Maya Rudolph (My Entire High School Sinking into the Sea, CHIPS, We Don't Belong Here, The Emoji Movie, The Nut Job 2: Nutty by Nature)  
Halston Sage (Before I Fall, You Get Me)  
Mark Wahlberg (Transformers: The Last Knight, Daddy's Home 2)

As much as I've enjoyed the movies I've seen in this year, not of them were enjoyable. I've listed below what I think are the ten *worst* titles of 2017 alphabetically. The titles in bold are ones I'm expecting to win at least one Razzie Award for the worst movies of the year.

Keep in mind, I tend to avoid movies I know will be dreadful unless required, saving my money for better ones. That being said, I saw a long lost of astonishingly terrible movies this year.

THE BOOK OF HENRY

A CHRISTMAS PRINCE

THE CIRCLE

**THE EMOJI MOVIE**

FATHER FIGURES

FIST FIGHT

FLATLINERS

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES

SNATCHED

**TRANSFORMERS: THE LAST KNIGHT**

There are couple of honourable mentions for this category, notably the painfully similar *A Bad Moms Christmas* and *Daddy's Home 2*. Other included *Geostorm*, *Power Rangers*, *Suburbicon* and *You Get Me*. They were all on this list at some point, and ultimately spared because of their more disappointing companions.

Two years ago, I was lucky to discover the hilariously awful Frank D'Angelo. He's the Tommy Wiseau of Canada; a Toronto producer of the worst independent films made today, but so hysterically compelling you simply must see. For the first time, this year treated us to two new movies: *The Red Maple Leaf* and *The Neighbourhood*. Like his four previous films, are all complete insults to filmmaking and disasters in their own right. They're also, however, wildly addicting to watch.

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## THE BEST SCENES

Part three concludes with my ten favourite scenes from movies this year. These are listed alphabetically, and chosen for different reasons described underneath each one. It's these kind of breathtaking moments ranging across the emotional and thematic spectrum that makes going to the movies so satisfying.

All ten scenes this year cover a diverse spectrum of movies from the year. This is both the toughest and most rewarding part of my essay every year - but this year was particularly hard choosing just ten. It was so hard in fact, I decided to include a couple of honourable mentions. These don't have the descriptions as those on the actual list, but simply named before my picks.

### Honourable Mentions:

"The Carousel" from *Below Her Mouth*

"Evermore" from *Beauty and the Beast*

"Shit Ain't Fair" from *Get Out*

"I Cannot Judge This" from *Murder on the Orient Express*

"No More Catholics Left" from *T2: Trainspotting*

"That's Not Miranda" from *Wonder*

Without further delay, here are, alphabetically, the ten best scenes from the movies for 2018.

**WARNING:** The description of these scenes may include major spoilers about the movies they mention, and some describe graphic, intense, or disturbing events. To skip this list and move on to part four, go to the bottom of page 15.

"Winston Rides the Underground"

*Darkest Hour*

True to the title, Winston Churchill was facing a truly grim period of his country's history. Unsure of what to do, this fictionalized scene in an other compelling history story imagines a ride on London's underground by the Prime Minister. When faced with the possibility of WWII, he decides to speak directly with the public on a casual subway ride for their opinions.

"Zombie Car Stampede"

*The Fate of the Furious*

Every year, blockbusters spend millions on eye-popping spectacles of shallow action to wow audiences with pure thrills. But *Fast & Furious 8* surprised with a real wallop - hundreds of cars suddenly taking over downtown. Auto drive is activated after a massive cyber attack, and suddenly hundreds of glamorous cars begin a high-speed chase through a parking garage. The end result? A pile up so incredible it simply must be seen to be believed.

"Bad Brad's Winning Hand"

*Molly's Game*

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Amid the lightning-fast cards and untraceable cash flying everywhere, one poker player stands out from the crown of Molly's elite clientele in her lavish card games. Brian D'Arcy James' Brad, the portfolio manager without a clue how to play cards, is memorable enough as a character. But when he squares off with a world champion and wins by accident, hell breaks loose before the chips fall in a hilarious way.

“Deploy Now!”

*Only the Brave*

After two hours of firefighting, the Granite Mountain crew set out to tackle a real doozy of a wildfire with a big, band wind behind it. At one moment of true, radical danger - suddenly the chief has to make a fast decision. It's a thrilling climax and well shot scene that's heart-stopping, especially to audiences who don't know the powerful real-life story that inspired it.

“Those Days of Friendship are Over”

*The Post*

Tom Hanks will unquestionably be remembered as one of Hollywood's greatest talents. This year, retiming with buddy Steven Spielberg, he was given one of the year's best monologues sharing his frank opinions about The Washington Post with his editor, Kay (a fabulous Meryl Streep.) His portrayal of Ben Bradlee may not be as iconic as Robert Redford's from *All the President's Men*, but his confrontation to Washington's elite at the party is marvellous.

“Lightning Strikes the Tree”

*Star Wars: The Last Jedi*

Most of the The Last Jedi saw Luke Skywalker having a really bad week. After facing an identity crisis and making a decision about the future of the Jedi order, he sets out to burn down a sacred tree. Just before he has the opportunity, he's visited by an old friend who beats him to the punch. It's hard to call the scene fan service due to the backlash it faced; but I believe the catch-up between former teacher and student was thematically strong and a delightful surprise.

“Why Don't I Just Walk?”

*Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*

In a movie jam-packed with memorable scenes, one stood out because of its heartbreaking resonance and impact that permeated every other moment of the story. Early on, mother Mildred remembers a fateful argument with her daughter, Angela. On the morning before a tragic accident, Mildred remembers her unfortunate last conversation with her daughter. In the end, Angela decides to walk instead of getting to borrow the car.

“Talk About Mercy”

*War for the Planet of the Apes*

Woody Harrelson had a great year playing doomed saviours of the law. Andy Serkis had his third genre-defining performance as Caesar, leader of the Apes in Fox's surprisingly magnificent trilogy. In this compound scene when the new disease is revealed, both of them finally meet their match in a battle of wits. It builds to the franchise's fantastic climax we've hoped for all along.

## 2017 in Cinema: The World Turned Upside Down

“Get Unconfused, Son”

*War Machine*

This is a short moment early on when Glen McMahon is explaining the hypocritical, blind tactics behind America’s new troop deployment in Afghanistan. One soldier has finally seen the quizzical problem in his country’s military strategy - but instead of piecing his epiphany together, he instead asks Glen to clarify his plan of action. And of course, it’s not Glen’s fault the unit is wasting time, money and pride: it’s the private’s job to “get unconfused, son.”

“No Man’s Land”

*Wonder Woman*

No movie was more refreshing or welcome than Patty Jenkins’ intrepid *Wonder Woman*. Just as the film was an emergence of great, silenced talent in Hollywood finally stepping into the light, so was Diana’s first scene fighting in the trenches. When Princess Diana (Wonder Woman) finally climbs the ladder and removes her coat, the onslaught finally starts. And she kicks ASS.

*Honourable Mention for Worst Scene of the Year:*

“Sky Zone Trampoline Park”

*A Bad Moms Christmas*

This was an unnecessary and disappointing vulgar movie to start. But if the first annoying hour wasn’t enough, then came a 20-minute native advertisement for a famous brand of trampoline parks. It was unfunny, shallow, and horrendously long. If anyone said the full name “Sky Zone Trampoline Park” one more time, I would have bounced out of the theatre demanding a refund.

## PART FOUR - ROAD TO THE OSCARS, AND PREDICTIONS

I would argue there’s no award more prestigious in Entertainment today than the Academy Awards. While the Academy’s annual award show is famously boring and poorly hosted, the awards themselves are the benchmark for movies across the Globe. And more often than not, they reflect wise choices in honouring the best in the art and science of movies.

Jimmy Kimmel is back this year to host the ceremony, and while some of his gags were a little unoriginal à la Ellen DeGeneres, he was still among the funnier hosts of the last two decades. Hopefully he’ll have a similarly clean and easy-going approach to this year’s show.

The scrutiny of the #OscarsSoWhite may for now be in the past, with the nominee list becoming more diverse and inclusive each year (this one included.) In its place, however, lies the scandals of powerful men slipping from their pedestals in entertainment as the #MeToo movement gains steam and shows no sign of slowing down. This is reflected even in some of the nominees - we’ll never know, for example, if this played a part in James Franco’s missed Best Actor nomination for *The Disaster Artist*.

## 2017 in Cinema: The World Turned Upside Down

Each year I love trying to see all the films I think will be nominated for Best Picture before the nomination announcement in California, and it's like a sport between my family, friends, and especially my grandfather Paul. It's fun guessing who will win each of the prizes. This year was the third time I achieved this goal, though weeks later than last year.

This year's awards are divided between one of two games: either wildly obvious for a clear winner, or impossible to guess a winner from some tight, fascinating races. Picking winners is going to be looking at some preferences, but also more gut instinct over what's been popular the last few months.

Here I've listed my complete predictions for all 24 categories, including three distinct marks: Who Will Win, Who Should Win, and Who I Want to Win. These three sometimes overlap, and sometimes they directly oppose each other. I explain my choices and background for all categories, and ultimately choose my official predictions for the 90th Academy Awards. (There are some extreme cases where the possible winner is just too close to accurately predict.)

### BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

WHO WILL WIN: Sam Rockwell - *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* , as Officer Jason Dixon  
WHO SHOULD WIN: Sam Rockwell - *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* , as Officer Jason Dixon  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Willem Dafoe - *The Florida Project*, as Bobby Hicks

Back in October, this race was Willem Dafoe's to lose, giving the most electrifying and complex performance of his career. Sam Rockwell also has a career best for *Three Billboards*, and in a far more memorable way. As *Billboards* gained popularity and award wins over the last six weeks, Rockwell has become the massive frontrunner, winning for one of the best characters in this category since Heath Ledger's Joker nearly a decade ago.

### BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

WHO WILL WIN: Alison Janney - *I, Tonya*, as Lavona Golden  
WHO SHOULD WIN: Laurie Metcalf - *Lady Bird*, as Marion McPherson  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Laurie Metcalf - *Lady Bird*, as Marion McPherson

I still believe Laurie Metcalf gave this category's best performance, playing the mother of all mothers in a story so defined by what motherhood is. I, Tonya explores this same relationship, but a greater spectrum and far funnier and more shocking material gave her the breathing room to become unthinkably evil. Her delirious cunning is attractive enough to win the Oscar.



# 2017 in Cinema: The World Turned Upside Down

## BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

WHO WILL WIN: Martin McDonagh - *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*  
OR Jordan Peele - *Get Out*  
WHO SHOULD WIN: Jordan Peele - *Get Out*  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Jordan Peele - *Get Out*

This is one of the year's tightest categories that could go either way. If *Get Out* actually wins something, this is what it will be for. Peele is nominated too for producing and directing, but here is where his innovation and creativity will likeliest be rewarded. The question is - is *Three Billboards* popularity and cleverness going to bring home a win instead?

## BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY

WHO WILL WIN: James Ivory - *Call Me By Your Name*  
WHO SHOULD WIN: Aaron Sorkin - *Molly's Game*  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: James Ivory - *Call Me By Your Name*

James Ivory created a beautiful, authentic love story with *Call Me By Your Name*. He's likely going to win for his adaptation of André Aciman's novel, especially with many of the best scripts this year falling into the Original Screenplay category. But Aaron Sorkin remains an iconic force among the industry's writers. He absolutely deserves to win for *Molly's Game*, with a screenplay infinitely stronger than his direction. It could be either, though I'm predicting *CMBYN*.

## BEST DOCUMENTARY FILM

WHO WILL WIN: *Faces Places*  
WHO SHOULD WIN: *Faces Places*  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: *Icarus*

No documentary was more timely this year than Netflix's *Icarus*, especially with the controversies of Russia in the Winter Olympics finishing just last week. But there's an overwhelming love and pantheon of strong review for *Faces Places*. With more people who've seen it, that's enough of an edge to beat *Icarus*. (Truthfully, this category should have gone to the terrific documentary *Jane*, about the early work of the great doctor Jane Goodall. It's snubbed nomination was one of the great surprises of the year.)

## BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT SUBJECT

WHO WILL WIN: *Heroin(e)*  
WHO SHOULD WIN: *Heaven is a Traffic Jam on the 405*  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: *Heroin(e)*

*Continued on the Next Page*

## 2017 in Cinema: The World Turned Upside Down

### ***Best Documentary Short Subject***

*Traffic Jam* is absolutely the most captivating film of the nominees this year. The Netflix availability, however, will actually be an advantage here for *Heroin(e)*. Beyond the title and plot's fascinating double meaning, it's vulnerable insight into the opioid crisis is a difficult tone on a subject nobody else has quite got right yet. Either of these great short subjects could easily win this year - and it's great to see diversity in this category after five nominees on the same subject at last year's Awards.

### **BEST LIVE ACTION SHORT FILM**

WHO WILL WIN:                *DeKalb Elementary*  
WHO SHOULD WIN:        *DeKalb Elementary*  
WHO I WANT TO WIN:      *DeKalb Elementary*

If the political climate wasn't enough, the eerie parallels from last month's shootings in Parkland, Florida will be the goodwill needed for DeKalb Elementary. It's as terrifying as it is poignant, and like the documentary shorts, timeliness should be an equal incentive for Academy voters. It may not be compelling enough in every case, but in liberal California, it should be.

### **BEST ANIMATED SHORT FILM**

WHO WILL WIN:                *Dear Basketball*  
WHO SHOULD WIN:        *Dear Basketball*  
WHO I WANT TO WIN:      *Dear Basketball* OR *Lou*

This is Glen Keane's first nomination for a movie not produced by the Walt Disney Studios, instead animating a poem by the great athlete Kobe Bryant. It's a quaint and emotionally resonant piece of experimental filmmaking, and in the LA area, Bryant is a legend. It's hard not to root for the hometown hero, but Pixar is overdue for a win. Even after winning with last year's *Piper*, *Lou* was their most charming and clever short in years.

### **BEST ANIMATED FEATURE FILM**

WHO WILL WIN:                *Coco*  
WHO SHOULD WIN:        *Loving Vincent*  
WHO I WANT TO WIN:      *Coco*

Speaking of Pixar's return to unmatched greatness, *Coco* is an easy and surefire winner for Best Animated Feature. Lee Unkrich last won for *Toy Story 3* in 2011 and he's almost guaranteed to win again for his new, original idea that honours both the dead and the living. This was a great year for new ideas in animation, especially with fellow nominees *Loving Vincent* (which was so technically innovative) and *The Breadwinner*. But this race is *Coco*'s to lose.

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### BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM

WHO WILL WIN: *A Fantastic Woman* (Chile) in Spanish  
WHO SHOULD WIN: *The Square* (Sweden) in Swedish  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: *A Fantastic Woman* (Chile) in Spanish

Many writers and critics think Sweden's *The Square* is going to win, if only for the remarkable banquet hall scene so famously plastered all over Facebook last Fall. But the award goes to an entire movie - not just one scene. Chile is overdue for its first win, and I'm calling the near perfectly reviewed *A Fantastic Woman* to pull the night's best upset.

### BEST VISUAL EFFECTS

WHO WILL WIN: Daniel Barrett, Dan Lemmon, Joe Letteri and Joel Whist - *War For the Planet of the Apes*  
WHO SHOULD WIN: Daniel Barrett, Dan Lemmon, Joe Letteri and Joel Whist - *War For the Planet of the Apes*  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Daniel Barrett, Dan Lemmon, Joe Letteri and Joel Whist - *War For the Planet of the Apes*

*War for the Planet of the Apes* was one of the year's best blockbusters, and concludes one of Fox's best trilogies of movies in the studio's history. But the Academy is likely only going to reward the film for one category: it's stunning visual effects bringing the cast of Apes to life. After losing this race for the franchise's first two movies in 2012 and 2015, this is the year for the *Apes* series to bring home the gold.

### BEST FILM EDITING

WHO WILL WIN: Lee Smith - *Dunkirk*  
WHO SHOULD WIN: Lee Smith - *Dunkirk*  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Lee Smith - *Dunkirk*

Like Christopher Nolan's *Inception* back in 2011, *Dunkirk* is going to clean up with many of the technical awards at this year's ceremony, even if it misses out on some of the night's more prestigious trophies. The first of three awards for Nolan's WW2 escape epic start here with its tight editing and seamless integration of its three plot lines across land, sea and air.

### BEST SOUND EDITING

WHO WILL WIN: Alex Gibson and Richard King - *Dunkirk*  
WHO SHOULD WIN: Alex Gibson and Richard King - *Dunkirk*  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Alex Gibson and Richard King - *Dunkirk*

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## 2017 in Cinema: The World Turned Upside Down

### ***Best Sound Editing***

Weirdly enough, *Dunkirk* faces the same competition for all three Oscars its gunning to win from Edgar Wright's mesmerizing and smooth *Baby Driver*. While the latter had some sharp sound editing across its diverse soundtrack, the far more complex arrangements from the attacks on Northern France will deliver *Dunkirk*'s second win.

### **BEST SOUND MIXING**

WHO WILL WIN: Gary A. Rizzo, Gregg Landauer and Mark Weingarten - *Dunkirk*

WHO SHOULD WIN: Juilan Slater, Tim Cavagin and Mary H. Ellis - *Baby Driver*

WHO I WANT TO WIN: Juilan Slater, Tim Cavagin and Mary H. Ellis - *Baby Driver*

Of this and the previous two awards, this is the one *Baby Driver* truly deserves to win. The mixing of its honourable and coolly original soundtracks is nothing short of a masterpiece. Slater, Cavagin and Ellis totally deserve this award, but the similarity of the prizes and distinctive work of *Dunkirk*'s technical team will cap off the film's three Oscars. If *Baby Driver* is going to come out with an upset in any category, this is the one.

### **BEST ORIGINAL SONG**

WHO WILL WIN: "Remember Me" by Robert and Kristen Anderson-Lopez - *Coco*

WHO SHOULD WIN: "Remember Me" by Robert and Kristen Anderson-Lopez - *Coco*

WHO I WANT TO WIN: "Remember Me" by Robert and Kristen Anderson-Lopez - *Coco*

Already winners in 2014 for the inescapable "Let It Go" from *Frozen*, the husband-and-wife team came out with their most tender, delicate and dramatic work with the heartbreaking love song "Remember Me." They completely deserve to win again this year, especially in a movie so reliant on culture and the power of music. Truthfully all the nominees are equally deserving of the prize - but I'll be personally upset and annoyed if Benj Pasek and Justin Paul win their second consecutive award for *The Greatest Showman*'s "This Is Me." It's not a bad song - (though the rest of the film's were) - it's just not this year's best.

### **BEST ORIGINAL SCORE**

WHO WILL WIN: Alexandre Desplat - *The Shape of Water*

WHO SHOULD WIN: Alexandre Desplat - *The Shape of Water* OR  
Hans Zimmer - *Dunkirk*

WHO I WANT TO WIN: Alexandre Desplat - *The Shape of Water*

Desplat is an Academy favourite and previous winner three years ago for *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. But this year's *Shape of Water* is far more tender and somehow a more aesthetically beautiful showcase for his subtle melodies. Hans Zimmer may surprise with an upset on his brilliant, perfectly-timed music on *Dunkirk*, but I'm guessing this will be Desplat's next win.

# 2017 in Cinema: The World Turned Upside Down

## BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY

WHO WILL WIN: Roger Deakins - *Blade Runner 2049*  
WHO SHOULD WIN: Roger Deakins - *Blade Runner 2049*  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Roger Deakins - *Blade Runner 2049*

The brilliant Roger Deakins scored his 14th nomination for *Blade Runner 2049* - though he has yet to win on *any* of his previous 13. The only thing comparably spectacular to the film's sets and otherworldly designs are how Deakins captured them on camera. The film is a visual marvel and masterpiece in every way, and the camera showed the colours, shapes, figures and characters with greater poise and sophistication than any other. This is Deakins' year, baby.

## BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN

WHO WILL WIN: Paul Denham Austerberry - *The Shape of Water*  
WHO SHOULD WIN: Dennis Gassner - *Blade Runner 2049*  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Paul Denham Austerberry - *The Shape of Water*

Dennis Gassner totally deserves to win alongside Deakins for his design and fabulous mies-en-scene in *Blade Runner 2049*. Sadly, he's been upstaged (literally) by an equally fantastic world, and one more traditional in *The Shape of Water*'s gothic Baltimore. The Academy tends to give the prize to more traditional nominees here, especially if they are based on real places. While it's likely going to Paul Denham Austerberry, either nominee could win this one.

## BEST COSTUME DESIGN

WHO WILL WIN: Mark Bridges - *Phantom Thread*  
WHO SHOULD WIN: Mark Bridges - *Phantom Thread*  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Luis Sequeira - *The Shape of Water*

As much as I'd like to see *The Shape of Water* also win here for its bleak, sharp and colourful designs, it's an unlikely campaign. Any time there's a movie where the clothing or costumes are integral to the story, like *Phantom Thread*, it's a near guaranteed victory. It helps the Reynolds Woodcock dresses are completely stunning, too. The designs are so compelling its hard to see anyone else winning.

## BEST MAKEUP AND HAIRSTYLING

WHO WILL WIN: Kazuhiro Tsuji, David Malinowski, Lucy Sibbick - *Darkest Hour*  
WHO SHOULD WIN: Kazuhiro Tsuji, David Malinowski, Lucy Sibbick - *Darkest Hour*  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Kazuhiro Tsuji, David Malinowski, Lucy Sibbick - *Darkest Hour*

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## 2017 in Cinema: The World Turned Upside Down

### ***Best Makeup and Hairstyling***

Makeup and Hairstyling is probably this year's least competitive race. Even with only three nominees, this is a locked win for Tsuji, Malinowski and Sibbick's work on *Darkest Hour*, if only for their work transforming Gary Oldman into Winston Churchill. The transformation is a one-two punch of Oldman's physicality and the team's gruelling makeup design. It's a radical character and it couldn't have been more perfect.

### **BEST ACTRESS**

WHO WILL WIN: Frances McDormand - *Three Billboards...*, as Mildred Hayes  
WHO SHOULD WIN: Frances McDormand - *Three Billboards...*, as Mildred Hayes  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Frances McDormand - *Three Billboards...*, as Mildred Hayes

Nobody gave a more engrossing and diverse performance this year than Frances McDormand as the comically aching Mildred Hayes. Like Janney and Metcalf in the supporting actress category, this year's best women all played mothers in extreme circumstances. But McDormand did something so much more. Her range acting across every action and intention created the most fully realized person in any film this year.

### **BEST ACTOR**

WHO WILL WIN: Gary Oldman - *Darkest Hour*, as Winston Churchill  
WHO SHOULD WIN: Gary Oldman - *Darkest Hour*, as Winston Churchill  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Gary Oldman - *Darkest Hour*, as Winston Churchill

All five men in this category are all equally worthy of this year's prize. Predicting a winner, however, is no challenging task. Oldman has cleaned up Best Actor at nearly every other ceremony this year from the Golden Globes, SAG and the BAFTAs. There's no reason he won't add an Oscar to his collection.

### **BEST DIRECTOR**

WHO WILL WIN: Guillermo del Toro - *The Shape of Water*  
WHO SHOULD WIN: Christopher Nolan - *Dunkirk*  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Jordan Peele - *Get Out*

Here's one of the most competitive categories for 2018. Anyone of the three listed names above could win, and it isn't helped by an equally tight Best Picture race. I'd love to see Jordan Peels win for his creative and disciplined vision for *Get Out*. If Christopher Nolan deserved to finally win for any of his movies, it's for *Dunkirk*'s tightest direction of the year. But when it comes to a complete idea and vision on an epic scale? Mr. del Toro has a slight - *very* slight edge.

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## BEST PICTURE

WHO WILL WIN: *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*  
WHO SHOULD WIN: *Get Out*  
WHO I WANT TO WIN: *Get Out*

Having been wrong in this category the last two years (breaking an eight year streak), I feel tremendous pressure to get this one right. Unfortunately, this is the closest Best picture race in the last 20 years. The top three titles are all neck and neck with each other.

The last two years have featured surprise winners, first with the actually better *Spotlight* winning over blockbuster *The Revenant*, and last year's unbelievable steal of *Moonlight* from the better made (although less deserving) *La La Land*.

I'm almost expecting a third consecutive surprise winner this year - because *Get Out*, *The Shape of Water* and *Three Billboards* are all so unbelievably close in terms of votes and their popularity. *Get Out* is unquestionably the year's best made and entertaining motion picture, but its uniqueness may be just a bit too much to win enough first place votes for a big win.

The likely winner is going to be *Three Billboards* or *The Shape of Water*. *Shape of Water* would have won if the awards were two weeks ago, but the great reviews and publicity from *Three Billboards* may have been enough to steal the prize since final voting began last week. Either way, don't be surprised when one of them wins. It's just that damn close.

## Final Thoughts for the Year

Last year offered several surprise wins at the Academy Awards, though this year will likely offer a few peculiar shockers. This definitely isn't going to be a year where one or two movies dominate the field with a massive number of wins - the golden statues are going to be shared rather evenly over a large number of movies. (I'm not expecting, for example, any one film to win more than three Oscars. *Three Billboards* has a minuscule chance of winning four.)

The least I can say is how wonderful going to the movies has been this year, and the consistent joy I felt when pleasantly surprised by what I saw. My movie watching pace has amounted to a great level, and I know how fortunate I am to have the opportunity to do so. 2017 is going to be remembered as a year of change, both in how movies are made and what they show us.

Two years ago I shared my desire to make this a permanent fixture in my life, getting to talk about and share movies to a larger audience. I'm sincerely grateful I've been able to do so, and I keep telling myself how lucky I am to have my job. I must also thank everyone who read my reviews, stories about the movies, and this annual essay. For everyone who takes the time to read this, thank you. I can't tell you how gratifying it is sharing my work with you.

## **2017 in Cinema: The World Turned Upside Down**

The list of great movies I implore you to see only grows over time. These movies are the stories that share human life and extend empathy to the furious world we live in. For those the movies you may have already seen, I hope you enjoyed them as much as I did. I'm eager and desperately excited to what next year has to offer, especially with so many new major pictures already in development for the next few years ahead.

Hollywood is far from perfect, but the world cinema is finally starting to press the importance of change, and it seems like we're moving in the right direction. The new insistence for accountability and moral principles is only going to continue to grow.

With the new pressure and expectations from audiences to make better and more original movies, there's more than one new status quo being implemented in Hollywood. Only time will tell how effectively this new attitude will begin to influence the motion picture industry.

It's going to be one heckuva year ahead.