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Finality and summaries were a big thing this year - not just welcoming the end of of things, but the hint of bigger things to come.

Star Wars ended this year. The MCU's 12-year master plan came to its conclusion this year. And the scary world of streaming is just beginning. Within two weeks of each other AppleTV+ and Disney+ both premiered. Netflix and Amazon's libraries are bigger than ever. What else is ending, and what else is starting?

The world and business of going to the movies is currently going through a conflicting yet fascinating change of size. On one hand, fewer and fewer people are making the effort to leave their homes and go see movies, as intended, on the big screen. On the other hand, the money rolling in is higher than ever, with record profits being reported from higher spending.

This change has to work co-operatively because it otherwise spells disaster. Last year I described a war about Hollywood's need for sufficient growth against the public's lack of interest to sustain it in the way audiences have for over a century.

As for the new trends of digital media, fuelled by the instant gratification of streaming services, the proof is in the pudding. Something about this new formula that shaped and supported filmmaking for the last 100 years isn't working anymore.

But the decision of who gets to tell their story and who gets to be part of the movie industry is expanding just as rapidly as change is coming to how we watch them. I've always believed the world is a more exciting place when everyone has a chance to not just tell stories, but also to have them be seen.

There's another endgame to the expectations of rich, white, men automatically getting to do whatever they want, and it's for the better. Privilege still exists and there's a long way to go, but the status quo has disappeared as has Star Wars formerly guaranteeing record-breaking profits.

Even I, as a reporter and professional audience member, see the benefit these opportunities allow to artists and citizens alike. The chance to expand what we think the world looks like to what it can be on the silver screen broadens our horizons. And that horizon is a world far more important than the world of scale that is jeopardizing the Hollywood system.

As a decade ends, so are big changes coming in the immediate future for yours truly. My post-secondary education at long last comes to its final conclusion over the next several weeks. I'm ending many of my recurring contracts that have employed me for the last 3-10 years. Recently I've begun my largest project ever of watching 365 movies in the year 2020 - a terrifying goal that has already challenged me beyond what I'd envisioned.

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Endings must come to all stories, just as new beginnings are sure to follow. This is the cycle of life, the cycle of art, and the hopeful nature of cinema itself. That's been the recurring theme for this past year, but also that of our recent society in the season of early 2020.

I've titled this year's essay "an endgame and another" as a reflection of both what's recently been finished and what endings we're already preparing for. Progress comes best not by dwelling in the end, but by taking charge into the unknown.

So many of the best and biggest (or both) films this year had that as their central theme. "Into the unknown" was the catalyst not just for Elsa in *Frozen 2* but for Ken Miles in *Ford v Ferrari*, Jo in *Little Women* and Javed in *Blinded by the Light*. The start of new possibilities and a reinvented purpose propelled *Jojo Rabbit*, *The Irishman* and *Knives Out*. And saying goodbye to everything we've known was critical for both indies like *The Farewell* and *Booksmart* but also commercial hits like *Toy Story 4*, *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* and of course, *Avengers: Endgame*.

After crossing over 1,000 lifetime movies this year with three separate movie-watching projects, the time has come at last for my sixth annual essay about the new movies that have come into the world. I sincerely hope you enjoy reading through my notes and observations as much as I had writing them for you.

If you'd like to be part of my biggest undertaking to date, please read all about it online as I watch as many movies this year as there are days in it: https://www.2020incinema.com

Before we get to another, let's examine the endgame that was, and all that was leading up to it in the first place:

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

2019 was the fifth year I maintained records of my movie-watching habits, continuing the revised system I started using last year (from my original binders and cataloguing I started in 2014.) I now use blank, white business cards to organize information so I can track between 5-10 films per page as opposed to three, greatly saving space in the journal. (As I seriously continue doing this, I needed to start thinking about my bookshelves of the future.)

Like the last two, most of this year was based in Oakville, Ontario (where I live and attend school, just outside Toronto.) While I still made some shorter trips to several locations in the greater Toronto area, this year had the highest concentration of locally seen movies to date. I wasn't focused nor incentivized to re-visit cinemas in places I've already seen movies.

Part of why the number of local films was higher is I did far less travelling this year, but I still love seeing what movie going is like in new places I visit. While I did see films in NYC and Orlando on weekend trips, the only new location this year was St. Croix in the US Virgin Islands.

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Last year I described how different my experience was in the 20+ cities I saw movies in, but what I discovered this year was how radically the local market in the GTA is mixing. Some venues are skyrocketing in price and lowering customer service, while others are lowering prices and offering different films with better staff.

I've noticed the growing difference between corporate chain cinemas and independent venues over the last few years, but when dynamic pricing came into effect for big releases this year at Cineplex (such as *Avengers* and *Star Wars*), it really started to annoy customers. And Cineplex's revenues, in turn, have taken their worst hit in a decade.

2019 got off to a slow start this year until early April, when school was demanding a large percentage of my time. Most of February and March were commanded by my thesis project at Sheridan, and I usually only saw one movie per week.

It returned, however, to a regular event about every twice a week in the spring and early summer. I continued at a consistent pace until July and August, where my work in Muskoka forced me to slow down, seeing only four films over those two months.

My Toronto movie going continued to expand this year, most notably in September, beginning with the Toronto International Film Festival. I visited 8 new screens downtown, and saw a record number of TIFF films this year on discounted tickets. I widely experimented at this year's festival in the ability to see more movies on a shoestring budget, greatly exploiting rush lines.

This new strategy proved immensely successful, managing to see a dozen titles over a few days at TIFF, including four in one day. Of those, two tickets were free and one was a world premieres. I got to see screenings of both *Jojo Rabbit* and *Ford v Ferrari*, but just as my luck got better, I also got shut out of multiple screenings for the first time.

The September festival also marked my third anniversary as the film critic for Oakville News, but this year also saw a big change in June. After two months of training, I stepped aside as the first-string reviewer and passed the baton to my colleague Dylan J. Mayberry, and he's been doing a fine job.

I still do some film reviews, but as I'm accepting new work contracts, I couldn't maintain doing stories every week without letting something else slide. I'm mainly doing event coverage and theatre criticism, but don't worry - you'll be seeing a lot more film reviews in the future.

Autumn rapidly accelerated film going to a much larger percentage than previous years to make up for a slower spring, 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.) 65% of all movies this year were in the last four months.

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The holidays themselves, specifically the final two weeks of the year, was my slowest Christmas in years, as I was working almost daily on a performing contract. I also didn't need to cram so many films in, as I'd already seen most of the Oscar titles earlier in October and November.

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 three repeat movies. It was less concentrated than last year, though still dedicated and planned with great care. I've expected and hoped to maintain this pace moving forward, and while this was a slower year for my total number of new titles, I'm happy to say I have done so.

2020 will be a whole new ballgame with my plans to nearly triple the number of cinema visits I make, but that'll be a story for next year.

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 thirty-two (132) different films I saw this year.

For the second year in a row, there's a dip in the total number of movies I saw this year, hitting a four year low. As described in part one, that's largely due to being away in July and August, then working aggressive schedules with school in the winter and work in the fall. Having formally left my primary post as first film critic with Oakville News didn't help, either.

But here are more observations than last few years as my records are become more thorough. All the facts and statistics come from my saved movie tickets and journals I collected from the year's experiences. I'm also bringing back a few tidbits I left out last year, but in less detail from whence it began.

Let's start with days of the week, when Tuesday (unsurprisingly) was the most common day to see movies, and obviously because it's the day of choice for most venues to offer mid-week discount admissions. Thursdays were much less popular because I did fewer paid preview shows, opting for more Friday afternoons when the new titles were cheaper and less crowded.

In both showtimes and days of visit, I seem to be gravitating towards uncrowded day and very late evening shows when crowds are smaller - I'm not sure why this is, but I did think it worth mentioning. I do still like large fans crowds for positive fan bases and large events. (I saw *Avengers: Endgame* twice in near sold-out crowds opening weekend, but I saw *Star Wars IX* on an opening day early morning show with only 30 people or so.)

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For the third year in a row, my most common genre seen was Drama, with almost one-third of all movies falling into this category. The next most popular were Comedy at 28%, Adventure at 24%, and Family at 18%. Both Adventure and Family had the biggest jumps, both nearly doubling their totals from last year.

Two genres that also continue to rise are Horror (of which I'm seeing more as I get better acquainted and comfortable with the genre) and Documentary - I saw 15 this year, including 10 in theatres. We really are living in a golden age of documentary filmmaking, with every topic imaginable being covered and done in creative, authentic ways.

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.

For some reason, the proportion of bad to exceptionally bad films had some higher percentages this year, especially in the half star and full star categories. 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.

3 star movies had their highest year yet, breaking 20% of the total for the first time since 2014. When comparing so many titles, that's an unusually large percentage. But it's still true no matter what the title is, I can't predict or effectively asses what a movie will be until I see it.

Below are the averages of the films this year.

4 Stars (Near Perfect) :	9.6%	(+2.4%)
3 1/2 Stars (Excellent) :	9.6%	(-2.4%)
3 Stars (Great) :	21.4%	(+3%)
2 1/2 Stars (Good) :	16.0%	(-2.5%)
2 Stars (Okay) :	14.9%	(+0.5%)
1 1/2 Stars (Bad):	14.9%	(+3.7%)
1 Star (Very Bad):	7.9%	(-3.3%)
1/2 Star (Dreadful):	6.3%	(+2.4%)
0 Stars (Brendan Fraser):	2.5%	(-0.7%)

Since the year ended, I have also seen several others on Netflix, etc. If these titles were included, the whole scale would learn even further towards 1 1/2 star films or lower. It is also worth noting, by sheer luck, the tie scores in films that earned 4 and 3 1/2 stars, a first time occurrence.

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SHOWTIMES

Another major detail I noted was the time of day in which I watched these movies - specifically, the start time or showtime. This gives me a better sense of when in the day I'm typically watching movies. Changing from previous years, I've once again changed the categories to best reflect various times of day for shows to start. The four new categories are as follows:

MORNING/FIRST SHOW	Before 2pm start	AFTERNOON	2-5:55pm start
EVENING/PRIMETIME	6-8:55pm start	LATE NIGHT	9pm or later start

My goal was to even out the categories best I could, but also generally split the times proportionally to when most movies play a 4-show day: 1pm, 4pm, 7pm and 10pm.

Amazingly, the difference between first place, second place and third place were all within ONE showtime of the next on the list, and the difference between first and fourth was a mere six movies. The most common this year, incredibly, were morning showtimes before 2:00pm. Next most popular were evening/primetime, late night shows in third, and afternoons in fourth.

The only trend that could explain the unusual spike in before 2pm shows is the work contracts I did for the months of October to November, which had ranging start times between 12:00 noon and 5:00pm. On any work days like that (which was nearly half of that 90 day stretch) I could only attend the first show of the day. Not only was that a period of majority morning shows, but as I said in part one, that window almost made up nearly half my movie-watching for the year.

Morning shows, however, are also becoming more popular in Canada on the whole. There are reliably smaller crowds and sometimes discounted prices. I noted this trend was growing in last year's essay too, and this is becoming a more regular thing in the GTA.

For the fourth year in a row, the most common showtime was between 7:00pm and 7:15pm. This is because so many event screenings and special preview shows for new releases (one of my favourites to attend) typically have a start time in this window.

PEOPLE AND VIEWING COMPANIONS

I'd like to elaborate here a little more than I have in some previous years. While I still won't reveal any specific names, I'd like to share some surprising details from this year.

One thing that hasn't changed since 2016 is the proportion of how many movies I see by myself. About 65-70% of my visits are alone, without a companion I've invited or I plan to see movies with. Part of that, yes, is due to the irregularity of my movie watching schedule. This year, that figure was at exactly 65.5% of total films, and 80% of them being in the month of May or later. This year I also saw three movies TOTALLY alone - literally without another person in the cinema. (In one case, *Playmobil the Movie*, I'm told I was the only person that whole day!)

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On the whole, I had far fewer different movie-going companions from 2018, but there's no trend to explain why. Over the course of this year, I saw a movie with 17 different people - a whopping 67% fewer than last year. Many of them are friends of mine or my siblings. Though what's less surprising and may explain why is the number of repeat films I saw with different people was up more than 150% from any other year.

So what's going on? What's happening is instead of more frequent movie visits with different people, the same dozen and a half friends and family of mine seem to be going to more movies together on a regular basis. (There's a group of several of us who had weekly visit around our school exams back in March and April.)

A returning category from last year is girlfriends. I'd had a new one since October 2018, and she ended up being my most frequent companion of this past year at 28 total movies; a similar pace to how we ended last year. After joining me for one particular day at TIFF, she also set a new record for most films with me (4) in a single day. She takes the four-year crown from a close friend of mine - we'll call him the generic "Chris" - who only saw 12 movies with me this year.

Over the last year we've seen tons of great and not-so-great movies together. Movie watching is still a great interest of hers. She and I broke up just before the holidays this year, and while she likely won't be the most frequent companion again, we're still movie buddies and we're still friends to this day.

Those are the practical numbers and technical data of my movie-going from the past year. 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 Ten List. These lists are commonly 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 equally exciting and challenging to effectively create 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, I don't like to think about how the list might look in the future. What's more important is how I feel about them now and 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 Ten List of the ten best movies from 2019.

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Since 2017 I've written 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 about my observations in film, I now believe myself qualified to write one concise list.

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. Again, to calculate four stars on a four star scale, that would be a score equivalent of 92.5 out of 100 points or higher.

Throughout the year, I usually 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. (Truly, I see a lot more okay to average films than I do exceptionally good or bad ones.)

It's also true that as Hollywood releases an increasing total number of new movies, the number of good and bad movies will also increase proportionally. Each year sets new records, and more than 800 titles were released last year.

While I enjoyed many movies this year, my number of four star films rose to a total of 12, up three from last year and setting an all-time high for the list. This is one greater than the 11 that appeared each year from 2015-2017. My total of 3 1/2 star films, however, decreased from last year. I'd observed there was an unusually high number in 2018, attributing to the drop in those with the highest score.

The movies are listed below in chronological order of their wide release date from the past year. These are my four star movies for 2019. (A * marks a Best Picture nominee.)

APOLLO 11
BOOKSMART
TOY STORY 4
THE FAREWELL
PARASITE (GISAENGCHUNG)*
FORD v FERRARI*
THE IRISHMAN*
A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
QUEEN & SLIM
MARRIAGE STORY*
LITTLE WOMEN*
1917*

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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.

You may notice only six of those titles are among this year's Best Picture nominees. I liked all of them, but the six noted here I believe are clearly the best. This sets a new record of titles matched between the Oscar candidates and my four star movies, though it should be noted I rated all the other candidates nominees as either a 3/4 or 3.5/4.

In previous years, I've also listed broadcasts, plays, events, and special screenings I gave a perfect score to in this section. This year, two events received that 4/4 score: the first of which was a Halloween screening of 1991's *The Silence of the Lambs*. It was my first time seeing it and I was thrilled from start to finish.

The second event was a broadcast from National Theatre Live (one of my favourite media organizations) and their September screening of *The Lehman Trilogy*. It was an epic, dazzling history that was deeply comedic and frustratingly technical as it recounted the 250 year history of was what formally among the greatest companies in the world. It's opening on Broadway in New York later this month at the Nederlander Theatre, and I say it's not to be missed by anyone who has the chance to go and see it.

TYLER'S TOP TEN FAVOURITE MOVIES OF 2019

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 the year.

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 2019.

1. Parasite
2. Little Women
3. Ford v Ferrari
4. 1917
5. Marriage Story
6. Toy Story 4
7. The Farewell
8. Booksmart
9. The Irishman
10. Once Upon a Time in Hollywood

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Honourable Mentions: (Movies that almost made Top 10, alphabetically)
A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood, Apollo 11, Avengers: Endgame, The Biggest Little Farm, Brittany Runs a Marathon, Dark Waters, The Peanut Butter Falcon, Queen & Slim

Choosing my #1 film this year was simpler than usual: *Parasite* was truly outstanding in its entertainment value, with a thrilling story that continually surprises and a stark commentary on the guilt of upper and lower classes alike. It was expertly crafted with suspenseful editing, authentic dialogue, breathtaking production design and a cast clearly having fun.

What I finally settled on for the next two spots, however, were the movie where I had the most fun watching them. What I liked most about *Little Women* and *Ford v Ferrari* was how effortless it was to connect to the material and cheer on the principal characters in their quests. Both of them had crowd-pleasing concepts, and in their own ways, brought out the best and worst qualities of men and women alike, both at work and how a dream evolves. The former is about the extraordinary in the ordinary, while the latter is its reverse.

But why these three top the list, ultimately, is how cathartic and multi-disciplined they are. The best movies have the same emotional connection and appeal that the best stories have - but they can go one step further, because we can see, hear and feel the human experience on screen. These three titles don't just make us feel something - they make us feel *everything*.

There's two common traits that are also reflected in the following seven titles. Many of my favourite films this year are stories of grand adventures to shape the future, like *1917* and *Booksmart*. Others are about the legacy of our families and how they grow and change, like *Marriage Story*, *The Irishman* and *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*.

Others, like *Toy Story 4* and *The Farewell*, are both. Coincidentally, these ones also tend to be the most overlooked on a lot of other Top 10 lists. I think both of these titles provided some of the strongest emotional moments of any films this year, showing the lives of Woody and Billi respectively in crisis, both with heartbreaking and uplifting results. They were both long shots for Best Picture nominations, but *The Farewell* being totally shut out is a travesty.

Speaking of Best Picture nominees, you may notice two of the nominees are missing from my top ten list. While I enjoyed them both, neither of them were so extraordinary to even make my honourable mentions. Still, having a great time watching a movie doesn't qualify it as among the best. Let me explain.

Joker is this year's *Bohemian Rhapsody*; it's a terrific central character with a lead actor giving every bit of thought, intention and care possible. What surrounds them is a bombastic story that's just a long build up to one moment. *Joker* only gets truly exciting in its final half hour, and the wait to get there is hokey with a few teases. I still, however, loved watching the sadistic glee of Arthur Fleck transforming his world view into that of a Joker with nothing to lose.

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There's also *Jojo Rabbit*, which I'll credit as the most creative premise for a movie this year. What keeps it from being truly great is two things: One, the climactic finale is just as small-scale as the journey before it. Even the final moment when Jojo confronts imaginary Hitler isn't fully satisfying, and ultimately predictable. Two, the movie isn't as extreme as it could be. The humour could've gone further still, but it felt somewhat restrained.

I'm not saying it should've had more gore or insults, but the caricatures could have gone to the extremes of, say, *What We Do in the Shadows*, an earlier work from Taika Waititi. He himself as Hitler is also the most memorable part, and some supporting characters are underused. But I do love the central message that hatred can be unlearned as easy as it's unfortunately taught.

One more commonality I found in most of this year's top 10 is the optimism in their endings (in all except The Irishman, which while not happy, is at least definitive.) This is something audiences, myself included, were certainly ready for in 2019. We can tell intense stories with peril and the paradoxes of how to behave in our new world of equal ignorance and awareness. But we can be hopeful that, while awareness isn't enough, it might be enough to incite action.

That's certainly how I felt after watching so many of these. *Marriage Story* makes me want to treat others better. *The Irishman* wants me want to tell the truth. *Booksmart* makes me want to help my friends find their success. *Little Women* excites me for the void of normalcy.

Even films like *Parasite*, *The Biggest Little Farm*, *Dark Waters* and *Jojo Rabbit* make me want to know what I can do to help make the world a better place. And that's a start.

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. Check all lists to see the names.)

One thing that helped considerably 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 noted in my, well, notes, throughout the year.

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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, their characters, and the films they come from below. These are my favourites of the year, listed and organized alphabetically.

LEAD ACTOR
Christian Bale as Ken Miles (Ford v Ferrari)
Suhail Dabbach as Major Jasem (Mosul)
Robert Downey Jr. as Tony Stark (Avengers: Endgame)
Taron Egerton as Elton John (Rocketman)
Zack Gottsagen as Zak (The Peanut Butter Falcon)
Paul Walter Hauser as Richard Jewell (Richard Jewell)
Hugh Jackman as Frank Tassone (Bad Education)
Viveik Kalra as Javed Khan (Blinded by the Light)
George Mackay as William Scofield (1917)
Mena Massoud as Aladdin (Aladdin)
Charles Melton as Daniel Jaewon Bae (The Sun is also a Star)
Eddie Murphy as Rudy Ray Moore (Dolemite is My Name)
Joaquin Phoenix as Arthur Fleck (Joker)
Jonathan Pryce as Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio (The Two Popes)
Matthew Rhys as Lloyd Vogel (A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood)
Mark Ruffalo as Rob Bolitt (Dark Waters)
Adam Sandler as Howard Ratner (Uncut Gems)

LEAD ACTRESS
Ana de Armas as Marta (Knives Out)
Awkwafina as Billi (The Farewell)
Jillian Bell as Brittany Fogsler (Brittany Runs a Marathon)
Emilia Clarke as Kate (Last Christmas)
Kaitlyn Dever as Amy (Booksmart)
Cynthia Erivo as Harriet Tubman (Harriet)
Rebecca Ferguson as Rose the Hat (Doctor Sleep)
Jennifer Lopez as Ramona (Hustlers)
Melissa McCarthy as Kathy Brennan (The Kitchen)
Thomasin McKenzie as Elsa Korr (Jojo Rabbit)
Saoirse Ronan as Jo March (Little Women)
Taylor Russell as Emilly Williams (Waves)
Naomi Scott as Princess Jasmine (Aladdin)
Charlize Theron as Megan Kelly (Bombshell)
Kerry Washington as Kendra Ellis-Connor (American Son)
Ali Wong as Sasha Tran (Always Be My Maybe)
Renée Zellweger as Judy Garland (Judy)

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SUPPORTING ACTOR
Utkarsh Ambudkar as Jern (Brittany Runs a Marathon)
Cameron Arnett as Thomas Hill (Overcomer)
Timothée Chalamet as Laurie "Teddy" Davidson (Little Women)
Billy Crudup as Elgie Branch (Where'd You Go, Bernadette?)
Mark Dacascos as Zero (John Wick Chapter 3: Parabellum)
Idris Elba as Brixton Lore (Hobbs & Shaw)
Jamie Foxx as Walter McMillan (Just Mercy)
Kulvinder Ghir as Malik Khan (Blinded by the Light)
Bill Hader as Richie Tozier (It: Chapter Two)
Joseph Izzo as Everest (Abominable)
Tracy Letts as Henry Ford II (Ford v Ferrari)
Brad Pitt as Cliff Booth (Once Upon a Time in Hollywood)
Taika Waititi as Adolf Hitler (Jojo Rabbit)
Patrick Wilson as Lieutenant Commander Edwin T. Layton (Midway)

SUPPORTING ACTRESS
Park So Dam as Kim Ki-Jeong (Parasite)
Zoey Deutsch as Madison (Zombieland: Double Tap)
Julia Fox as Julia (Uncut Gems)
Renée Elise Goldsberry as Catharine Williams (Waves)
Dakota Johnson as Eleanor (The Peanut Butter Falcon)
Emily Alyn Lind as Snakebite Andi (Doctor Sleep)
Janelle Monae as Peg (Lady and the Tramp)
Michelle Pfieffer as Queen Ingrith (Maleficent: Mistress of Evil)
Margot Robbie as Kayla Pospisil (Bombshell)
Octavia Spencer as Harriet Wilson (Luce)
Kristen Stewart as Sabina Wilson (Charlie's Angels)
Geraldine Viswanathan as Rachel Kellog (Bad Education)
Kathryn Wilder as Judith Shakespeare (All is True)
Zendaya as Mary Jane Watson (Spider-Man: Far From Home)

CAMEO APPEARANCE
F. Murray Abraham as Tony (Lady and the Tramp)
Andrea Bang as Stephanie Kim (Luce)
K. Callan as Wanetta "Great Nana" Thrombey (Knives Out)
Frank D'Angelo as Acting Coach (The Last Porno Show)
Wayne Dehart as Blind Jasper John (The Peanut Butter Falcon)
Alexa Demie as Alexis Lopez (Waves)
Kevin Hart as Airline Marshal (Hobbs & Shaw)
Derek Jacobi as Professor Wright (Tolkien)
John Leguizamo as Jeremy Martinez (The Sun is also a Star)
Jason Mantzoukas as Tick Tock Man (John Wick Chapter 3: Parabellum)

CAMEO APPEARANCE (Cont'd)

Mike Moh as Bruce Lee (Once Upon a Time in Hollywood)
Bill Murray as Himself (Zombieland: Double Tap)
Maryann Plunkett as Joanne Rogers (A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood)
Daniel Radcliffe as Rex Dasher (Playmobil: The Movie)
Darci Shaw as Young Judy (Judy)
Imelda Staunton as Lady Maud Bagshaw (Downton Abbey)
Meryl Streep as Aunt March (Little Women)
Tilda Swinton as Auction House Manager on Phone (Uncut Gems)
Jessica Williams as Ms. Fine (Booksmart)

THE ENTIRE CAST

Avengers: Endgame	Knives Out
Bad Education	Little Women
Bombshell	Once Upon a Time in Hollywood
Dolemite is My Name	Parasite
The Farewell	The Peanut Butter Falcon
Ford v Ferrari	Velvet Buzzsaw
John Wick Chapter 3: Parabellum	Zombieland: Double Tap

WINNERS

Willem Dafoe (The Lighthouse, Motherless Brooklyn, Togo)
Laura Dern (Cold Pursuit, Marriage Story, Little Women)
Adam Driver (The Dead Don't Die, The Report, Marriage Story, Star Wars: Episode IX)
Julie Hagerty (Noelle, Marriage Story)
Tom Hanks (Toy Story 4, A Beautiful Day in the Neighbourhood)
Kelvin Harrison Jr. (Luce, Bolden, Waves)
Scarlett Johansson (Avengers: Endgame, Jojo Rabbit, Marriage Story)
Idina Menzel (Frozen II, Uncut Gems)
Florence Pugh (Fighting with my Family, Midsommar, Little Women)
Keanu Reeves (John Wick Chapter 3: Parabellum, Always Be My Maybe, Toy Story 4)
Will Smith (Aladdin, Gemini Man, Spies in Disguise)
Emma Thompson (Missing Link, Late Night, Last Christmas)

LOSERS

Matthew Broderick (Wonder Park, Love is Blind)
Jim Gaffigan (Drunk Parents, Above the Shadows, Playmobil: The Movie)
Tiffany Haddish (The Secret Life of Pets 2, The Angry Birds Movie 2, The Kitchen)
Anne Hathaway (Serenity, The Hustle)
Sarah Paulson (Glass, The Goldfinch)
Rebel Wilson (Isn't it Romantic?, The Hustle, Cats)
Finn Wolfhard (It: Chapter 2, The Goldfinch, The Addams Family)
Jeffery Wright (The Goldfinch, The Laundromat)

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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 2019 alphabetically. The titles in bold are ones I'm expecting to win at least one Razzie Award for the worst movies of the year. (Those with a * beside their names are films that, if eligible, I suspect would also win a Razzie or two.)

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.

A DOG'S JOURNEY
CATS
COUNTDOWN
DARK PHOENIX
THE GOLDFINCH
THE KITCHEN
THE LAST BIG SAVE*
PLAYING WITH FIRE
STAND!*
WONDER PARK

Some honourable mentions among the worst films this year include *A Dog's Way Home*, *The Aftermath*, *Godzilla: King of the Monsters*, *The Hustle*, *Jexi* and *The Sun is also a Star*. For anyone looking for pure trash on Netflix, one of my favourite trilogies to loathe got a threequel this year called *A Christmas Prince: The Royal Baby*.

Speaking of bad movies, there's one other local filmmaker I like to mention right about now. Four 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 his films are unmissable for true fanatics.

But I also had the pleasure of meeting him in person this year, twice. I was invited to the premiere of his latest film *Making a Deal with the Devil* in June, and meeting him, he's a terrific host and a nice guy. As magnificently awful as his films are, I can't say I don't enjoy watching them, and I eagerly await the next one when it comes out.

His primary investor, Barry Sherman, unfortunately died earlier in 2018, and his future releases are somewhat in question. In 2019 he did have two films already made that finally got a (very) limited release.

Of those, there's the one mentioned above, and another one called *The Last Big Save*. This hockey themed film truly is his worst one to date, with more than half the film being an unscripted hockey game with no plot whatsoever. It made my Worst 10 of the year, and being available on Amazon Prime right now, I can't recommend enough you go watch it.

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BEST AND WORST OF THE DECADE

As a supplement this year, and just this year, I thought I'd continue my theme of endings by briefly listing my ten best and worst film titles from the past decade of 2010-2019. I won't lengthy this already long essay with full analyses, but it was a fun exercise to go through and make a definitive list.

I list them alphabetically because it would take me days to number them, but I still enjoyed the exercise. Without further ado, here they are:

10 BEST OF THE DECADE	10 WORST OF THE DECADE
12 Years a Slave	A Christmas Prince
The Avengers	Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice
Boyhood	Cats
Get Out	The Emoji Movie
Inception	Fifty Shades Darker
Inside Out	The Last Airbender
La La Land	Movie 43
Little Women	Nine Lives
Mad Max: Fury Road	Snatched
Parasite	Solo: A Star Wars Story

Honourable Mentions:	Honourable Worst:
Carol, Dunkirk, Lady Bird, The Master, Moonlight	After Earth, The Last Big Save

THE BEST SCENES

Part three, as usual, concludes with my ten favourite scenes from movies this year. These are listed alphabetically, and chosen for various 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.

This year's collection of scenes was the hardest to narrow down I've ever had. I also found most movies on this list had several standout moments - it shows a narrative strength and true talent from the directors. For the sake of showing diversity across the landscape, only the best scene from each film is listed. If I liked more than one from the same film, second or thirds were omitted from the list. (And for some, that was really tough.)

Before those scenes, I'm (like last year) including some honourable mentions that I will simply name and not describe. I'd encourage you to try some of these films to see what surprises they have to offer. They begin on the next page.

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<u>Honourable Mentions:</u>
"Molly in the Bathroom" from *Booksmart*
"Confronting Dupont in Delaware" from *Dark Waters*
"Battle for Samoa" from *Fast and Furious presents Hobbs & Shaw*
"Ken doesn't go to France" from *Ford v Ferrari*
"Bathroom Dance" from *Joker*
"Herbert in the Chair" from *Just Mercy*
"The Airplane Goes Down" from *1917*
"Outswimming the Pretty Work" from *The Peanut Butter Falcon*
"The Northern Straight Breaks" from *Togo*

I swear picking this list gets tougher every year. Without further delay, here are, alphabetically, the ten best scenes from the movies in 2019.

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, read ahead to midway down page 19.

"Ascending the Rocket"
Ad Astra
While on Mars, Roy learns that if he wants to continue on his journey, he needs to go alone. After quietly being snuck onto the launch pad, he arrives only moments before liftoff, beginning a thrilling race to board the rocket to Neptune before disaster. The cinematography, lights, music, and the warped frame rate and playback all fuse together to make an awesome sequence.

"Avengers Assemble"
Avengers: Endgame
If you saw the final Avengers this year, you know exactly what moment I'm talking about. Before the final battle on the ruins of the Avengers campus, our colossal band of heroes and Thanos' villains throughout history meet for the first time as truly equal armies. Once both sides have positioned their ranks, Captain America finally drops the line that was mercilessly teased in 2015's *Avengers: Age of Ultron*. At last, the stage is set for the ultimate battle.

"Emma's Babies"
The Biggest Little Farm
Strangely, this is the second year in a row (and second time ever) a scene from a documentary makes this list. When Emma the pig goes into labour, she has a larger than expected litter - providing John and Molly the first example to a core lesson in farming: control over an unreachable balance in nature is unattainable. But it's all part of biodiversity's master plan.

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"Two Henrys in Cartagena"
Gemini Man
I really liked this movie better than most people did, but this first showdown between Henry and his unknown pursuant is the stuff action movie dreams are made of. It's great drama seeing two possible heroes of equal skill try to outsmart each other, and it's even better given they both use the talents they don't know they share.

Some of the extended shots of duelling motorcycles across the city show the masterwork of not just director Ang Lee but also the often-mocked talents of Will Smith, not just in his best performance of the year, but also playing both men literally fighting himself.

"Ex Comunicado in Effect"
John Wick Chapter 3: Parabellum
Speaking of intriguing action scenes, the other standout this year was the inciting incident in man-for-hire John Wick's great escape. The doctor helps with him fix a stitch, but then it turns 6:00pm. What comes next is a testament to the cavalcade of fascinating relationships John has.

"Amy's Last Painting"
Little Women
This film was the toughest one to choose just one scene that really dazzled above all others. The moment of true, sudden breathlessness came when Amy finds herself in Paris with Laurie, ready to give up painting forever. What starts as a discussion about her relationship with Fred suddenly gives Laurie a new perspective he hadn't thought of. As Amy paints Laurie's portrait, he's forced to accept an economic consideration that had never (nor would it ever have) crossed his mind.

"Rose Visits Harriet at School"
Luce
This is probably the least seen of the ten scenes this year, but the raw acting power and courageous choices of Octavia Spencer and Marsha Stephanie Blake. It's a remarkable, extended shot that circles the camera around Harriet in a high school atrium. Watching her try to maintain control over her sister Rose's surprise visit is as heartbreaking as it is technically astounding.

"The Fight"
Marriage Story
In ten minutes, Adam Driver's Charlie and Scarlett Johansson's Nicole spiral from reluctant friends in a dire situation to brutal enemies despising every quality in each other, only to find themselves trapped in the same cycle they've been in all along. Two actors with everything on the line hit a grand slam, with great dialogue, exciting stakes that continue to rise, and a final punch that tops off one of the greatest verbal showdowns since Shakespeare was writing.

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"Slightly More Useless Each Day"
Once Upon a Time in Hollywood
Rick Dalton is reading outside during a lunch break on the set of the TV pilot *Lancer*, and when he describes his novel to a child co-star, he comes to terms with his future in Hollywood, especially compared to hers ahead. Dalton has a tough shoot ahead of him, but there's a sobering beauty in how he thinks of what his relationship to the job he loves will soon be. In a movie that spends a lot of time blowing smoke to Hollywood, this speech helps bring it back down to Earth.

"Bringing out the Cake"
Parasite
With this scene, it's hard to describe what happens during the birthday party without spoiling most of the film. But the once the garden party gets going, it's spellbinding and heart-stopping thrills on the edge of your seat, desperate to know what's coming next. Bong Joon Ho has been teasing us with a confrontation the whole film, but he's a master of preventing us from guessing exactly how all the pieces are going to intersect.

And now, finally, for the last part of the essay, and the cheat sheet that'll help you win the Oscar pool contest this weekend against your friends.

PART FOUR - ROAD TO THE OSCARS, AND PREDICTIONS

I would argue there's, however local it truly is, still no award more prestigious in entertainment than the Academy Awards. While the organization's annual award show is famously boring, the awards themselves are the benchmark for movies across the globe and the prestige alone opens doors and opportunities for the winners. And more often than not, they reflect wise choices in honouring the best in the art and science of movies.

Even though this year has once again (wisely) foregone a host, it's a darn shame the producers work so hard to make the show relentlessly dull. But changing that requires answers to some deeper moral questions.

How do you condense a show without getting rid of what's, frankly, the most entertaining parts? 2018's suggestion of a "popular film" category flopped. Then came the omission of acceptance speeches and original song performances to cut down the ceremony time. All of the ideas were met with immediate backlash.

So what is the best way to revamp the ceremony? This is a question the Academy has been wrestling with for years, and viewership continues to plummet. Something drastic needs to change to keep the public interested in the accolades the institution has to offer.

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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 in the last six weeks. A condensed Oscars season this year has really cranked up the pressure.

I think this year's ceremony is going to be much easier than last year's, mainly because most categories have got clear frontrunners. The biggest controversy this year came more from the omissions from the nominations, and the abundance of misunderstood white men in their place.

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. While I give clear ideas in each category, there have been dozens of cases where the Academy surprises even me by actually awarding the Oscar who who should or I want to win instead of who is widely expected to.

I explain my choices and background for all categories, and ultimately choose my official predictions for the 92nd Academy Awards. Many will be easier than last year, but I think that's just a set-up to some surprise upsets just to shake things up.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

WHO WILL WIN:	Brad Pitt - *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood,* as Cliff Booth
WHO SHOULD WIN:	Joe Pesci - *The Irishman,* as Russell Bufalino
WHO I WANT TO WIN:	Joe Pesci - *The Irishman,* as Russell Bufalino

Joe Pesci won this same category 30 years ago for his work in *Goodfellas*, another Scorsese-directed crime epic. That performance was entertaining, but also slightly unhinged and without the true mark of amazement. Pesci as Bufalino in *The Irishman*, is the exact opposite. It's controlled, warm, and downright amazing to watch. It should be the film's deserved single win for the night, but Pitt has been charming award shows for months now, and he's just too popular.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

WHO WILL WIN:	Laura Dern - *Marriage Story,* as Nora Fanshaw
WHO SHOULD WIN:	Laura Dern - *Marriage Story,* as Nora Fanshaw
WHO I WANT TO WIN:	Florence Pugh - *Little Women,* as Amy March

Breathtaking as Dern was in *Marriage Story*, she's outshined by Driver and Johansson in the lead parts. The best singular supporting performance came from the breakaway smarts and power of Florence Pugh's Amy, but she's also got a long career destined ahead of her. It's crazy that Dern hasn't won yet in her 30+ year career, and while I still believe Oscars should go to a single performance, I'm not mad about who's the surefire winner.

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BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

WHO WILL WIN: Bong Joon-Ho and Han Jin-Won - *Parasite*
WHO SHOULD WIN: Bong Joon-Ho and Han Jin-Won - *Parasite*
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Bong Joon-Ho and Han Jin-Won - *Parasite*

Like many categories tonight, this is one that's a very close race between *Parasite* and *1917*. In this first matchup, this is one where *Parasite* is the likelier winner. Both Sam Mendes and Bong Joon-Ho are double nominated as writers and directors, and each has an edge in one category over the other. Joon-Ho's screenplay is just a cleverer story, and so the script likely goes to him.

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY

WHO WILL WIN: Taika Waititi - *Jojo Rabbit*
WHO SHOULD WIN: Greta Gerwig - *Little Women*
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Taika Waititi - *Jojo Rabbit*

Gerwig certainly should have been nominated as one of the year's five best directors, but she did get nominated here for her screenplay. It's hard to have an original script of Louisa May Alcott's iconic novel, but Gerwig's is unquestionably the very best of them. But Waititi's work on *Jojo Rabbit* wasn't just an adaptation - it was a total reinvention that brilliantly turned the book into a whole new story that made sense on film. Even more, it improved the work, and that'll get a win.

BEST DOCUMENTARY FILM

WHO WILL WIN: *American Factory*
WHO SHOULD WIN: *American Factory*
WHO I WANT TO WIN: *Honeyland*

American Factory is the clear frontrunner in this category, covering the pertinent topic of industrialization and the balance of how work looks in America today. Even in Hollywood that's resonant, and it being released on Netflix means lots of people have seen it and loved it. I wasn't nearly as impressed, finding it smart but emotionally inaffectious.

BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT SUBJECT

WHO WILL WIN: *Learning to Skateboard in a Warzone (If You're a Girl)*
WHO SHOULD WIN: *Learning to Skateboard in a Warzone (If You're a Girl)*
WHO I WANT TO WIN: *Learning to Skateboard in a Warzone (If You're a Girl)*

The best short documentaries are the ones with a clever premise on unexpected topics. All of them are well-produced, so you need a clever idea to hook viewers into winning. Learning to Skateboard is exactly what it sounds like, and it's all of the above. And what an awesome title!

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BEST LIVE ACTION SHORT FILM

WHO WILL WIN: *The Neighbours' Window*
WHO SHOULD WIN: *The Neighbours' Window*
WHO I WANT TO WIN: *The Neighbours' Window*

I'll admit, this is one of the years I just didn't get around to watching the live action short films. The one that seems to be getting the most attention is The Neighbours' Window, and it's already one a handful of other prizes. It's your safest bet in predicting a winner.

BEST ANIMATED SHORT FILM

WHO WILL WIN: *Hair Love*
WHO SHOULD WIN: *Memorable*
WHO I WANT TO WIN: *Sister, Memorable* OR *Kitbull*

Without an entry from Pixar Animation, this category's harder than usual to predict a winner. Most of the votes seem to be for *Hair Love*, a sweet, largely forgettable short that thinks it's far cooler than it actually is. A large audience saw it as it screened before The Angry Birds Movie 2 last summer, and that recognition will launch it to a win. The best? The heartbreaking *Sister*.

BEST ANIMATED FEATURE FILM

WHO WILL WIN: *Toy Story 4*
WHO SHOULD WIN: *Toy Story 4*
WHO I WANT TO WIN: *Toy Story 4*

Normally any success from Pixar, like above, would be an easy prediction. But three of the other four nominees have all won popular prizes in this category so far, and all except *How to Train Your Dragon 3* could surprise with an upset here. Having seen them all, *Toy Story 4* truly is the best movie, both as a story and story on film. But I've got a feeling something's gonna happen in this category and a few heads will turn.

BEST INTERNATIONAL FEATURE FILM

WHO WILL WIN: *Parasite* (South Korea) in Korean
WHO SHOULD WIN: *Parasite* (South Korea) in Korean
WHO I WANT TO WIN: *Parasite* (South Korea) in Korean

This is South Korea's first ever nomination in the newly renamed category (it used to be Best Foreign Language Film.) With all the other nominations *Parasite* has it's the obvious choice. Not only is it the best international film of the year, it's also the best film period. *Honeyland*'s second nomination for Best Documentary could upset, but the odds are slim.

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BEST VISUAL EFFECTS

WHO WILL WIN: Guillaume Rocheron, Greg Butler and Dominic Tuohy - *1917*
WHO SHOULD WIN: Dan DeLeeuw, Matt Aitken, Russell Earl - *Avengers: Endgame*
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Dan DeLeeuw, Matt Aitken, Russell Earl - *Avengers: Endgame*

Here lies a tricky puzzle. The more deserving nominee is the exceptional effects that brought the mayhem and cosmic worlds of *Avengers: Endgame* to life. But is that too mainstream for the Oscars? If so, the far classier pick would be *1917*. DeLeeuw was also nominated last years for *Infinity War* and lost to *First Man*. The *Avengers* once again have the best visual effects in a movie, but 1917 will add another win here in it's quest for top winner of the night.

BEST FILM EDITING

WHO WILL WIN: Yang Jin-mo - *Parasite* OR Andrew Buckland and
                       Michael McCusker - *Ford v Ferrari*
WHO SHOULD WIN: Yang Jin-mo - *Parasite*
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Yang Jin-mo - *Parasite*

Voters were stunned when 1917 wasn't nominated in this category, leaving Parasite's tight, thrilling edits as the next best choice. But audiences loved the fast, heart-pumping car races in Ford v Ferrari, and while it's got no chance of winning Best Picture, the other three nominations it has are the three closest calls of all categories this year. So what are the other two? Funny enough, it's the two most similar prizes.

BEST SOUND MIXING

WHO WILL WIN: Mark Taylor and Stuart Wilson - *1917*
WHO SHOULD WIN: Paul Massey, David Giammarco and Steven A. Morrow -
                       Ford v Ferrari
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Paul Massey, David Giammarco and Steven A. Morrow -
                       Ford v Ferrari

Most people don't know the difference between this award and Sound Editing. The Mixing prize goes to the best actual mix - the blending of audio tracks to create a product. While 1917's technical achievements will be rewarded here and in Sound Editing, here I actually prefer the complex mixes of the car racing in Ford v Ferrari. If it deserves one win this year, it's this.

Fun fact: Massey and Morrow, nominees together last year, competed against each other last year in the same category and both lost. Sadly, it seems likely they'll both lose again this year, too.

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BEST SOUND EDITING

WHO WILL WIN: Oliver Tarney and Rachael Tate - *1917*
WHO SHOULD WIN: Oliver Tarney and Rachael Tate - *1917*
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Oliver Tarney and Rachael Tate - *1917*

Sound EDITING, on the other hand, has nothing to do with mixing. This is the actual art of creating sound effects in unorthodox ways so the sounds you hear in movies sound like how audiences suspect they should. While *Ford v Ferrari* may win because of a misconception between categories, the best design was in *1917* - especially in those trench scenes.

BEST ORIGINAL SONG

WHO WILL WIN: "(I'm Gonna) Love Me Again" by Elton John and Bernie Taupin
                        - *Rocketman*
WHO SHOULD WIN: "(I'm Gonna) Love Me Again" by Elton John and Bernie Taupin
                        - *Rocketman*
WHO I WANT TO WIN: "(I'm Gonna) Love Me Again" by Elton John and Bernie Taupin
                        - *Rocketman*

It's funny really that, like last year's *A Star is Born*, such an outstanding movie is going to be overshadowed to a mere single win for Best Original Song. Rocketman was made by much of the same team as last year's Bohemian Rhapsody, and while it preposterously won four Oscars, Rocketman will win just this one, event though it's by miles the better movie.

If there is a silver ling here though, it's that lifelong friends Elton John and Bernie Taupin have never won a professional, competition prize together for their music, and how appropriate this is the work that's going to change that.

BEST ORIGINAL SCORE

WHO WILL WIN: Hildur Giōnadóttir - *Joker*
WHO SHOULD WIN: Hildur Giōnadóttir - *Joker*
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Any of the five nominees!

Here is a truly rare case where all five nominees are equally deserving of the same prize. I loved each of them for different reasons, and the scores of *Little Women*, *Marriage Story*, *1917* and *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* all had their scores play integral characters in their respective films. But there's a lot of love behind the eerie, graceful and bone-chilling score in *Joker*, and oddly, it looks like the newcomer among four Hollywood legends will be victorious.

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BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY

WHO WILL WIN:	Roger Deakins - *1917*
WHO SHOULD WIN:	Roger Deakins - *1917*
WHO I WANT TO WIN:	Roger Deakins - *1917*

After finally winning an Oscar two years ago for *Blade Runner 2047* (and on his 15th nomination!) Deakins is poised to win his second award for his well-planned and meticulously detailed work in 1917. The camerawork was just as impressive as the editing and the sets built to help tell the crazy, seemingly one-shot story. Deakins deserves this.

BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN

WHO WILL WIN:	Barbara Ling and Nancy Haigh - *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*
WHO SHOULD WIN:	Dennis Gassner and Lee Sandales - *1917*
WHO I WANT TO WIN:	Dennis Gassner and Lee Sandales - *1917*

1917's enormous sets - not to mention those trenches! - are clearly the most creative, detailed, and award-worthy productions of the year. Hollywood, however, will always love itself, and there was no doubt a lot of care and brightness in Ling and Haigh's design of Hollywood in its vibrancy and grit of the late 60s.

BEST COSTUME DESIGN

WHO WILL WIN:	Jacqueline Durran - *Little Women*
WHO SHOULD WIN:	Jacqueline Durran - *Little Women*
WHO I WANT TO WIN:	Jacqueline Durran - *Little Women*

You'd think Arianne Phillips' work on *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* would be the one to beat, but for some reason nobody thinks it can win. Period costumes are also a regularly safe choice for Oscar winners, so picking *Little Women* does make a lot of sense. (And frankly, the clothes weren't the main draw of *Hollywood*'s visual feast.)

BEST MAKEUP AND HAIRSTYLING

WHO WILL WIN:	Kazu Hiro, Anne Morgan and Vivian Baker - *Bombshell*
WHO SHOULD WIN:	Kazu Hiro, Anne Morgan and Vivian Baker - *Bombshell*
WHO I WANT TO WIN:	Kazu Hiro, Anne Morgan and Vivian Baker - *Bombshell*

Kazu Hiro won in this category two years ago for turning Gary Oldman into Winston Churchill for *Darkest Hour*. Now, she's on another team recreating history, helping turn a talented cast into the shockingly lifelike staff of Fox News in *Bombshell*. This was the best part of the whole stinking movie, and well worthy of an Academy Award, especially for Morgan and Baker.

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BEST ACTRESS

WHO WILL WIN: Renee Zellweger - *Judy,* as Judy Garland
WHO SHOULD WIN: Scarlett Johansson - *Marriage Story,* as Nicole Barber
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Scarlett Johansson - *Marriage Story,* as Nicole Barber

Frankly, while her impersonation of Judy Garland is quite good, Zellweger's acting here isn't, and this isn't an award for the best impression. Even though Zellweger is the miles ahead leader, to me she's by far the least deserving of the five nominees. The four other women were outstanding in every regard, but Johansson's detailed and equally furious and compassionate performance in *Marriage Story* is what she should be at last winning her Oscar for. I'm actually more than a little upset about Zellweger's likelihood fo winning.

BEST ACTOR

WHO WILL WIN: Joaquin Phoenix - *Joker,* as Arthur Fleck/"Joker"
WHO SHOULD WIN: Joaquin Phoenix - *Joker,* as Arthur Fleck/"Joker"
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Adam Driver - *Marriage Story,* as Charlie Barber

This year's Best Actor race is all about men on the verge of a crisis, panicking about what to do to save their worlds as they know it. I still say Driver gave the clearest, most dedicated performance, showcasing tactics, objectives, and interesting actions to get them as Charlie Barber. But someone else went all out, and it happened to be as one of the most interesting characters in film history.

The last time the Joker was on screen, it posthumously won Heath Ledger an Oscar, and it looks like history will likewise reward Phoenix for, what I'll admit is, daring work, and the highlight of his otherwise very good but not great film.

BEST DIRECTOR

WHO WILL WIN: Sam Mendes - *1917*
WHO SHOULD WIN: Bong Joon-Ho - *Parasite*
WHO I WANT TO WIN: Sam Mendes - *1917*

Here we come to the penultimate contest not just of the night but between Parasite and 1917. This is a race where 1917 has an edge because of the sheer planning and dedicated vision that was needed to pull it off in the first place. Sam Mendes clearly knew how to tell the story, what elements and tangible things he'd need, and he executed that unbelievably complicated vision masterfully. His Oscar is well won here, but it's still a close race.

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BEST PICTURE

WHO WILL WIN: *1917*
WHO SHOULD WIN: *Parasite*
WHO I WANT TO WIN: *Parasite*

Now before you look too deeply into my prediction here, it's worth noting that I've incorrectly guessed the Best Picture winner four years in a row. I have 70-87% accuracy rates in predicting Oscars overall. But especially since preferential voting was introduced, this category is still a doozy to guess.

It doesn't help we have a ferociously tight race for who's going to win this year, and while there's a 1-2% chance of an upset from *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, the race really is down to *Parasite* and *1917*. Of those, *1917* fits much more comfortably in what usually wins.

Parasite, truly, I believe to be the year's Best Picture. But an international film has never won, and if it does (as it rightfully should) it's going to be a monumental achievement to celebrate for years to come - not just because it's Korean, but because it's a totally original thriller, and it did it almost without any politically campaigning to win whatsoever.

The likelier winner is going to be *1917*, and unlike last year when I made a gutsy bet for *Roma* to win, I'm playing it safe and sticking with the mathematical odds. But like last year when *Green Book* actually won (despite me thinking ti had no chance) I would love to be wrong.

Final Thoughts for the Year

Yes, the endings are the impression audiences are going to take in those moments after the leave the theatre. But what kind of impression is movie-going starting to make?

I mentioned in my Top 10 movies this year a commonality of optimism in the end of these stories. There's a growing desire that, even if unresolved, we want there to be hopefulness at what comes after the credits start to roll.

Are movies helping us stay hopeful? I'd argue yes. The cynicism that has plagued art-house cinema for decades is finally starting to be stripped away and the best filmmakers are finding the common ground between attracting an audience to see what they've made (and providing some escapism) while also having something worthy of being said.

The eventual end of how Hollywood is going to change or not is sourced from the financial trends of what people do in entertainment. The money really does talk, and that's a bleak outlook for what business at the multiplex may look like. Are audiences less attentive streaming things at home? Is laziness starting to dictate the buying trends when going to a cinema?

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And how does this art stay accessible and affordable? It's already better value than most books, live music and theatre. I suspect there will soon be an end to the revolution in how people stream and release movies. Either companies are going to learn to get along or people are going to stop paying so much money at home, in theatres, or both.

Four 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'm not sure what the future is holding for how I'll continue doing this, but you can bet my experiment in 2020 is going to be a doozy.

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.

The list of great movies I encourage audiences 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.

I believe it's true that all opportunity comes and goes in the right timing of things. With all endings comes new beginnings - and with that there is a responsibility to control and wisely manage how we begin our new habits and attitudes not just in film but in the social world we are seeing. Movies are a tool we can use both for good and for harm.

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.

And like the Marvel Cinematic Universe, more of the same will still be coming. The endgame really is just a tease until the next surprise comes from around the corner.