Journalism Movies From A to Z

This is a partial list of movies that feature journalism, journalists or values important to journalists, such as the freedom of expression. All are available on DVD.

**Absence of Malice** (1981) drama, PG, 116 minutes. Paul Newman and Sally Field. The adult son of a gangster gets back at the local newspaper after a reporter crosses an ethical line to write an article that damages his reputation.

**Ace in the Hole** (1951) drama, not rated, B&W, 111 minutes. Kirk Douglas and Jan Sterling. Hard-boiled reporter Chuck Tatum finds himself stuck at a small-time newspaper when he gets a chance at a huge story, but only if he tosses his ethics aside.

**All The President’s Men** (1976) drama, PG, 139 minutes. Robert Redford, Dustin Hoffman and Jason Robards. This is the true story of *Washington Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein as they researched and reported on the Watergate scandal that brought down President Richard Nixon and several aides. Robards won an Oscar for best supporting actor.


**Broadcast News** (1987) comedy/romance, R, 132 minutes. William Hurt, Albert Brooks and Holly Hunter. This is a classic movie about television news, the characters behind and in front of the camera and the ethical dilemmas journalists face every day.


**The China Syndrome** (1979) drama, PG, 122 minutes. Jane Fonda, Jack Lemmon and Michael Douglas. A TV reporter and her cameraman investigate the possibility that there is a cover-up of safety hazards at a nuclear power plant.

**Citizen Kane** (1941) drama, not rated, B&W, 119 minutes. Orson Welles and Joseph Cotton. Considered by some movie critics as one of the best movies ever, this film follows the life of newspaper tycoon Charles Foster Kane in a story that mirrors the real-life biography of William Randolph Hearst.
Control Room (2004) documentary, not rated, 86 minutes. This film examines how satellite television has changed war reporting.

Deadline (1987) drama, R, 100 minutes, also titled “Witness in the War Zone.” Christopher Walken. Reporter Don Stevens begins digging deep to find the truth after he is duped into interviewing a fake PLO official.


Foreign Correspondent (1940) thriller, not rated, B&W, 120 minutes. Joel McCrae and Laraine Day. This Alfred Hitchcock film sends an American reporter to London to uncover enemy agents as World War II begins.

The Front Page (1931) comedy, not rated, B&W, 101 minutes. Pat O’Brien and Adolphe Menjou. A newspaper reporter plans to quit journalism and get married, but his editor continues to pull him back into the hectic business by keeping him on a hot story about an escaped prisoner.

The Front Page (1974) comedy, PG, 105 minutes. Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau. This is a remake of the 1931 film in which a newspaper reporter plans to quit journalism and get married, but his editor continues to pull him back into the hectic business by keeping him on a hot story about an escaped prisoner.

Frost/Nixon (2008) drama, R, 123 minutes. Frank Langella and Michael Sheen. After President Richard Nixon resigns in shame, English TV personality David Frost risks a lot of money, and, perhaps his career, to try to get to the truth in a series of interviews with the politically savvy and evasive Nixon.


Gonzo: The Life and Work of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson (2008) documentary, R, 120 minutes. Hunter S. Thompson and Johnny Depp. This film provides a look back at the life and work of Thompson, who popularized gonzo journalism, a form that puts the journalist at the heart of a story.


Infamous (2006) drama, R, 110 minutes. Toby Jones, Sandra Bullock and Daniel Craig. Similar to the story told in “Capote,” this film focuses more on writer Truman Capote’s relationship with two men who murdered a Kansas family.
**The Insider** (1999) drama, R, 158 minutes. Al Pacino, Russell Crowe and Christopher Plummer. In a retelling of a true story, a former tobacco executive becomes a consultant for a *60 Minutes* segment about the tobacco industry, but *60 Minutes* executives find the story too controversial.

**The Killing Fields** (1984) drama, R, 141 minutes. Sam Waterston and Dr. Haing S. Ngor. This is based on the true story of *New York Times* reporter Sydney Schanberg and his relationship with his aide in Cambodia as the Khmer Rouge captured Phnom Penh in 1975 and began a murderous reign that resulted in the death of some three million. In reality, Ngor had endured the Khmer Rouge atrocities, and he won an Oscar for best supporting actor even though he was not a trained actor.

**Live From Baghdad** (2003) drama, not rated, 108 minutes. Michael Keaton and Helena Bonham Carter. In this HBO film based on true events, CNN producer Robert Wiener and producing partner Ingrid Formanek risk their lives to report from Baghdad as a war begins.

**Network** (1976) drama, R, 121 minutes. Faye Dunaway, William Holden, Peter Finch and Robert Duvall. This film, with its iconic line “I’m mad as hell, and I’m not going to take this anymore,” focuses on how far television executives will go for popularity and ratings. Three actors in the film won Oscars: Peter Finch, best actor; Faye Dunaway, best actress; and Beatrice Straight, best supporting actress.

**Nothing But the Truth** (2008) drama, R, 107 minutes. Kate Beckinsale, Matt Dillon, Alan Alda and Vera Farmiga. Inspired by the famous (or infamous) case in which NYT reporter Judith Miller spent time in jail for refusing to reveal a source, this film features Beckinsale as a reporter who – although she works for a major newspaper – seems to know little about media law when she is subpoenaed to appear before a federal grand jury to disclose the name of a source. Famed First Amendment attorney Floyd Abrams plays a significant role as a judge in the film.

**Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch’s War on Journalism** (2004) documentary, not rated, 78 minutes. Rupert Murdoch and Roger Ailes. This is an examination of Fox News Channel’s claim to be “fair and balanced.”

**The Paper** (1994) comedy/drama, R, 112 minutes. Michael Keaton, Glenn Close, Randy Quaid and Robert Duvall. This film focuses on the craziness at a big-city newspaper as a reporter covers a high-profile murder.

**The Pelican Brief** (1993) drama, PG-13, 141 minutes. Denzel Washington and Julia Roberts. A law student and a journalist work together to find out who assassinated two U.S. Supreme Court justices.

**The People vs. Larry Flynt** (1996) drama, R, 130 minutes. Woody Harrelson, Courtney Love and Edward Norton. This bio about Hustler magazine Publisher Larry Flynt includes his famous legal battle with the Rev. Jerry Fallwell. The case demonstrates just how far the First Amendment goes to protect offensive speech.
**Resurrecting the Champ** (2007) drama, PG-13, 112 minutes. Samuel L. Jackson and Josh Hartnett. A sports reporter befriends a homeless man whom he believes to be a former boxing champion.


**Shattered Glass** (2003) drama, PG-13, 94 minutes. Hayden Christensen and Peter Sarsgaard. In this true story, Stephen Glass is a young up-and-comer in the magazine industry until a competing publication begins checking the facts of one of his stories. The fallout threatens the magazine and the reputations of all of its writers.


**State of Play** (2009) drama, PG-13, 127 minutes. Russell Crowe, Rachel McAdams and Ben Affleck. Two Washington newspaper reporters work to solve the mysteries surrounding two deaths that appear to be unrelated.

**Talk Radio** (1988) drama, R, 109 minutes. Eric Bogosian and Alec Baldwin. A Dallas radio talk-show host who likes to shock and enrage his listeners finds out just how dangerous words can be.


**Veronica Guerin** (2003) drama, R, 98 minutes. Cate Blanchett. This is the true story of a woman reporter in 1990s Dublin who won public acclaim as she searched for the truth about some very dangerous people and eventually paid the ultimate price.

**Wag The Dog** (1997) comedy, R, 96 minutes. Dustin Hoffman and Robert DeNiro. Public relations experts use technology and trickery to create a phony war to distract the public from a sex scandal involving the president of the United States.

**War and Truth** (2007) documentary, not rated, 74 minutes. Joe Galloway and Helen Thomas. War correspondents talk about their experiences in the Iraq war and the value of truthful reporting during wartime. It has a lot of graphic images.

**War Photographer** (2001) documentary, not rated, 96 minutes. James Nachtwey. This film follows famous war photographer James Nachtwey as he works. It includes interviews with the soft-spoken Nachtwey and some of his editors.
**Where the Buffalo Roam** (1980) comedy, R, 96 minutes. Bill Murray and Peter Boyle. Based on a Hunter S. Thompson adventure, this film sends a reporter and his crazed attorney friend on the road to cover the Super Bowl and the 1972 presidential election.

**The Wire**, season five (2008) drama, not rated, 630 minutes. Dominic West and Clark Johnson. OK, this is not a movie, but the 10 episodes of this critically acclaimed HBO series reveal the relationships that exist among journalists, politicians and law enforcement.

**The Year of Living Dangerously** (1982) drama/romance, PG, 115 minutes. Mel Gibson, Sigourney Weaver and Linda Hunt. Based in Indonesia in 1965, this film focuses on an Australian reporter as he tries to cover civil unrest. Hunt plays a male photographer in role that won her an Oscar for best supporting actress.

**Zodiac** (2007) drama, R, 157 minutes, Jake Gyllenhaal, Mark Ruffalo and Robert Downey Jr. Based on a true story about the search for a serial killer, this film focuses on a newspaper cartoonist, a reporter and a police detective.