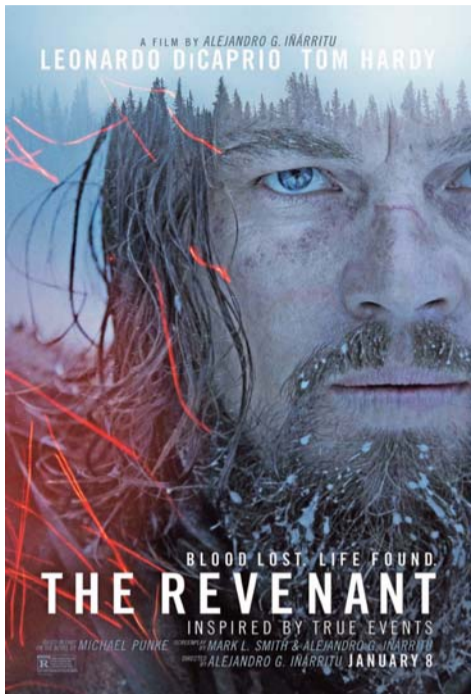


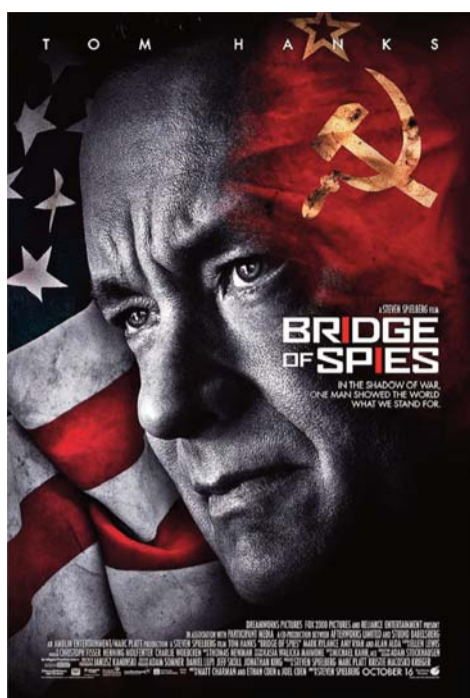
Real to reel: 10 Oscar hopefuls based on true stories

From biopics and historical epics to spy stories and harrowing tales of abduction and abuse, this year's list of Oscar nominees features a bevy of films based on true stories. Some stick faithfully to history, but many play fast and loose with the facts—and others are almost entirely fictionalized. Here are 10 Oscar-nominated films which prove the maxim that real life can sometimes be stranger—or at least more entertaining—than fiction:



The Revenant
Famous as much for the brutal filming conditions and Leonardo DiCaprio's liver-eating antics as its glittering array of pre-Oscar honors, "The Revenant" tells the story of real-life 19th century frontiersman Hugh Glass. Left for dead after a bear attack and grieving his murdered son, he embarks on an epic quest for survival, fueled by a bloodthirsty desire for revenge. The film is up for 12 Oscars, including best actor for DiCaprio, best picture and best director for Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu. Glass was left for dead by his companions in real life, but there's no record that he had a son, and he seems to have been motivated by a desire to get his rifle back and demand an apology, rather than revenge.

Bridge of Spies
Steven Spielberg's espionage thriller is nominated for best picture and five other statuettes, including best supporting actor for Mark Rylance. Set in the Cold War, it tells the story of the 1962 prisoner exchange of American spy plane pilot Francis Gary Powers and graduate student Frederic Pryor for Soviet spy Rudolf Abel. The Washington-based Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum wrote a blog post listing



five myths propagated by the film, including that Powers was tortured. "I didn't expect a documentary, but as someone who is a stickler for historical accuracy and someone especially familiar with this story, the movie was a disappointment," wrote Layne Karafantis, a museum curator.

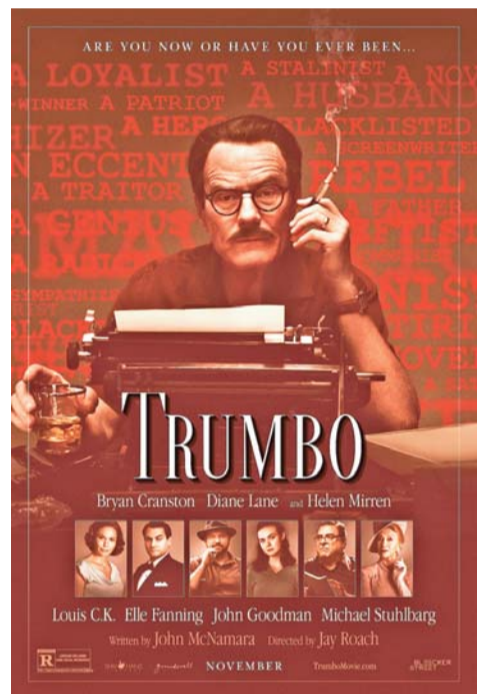
The Big Short
Adam McKay's "The Big Short" is based on Michael Lewis's non-fiction 2010 book of the same name on the 2008 global financial melt-



down. Boasting an all-star cast including Christian Bale, Steve Carell, Ryan Gosling and Brad Pitt, it is nominated for five Oscars, including best picture and best director. Described by The New York Times as a "true crime story and a madcap comedy, a heist movie and a scalding polemic," the film tells the story of Michael Burry, a hedge fund manager who bet against the subprime mortgage market at the heart of the crisis.

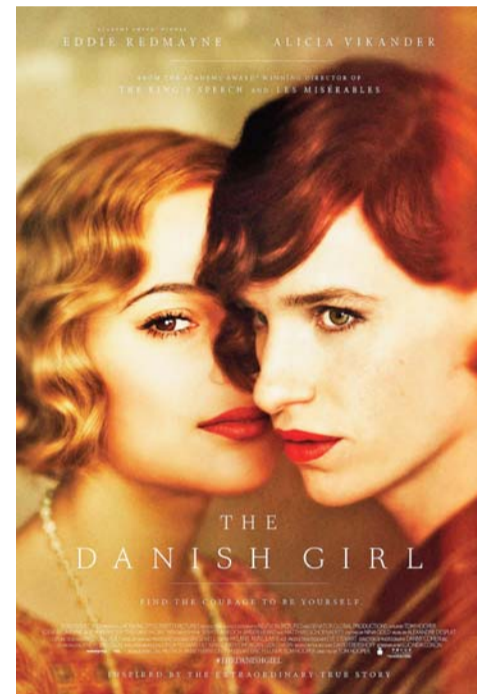
Room
"Room," up for four Oscars including the best actress prize for Brie Larson and Jacob Tremblay, was adapted from Emma Donoghue's novel of the same name, shortlisted for the Booker Prize. The film tells the story of Joy "Ma" Newsome, a young woman and her escape after 10 years in captivity, as told through the eyes of her five-year-old son Jack. While entirely fictional, the story was inspired by the case of Austria's Josef Fritzl, who locked his daughter, Elisabeth, in a basement for 24 years, raped her repeatedly and fathered her seven children.

Spotlight
"Spotlight" depicts the painstaking investigation by The Boston Globe newspaper on how the Catholic Church hushed up the activities of nearly 90 pedophile priests in the northeastern US city in the early 2000s. Nominated for six Oscars and a slew of other prizes, the film is based on a series of stories by the real Spotlight team, who earned the Globe the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service. Journalists Walter Robinson and Mike Rezendes, part of the investigative team, told AFP last month the child abuse scandals plaguing the Catholic Church are only the tip of the iceberg.



Trumbo
"Trumbo" tells the story of screenwriter Dalton Trumbo, who in 1947 was blacklisted along with other artists for refusing to testify before Congress about alleged Communist propaganda in Hollywood films. Bryan Cranston-of "Breaking Bad" fame-is up for an Oscar for his portrayal of Trumbo, but some critics have attacked the film for being historically misleading. Godfrey Cheshire, of the "Roger Ebert's Journal" website, described the biopic as "another of those simplistic, made-to-order films about the Hollywood blacklist in which the blacklisted movie folks are all innocent, in every conceivable way." Cheshire complained that the film incorrectly has the House Committee on Un-American Activities creating the blacklist when in reality it was drawn up and maintained by Hollywood studio chiefs after the committee's hearings.

Steve Jobs
The biopic of Apple's visionary boss, for which Kate Winslet has a best supporting actress nomination, has been hit by numerous claims of inaccuracy. Pixar and Disney Animation Studios president Edwin Catmull told the Hollywood Reporter that Jobs would "be appalled" by the film, arguing that he was much kinder than the character portrayed by nominee Michael Fassbender.

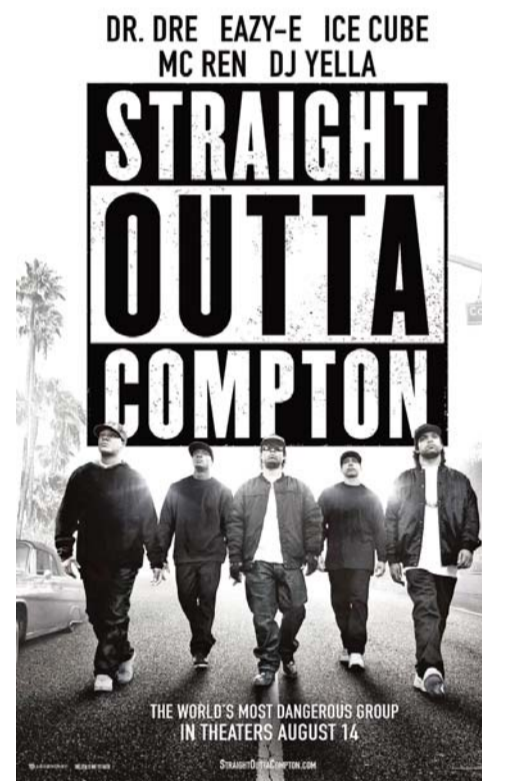


The Danish Girl
"The Danish Girl"—up for four Oscars including best actor for last year's winner Eddie Redmayne—was loosely inspired by the lives of 1920s painters Lili Elbe, one of the first known recipi-

ents of sex reassignment surgery, and her wife Gerda Wegener. The film has been marketed as a "true story," despite containing many of the deliberate historical inaccuracies of the 2000 novel of the same name on which it is based. Some characters and scenes are entirely fictional, and the film distorts the timeline of many of the real-life events in the main characters' lives.

Joy
Comedy drama "Joy" stars Oscar-nominated Jennifer Lawrence as Joy Mangano, a real-life divorced mother-of-three who became a millionaire after inventing the self-wringing Miracle Mop. Mangano is reported to have given director David O. Russell permission to take many liberties with the facts, including giving her a fictional half-sister and two children, rather than three, and making her ex-husband a Venezuelan singer.

Straight Outta Compton
After the biographical drama about Los Angeles-based gangsta rap pioneers NWA was released, MC Ren took to Twitter to complain that his significance in the group had been greatly diminished. The film has also been accused of omitting a number of women who played significant parts in NWA's success and criticized for whitewashing Dr Dre's history of physically abusing women. Dre issued a statement in response apologizing to "the women I've hurt. I deeply regret what I did and know that it has forever impacted all of our lives." — AFP



Harper Lee leaves questions about her life and work

Harper Lee has died, but the conversation about the author's life and work has only begun. "I think the retrospective will be more useful than what was said during her lifetime, because there are a lot of things we can get down to that were impossible before," Lee's friend Wayne Flynt, an Alabama-based historian, told The Associated Press.

Lee's death Friday at age 89 comes almost exactly a year after her publisher, HarperCollins, stunned the world by announcing that a second novel by the author of "To Kill a Mockingbird" would be released, ending what many believed was a permanent and much-desired literary silence.

With Lee confined to a nursing home in her native Monroeville, Alabama, and communicating only through press releases that many wondered if she even knew about the debate about her state of mind and about the second book, "Go Set a Watchman," took off without her. It will likely grow as those close to her finally speak up and more is learned about what, if any, other writings she left behind.

Divisive memories
"Everybody from the newspaper boy to the checkout girl to the local minister will be remembering Harper Lee with fondness or with an ax to grind, depending on how they were treated," said Lee biographer Charles Shields, whose



Harper Lee's two books, "To Kill a Mockingbird," and "Go Set a Watchman" are displayed with a bouquet of tulips in the Monroe County Heritage Museum old courthouse Friday, Feb 19, 2016, in Monroeville. — AP photos

"Mockingbird: A Portrait of Harper Lee" was published in 2006 and will be reissued this year.

Flynt, who delivered the eulogy at Lee's private memorial service Saturday in Monroeville, is among those thinking about a memoir. Lee's retreat from public life over the past half-century created one kind of mystery; last summer's publication of "Go Set a Watchman" started another. Millions who thought they "knew" Atticus Finch, who named their children for him and became

lawyers because of him were faced with a seemingly different man in the new book, which took place 20 years later but actually had been written before Lee turned to what became "To Kill a Mockingbird."

The bold attorney who in the 1930s defended a black man accused of rape in "Mockingbird" had aged into a spiteful reactionary condemning the Supreme Court's 1954 decision to outlaw segregation in public schools. Was the Atticus of



In this Nov 5, 2007 file photo, President Bush, left, presents the Presidential Medal of Freedom to author Harper Lee, center, during a ceremony in the East Room of the White House in Washington.

"Mockingbird" a romanticized figure and the Atticus of "Watchman" closer to the truth? Did Atticus, based closely on Lee's father, really change or was he simply a patrician more comfortable with the old rules, when all the powers belong to whites?

Ralph Eubanks, a former editor of the Virginia Quarterly Review and currently a visiting professor of Southern studies at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, said that the brilliance of

"Mockingbird" was in how it could make anyone from the North or South identify with the issues and with the characters. "For 'Go Set a Watchman,' there was no one you were cheering for," he said. "That for me changed the dynamic."

Great gift
In an email to The Associated Press, award-winning historian Isabel Wilkerson said that Lee had created two equally worthy legacies. "Harper Lee has left us a great gift: a beloved vision of our better selves in 'To Kill a Mockingbird' and a thornier reflection of what lies beneath in her earlier manuscript, 'Go Set a Watchman,'" wrote Wilkerson, best known for "The Warmth of Other Suns," which traced black migration from the South in the 20th century.

"In both, she has bravely given us versions of our country for us to ponder for generations." James McBride, winner of the National Book Award in 2013 for the novel "Good Lord Bird" and author of the upcoming nonfiction "Kill 'em and Leave" about James Brown, said reading "To Kill a Mockingbird" as a child made him want to become a writer and that it "crystallized" for him an awareness of racism that had been "floating around him." Nobel laureate Toni Morrison and others have labeled the book a "white savior" novel, but McBride believes that "Mockingbird" is the best story that Lee could have told. —AP

Kesha loses bid to be freed from contract with top producer

Watching tearfully from a courtroom audience, pop star Kesha lost a bid Friday to be freed from her contract with a top record producer she says drugged, sexually abused and psychologically tormented her.

But the ruling doesn't end the platinum-selling singer's clash with hitmaker Dr. Luke, who denies her claims and says she's smearing him to try to shirk her contract. Friday's decision wasn't the final word on their court fight in New York, to say nothing of related lawsuits in California and Tennessee.

Kesha declined to comment as she left court and hugged some of the scores of fans gathered to support her, many of them dusted with the "Tik Tok" singer's trademark glitter. The dispute is a strikingly personal fight in an industry with a long history of strife between artists and those who work with them.

"I cannot work with this monster," Kesha said in a sworn statement in August that accused Dr. Luke of raping her a decade ago after giving her a pill that knocked her out, browbeating her to lose weight to the point where she didn't eat solid food for eight days, and holding her career hostage because she spoke up. His

abuse led her to develop an eating disorder and suicidal thoughts that prompted two months in a rehabilitation clinic in 2014, her lawyers say.

But Dr. Luke and his attorneys say the singer and her camp are trying to pressure him into letting her out of her contract. "All of their horrific allegations of abuse, threats and other purported misconduct by me against Kesha are completely untrue and deeply hurtful," he said in a sworn statement in December. He has not been charged with any crime, and his lawyer, Christine Lepera, says "he wants his name restored."

Too frightened

Dr. Luke's attorneys note that Kesha herself said he "never made sexual advances at me" during sworn questioning in another lawsuit in 2011. Her lawyers say she was too frightened of him for years to disclose what happened.

Dr. Luke, born Lukasz Gottwald, has produced hits by artists including Katy Perry, Rihanna, Pitbull and Miley Cyrus. Kesha Rose Sebert was an 18-year-old unknown from Nashville when she signed a contract with one of his companies in 2005, according to court

papers. Five years later, "Tik Tok" was the No. 1 song in the country. She's released two albums, most recently in 2012.

Kesha continues to play some shows, but her lawyers say the contract has essentially stalled her career because she can't stand working with her accused rapist. Lawyers for Dr. Luke and Sony Music Entertainment - his partner in Kesha's record label, Kemosabe Records - say she's violating the five-album agreement by not recording. They say she doesn't have to work with him personally, though he has rights to produce at least six songs on each of her albums and could pursue damages if he doesn't.

Kesha's lawyer, Mark Geragos, asked a judge Friday to bar enforcement of the contract while the case plays out. While the companies said they're eager to see Kesha make and sell records, Geragos suggested they wouldn't promote anything Kesha might record without Dr. Luke. Manhattan state Supreme Court Justice Shirley Komreich turned down the request, saying Kesha "is being given the opportunity to record." — AP

Malabar Gold & Diamonds announces 'Chain Festival'

Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the leading jewelry retailer announced the details of its exclusive & unique campaign- 'Chain Festival' in Kuwait showcasing an extensive collection of chains. The festival runs from 18 Feb until 12 March 2016 at their outlets in Al Rai, Dajeej, Fahaheel and Watya.

The chain festival showcasing different designs of chains to suit the personal style, occasion and budget of their customers. The customers get a chance to witness and own the rarest and finest collection from India, Turkey, Italy, Malaysia, Singapore and UAE, ranging from lightweight daily wear to heavy party wear in traditional as well as contemporary designs.

Customers can also browse through the new jewelry assortment added in to the most admired exclusive brands in the jewelry segment that includes Ethnix - Handcrafted Designer Jewelry, Era - Uncut Diamond Jewelry, Mine - Diamonds Unlimited, Divine- Indian Heritage Jewelry, Precia - Precious Gem Jewelry and Starlet - Kids Jewelry.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds has always differentiated itself from other jewelry retailers by offering customer friendly policies which are unique like exchange policies and free lifetime maintenance service. Their convenient gold exchange schemes ensure quality service and customer satisfaction.

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