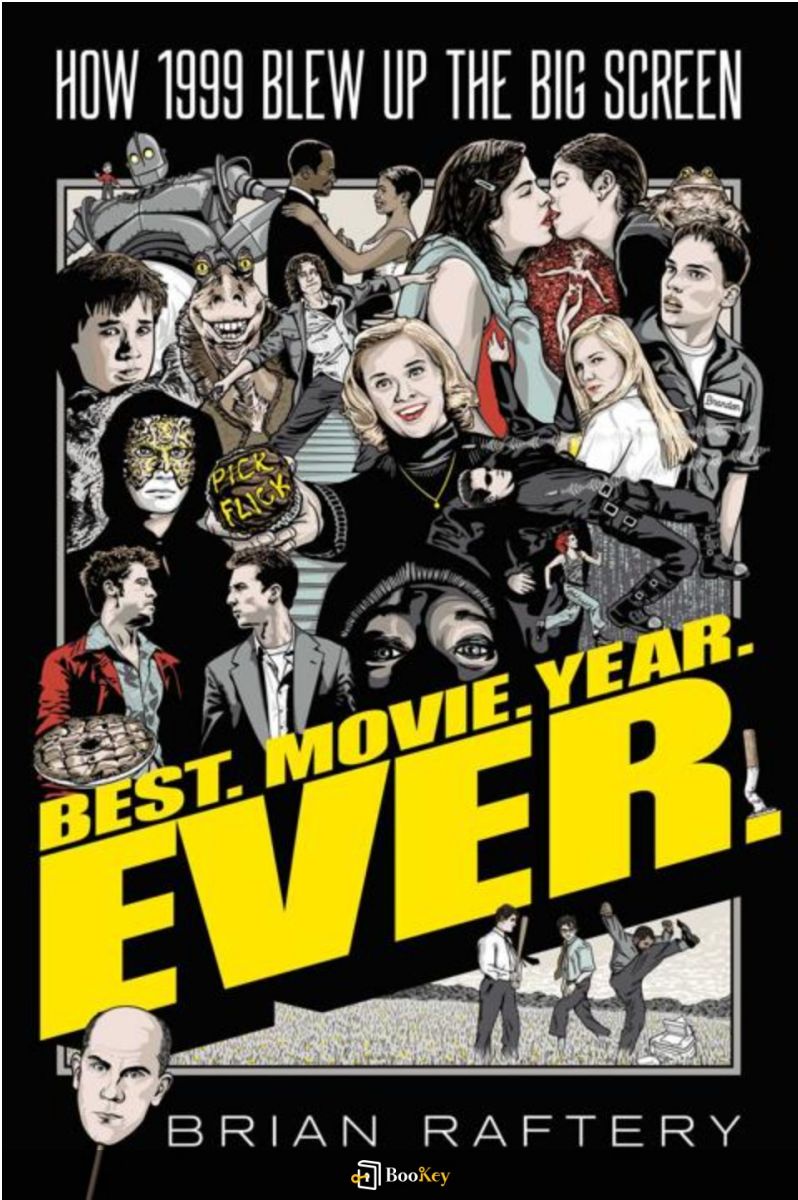


# Best. Movie. Year. Ever. PDF

Brian Raftery



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# About the book

Exploring Cinematic Brilliance: A Look at 1999

In Brian Raftery's engaging book, "Best. Movie. Year. Ever.," readers embark on an exhilarating exploration of the pivotal year 1999, a transformative period in film history. This year witnessed a burst of creativity that reshaped modern cinema and introduced innovative storytelling techniques.

Raftery's passion is evident as he navigates the cultural atmosphere and the creative processes that brought to life iconic films such as "The Matrix," "Fight Club," and "The Blair Witch Project." Through detailed anecdotes and sharp analysis, he reveals how this single year became a powerhouse of cinematic genius, producing timeless works that continue to influence filmmakers and captivate audiences.

Join Raftery as he celebrates the remarkable artistic feats of 1999 and examines their lasting legacy, inviting readers to rediscover a year that changed the course of film forever and to grasp why the brilliance of that era still resonates in today's movies.

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# About the author

Profile: Brian Raftery - Cultural Commentator and Journalist

## Overview:

Brian Raftery is a prominent figure in the world of journalism, particularly within the realms of entertainment and pop culture analysis. With over 20 years of experience, Raftery has built a notable career contributing to prestigious outlets like Wired, GQ, and Rolling Stone.

## Expertise:

Raftery's work is characterized by a distinctive blend of personal anecdotes and wider cultural contexts. This unique approach enables him to provide readers with deep insights into the media landscape, elucidating the complexities and influences of various cultural phenomena.

## Passion & Influence:

His fervor for film and storytelling shines through in his writing, positioning him as an authoritative voice in discussions surrounding cinematic history and its implications on society. Through his insightful commentary, he continues to shape the understanding of entertainment and culture in contemporary discourse.

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# Best. Movie. Year. Ever. Summary

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# Best. Movie. Year. Ever. Summary Chapter List

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# 1. An Introduction to an Unforgettable Year in Film

The year 1999 stands out as a watershed moment in cinematic history, a time when the film industry experienced a confluence of creativity and ambition that would leave an indelible mark on the art of filmmaking. As Brian Raftery discusses in "Best. Movie. Year. Ever.", 1999 was not merely another year in a long line of productions; it was a defining landscape brimming with innovation, cultural relevance, and genre-defining masterpieces.

At the heart of this remarkable year were films that not only captivated audiences but also challenged prevailing narratives and redefined cinematic conventions. Movies like "The Matrix", "Fight Club", and "The Sixth Sense" introduced groundbreaking storytelling techniques, iconic visual styles, and psychological depth that resonated with viewers and critics alike. These films dared to explore complex themes such as identity, reality, and the influence of consumer culture, engaging audiences in ways that had not been seen before.

Furthermore, this era marked the convergence of various cultural movements and technologies that enhanced the cinematic experience. The dawn of the internet began to change how movies were marketed and consumed, with fans able to discuss, dissect, and speculate online in ways that hadn't been

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possible previously. This shift not only increased the visibility of films but also initiated a rich dialogue about their implications and meanings.

The directors of this period played a pivotal role in this cultural impact.

Visionaries like David Fincher, the Wachowskis, and M. Night Shyamalan were at the forefront, utilizing their craft to push artistic boundaries.

Fincher's "Fight Club", for example, tackled themes of nihilism and identity crisis in a consumer-driven world while employing a gritty, stylized visual approach that has since become a hallmark of his work. The Wachowskis' "The Matrix" merged philosophical concepts with action-packed sequences, creating a thought-provoking narrative that still inspires discussions about reality and technology today.

Notable too was the manner in which 1999 films drew inspiration from diverse sources, amalgamating genres and defying categorization. For instance, "Being John Malkovich" spun a surreal tale blending comedy, drama, and meta-commentary that delighted audiences while leaving them pondering its deeper implications about fame and identity. Similarly, "Notting Hill" and "10 Things I Hate About You" redefined romantic comedy, showcasing deeper emotional narratives and richer character development that contrasted sharply with more traditional, formulaic romances.

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Conversely, while numerous films made significant cultural and artistic impacts, not all showcased commercial success at the box office. Big-budget films like "Wild Wild West" struggled to find their footing amidst the cultural zeitgeist that marked 1999, providing a stark reminder that even the most anticipated projects could stumble in delivering on audience expectations. This mix of financial highs and lows set the stage for a complex and multi-faceted film industry that was no longer simply defined by blockbuster hits.

In summary, 1999 was a year ripe with creativity, experimentation, and cultural significance, fundamentally altering the trajectory of filmmaking. The blend of audacious films, visionary directors, and evolving audience dynamics paved the way for a legacy that's still felt today, serving as both a celebration of creativity and a reflection of societal shifts that resonate deeply in modern cinema.

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## 2. Exploring the Cultural Impact of Groundbreaking 1999 Films

The year 1999 marked a monumental turning point in the landscape of cinema, represented by a wave of films that not only entertained but also profoundly influenced cultural narratives and societal discussions. Among the year's releases were pieces that pushed boundaries and explored complex themes of identity, existence, technology, and the human experience. Movies such as "The Matrix," "Fight Club," and "American Beauty" emerged as cultural phenomena, reflecting the zeitgeist of the late 1990s and laying the groundwork for cinematic storytelling in the decades to follow.

"The Matrix," directed by the Wachowski siblings, introduced audiences to a mind-bending narrative that merged philosophy with science fiction. It posed essential questions about reality versus illusion, using groundbreaking visual effects, notably the iconic bullet time technique, which significantly changed action filmmaking. The film sparked widespread discussions about technology's role in society, consciousness, and the nature of reality. The phrase "red pill" entered popular lexicon, symbolizing the choice between confronting uncomfortable truths and remaining in blissful ignorance. The Matrix effectively became a lens through which many viewed the rise of the digital age, foreshadowing the influence of virtual realities and the internet culture that would follow in the new millennium.



Similarly, "Fight Club," directed by David Fincher, was another groundbreaking film that explored themes of masculinity, consumerism, and the search for identity in a post-modern society. Based on Chuck Palahniuk's novel, it boldly critiqued a corporate-driven culture and the superficiality of modern life. The film's portrayal of an underground fight club as a means for men to reclaim their lost masculinity resonated deeply with a generation disillusioned by consumerist ideals. The phrase "The first rule of Fight Club is: You do not talk about Fight Club" became a cultural touchstone, symbolizing both rebellion and the struggle for self-definition in an increasingly homogenized world. The polarizing nature of the film ignited conversations surrounding mental health, personal agency, and societal norms, reflecting the era's existential uncertainties.

"American Beauty," directed by Sam Mendes, offered a poignant exploration of suburban life, delving into themes of beauty, desire, and the American Dream. Its narrative centered on a mid-life crisis that dismantled the façade of perfection in suburban America, illuminating the discontent that lay beneath. The film's critical portrayal of a seemingly idyllic family life and its inspection of repressed desires led to significant discussions around mental health, domesticity, and the lingering pursuit of happiness. The film not only garnered critical acclaim but also served to highlight the underlying tensions in suburban America, resonating with audiences who felt trapped in the same existential malaise.

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Furthermore, the cultural impact of these films was not limited to their narratives. The innovation in storytelling, character development, and cinematic techniques reshaped the expectations audiences had for films. They paved the way for narratives that embraced complexity and ambiguity, encouraging a generation of filmmakers to explore deeper themes and to venture into unconventional storytelling. These films reaffirmed the importance of cinema as a reflective medium capable of influencing and capturing the shifts in society.

In addition to changing the artistic approach to cinema, these films influenced wider pop culture in ways that are still evident today. Fashion, language, and film references have been shaped by these groundbreaking works. The aesthetics associated with "The Matrix" have infiltrated various facets of visual culture, from music videos to fashion, sparking a prolonged fascination with cyberpunk and dystopian narratives.

In conclusion, the films of 1999 transcended mere entertainment to become significant cultural artifacts that sparked critical discourse regarding identity, reality, and societal norms. They compelled audiences to question their perceptions and navigate through increasingly complex emotional landscapes, forming a crucial cornerstone in the evolution of modern cinema and its indelible impact on culture.

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### 3. The Directors Who Redefined Cinema in 1999

The year 1999 stands out as a remarkable point in film history, characterized by the emergence of visionary directors who would not only redefine their craft but also influence the trajectory of cinema for decades to come. This year heralded a multitude of iconic films that challenged traditional storytelling, embraced innovative technologies, and reflected the complexities of contemporary life. The directors behind these films displayed a distinct flair for creativity, allowing them to push the boundaries of filmmaking.

One of the most significant figures of 1999 was David Fincher, who released the cult classic "Fight Club." This film, based on Chuck Palahniuk's novel, explored themes of identity, consumerism, and masculinity through a lens of dark satire and psychological complexity. Fincher's meticulous attention to detail and his willingness to delve into the darker aspects of human nature marked a shift in the understanding of how such themes could be portrayed on screen. The film's non-linear narrative structure and its final twist left audiences reeling, ultimately cementing its status as a classic and influencing countless films that followed.

Also noteworthy was the work of the Wachowski siblings, whose groundbreaking film "The Matrix" revolutionized the action genre and





special effects. By merging complex philosophical ideas with breathtaking visuals and innovative slow-motion techniques, the film offered a fresh take on the dystopian future and reality itself. The use of bullet time—a groundbreaking special effect—allowed audiences to witness action sequences in a whole new way, setting a new standard for the genre and influencing a slew of subsequent films, including sequels and superhero blockbusters.

Another vital contributor to the cinematic landscape of 1999 was M. Night Shyamalan, with the psychological thriller "The Sixth Sense." Shyamalan's ability to blend supernatural elements with profound emotional depth intrigued audiences and paved the way for a new wave of filmmakers interested in the horror genre. The film's famous twist ending not only kept viewers guessing throughout but also inspired filmmakers to experiment more with surprise conclusions that could leave lasting impressions. His work in 1999 exemplified how to craft a story that ultimately resonated on both an emotional and cerebral level, ultimately reigniting interest in the horror genre amid a slew of CGI-heavy thrillers.

The Coen Brothers, known for their distinctive style and sharp wit, released the critically acclaimed "The Big Lebowski" in 1998, but its cultural impact continued to rise in 1999. The film's unique blend of quirky characters and absurdist humor created a cult following that influenced the indie film scene



and showcased how narrative nonconformity could be embraced in mainstream cinema. Their eccentric characters and offbeat storytelling served as a template for future filmmakers who sought to tell unconventional tales that resonated with audiences seeking authenticity over formulaic plots.

In animated cinema, directors such as Brad Bird with "The Iron Giant" challenged the status quo by blending action, adventure, and deep emotional resonance aimed at both children and adults. This film represented a shift in how animated features could address heavy themes like friendship, loss, and heroism, setting a foundation for future animated films that aimed for narrative depth rather than mere entertainment.

All these directors shared a common thread: they dared to take risks, whether through innovative storytelling, complex character development, or the incorporation of technology that fundamentally changed how narratives could be constructed and received. Their contributions did not merely make 1999 memorable; they set a precedent that would encourage a new generation of filmmakers to explore deeper, darker, and more complex narratives in their works.

Overall, the directors of 1999 not only redefined the cinematic landscape of their time but also laid the groundwork for future innovations and influences that would resonate through the 21st century. Their artistry, willingness to

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take creative risks, and thoughtful engagement with contemporary issues forever altered our relationship with film, making 1999 a landmark year in cinema history.

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## 4. Box Office Hits and Misses: The Financial Landscape

The year 1999 proved to be a pivotal moment in cinema, not just because of the groundbreaking films that emerged, but also due to the profound shifts in the financial landscape that surrounded these movies. It was a year defined by dramatic box office successes and notable failures, leading to a reevaluation of what audiences sought in film.

Among the major box office hits was "Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace", which reignited the Star Wars franchise after a 16-year hiatus. The film grossed over \$924 million worldwide, making it the highest-grossing film of the year. Its release was backed by a fervent fanbase, extensive merchandise campaigns, and a carefully orchestrated marketing blitz that attracted viewers of all ages. The financial success of "The Phantom Menace" highlighted the power of established franchises and their ability to generate massive revenue through both box office sales and ancillary products like toys and collectibles.

However, the year was not devoid of misses. "Wild Wild West" is a striking example. Despite featuring big-name actors like Will Smith and Kevin Kline, it grossed only \$222 million against a production budget of \$170 million. The film became a cautionary tale of relying too heavily on star power and special effects without a solid script or clear direction. It



showcased that while a famous duo could draw in an audience, the quality of storytelling was paramount to success.

Another blockbuster hit was "The Matrix", which managed to combine innovative special effects with a compelling science fiction narrative, grossing over \$463 million worldwide. Its success was indicative of a demographic shift within the film audience, one that tended to favor high-concept narratives woven with philosophical inquiries about technology and reality. Such themes resonated deeply with the tech-savvy culture of the late 1990s, suggesting that films that could tap into the zeitgeist stood a better chance at the box office.

Conversely, "The Man on the Moon", a biographical film about comedian Andy Kaufman, struggled at the box office, taking in only \$47 million against a budget of \$82 million. It illustrated the risks inherent in biopics, particularly those steeped in unconventional storytelling and artistic vision. Despite great performances, financial return remained elusive, prompting investors to reconsider which types of stories would attract audiences, especially in a year dominated by more commercial and action-oriented films.

The box office landscape of 1999 also revealed trends about the evolving nature of audience expectations. It was the year when teen-centric films like

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"10 Things I Hate About You" emerged, emphasizing the importance of targeting specific demographics. This film's balance of humor and romance achieved considerable success, proving there was a significant market for light-hearted, youthful narratives. On the other hand, the art house scene made a slight mark with films like "The Blair Witch Project", which gained notoriety due to an unconventional marketing strategy that created a viral buzz, grossing nearly \$250 million on a budget of just \$60,000, showcasing the power of grassroots promotion in the digital age.

Ultimately, the financial landscape of 1999 was characterized by a combination of spectacular successes and notable flops. Hits showcased the viability of franchise films while also stressing the importance of infectious originality and good storytelling, while misses served as reminders of the hard truths of market expectations and shifting societal trends. This year would become a bridge for understanding the changing industry standards, setting a precedent for how films would be marketed and produced in the years to follow.

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## 5. Conclusion: Lasting Legacies of the Films of 1999

The films of 1999 left an indelible mark on cinema that continues to resonate today, shaping not only the landscape of modern filmmaking but also influencing popular culture, societal narratives, and the very way stories are told on screen. Several key movies from that year have established legacies that go beyond entertainment, embedding themselves in the cultural zeitgeist and setting the stage for future generations of filmmakers and audiences alike.

One of the most significant impacts of 1999's films can be seen in the genre of science fiction and action, with "The Matrix" emerging as a groundbreaking title that pushed the boundaries of visual effects and narrative structure. The film's innovative use of bullet time and its philosophical underpinnings concerning reality and perception changed how films could engage with complex themes. Its influence is palpable in countless subsequent projects, inspiring filmmakers to take risks with visual storytelling that venture into the surreal or abstract, while also encouraging deeper explorations of identity and consciousness, as seen in works like "Inception" and the continued evolution of the superhero genre.

Additionally, "Fight Club" introduced audiences to themes of anti-consumerism and identity crisis, capturing the disillusionment of a



generation. With its unorthodox narrative style and cult-like following, it challenged conventional storytelling by embracing unreliable narration and shocking plot twists. The film's exploration of masculinity, capitalism, and societal norms continues to spark discussion and debate. This has resulted in a renewed interest in dark, anti-hero narratives, influencing everything from television series to independent films.

Moreover, the romantic comedy genre was redefined with "Notting Hill" and "10 Things I Hate About You", which not only brought charm and wit but also presented fresh and relatable characters who resonated with a diverse audience. These films revitalized interest in romantic storytelling, leading to a wave of similarly styled films throughout the early 2000s, and emphasizing the importance of chemistry and authenticity in on-screen relationships. The cultural staples introduced in these films, such as character archetypes and plot devices, are still prevalent in contemporary romantic comedies, showing how 1999 set a template for future projects.

In the realm of horror and suspense, "The Sixth Sense" redefined narrative expectations by incorporating twists that became a hallmark of modern thrillers. Its subtleties and deep emotional undertones served to elevate the genre, demonstrating that horror could go beyond jump scares to explore profound human experiences. This legacy has informed contemporary horror films like "Get Out" and "Hereditary", which combine social commentary

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with psychological depth, pushing audiences to engage with the material on multiple levels.

The intersection of these films also showcased a burgeoning willingness to embrace diversity, with stories that reflected a broader range of experiences and identities. For instance, "Boys Don't Cry" and "Simply Irresistible" tackled issues of gender identity and representation, prompting a more nuanced dialogue around sexuality and acceptance that has grown in urgency over the years.

Ultimately, the films of 1999 not only captured the spirit of their time but also forged pathways to new storytelling techniques, narrative complexities, and thematic explorations. As we reflect on the cinematic achievements of that year, it is evident that the cinematic innovations and cultural dialogues initiated by these films have proven to be a lasting legacy—one that continues to inspire and challenge filmmakers and audiences around the world. The echoes of 1999's influential works are still felt today, as they remind us of the power of cinema not just to entertain but to provoke thought, mirror society, and foster collective conversations that transcend time.

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  - Know yourself.
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    - Our lives are shaped by temperament
    - Personal development demands loneliness and solitude
- Key Insight 2**
  - Have a good grasp of the subject-object relationship.
    - Riches are like seawater; what suit us is the most important