This is my year in review. I would like to think 2015 was a great year in movies but that just isn’t so. The year had it’s ups and downs like all years do but this year something felt off. I think it was the endless output of remakes, sequels, prequels and all that. I know everyone complains about it but fuck, I just want some originality. I still haven’t seen a lot of stuff from 2015 so if I left anything off please let me know.

BEST:

*Ex Machina* –A tense, atmospheric film complemented by amazing visuals and great acting, “Ex Machina” was the first truly great film of 2015.  
  
*The Revenant* –Intense and thrilling with the cinematography and acting to match, “The Revenant” was a strong way to end my film-watching year.

*The Big Short* –Funny yet challenging, breezy yet complicated, “The Big Short” was a very nice treat and a very different movie than what usually gets churned out.

*Slow West-* This film was recommended to me on the Internet. Not usually a huge fan of westerns, but “Slow West” was exactly that, slow. Even at its brief running time, the movie felt slowed down and meaningful. Even the climatic action scene was filled with symbolism and heart.

*What We Do in the Shadows*- A guy I follow from the Alamo Drafthouse was raving about this film for months, but being in Alabama, I had to wait for it to hit video. It was well worth the wait. Horror comedies are, in my opinion, one of the biggest hit or miss genres: either wildly immature or amazingly witty. This one falls in the latter category and was a “howling” good time (I’m sorry).

*It follows*- Now this might just be my horror bias, but I adored “It Follows.” Slow, tense, scary, always building its atmosphere and dread- couple that with a BUMPIN’ ass soundtrack, and you have throwback greatness. Don’t listen to people saying it’s too slow; they probably loved “The Evil Dead” remake.

*Steve Jobs*- Might be my movie of the year. Sorkin writes such quality dialogue and scene setup. With Fassbender dealing what is in my opinion a best actor Oscar-winning performance, this movie seals the deal. It also has my favorite scene of 2015 in it.

*Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*- Another movie I had to wait to see. I was initially sketchy on its premise, which has been done a few times even recently (*The Fault in Our Stars, 50/50*). “Me and Earl and the Dying Girl” felt like Wes Anderson’s take on this worn out premise, yet it was better than anything Anderson has put out in years.

*The End of the Tour*- Wow. I was amazed by how much I loved this movie. What is basically two guys talking for two hours turned out to be absolutely amazing. The comfy, icy atmosphere, the acting, examination of so many things, “The End of the Tour” offers a refreshing and challenging view of a man that was hard to understand.

*The Hateful Eight*- A slow burning exercise in how to build tension, “The Hateful Eight” puts us in room with eight terrible people trapped in a harsh blizzard and lets everything unfold before us. Violent, funny and Tarintino’s best in years.

WORST  
  
*Paper Towns*- Oh, wow. Absolutely god awful, and I somewhat enjoyed “The Fault in Our Stars.” Cringe characters. Cringe Dialogue. Cringe pokemon singing scene. No, I’m not kidding.

*Dragonball Z: Resurrection F-* Now this was the worst movie I watched last year, and that’s saying a lot. “Battle of the Gods” was so good and a welcome return to the Z cast. This? This was just a shameful cash-in. No tension, no threats- just plan boring and a waste of time.

*Hot Tub Time Machine 2*- As someone who really enjoyed the first “Hot Tub,” this movie was fucking ridiculously bad. I think I might have laughed once, maybe twice. I remember checking my phone every ten minutes and just praying the movie would end soon. I didn’t care which one.

*Jupiter Ascending*- Everyone has already shit on it, so I’ll just say this: Cool character designs completely wasted in a jumbled, generic mess.

*Sinister 2*- Well, I guess this one is just like the first two. I really loved the first “Sinister” as a genuinely creepy and unsettling, somewhat original movie. This was just an exercise in stupidity and clichés. Hollywood take note: creepy kids should be left in ’05.

Biggest surprise:

*Ant-Man*- Expected a standard Marvel movie, got it but with a HUGE flavor of cheesy 50-60’s B-movie tropes. It was just plain fun.

*The Night Before*- I like everyone involved with this movie. The trailer didn’t look very good, but I still decided to give it the bros night out treatment. Was surprised by the depth of the characters even in a raunchy bro-comedy.

*The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*- I don’t know if you can tell by now, but I have a love for campy modern movies. This one is no different. Somehow this turned out a better Bond movie than “Specter” was.

Most disappointing:  
  
*Chappie*- Let me paint a small picture: it’s March 2015, and we all know January and February are where studios dump their hopeless projects, so nothing good has come out in two months. Here comes “Chappie” directed by Neil Blomkamp (District 9). I was excited, so I went and watched it even though it had so-so reviews. As I watched, I was wondering why it was shit on? It was p good, p good. Then the last 20 minutes happen and now it has a new home as my top disappointment of the year

*Mad Max: Fury road*- Critics loved it. Praised it up and down. Sucked on its dick. Maybe I’m just an uncultured plebe, but why? It was just non-stop action with very little plot. Why was this praised when “Transformers” is constantly lambasted? They’re both the same. Skeleton stories with two hours of non-stop action. Save your explosions, I’ll take characters.

*Southpaw-* Same as “Chappie”: thought it would be great, turned out to be shit. Except this time, it wasn’t just the third act. It was all three acts. Jake rarely does wrong, and his performance wasn’t the problem here. The problem lay within the scripts: generic, trope filled, seen it a hundred times storyline and dialogue.

*Green Inferno*- A friend and I waited three years for this movie. Sure, Roth isn’t a “good director,” but he generally does horror alright, so she and I waited as it got pushed back and eventually landed into release limbo. It was hyped “muh blood, muh shock,” and then it came out. I still remember the night I saw it. Ravens vs. Steelers, Thursday October 1st. The Ravens were 0-3 and losing this game. Me and my friend met up and watched this, excited. It fucking blew. It literally had a scene where the smoke the village out because “LOL XD POT SO FUNNAY!!” The dialogue made me roll my eyes every ten seconds. Jesus, I don’t know what we expected. At least the gore was good. Bravo Eli, Bra-fucking-vo.

*Krampus-* Doughery’s “Trick ‘r Treat” is great way to spend a Halloween night, so I was hoping “Krampus” would be a great way to spend a Christmas night. Then I saw the kiss of death for a horror movie: the all too infamous PG-13. The movie could not find a tone. Was it a comedy? Scary? It just didn’t know. Most of the comedy didn’t work, and only some of the scary aspects did. Great potential wasted.

*Trainwreck*- Apparently all it takes for a woman to be funny is “le crude sex joke.” Dialogue that would be “sexist” or “immature” in a male lead comedy is praised here. It wouldn’t be funny if a guy said it, and it isn’t funny here.

*Star Wars: The Force Awakens*- How to make a billion dollars and be praised worldwide: Find a script from an earlier movie in the series, copy it beat by beat, but change some names. That’s it.

Fuck you I enjoyed it:

*We Are Your Friends*- I have no reason and I’m not going to explain myself. Maybe it just hit me when I needed “le motivation,” but for some reason I liked it.

*Scouts Guide to the Zombie Apocalypse*- Once again, I think this is just my weakness for horror movies talking. I didn’t expect much, and it didn’t offer much except a good damn time.

*American Ultra*- There might be a great movie here, and some of the scenes are even touching, but writer Max Landis squanders any emotional value with some truly epic “DA WEED LOL” humor. What we are left with is some surprisingly good action scenes and the potential of a good movie left wasted.

*Knock Knock*- Maybe it was just the lowered standards after watching “Green Inferno,” but I enjoyed how cruel “Knock Knock” was. The acting ranged from terrible to annoying, and some of the plot actions made zero sense, yet I still left thinking “It was bad, but fuck it I liked it.”