5) Spotlight (2015):

On January 6, 2002, Boston Globe subscribers picked up their local paper and saw the front page headline: "Church Allowed Abuse by Priest for Years." The story, written by Michael Rezendes, a reporter on the investigative "Spotlight" team, was massive, in word-count and impact, but it was just the beginning. Two more Spotlight stories on the same topic ran that day, with more to follow. The uproar from the Spotlight stories (The Boston Phoenix, an alternative weekly, had covered church sexual abuse but it didn't have the circulation of the Globe) was so sustained that by December 2002, Cardinal Bernard Law, the Archbishop of Boston, stepped down in disgrace, saying in a statement, "To all those who have suffered from my shortcomings and mistakes I both apologize and from them beg forgiveness." (Pope John Paul II gave him a position in Rome, where Law remains to this day.) The Spotlight team won a Pulitzer Prize in 2003 for their reporting. These events are familiar to everyone by now, but those first Spotlight stories are painfully familiar to Boston Catholics (my family is Boston Irish-Catholic), and it was the first news story to dominate everyone's conversations since September 11th only a few months prior

Tom McCarthy's superb "Spotlight," co-written by McCarthy and [Josh Singer (Links to an external site.)](https://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/josh-singer), is the story of that investigation. "Spotlight" is a great newspaper movie of the old-school model, calling up not only obvious comparisons with "[All the President's Men (Links to an external site.)](https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/all-the-presidents-men-1976)" and "[Zodiac (Links to an external site.)](https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/zodiac-2007)," two movies with similar devotion to the sometimes crushingly boring gumshoe part of reportage, but also [Cary Grant (Links to an external site.)](https://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/cary-grant) and [Rosalind Russell (Links to an external site.)](https://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/rosalind-russell) shouting into adjacent phones in "His Girl Friday." At a late moment in "Spotlight," there's an image of the presses printing off the edition that carries the church abuse story. Such a scene is so de rigueur in newspaper movies that it borders on cliche, but in "Spotlight" it is a moment of intense emotion. The truth in that edition, the evil it describes, will be a wound in the psyche of millions, but it must come out.

The Spotlight team is editor Walter "Robby" Robinson ([Michael Keaton (Links to an external site.)](https://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/michael-keaton)), and three reporters, Michael Rezendes ([Mark Ruffalo (Links to an external site.)](https://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/mark-ruffalo)), Sacha Pfeiffer ([Rachel McAdams (Links to an external site.)](https://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/rachel-mcadams)), and Matty Carroll (Brian d'Arcy James). [John Slattery (Links to an external site.)](https://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/john-slattery) plays Globe managing deputy editor Ben Bradlee Jr.. All of the reporters are locals, and everyone has some connection to the Catholic Church (referred to as only "The Church"). When a new editor, Marty Baron ([Liev Schreiber (Links to an external site.)](https://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/liev-schreiber" \t "_blank)), comes on board, he is perceived as an outsider because he's not from Boston at all (he is first seen boning up on the city by devouring "The Curse of the Bambino.") In an initial meeting with Robby, Baron brings up a recent piece by a Globe columnist about the Boston archdiocese's potentially shady handling of various abuse cases. Baron suggests the story could be perfect for the Spotlight team.