HIS GIRL FRIDAY (1940)
Dir. Howard Hawks.
My personal favorite. Watch Cary Grant and Rosalind Russell at the top of their games in a romp through Chicago journalism of the 1920s. HGF features an epically dense screenplay, as the two leads constantly talk over each other. One memorable zinger after another. From the play, “The Front Page,” written by journalists Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur.

CITIZEN KANE (1941)
The cinematic masterpiece from Orson Welles, who wrote, directed and starred. It’s a thinly veiled biography of William Randolph Hearst, who hated it and did all he could (which was a lot) to try to suppress it. Welles gets the last laugh. Screenplay co-credit goes to Herman J. Mankiewicz.

WOMAN OF THE YEAR (1942)
The first of the nine Hepburn/Tracy films. Two rival reporters meet cute, and trouble ensues. Kate Hepburn plays a version of the real-life columnist Dorothy Thompson. Spencer Tracy wishes his globe-trotting, multi-lingual wife were home a bit more often. Ring Lardner Jr. shares screenwriting credit.
GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT (1947)
Gregory Peck plays a journalist who decides to investigate anti-semitism by pretending to be Jewish himself. Peck at his righteous best.
Screenplay by Moss Hart, based on novel by Laura Z. Hobson.

SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS (1957)
Burt Lancaster portrays gossip columnist Walter Winchell. Tony Curtis plays an oily, sycophantic p.r. agent. A noir masterpiece that explores the careers of people who don't know how not to manipulate others.
One of the screenwriting credits goes to playwright Clifford Odets.

ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN (1976)
The essential celebration of investigative reporting, starring Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman as Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein. The film dramatizes the real-life reporting of the Washington Post reporters that led to the downfall of President Nixon.
Screenwriter William Goldman wrote the best line, uttered by Hal Holbrook, playing “Deep Throat” in a dark and empty parking garage: “Follow the money.”

NETWORK (1976)
Dir: Sidney Lumet
Starring: Faye Dunaway and William Holden. Featuring Peter Finch for his memorable freak-out live on television, urging viewers to join him in shouting: “I’m mad as hell and I’m not going to take it anymore!”
Writer: Paddy Chayefsky

BROADCAST NEWS (1987)
Dir. James L. Brooks.
A romantic triangle involving William Hurt, Albert Brooks, and their boss, the incomparable Holly Hunter. Set in a television newsroom, the main characters manage to address real journalistic issues without preachy speeches.
Written by James L. Brooks, no relation to Albert. (who also wrote the newsroom-based TV shows Mary Tyler Moore and Lou Grant).

WAG THE DOG (1997)
Dir. Barry Levinson
An acidic satire of Washington’s manipulation of the mass media. Starring Robert DeNiro as a political operative who enlists a Hollywood producer (Dustin Hoffman) to gin up a photogenic war to divert public attention from scandal. Hoffman envisions war as “a pageant.” From the book by Larry Beinhart.
**FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS** (1998)
Dir.: Terry Gilliam.
Benicio del Toro plays Dr. Gonzo himself. In a masterpiece of understatement, IMDb tries to get its arms around this film this way: “An oddball journalist and his psychopathic lawyer travel to Las Vegas for a series of psychedelic escapades.” That about sums it up.
From the book by HST.

**THE INSIDER** (1999)
Starring Russell Crowe and Al Pacino.
Based on CBS investigation into Big Tobacco. Crowe plays a chemist-turned-whistleblower, and Pacino plays TV producer Lowell Bergman as a blow-hard.
Christopher Plummer portrays a TV reporter based on Mike Wallace of CBS’s “60 Minutes” – who did not appreciate the insinuation that he pulled punches.
Based on Marie Brenner’s article in *Vanity Fair* called “The Man Who Knew Too Much.”

**CAPOTE** (2005)
In one of his last major roles, Philip Seymour Hoffman does a star turn as the writer Truman Capote as he undertakes the reporting that turned into the non-fiction novel “In Cold Blood.” Catherine Keener plays the young Nelle Harper, Capote’s sidekick and better known as the author Harper Lee of “To Kill a Mockingbird.”

**GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK** (2005)
Dir. George Clooney
David Straithairn plays Edward R. Murrow in this heroic biopic. Good as far as it goes, but it pulls punches on what happened to Murrow after he took on Sen. Joseph McCarthy. (CBS sidelined Murrow because he was too overtly political.)
Clooney wrote it, too.

**THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA** (2006)
Meryl Streep plays an imperious editor of a woman’s high-fashion magazine (a la Anna Wintour at *Vogue*), and Anne Hathaway plays her plucky assistant. Terrific cast.

**SPOTLIGHT** (2015)
Dir. Tom McCarthy.
With help from screenwriter Josh Singer, McCarthy delivers an appreciative bouquet to traditional "accountability" journalism. Based on the true story of the Pulitzer-winning investigative reporting team at the *Boston Globe* who exposed the rampant sexual abuse and extensive cover-up within Boston’s Catholic archdiocese.
Honorable mention, TV series:
The Wire, Season 5; Newsroom; Lou Grant;
Superman (George Reeves) See a mild-mannered reporter at The Daily Planet, Clark Kent, turn into a righteous super hero. If only all reporters could be caped crusaders.

* * * * *

Honorable mention, documentaries:
Reporting America at War, Control Room, Around the World in 72 Days, Outfoxed, Page One.