

OPINIONATED JUDGE

BY DARLEEN ORTEGA



PHOTO BY UNIVERSAL PICTURES
A black man's experience of racism is powerfully portrayed by Daniel Kaluuya in 'Get Out,' an unconventional new horror film voted best picture of 2017 by Portland Observer film critic and Opinionated Judge columnist Darleen Ortega.

'Get Out' Best Film of 2017

As usual, the more than 150 films I saw this year includes almost all of those that populate most critics' top 10 lists. My own list of the year's best films includes some overlap -- but five of the films on my list were virtually unrecognized by critics. I'm left savoring a game-changing social thriller, two important documentary examinations of systemic injustice, an animated celebration of Mexican culture, an achingly beautiful love story, a biopic that breaks the mold, and four features that engage mightily with stories of the marginalized. So here's the whole list, with fuller descriptions below:

1. **Get Out**
2. **The Unknown Girl**
3. **The Florida Project**
4. **Whose Streets?**
5. **Coco**
6. **Abacus: Small Enough to Jail**
7. **Call Me By Your Name**
8. **I, Daniel Blake**
9. **A Quiet Passion**
10. **Maudie**

1. The top of my list has been reserved for "Get Out" since I first saw it last spring, and every one of the many times I

have seen it and thought about it since. Not since "The Matrix" has a film spoken so cannily about the things I experience most profoundly; it would not be an exaggeration to say that I think about "Get Out" (as I do "The Matrix") literally every day -- it helps me make sense of my world, gives me ways of explaining things I could never quite explain before. It irks me to hear what much of the mainstream press says about this film (such as referring to it as "Jordan Peele's film about racial paranoia")--and yet that very blindness is a manifestation of the so-far intractable dynamics of racism that Peele has illustrated so astutely. His film is an achievement in originality and visionary writing and directing without any parallel, and Daniel Kaluuya has more than earned the title of best actor. Like the very best films, "Get Out" deserves to be named Best Picture for reasons we are not yet ready to understand.

2. "The Unknown Girl" is a thriller of the best kind; it captures some profound spiritual truth. It is the work of the Belgian writer-director brothers Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, who make absorbing


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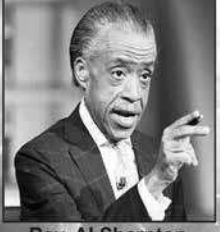
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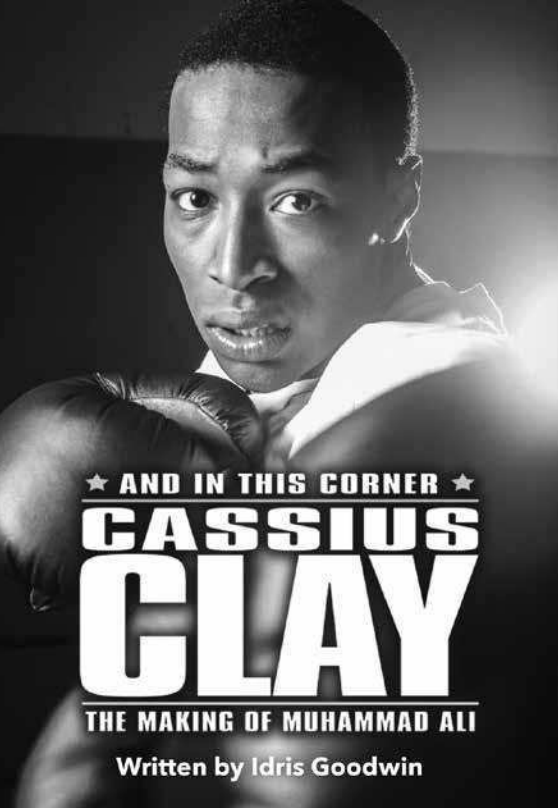


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