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# Here's what you didn't see in these four Oscar-nominated films



The Envelope spoke with producers and directors from four films nominated for best picture and discovered what ended up on their cutting room floors. (Illustration by Sando Rybak / For The Times)

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We all know what goes into a film — after all, once you've watched a movie, you know

exactly what scenes made the final cut. But what we often don't know is what *doesn't* go into any given movie. Sometimes cuts are made to a film when there's just too much of a good thing, sometimes it's a repetition of an emotional beat, sometimes it's a tone that doesn't play well — and sometimes it's just a matter of trimming and shaping. The Envelope spoke with producers and directors from four films nominated for best picture and discovered what ended up on their cutting room floors.



A scene was cut from “Past Lives” — not this one — because it too closely repeated the emotional beat of the ending. (Jon Pack / A24 Films)

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### ‘Past Lives’

**Setup:** After a subway ride home, Hae Sung (Teo Yoo) and Nora (Greta Lee) part ways, but they're in different head spaces. He wants to keep hanging out with her, but she just says she'll see him the next day and gets on another train. It was mostly a silent scene, with a lot of fraught emotions, but ended up trimmed.

**Missing moment:** “We shot it exactly as we’d dreamed it,” says writer-director Celine Song. “It was such a hard thing to remove it, because the actors were so proud of that scene; the crew worked so hard to get that scene — it’s a scene we all loved. But when you see the whole film, it’s like, here’s a problem. The ending has to work. The whole film is a knife, and it all has to come to that one gesture of pushing the knife in. Everything in the subway scene happens 30 minutes before the film ends — and it’s that scene again. We blew the tension and uncertainty [for the ending] earlier. The holding of the breath, the silence, the intense look — all of those things in the middle of the film was killing the way it was supposed to happen.”



A driving scene was cut from “The Holdovers,” which was running long in its first cut. (Seacia Pavao / Focus Features)

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‘The Holdovers’

**Setup:** When Mary (Da'Vine Joy Randolph), Paul (Paul Giamatti) and Angus (Dominic Sessa) are driving back from a party, they pass a graveyard, and Mary comments about the cemetery and the dead.

**Missing moment:** “I can’t think of any movie I’ve done that doesn’t have a huge amount of scenes that were shot and unused — but because of Alexander’s [Payne, director] precision and structure, that wasn’t the case with this finished film,” says producer Mark Johnson. “The first cut [of the film] we looked at was 2 hours and 45 minutes long; the final cut is 2 hours and 10 minutes long. But largely what got cut weren’t wholesale scenes — just trimming what was there. There was a nice bit of dialogue when Mary spoke about the dead, but it didn’t really have a place. It’s like a moment, a transition. Not a big revelatory scene. The kind of things we generally took out were driving scenes. Driving shots are problematic, because they’re not — by definition, with some filmmakers — kinetic. Those are the sorts of things we trimmed out. I’d love to tell you there’s a shootout at a bank — but there’s no such thing.”



A scene of the Sandra character posing for portraits for a magazine story had to be cut from “Anatomy of a Fall” because it “had a different tone than the rest of the scenes — it had irony and critical distance,” says writer-director Justine Triet. (Le Pacte)

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## ‘Anatomy of a Fall’

**Setup:** Sandra (Sandra Hüller) brings a German photographer in to take pictures of her for a glossy magazine, where you see her posing with her son.

**Missing moment:** “All of these things were to create a farcical image of a perfect mother who is also in pain from the death of her newly deceased husband,” says director Justine Triet via translator Assia Turki-Zauberman. “It linked the plot and her character to the media and her financial considerations — she was participating in this portrait for money — but we had to cut it out. There were too many elements going in too many different directions. This scene had a different tone than the rest of the scenes — it had irony and critical distance and didn’t make for a smooth transition to the courtroom. It pained me to let it go, because I thought it was fascinating and added a lot to the character’s complex representation.”



“There were sections we loved,” says producer David Heyman. After Ken (Ryan Gosling) takes over Barbie’s dream house, there scenes of “the Kens playing basketball, or sitting in shorts with their bare legs on a leather couch and

whenever they stood up it made a big fart sound." (Warner Bros. Pictures)

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## 'Barbie'

**Setup:** Toward the end of the film, Midge (Emerald Fennell) starts to have her baby. The narrator (Helen Mirren) emerges from behind the camera to tell the cameraman to stop filming.

**Missing moment:** "Helen Mirren's narrator was never thrilled with Midge's presence in Barbieland," explains producer David Heyman. "There was more material with Helen on camera — she was more of a physical presence in the film — but we couldn't keep it. It made sense to cut it. The film was full of funny moments we all loved and would have liked to keep. But to keep the eye on the prize, it made sense to cut them. It was a very funny payoff for both the narrator and Midge, though. We also had extra material for when Barbie returns to Barbieland and Ken (Ryan Gosling) has taken over. There were sections we loved — the Kens playing basketball, or sitting in shorts with their bare legs on a leather couch and whenever they stood up it made a big fart sound. The Kens found that very funny, and when we tested it, the audience also found it funny — but how much time can you spend on that?"