

MOVIES

9/11 movies and documentaries worth watching

In the 23 years since the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, Hollywood and documentary filmmakers have explored the events before, during and after.



Biden, Harris and Trump to attend 9/11 memorial in NYC

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By Rande Dawn

It's been 23 years since Sept. 11, 2001, a day many Americans will never forget. The felling of the twin towers of New York City's World Trade Center by two planes; a third plane striking the Pentagon outside Washington, D.C., and a failed attempt by a fourth plane, which crashed in rural Pennsylvania when the passengers took over — these are events etched in the memories of U.S. citizens and around the world.

And, in the ensuing decades, numerous documentaries and feature films have

explored the events before, during and after what has become collectively known as 9/11. Today marks the 23rd anniversary of those attacks. For those wanting to look back in remembrance or educate young people who might not have been alive then, here are 12 movies and documentaries worth seeing.

1. “The Man Who Knew” (2002)

Watch on [YouTube](#) (1 hour, 25 min.)

The Man Who Knew (full documentary) | FRONTLINE



PBS’ “Frontline” has been on top [of numerous documentaries](#) about 9/11 and its aftermath; “The Man Who Knew” focuses on a former FBI counterterrorism agent who felt the U.S. should have preemptively taken out Osama Bin Laden. John O’Neill, who died in the twin towers on 9/11, had been fighting for six years to track down and prosecute al-Qaeda operatives around the world, but was considered controversial.

2. “Fahrenheit 9/11” (2004)

Watch on [Peacock](#) (2 hours, 2 min.)

Fahrenheit 9/11 (2004) Official Trailer - Michael Moore Bush Administratio...



Director Michael Moore put himself behind and in front of the camera to cast his unflinching gaze on the presidency of George W. Bush, the Iraq War and the way the media covered the war, along with how the administration dealt with the events of 9/11.

3. “Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close” (2011)

Rent on [YouTube](#) (2 hours, 9 min.)

Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close (2011) Trailer HD - Tom Hanks Movie



Based on a bestselling fiction book by Jonathan Safran Foer, young Oskar goes on a quest across New York with a key, one year after his father died in the World Trade Center attacks.

4. “The Woman Who Wasn’t There” (2012)

Watch on [Prime](#) (1 hour, 4 min.)

The Woman Who Wasn't There - Trailer



Based on the story of Alicia Esteve Head, “The Woman Who Wasn’t There” was both a book and a documentary that looked at a Spanish businesswoman who claimed to have survived the World Trade Center attacks (calling herself Tania Head). She became the head of the World Trade Center Survivors’ Network support group — but in 2007, her story was revealed to be a hoax.

5. “9/11 Inside the Pentagon” (2016)

Rent on [Prime](#) (54 min.)

9/11 INSIDE THE PENTAGON | Official Trailer | PBS



The twin towers weren't the only buildings hit on 9/11; the Pentagon was struck by a third plane, and 184 people were killed. This documentary (which can also be [found on PBS](#) with a subscription) shifts the perspective from New York to one of the country's most important and secretive buildings to explore the attack.

6. “In the Shadow of the Towers: Stuyvesant High on 9/11” (2019)

Watch on [Max](#) (32 min.)

In the Shadow of the Towers: Stuyvesant High on 9/11 (2019) | Official Tra...



Students in one of New York City’s most elite schools, Stuyvesant High, watched the World Trade Center attack from their classrooms. Director Amy Schatz spoke with former students, and they shared their recollections. ([TODAY.com](#) also has a story told through the eyes of adults who were in kindergarten blocks away from the twin towers at the time.)

7 & 8. “9/11: The Final Minutes of Flight 93” (2020) and “United 93” (2006)

Watch “9/11: The Final Minutes of Flight 93” on [History](#). (43 min.)

9/11: The Final Minutes of Flight 93 & The Pentagon Promo | Two New Do...



Watch “United 93” on [Peacock](#). (1 hour, 50 min.)

United 93 Official Trailer #1 - Paul Greengrass, David Alan Basche Movie (2...



The U.S. Capitol and White House were spared being hit by a fourth plane on 9/11 when passengers wrestled control from the terrorists inside — and the plane crashed in a field near in Pennsylvania instead. All 44 inside the plane (including the hijackers) were killed. The event has been explored in a fictionalized 2006 feature called “United 93,” while the documentary “9/11: The Final Minutes of Flight 93” provides newly unclassified evidence that allowed filmmakers to piece together what happened on the plane, minute by minute.

9. “The Forever Prisoner” (2021)

Watch on [Max](#) (2 hours)

The Forever Prisoner | Official Trailer | HBO



Oscar winner Alex Gibney — who co-executive produced the 10-part fictionalized take on the events leading up to 9/11 with an adaptation of the 2006 book “The Looming Tower” in 2018 — dove into the aftermath of al-Qaeda suspect Abu Zubaydah, the first high-value detainee who was subjected to “enhanced interrogation techniques” for the U.S. post-9/11.

10. “9/11: Inside the President’s War Room” (2021)

Watch on [Apple TV+](#) (1 hour, 30 min.)

9/11: Inside the President’s War Room – Official Trailer | Apple TV+



This Apple TV+/BBC One documentary goes into detail about the steps that followed in the immediate hours after the attacks, focused on the point of view of President George W. Bush and his staff. It includes interviews with Bush, former Vice President Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell and many others.

11. “9/11: One Day in America” (2021)

Watch on [Disney+](#) (6 episodes, run times vary.)

9/11: One Day in America Trailer | National Geographic



In its six episodes, “One Day in America” (which was created in official collaboration with the 9/11 Memorial & Museum) walks viewers through the timeline of 9/11 while focusing on those who survived and those who came to their rescue — firefighters, paramedics and regular folk.

12. “Turning Point: 9/11 and the War on Terror” (2021)

Watch on [Netflix](#) (5 episodes, run times vary.)

Turning Point: 9/11 and the War on Terror | Official Trailer | Netflix



In this five-episode series, experts explore where the 9/11 attacks came from, what happened on the day and the decades-long ripple effect the attack has had on the U.S. and its citizens.

Randee Dawn

Randee Dawn (she/her) is an entertainment journalist and author based in Brooklyn. In addition to writing for TODAY.com, Variety and The Los Angeles Times, her debut novel, *Tune in Tomorrow*, about a reality TV show run by mythic creatures, published in 2022. She's also the co-author of *The Law & Order: SVU Unofficial Companion*. When not interviewing the stars or dabbling in speculative fiction, she dreams of the next place she can travel to, or cuddles her Westie. More at [RandeeDawn.com](https://www.randeedawn.com).