



more Christmas Movies THAT DON'T GET ENOUGH LOVE

The much-awaited sequel to last year's list, where we gave a shout out to *The Family Man*, *A Muppet Christmas Carol*, *Small One*, *Jingle All the Way*, and *Die Hard* (yes, it's a Christmas movie). Here are this year's choices. Some are long forgotten, and some are just plain underrated:

Joyeux Noel

Nominated for Best Foreign Film at the 2006 Academy Awards, this French drama details the "Christmas Truce" that occurred during World War I (Christmas Eve 1914). The casting is superb and it covers all three sides of the conflict with great empathy (French, German, and English). Not many war films focus on the good of humanity with this level of care. It's not a film for young children, but it's a top-notch Christmas movie that reminds us all of a beautiful moment in human history.

White Christmas

If you like 1950s Christmas musicals, this is far and away the best one. Bing Crosby is in his musical prime and Danny Kay is hilarious. This film enshrined many of the classic Christmas songs that still permeate our culture. Despite its popularity, *White Christmas* makes our list because some have accused it of not aging well. While we concede that it's awkward for a movie called *White Christmas* to only have one person of color in the entire film, it would be a mistake to throw out all of this good music and comedy just because it was a product of its time.

The Polar Express

Tom Hanks put a lot of great energy into this project, which was no small feat. Turning a bestselling 32-page book into an entire movie was ambitious, but the music and the voice acting carry the day. The animations of the train and the winter landscapes are breathtaking and immersive, just like the book; however, the movie struggled on animating its human characters. They exist in an uncomfortable "uncanny valley," which happens when computer animated characters have too many awkward movements or flaws which can make an audience feel uneasy. It was the early days of motion capture, and they bit off more than they could chew. Still, the film does a great job of capturing that incredible feeling of being bundled up under the blankets at home on a cold, snowy night waiting for Santa to come. For that, it's worth a viewing.

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A Trip to NYC to Teach Virginia Criminal Law

Thanks to the staff at Lawline.com for inviting me!

James has already been invited back for next year!

Feedback from Lawline:

I want to thank you for coming in to present your program on the Foundations of Domestic Violence Charges in Virginia. I truly enjoyed your program, and so did our customers. 131 customers watched your program live, and 98% would recommend it to others. Comments we have received thus far are:

- **Good!**
- **Raised good points.**
- **Excellent presentation!**
- **One of the better webinars that I have seen recently. Great speaker.**

Congratulations on a truly excellent program!

We're thrilled about the impact James is having in the legal community. If you have a criminal issue you'd like to discuss confidentially, James is ready to help. ■

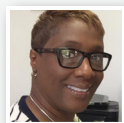


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It's A Wonderful Life

How could this possibly be underrated when many families in America watch it every single year? The answer is that in the past few years, I have heard from more people than ever that 1) they have never seen it before, or 2) it's overrated. Let me just take a moment to say that *It's A Wonderful Life* is one of the greatest films of all time, not just among Christmas movies. Frank Capra was a filmmaking genius and this is one of his masterpieces. Very few films cut to the core of what it means to live a meaningful life and the impact one life can have on so many others. I consider this film one of the greatest treatises against suicide I've ever witnessed. How many films will make grown men cry when they've already seen it a dozen times? If you've never seen this film, take 2 hours and 15 minutes out of your life to make it happen this holiday season. ■



Sharon's CHRISTMAS TOFFEE POPCORN

Ingredients:

- 1 cup butter
- ½ cup light corn syrup
- 1 ½ cups cinnamon red hot candies
- 8-10 cups popped popcorn

Directions:

- 1 Preheat oven to 250 degrees.
- 2 Line baking sheet with parchment paper.
- 3 Combine butter, corn syrup and cinnamon candies in a saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a boil and cook for 5 minutes, stirring constantly.
- 4 In a large bowl (that holds 8-10 cups of popped popcorn), pour the syrup over the popcorn, stir to cover the popcorn as evenly as possible. *Hint: it is best to use a wooden spoon that has been VERY lightly coated with butter.*
- 5 Spread the popcorn out onto the baking sheets.
- 6 Bake for about 30 minutes or until the toffee coating is set.
- 7 Let cool for about 10 minutes and gently break apart.
- 8 Keep in an airtight container. ■



Enjoy!

MERRY CHRISTMAS

FROM THE GLASS FAMILY!



From our family to yours, THANK YOU for being a part of our lives and a reader of our newsletter. We wish success, happiness, peace, and joy to you and everyone you love. Now, go get started early on those New Year's Resolutions!

Ben W. Glass, III



Reminder About Our Firm's Communication Policy

Our promise to you is that while we are working on your case, we don't take inbound phone calls, faxes or emails. Ben Glass takes no inbound unscheduled phone calls whatsoever. It makes him much more productive and helps get your case resolved faster. You can always call the office at 703-544-7876, and schedule an in-person or phone appointment, usually within 24-48 hours. This is a lot better than the endless game of "phone tag" played by most businesses today. Remember, too, that email is "quick," but is checked no more than twice a day. Replies are then scheduled into the calendar. So if it's really important, don't email—call the office instead.

This publication is intended to educate the general public about personal injury, medical malpractice, and small business issues. It is not intended to be legal advice. Every case is different. The information in this newsletter may be freely copied and distributed as long as the newsletter is copied in its entirety.

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A Trip to NYC to Teach Virginia Criminal Law

By James Abrenio

Recently, I had the opportunity to take a trip to New York City to host a webinar on the complexities of handling Domestic Violence cases here in Virginia. The webinar was hosted by Lawline.com, an online Continuing Legal Education platform for fellow attorneys.

My discussion, entitled Foundations of Virginia Domestic Violence Charges, was intended to help fellow attorneys understand the "ins and outs" of handling these types of cases. From the feedback received from Lawline, it sounds like it was well received!

It was a really great experience and Lawline.com has invited me back next year, where I plan to speak about other areas of Virginia criminal law, as well as the difficulties of Premises Liability cases.

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Just how do you get all That Reading Done?

I read between 40 and 60 books a year, subscribe to a number of magazines, and, of course, read a ton of stuff for my law practice. People are curious about how I get all that done and still have a life. Here's a letter we received recently:

Ben-

I don't feel I'm overstating this, so here's the question: When do you find time to read these awesome books that've molded you and your business?

For me, right before bed at 10 isn't working—too tired. Like you, I'm a committed Christian, so I've got that for ½ hour first thing. I work out at 6 am 3 days a week. I've only got 4 children, but they're under 11, with 3 year-old twins, and I don't wanna cheat my wife out of too much of our nights together. Many thanks for all you do for me—and your answer.

Robert T. Usry, Esquire

Rob:

In my younger days, most of this was at night, in bed. These days, I barely get through a paragraph at that time! These days, with kids older than yours, there is that space between about 8-9 at night that is available to me.

I also do this: I try not to get into the office before 1:00 p.m. each day. Nothing is scheduled for me before 1:00. I have a pretty nice home office and I'm usually at my desk by 7:30-7:45. The "don't schedule anything for me until after lunch" habit is one I should have adopted years ago. You get a ton more done when your mind feels "fresher" ... it forces a lot of focus.

So, that morning time after the buses leave for school is available to me for a "chapter a day"... and when I read, I take notes in the margins and on the blank pages at the back the book. I also have a huge document in the cloud where when I see something in a book or hear it at a seminar, I add it to what I call my manifesto... helps you focus on what you are reading. When the kids were younger, I got a lot of reading done on vacations and whenever I travelled, especially if travelling alone.

I don't know what time you get up. Even on days when I'm not doing 5 a.m. CrossFit, I am still up by 5:00. On CrossFit days, it's 4:20 a.m., Saturday and Sunday, too. I make coffee, put my feet on the desk, think, read and journal.

Hope this helps, too. I also have an "all you can eat" subscription to Audible for when I'm driving or, more recently, sitting in the dark and cold watching my daughter do her therapeutic horse riding.

Finally, I also have a highly developed skill for napping. So on a weekend day, if there is 20 minutes when no one is "looking," I can set my watch and be asleep 17 of those minutes!

Ben ■

About that New Year's Diet Resolution

I'm down 12 pounds from the time I started CrossFit in early June and holding steady. The holidays are always tough for me. If you need a boost, here's a sign you can create for your refrigerator, based on research from Johns Hopkins University (and reported in *Men's Journal*):

Enjoy!

\$16,169

The amount an overweight 50-year-old would save over his lifetime if he got down to a healthy size. This factors in medical bills and indirect costs like lost salary and work productivity.



WHY I NEVER BRING A LAPTOP TO A LECTURE OR SEMINAR

In Virginia, we are required to attend 12 hours of continuing legal education a year. At most of these seminars, at least half the people in the room are taking notes on laptops and some are complaining that there aren't enough plugs around the room! I'm the guy sitting there, hardbound journal in hand, taking handwritten notes. — Why?

- 1 Taking notes forces me to pay attention, digest the information relatively fast, and get it down on paper in a form that I can understand later. Just listening to what someone is saying and trying to type it verbatim doesn't actually require any cognitive work at all.
- 2 I find that writing stuff down helps with my retention of the materials. In 1983, when I was studying to take the bar exam, I took practice test after practice test and wrote down only the questions and answers that I missed. This served two purposes. First, writing down cemented the question and answer in my

head. Second, as I got close to the exam date, I did NOT study all of the materials. I only studied the questions and answers I had written down. I passed the bar with flying colors on the first try.

- 3 It annoys everyone around you when you are clacking away in a lecture hall. Were I a teacher or professor, I'd ban laptops from my lectures.
- 4 It's distracting to me. I know that if I had a laptop with me that the moment the lecture got boring, I'd be reading the news or chasing down Facebook likes. Next thing you know, an hour has gone by and I haven't digested a word.

Are you someone who brings a laptop to a lecture? Give my method a try! ■

SMALL BUSINESS TIP NEVER STOP LEARNING

I'll be 60 in February, but I'm still learning! Here are some of the things I worked on this past year to make my two businesses better. Perhaps you'll find a gift of a nugget here for your business!

- 1 Have a very clear, written down, description of what your business will look like at the end of 2018. Close your eyes and *feel* it.
- 2 As you draw this picture, don't let your own objections slow you down. Just be a creator for now! (Hint: Steven Covey's 7 Habits is great. This one is Habit #2, Begin with The End in Mind.)
- 3 Push more of the thinking about the details of how this vision will materialize onto your team. A mantra of mine that they are familiar with is "That's logistics; I don't do logistics." My teams have vast imaginative and follow-through abilities. Liz Wiseman's book, *Multipliers*, is a good resource on this subject. She teaches the **Five Disciplines of the Multiplier**.
- 4 You do not need to know all of the answers in order to move forward.

SOMEONE ELSE already knows the answers. We just have to find that person and figure out what he/she knows. This is why it is critical that you continue to read the good books I mention. *Be curious* about the paths that other successful people have taken! Most successful people would love to tell you their stories, but they are never asked

- 5 Put a deadline on everything and have one person be responsible for each task you put into play. Doesn't matter if you have a team working on a problem. ONE PERSON needs to take ownership and that person needs to agree with you on a deadline and that deadline must be honored.
- 6 Develop KPIs (key performance indicators) for every position and manage (and compensate) by the KPIs.

Here's the credo we live by:

"Where performance is measured, performance improves. Where performance is measured and reported, performance improves dramatically. Where performance is measured and reported publicly, performance improves exponentially."
~ Clate Mask, CEO & Co-Founder of Infusionsoft.

So as the year closes out, it's a great question to ask yourself: what are you going to do differently in 2018? At the end of the day, becoming an expert at marketing and getting peak performance out of your marketing capital will improve your results, but becoming an expert in YOURSELF and getting Peak Performance out of yourself – that's where your life will change. ■

