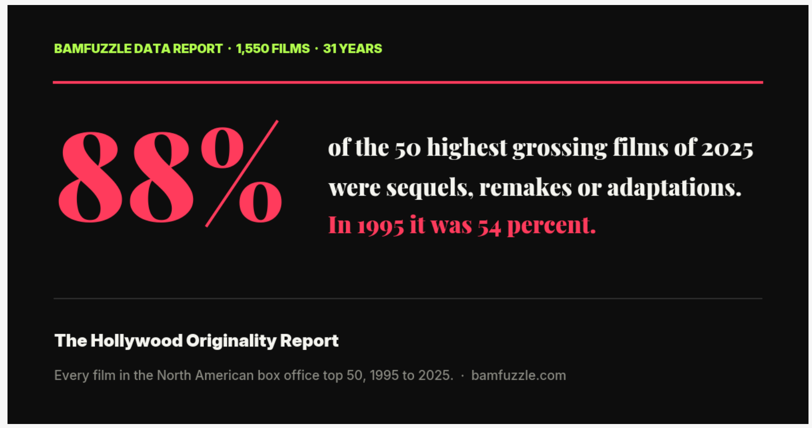
No Original Film Has Topped the U.S. Box Office in 15 Years, New 31-Year Study Finds

Bamfuzzle classified all 1,550 films in the annual box office top 50 from 1995 to 2025. Original screenplays now take 10% of the slots and 10.9% of the money.



NEW YORK CITY, NY, UNITED STATES, August 4, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Original screenplays accounted for 10 percent of the 50 highest grossing films at the North American box office in 2025, down from 36 percent in 1995, according to a new study of 31 consecutive years of box office data published by pop culture publication Bamfuzzle.

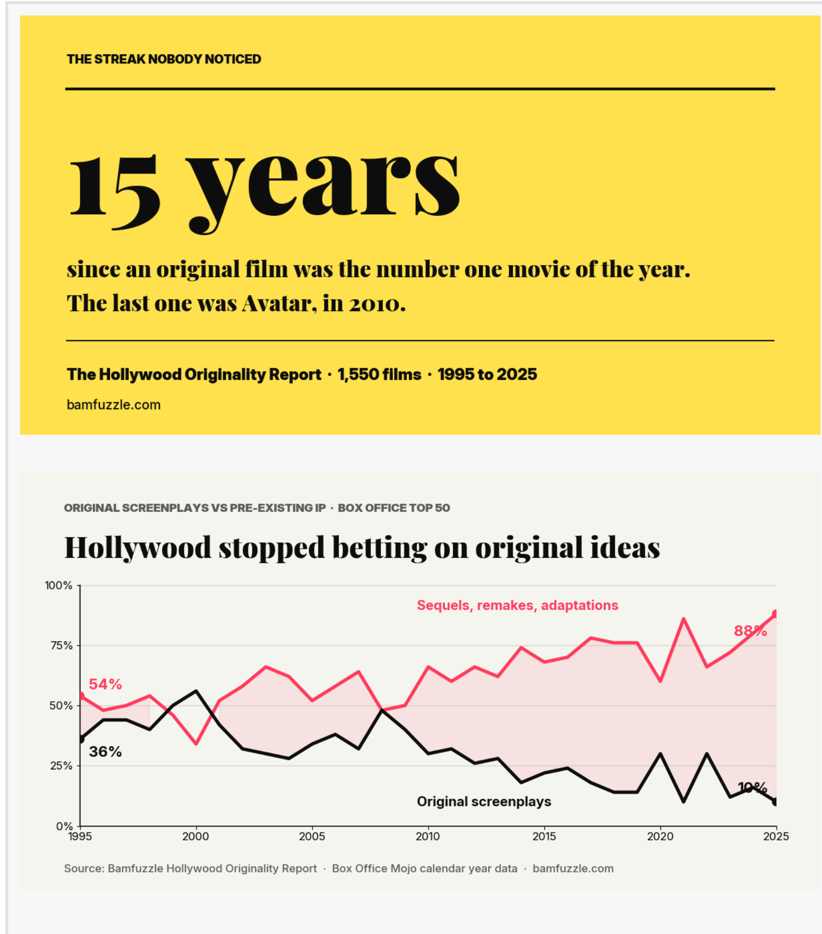
The Hollywood Originality Report by Bamfuzzle classified all 1,550 films that appeared in the annual box office top 50 between 1995 and 2025 into five categories: original screenplay, sequel, remake, adaptation of material from another medium, and dramatization of true events. Films built on pre-existing intellectual property rose from 54 percent of the top 50 in 1995 to 88 percent in 2025.

> "Hollywood is out of ideas is the wrong sentence. Hollywood stopped betting on them. Original films still work when they get made. They stopped being scheduled."
>
> *Bryan Falcon, Bamfuzzle*

The revenue findings are sharper than the film counts. Original films earned 34.2 percent of all money taken by the top 50 in 1995 and 10.9 percent in 2025. Sequels moved from 17.1 percent to 52.9 percent across the same period and peaked at 73.7 percent in 2021. Across the 2020 to 2024 period, original films averaged 9.7 percent of top 50 revenue, the lowest figure of any five year block in the dataset.

The report also documents a streak that has gone largely unremarked. No original film has finished a calendar year as the highest grossing release in North America since Avatar in 2010, a run of 15 consecutive years. Because Avatar opened in December 2009 and won 2010 on carryover earnings, the last original film to open and top its own calendar year outright was Finding Nemo in 2003.

Nine of the 31 years studied produced no original film in the annual top 10 at all, and every one of those nine falls after 2010. Across the sixteen years from 1995 to 2010 it never happened once. The eleven years from 1995 to 2005 produced 42 original films in the top 10, an average of 3.8 per year. The eleven years from 2015 to 2025 produced five.



One finding runs against the common explanation for the trend. The number of distinct franchises appearing in the top 50 each year rose from 21 in 1995 to 36 in 2025, which the report argues rules out a simple consolidation story. Rather than a small number of franchises absorbing the chart, a larger number of franchise entries now compete for the same fixed 50 positions, and films arriving without an existing brand are what get displaced.

The 2025 top 10 illustrates the pattern. It contained four remakes, the highest concentration recorded in any year of the study, and one original film, Sinners, at number seven.

The report is explicit about what the data cannot show. Because it observes only the top 50 grossing films each year, it measures commercial prominence rather than production volume, and cannot establish whether fewer original films are being made. It contains no budget data and therefore supports no conclusion about profitability. Classification of roughly 40 borderline titles involves editorial judgment, and each is flagged in the underlying data.

Trend figures are published for both measures. The original film share of the top 50 declines at an average of 1.10 percentage points per year with a correlation coefficient of negative 0.815. Revenue share declines at 1.33 percentage points per year with a correlation of negative 0.891.

All box office figures are drawn from Box Office Mojo calendar year domestic charts and are nominal, unadjusted for inflation, which is why the study reports category shares rather than absolute revenue. The report publishes the complete box office dataset from 1995 to 2025, the category definitions, and the priority rules applied to films qualifying in more than one category.
Bamfuzzle has made the findings free to cite and republish with attribution and a link.

About Bamfuzzle
Bamfuzzle is an entertainment and pop culture publication covering film, television, streaming, celebrity, true crime and nostalgia. The Hollywood Originality Report is its first annual box office benchmark study and is intended to be extended by one calendar year each January.

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