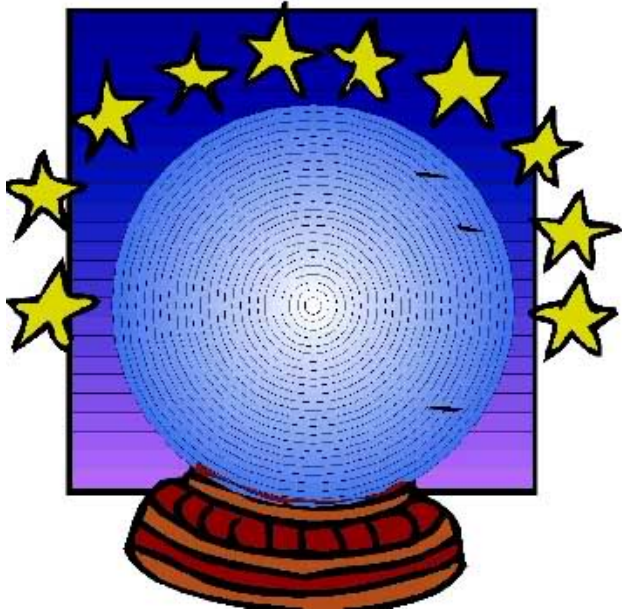


The Crystal Ball - July 20 Releases

Written by {ga=mitch}

Thursday, July 19 2007 7:00 PM -

It's a slow week for releases at the theaters, but "Zodiac" comes out on DVD ... a film I'm anxious to see after missing it at the theaters. The slow week doesn't bother Mitch though, he'll be locked in, watching the British Open all weekend before writing a recap on it for us on Monday. Mitch also fills us in on some intriguing new film projects in the works in this weeks Crystal Ball, our Friday night look at the movie industry here at TCF.



There were no movies released during the middle of the week this week. I almost didn't know what to do with myself.

But having no new movies coming out that I deem watchable does mean that I'll have plenty of time to turn on the TV at 7 AM tomorrow and Sunday to catch my favorite golf tournament; the British Open (or, as we golf snobs say, "The Open Championship"). You'll get a recap of that on Monday.

News & Rumors:

~ Time to wince. I had earlier reported that there was going to be a movie made from the comic book "The Green Hornet". Well, it's been announced that Seth Rogen will both write the script and STAR in the film. That's right...the fat slacker from "Knocked Up" as the Green Hornet. And I thought Nicholas Cage as "Ghost Rider" was dumb.

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~ Some major stars are lining up for a movie based upon the Valerie Plame CIA case. Kate Beckinsale is in talks to star as a journalist breaking the story in "Nothing But the Truth", with Matt Damon as the prosecutor, Vera Farmiga (from "The Departed") as the CIA agent, and Edie Falco as the newspaper editor.

~ As if the above story won't piss off the ultra-conservatives, this bit of news will send them over the edge. Steven Soderbergh is planning on making TWO films about Che Guevara, both starring Benicio del Toro as Fidel Castro's revolutionary compatriot. I'm personally far from an uber-conservative, but quite frankly, I just don't get the fascination Hollywood has with Che. Hopefully any movie will attempt to be historically accurate and show some of the atrocities that occurred via Che's people, and not just the romanticized vision of him. Then again, these have the potential to be just as big of bombs as two other recent Soderbergh films, "Solaris" and "The Good German".

~ Coming soon... "Ace Ventura 3" starring...Josh Flitter. Who? Some kid who will be playing the SON of Ace, acting as a pet detective for his seventh grade class. Evidently, no one has learned the lesson yet that you don't cast someone else into a sequel of a Jim Carrey movie other than Jim Carrey and expect it to do anything but suck. (see also; "Evan Almighty" and "Son of the Mask").

~ Speaking of upcoming movies that are a lead pipe cinch to suck...say hello to "Old Dogs", starring John Travolta, Robin Williams, and Seth Green. Travolta and Williams will play best friends and business partners trying to work a big deal through Green, but a monkey-wrench gets thrown in the works in the form of twin seven year olds that they suddenly have to care for. I'd probably rather watch a three hour movie with Adam Sandler AND Ben Stiller than this.

~ Sometimes I read stuff that just cracks me up. Like the headline for an upcoming movie saying "Jared Leto as 'Mr. Nobody'". No Duh.

This week's new releases:

As noted earlier; two new films being released...neither of which appeals to me in the slightest.

However, if you want to see a quality movie, those of you in the Cleveland area could go out to the Cedar Lee in Cleveland Heights and see "Rescue Dawn", the Christian Bale flick based upon a true story of a downed pilot in the Vietnam War. It should be released more widely in the next few weeks, and I'll preview it in more depth at that point.

I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry

Starring: Adam Sandler, Kevin James, Jessica Biel

Plot: Two firefighters pretend to be a gay domestic partnership couple to get benefits for one of the firefighter's kids.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: This might even be lame in comparison to other lame Adam Sandler comedies. Most times, you watch the trailers and it ends up that all the funny bits from the entire movie are in the two minute trailer. In this case, even the trailer wasn't funny, so what does that mean about the rest of the movie?

Hairspray

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Starring: Nikki Blonsky, John Travolta, Queen Latifah, Christopher Walken, Michelle Pfeiffer

Plot: A plump teenager teaches 1962 Baltimore a few things about integration and acceptance after landing a spot on a local TV dance show.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: According to most of the buzz, this is a really good movie if you are into musicals such as “Grease”. I’m not. I thought “Chicago” was great, that “Phantom of the Opera” was decent, and that “Dreamgirls” was respectable...but this one just looks too Grease-y to me. Other than the overall cheesiness of it, it’s set in Baltimore...and as a writer for a Cleveland sports based site, I have to tell you that I despise everything connected with the City that Penicillin Forgot. My wife wants to see it...so I think I’ll call my daughter and let them go out and have a good time, and I’ll just stay at home and watch “Crank” on DVD tomorrow.

New DVD Releases on Tuesday, July 24th

The Number 23 – Mega-bomb for Jim Carrey. Another boring horror flick that tries just a little too hard to be “artsy”, with the result being that it’s not very scary, and it’s not very intellectual either. How soon before we see Jim Carey taking on a role for a TNT series?

Zodiac – Good rental for this week. Jake Gyllenhaal is excellent as the former San Francisco Chronicle cartoonist who helps track the serial killer that terrorized

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the Bay Area in the late 60s through the mid 70s. Fascinating storyline and a wonderful job from the director in capturing the mood of the city and the atmosphere of San Francisco at that time. But be warned; it's a long one at two hours and forty minutes.

Slow Burn – Do not be stupid enough to rent this one...as the only thing of interest about it is the story of how it finally came to being released. Filmed in 2003, this Ray Liotta/LL Cool J cops and ganstas movie wasn't first seen until late 2005 at the Toronto Film Festival...where it was panned and shelved. Then for some reason, some studio idiot decided to release it, thinking it would appeal to those degenerates that liked "Smokin' Aces". They didn't, and the film barely cleared a million at the box office.

The Host – One of the biggest international hits of the year, especially in Asia, is this Korean export that is part creature feature, part social commentary, and part slapstick comedy.

The Wind That Shakes the Barley – Winner of the Palm D'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, this movie focuses on two brothers torn apart by the 1920s struggles for Irish independence. If you liked "Michael Collins", you'll want to check this one out.

Calendar Watch

Next week; [The Simpsons Movie](#), *I Know Who Killed Me*, *No Reservations*, *Skinwalkers*, *Who's Your Caddy*, [Sunshine](#)

Upcoming Biggies (click on the hyperlink to view the available trailers).

[*The Bourne Ultimatum*](#) – August 3rd - Superspy Jason Bourne (Matt Damon) is back and looking for his roots.

[*Underdog*](#) – August 3rd – Combination of animation and live action. Let's hope it's more "George of the Jungle" than "Scooby-Doo".

[*Rush Hour 3*](#) – August 10th – More of the same...this time in Paris.

[*The Invasion*](#) – August 17th – Nicole Kidman and Daniel Craig in an adaptation of the sci-fi classic "Invasion of the Body Snatchers"

[*Shoot ‘em Up*](#) – September 7th – Clive Owen and Monica Bellucci protecting a baby from sinister Paul Giamatti. I was so there anyway, and then I found out that in one scene Owen and Bullucci are having sex while in a shoot out. Check out the trailer, as it is one of the best I have seen.

[*The Brave One*](#) – September 14th – Jodie Foster going all Charles Bronson-DeathWish on some thugs.

Eastern Promises – September 14th (limited) – Naomi Watts as a London midwife drawn into the Russian Mob, headed by Viggo Mortensen.

[*The Kingdom*](#) – September 28th – Jamie Foxx, Chris Cooper, and Jennifer Garner in a story about an American team sent into the Middle East to investigate a terrorist attack on Americans in Riyadh.

3:12 to Yuma – October 5th – Russell Crowe and Christian Bale in a remake of a classic Western with Bale as a farmer volunteering to escort a criminal (Crowe) to Yuma by train, with a battle of wits ensuing.

Michael Clayton – October 5th – George Clooney as a top law firm's "fixer" (the type of person played by Jodie Foster in "Inside Man"...IOW, a shady power broker/dirty tricks expert).

[Hitman](#) – October 12th –

Deadwood's Timothy Oliphant follows up his portrayal as the chief villain in "Live Free or Die Hard" in this action/adventure film where he play...what else...a hitman. Look for it to be in the same vein as "The Transporter", and a hit (heh...I kill me).

The Golden Age – October 12th
– Cate Blanchett and Clive Owen in a follow up of the award winning "Elizabeth".

Rendition – October 12th –
Reese Witherspoon, Jake
Gyllenhaal, Meryl Streep and
Alan Arkin in a political thriller
with Gyllenhaal as a CIA
agent troubled by witnessing
questionable interrogations.

American Gangster –

November 2

nd

– Denzel Washington as a

heroin kingpin from the Vietnam War era (he smuggled it back in the body bags of dead soldiers) and Russell Crowe as the investigator on his trail.

[Bee Movie](#) – November 2ⁿ
d

– Animated flick with Jerry Seinfeld as a bee who files

a lawsuit against mankind
for eating honey.

Lions for Lambs –

November 9

th

– Robert Redford directs
himself, Tom Cruise
(yeck) and Meryl Streep
in this political thriller.

Fred Claus – November
9th – Vince
Vaughn as Santa's
embittered little brother.
With Paul Giamatti.
Another slightly naughty
Christmas fairy tale that
will make a bundle of
cash.

Beowulf – November
16th - Robert
Zemeckis gets all
medieval on us with a
motion capture (like
“Polar Express”)
adaptation of the epic
poem. Crispin Glover
as the monster Grendel
and Angelina Jolie as
Grendel’s mother? I’m

there.

The Golden Compass

– December 7
th

– Major, major push
from the studios for
this big budget
fantasy...designed to

be the first of a franchise. Nicole Kidman and Daniel Craig star (their second collaboration this year), along with Sam Elliot and Eva Green.

I Am Legend -

December 14
th

– Will Smith in what is basically a remake of the Chuck Heston apocalyptic film “The Omega Man”.

National Treasure: Book of Secrets – December 21 st

– Follow-up to the hugely popular guilty pleasure “National Treasure” with Nick Cage back at his wacky best.

Charlie Wilson's War – December 25

th

– Tom Hanks, Julia
Roberts, and Philip
Seymour Hoffman
in an Oscar
contender about the
charismatic and

eccentric Texas
Congressman who
orchestrated the
funding of the
Afghans against the
Soviet Union in the
early 80s.