

The Crystal Ball - Aug 31 Releases

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If you've been reading "The Crystal Ball" you know Mitch has been less than satisfied with the options at the theaters this summer. That's about to change, as Mitch is actually pretty excited about some of the films coming out soon, and will be back in the fold with his world renowned movie reviews in the coming weeks. In this week's column Mitch talks about the latest George Lucas film, and also previews the week's releases at the theaters and on DVD.



One more week before the regular season begins for the Browns.

One more week of crappy movies before I get back to my other duties here and start watching decent (I hope) films again.

News & Rumors:

~ Artsy new movie of the week. "The Informers", a drama based upon a collection of short stories by Bret Easton Ellis, the author of "American Psycho". The stories are set during one week in 1983 and include seven intertwining tales about movie executives, rock stars, a vampire, and other morally challenged characters. It will star Billy Bob Thornton, Kim Basinger, Brandon Routh (Superman), Austin Nichols, Ashley Olson, and Jon Foster, among others.

~ Oliver Stone is set to return to the subject of Vietnam with "Pinkville", starring Bruce Willis and Channing Tatum. The story concerns real life Army General William R. Peers (Willis) who investigated the infamous 1968 My Lai Massacre. Tatum will play Hugh Thompson Jr. an Army helicopter pilot who helped stop the killings by flying between the civilians and the attacking soldiers, later rescuing the wounded.

~ George Lucas is looking to do his first non-Star Wars movie in years. "Red Tails" will be based upon Lucas' own story about the Tuskegee Airmen in World War II, the first African-American fighter pilots in U.S. military history.

~ Edward Furlong, a case study in how a teenaged actor can screw up his career and his life, is reported to be set to reprise his John Conner role in "Terminator 4". Of course, this is being "reported" by his manager, so who really knows. However the point about there being a T4 evidently is pretty solid. Just don't expect Ah-nuld back as the killer Cyborg.

~ Zack Snyder, one of the geniuses behind "300" will direct a film adaptation of the Ray Bradbury classic "The Illustrated Man". No information yet regarding dates or cast.

~ Owen Wilson is no longer going to be in Ben Stiller's upcoming film "Tropic Thunder" that was set to co-star Jack Black. File that one under the "No Duh" Category.

This week's new releases:

Balls of Fury

Starring: Dan Fogler, Christopher Walken, George Lopez

Plot: A former champion ping-pong player is recruited by the FBI to infiltrate an underground table tennis tournament.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: This just might rival "Delta Farce" as the stupidest movie of the year. To prepare yourself for watching this movie, please hit yourself repeatedly in the head with a brick prior to entering the theater.

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### **Halloween**

**Starring:** Scout Taylor-Compton, Malcolm McDowell, Tyler Mane

**Plot:** After being locked up in a mental institute for 17 years, Michael Myers is mistakenly released and joins the Cincinnati Bengals, where he fits right in.

*View Trailer*

**The BeerBuzz:** Few people have gotten as much perverse pleasure out of the crashing and burning seen by the Horror Movie genre as I have. Director Ron Zombie is a big name in scare flicks, and he might be the one guy who might do justice to a remake of the classic John Carpenter slasher flick...but I'm not holding my breath.

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Death Sentence

Starring: Kevin Bacon, John Goodman, Kelly Preston

Plot: A man sets out to go all Charles Bronson on a gang of thugs that attacked his son.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: I did here that there was one great scene in this film, where Kevin Bacon goes from being uptight yuppie dad to wild-assed vigilante. Other than that, and seeing John Goodman as a wacko weapons dealer, there's nothing you didn't see in "Death Wish".

New DVD Releases on Tuesday, September 4th

Two major releases coming out...and it's a toss-up on which one sucks worse.

Delta Farce - Mentioned above as one of the top

contenders for stupidest movie of the year. I think this one may have the inside track because at least "Balls of Fury" has Christopher Walken. This one just has Bill Envall and Larry the Cable Guy as idiot rednecks mistakenly packed onto a Nation Guard flight to Iraq, but mistakenly parachuting into Mexico (where they dumbasses think is Iraq).

Georgia Rule - Jane Fonda as grandma and Felicity Huffman as Mommy Dearest try to deal with hellion Lindsay Lohan. First...you take away her cocaine...and then the keys to any car.

Calendar Watch

Next week: [Shoot 'em Up](#), [3:10 to Yuma](#), *The Brothers Solomon*, *Hatchet*

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

[*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.

[Michael Clayton](#) - October 12th - 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"...this one

looks to be better than the first, with much more action as it focuses on England's defeat of the Spanish Armada.

[We Own the Night](#) - October
12th -

Joaquin Phoenix, Mark Wahlberg, and Eva Mendes in a story of a nightclub owner (Phoenix), his police officer brother (Wahlberg), and the conflict with the mobsters who

run Phoenix's nightclub. And yes, if you are counting, that's FOUR movies I deem "interesting" debuting on the same day. I get the feeling that will change, and some of them will move their release date.

[Rendition](#) - October 19th - 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
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- Animated flick with Jerry Seinfeld as a bee who files a lawsuit against mankind for eating honey.

Lions for Lambs -

November 9

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- 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, let's hope it's better than "The Invasion";), along with Sam Elliot and

Eva Green.

Leatherheads -

December 7

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- George Clooney in
an old fashioned
screwball comedy set

in 1925. George is an aging football legend who now owns a pro team, and is competing for the affections of Renee Zellweger with his star player.

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.

P.S., I Love You -
December 21
st

- Hillary Swank,
Gerard Butler, and
Harry Connick Jr.
in an award
contender about a
widow who
discovers love
letters written by
her recently

deceased husband
(Butler) that are
meant to help her
begin the next
chapter of her life.

The Other Boleyn

Girl - December
21st - Natalie
Portman as Anne
Boleyn, Scarlett
Johansson as her
sister Mary, and
Eric Bana as King
Henry VIII. I
expect this to blow

the tepid
Showtime series
"The
Tudors" out
of the English
Channel.

*Charlie Wilson's
War* - December
25th - 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.

*Sweeny Todd:
The Demon
Barber of Fleet
Street - Limited*

release in
December - Tim
Burton's
adaptation of the
macabre Steven
Sondheim
musical about a
deranged barber

bent on revenge
(Johnny Depp)
and the meat pie
baker that assists
him (Helena
Bonham Carter),
who uses the
bodies to make

delicious snacks.

Untitled J.J.

Abrams Project -

January 18

th

- You've seen the buzz generating hand held camera trailer during "Transformers" and wondered what

it's all about. We
don't know yet,
but we're thinking
it should be fun.