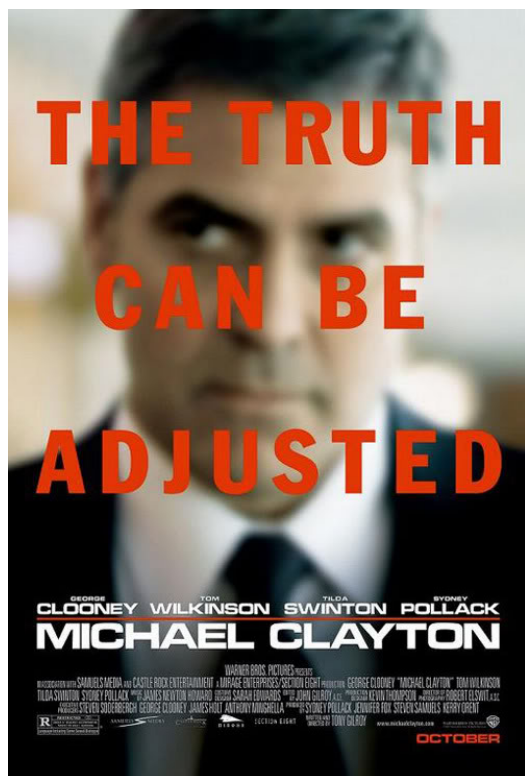


Best & Worst Movies Of 2007

Written by {ga=mitch}

Friday, December 28 2007 7:00 PM -

2007 wasn't a great year for movies, and you had to look a little harder to find them. But the year still produced a number of fine films, and Mitch gives us his ten best of the calendar year for us in his latest piece. Mitch also lists his five worst 2007 movies, the box office bombs and hidden gems, and also recaps his 2006 top ten list for us.



As we draw to the end of another year at The Cleveland Fan, what better time to look back on the past year...and then reach for the nearest bottle of absinthe.

So without further ado, let's all hold our noses and take a retrospective view of the last twelve months.

As with last year, I'm only listing movies that were released in 2007 that I actually saw for my "Best" and "Worst" list. I fully expect the Top Ten list to change once I finally get around to see "No Country for Old Men", "Charlie Wilson's War", "Juno", "There Will Be Blood", and "Atonement". I'm not saying all of them will be on the list, but given the current accolades they are getting, one or two will probably sneak on there.

Top Ten movies of 2007:

1. Michael Clayton. George Clooney plays a man who looks like George Clooney, but doesn't have his luck in this character study/thriller about a law firm's "fixer". Tom Wilkinson should get a best supporting actor nomination as Clooney's mentor, a civil trial lawyer who has went off his meds, and threatens to blow up a billion dollar lawsuit.

2. Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street. Possibly the best Tim Burton movie ever as he once again teams up with Johnny Depp to do what I thought would have been impossible; bringing Steven Sondheim's gory tale of revenge to the screen, keeping intact the main component: It's 90% singing.

3. 3:10 to Yuma. Christian Bale and Russell Crowe are nothing short of amazing in this remake of the classic Glenn Ford/Van Heflin western. Decent-but-broke rancher Bale volunteers to escort infamous outlaw Crowe to a train station to meet a prison train...with Crowe's gang in hot pursuit. The performances really take off in the middle, where it turns into a psychological game between the two men.

4. Eastern Promises. David Cronenberg scores again with his look inside the Russian Mafia operating in London. Naomi Watts is the midwife poking around to find the identity of a newborn orphaned at birth. Viggo Mortensen shines as the driver/bodyguard to the Mob Chief's eldest son.

5. 300. THIS IS SPARTA!!!! Perhaps the most macho movie of the decade. History buffs aren't enamored with it, but this isn't Oliver Stone's dreadful "Alexander"; attempt on history, it's a graphic novel brought to life by the master of the genre, Frank Miller.

6. Gone Baby Gone. Who knew that Ben Affleck could be such a talented director? Or that Casey Affleck was one hell of an actor? Breakout film for both

brothers in a tale from the author of "Mystic River" concerning the search for a missing little girl.

7. American Gangster. Denzel Washington once again delivers one of his mesmerizing performances as the 70s N.Y. drug lord who smuggled heroin back in the transport coffins of dead Vietnam War soldiers. Russell Crowe dials down the bombastic-ness as the cop on his trail.

8. The Bourne Ultimatum. Paul Greengrass brings to vibrant life Tony Gilroy's superb script in the final part of what may only be the first arc of Bourne films. The first was Bourne finding out who he was. The second was about learning what he did. This one focuses on Bourne discovering the "why?" of it all. Matt Damon is incredible in the role, and it all ties up nicely in this one.

9. Hot Fuzz. Didn't catch this one until it came out on DVD, but it is a definite hidden gem. Simon Pegg ("Shaun of the Dead") stars as a hot-shot London super-cop who is transferred by his jealous co-workers to the "safest village in England". And then murders start happening. Hilarious combination of Benny Hill and "Shoot 'Em Up".

10. Ratatouille. Another one from the DVD list. What Brad Bird did with "The Incredibles" was shown to be no fluke by this wonderful tale of a rat who dreams to be a French chef. Great for all ages.

NOTE: Since my Top Ten list last year did not include several movies that I had not been able to see prior to my EOY column, I'll list them again here:

1. "The Departed";
2. "World Trade Center";
3. "Children of Men";
4. "Letters from Iwo Jima";

Best & Worst Movies Of 2007

Written by {ga=mitch}

Friday, December 28 2007 7:00 PM -

5. "Babel";
6. "The Queen";
7. "Casino Royale";
8. "Little Children";
9. Borat";
10. "Inside Man";

Bottom Five Movies of 2007.

5. Fantastic 4: The Rise of the Silver Surfer. And I was stupid enough to believe the trailers and think that this would be better than the first. Ioan Gurfudd and Jessica Alba have all the chemistry together as Chuck Norris and Richard Simmons.

4. Death Proof. Released to DVD as an extended version of Tarantino's half of "Grindhouse",. Quentin is losing his touch. 60 minutes of it is just girls talking like they were Jules and Vincent Vega yakking about French cheeseburgers. The other 30 minutes of chase scenes are decent, but Kurt Russell is wasted.

3. Because I Said So. Worst Netflix pick ever. A chick flick that even the most girly-girl (my daughter) will want to turn off half-way through.

2. Pathfinder. Karl Urban (Eomer in "Lord of the Rings",) as a Viking boy who gets left behind in the New World and ends up being the Native Americans' defender when the bad guys show back up. Stupid on every single level.

1. Smokin' Aces. Possibly the worst movie I've ever seen at a theater, and one that I would have walked out on had I not been there to review it. Tried to be super-hip, but was just super-lame. Never thought Jeremy Piven could suck. He

did. My first "Spergon Wynn" rating on this site.

Dishonorable Mention (movies that were said by everyone to have stunk up the joint, so I didn't waste my money) "Norbit", "Good Luck Chuck", "I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry", "The Heartbreak Kid", and "The Reaping".

Box Office Bombs of the Year

1. Evan Almighty. The slightly naughty edge that Jim Carrey brought to "Bruce Almighty" was replaced with a bland family story with Steve Carrel, and it just didn't work.

2. Elizabeth: The Golden Age. Huge losses for what was supposed to be a big budget, high-quality follow-up to Cate Blanchett's acclaimed first turn as the iconic queen.

3. The Nanny Diaries. □ Didn't know whether to be a comedy or a drama...so it ended up being neither. Complete waste of the incredible cast of Scarlett Johansson, Laura Linney, and Paul Giamatti.

4. The Kingdom. □ Was supposed to be a big action-adventure hit, but was a victim of two things; a bad script and the nationwide rejection of all movies focusing on the Middle-East.

5. Lions for Lambs. See above for one of the reasons this failed. The other reason is that it was boring as hell.

Best & Worst Movies Of 2007

Written by {ga=mitch}

Friday, December 28 2007 7:00 PM -

Winner of the Year: Denzel Washington. Coming up big at the end of the year with his star turn in "American Gangster"; and as director/star of the critically acclaimed "The Great Debaters";

Loser of the Year: Nicole Kidman. Three bombs in one year with "The Invasion", "The Golden Compass"; and "Margot at the Wedding";.

Guilty Pleasure of the Year: "Shoot 'Em Up";. Stupid, stupid movie that's just a live action version of Elmer Fudd continuing to shoot Daffy Duck's bill off. But Clive Owen and Paul Giamatti make it fun to watch.

Over-rated Film of the Year: "Transformers";. Steven Spielberg's involvement was probably the only thing that kept this from being a Bottom Five contender due to director Michael Bay's typically horrid job.

Upon Further Review: 3 ½ Footballs for "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End";? 2 Footballs for "Ghost Rider";? (Should have been a 1). What the hell was I drinking?

Have a Happy New Year, and see ya' in the popcorn line next year!