

## The Crystal Ball - March 28 Releases

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Finally! That's what Mitch says in this week's Crystal Ball. Finally it appears there may be a movie worth seeing at the theater here in '08, as Mitch will set out this weekend to review &quot;21&quot; for us. It releases to theaters today, stars Kevin Spacey, and is the story of the MIT kids that took down Vegas casinos with an elaborate blackjack card counting scheme. As he does each Friday, Mitch looks at all the new releases at the theater and on DVD in his Friday night weekly column.



A movie being released this week that actually looks like it might be worth the \$\$ to see it in the theater?

Whodathunkit?

## News and Rumors

~ Numerous Leonardo DiCaprio sightings. Seems he continues to be the actor of choice for the best directors in the business. This year he'll be seen with Kate Winslet and Kathy Bates in Sam Mendes' 50s based drama &quot;Revolutionary Road&quot;. Also in 2008 will be Ridley Scott's political thriller &quot;Body of Lies&quot; with Russell Crowe. He follows that with TWO Martin Scorsese films, the mystery &quot;Shutter Island&quot;, and as Teddy Roosevelt in &quot;The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt&quot;. And then when he gets done with all of that, it's back

to work for Ridley Scott in &quot;The Low Dweller&quot;, as an ex-con trying to re-acclimate himself to civilian life during the mid-80s. Busy man.

~ Elizabeth Banks has been added to the cast of Oliver Stone's upcoming biography of George W. Bush. Banks will portray Laura Bush opposite Josh Brolin as the Prez. Jeffrey Wright (&quot;Casino Royale&quot;) will play Colin Powell, and James Cromwell is in negotiation to play George H.W. Bush. No word on casting for Dick Cheney yet, although Robert Duvall has been mentioned. I guess Darth Vader wasn't available. I still just don't see how this thing could be anything other than a train wreck of &quot;Alexander&quot; proportions.

~ Bruce Willis' new project is called &quot;Surrogates&quot;. Johnathan Mostow (&quot;Terminator 3&quot;) will direct the sci-fi adaptation of a graphic novel telling of a world where humans live in isolation and interact vicariously through surrogate robots who are better looking versions of themselves. Willis will play a cop (naturally) who, through his surrogate, investigates the murders of other surrogates. Confused? Me too.

~ Stupid remake news. Jason Statham will reprise his role as Chev Chelios in one of my Bottom Five pictures from 2006, &quot;Crank&quot;. For those of you who saw the movie, you may be wondering how that was possible since it ended with Chev falling a half mile from a helicopter. But that's Hollywood.

~ Earlier I reported of a remake that I may like: "The Taking of Pelham 123", with Tony Scott directing. I liked it even more when I heard that Denzel Washington and James Gandolfini will be in the cast. That offsets the bad news that John Travolta will also be in it. Denzel is the good guy, Travolta the bad guy, and Gandolfini is the mayor of New York. Kind of hard to whack someone from that position.

## **This week's new movie releases:**

**21**

Starring: Kevin Spacey, Jim Sturgess, Kate Bosworth

Plot: Six MIT math geniuses are trained by one of their professors in the art of card counting, and subsequently take a handful of Vegas casinos for millions.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: I'm on record for very much disliking movies that claim to be "true stories" and then totally disregarding the facts. At least with this one, they say "inspired by a true story"...so I won't get so upset

when they don't follow the real life event as depicted in the Ben Mezrich book &quot;Bringing Down the House&quot;. I'll let you know next week whether I'm upset with the movie in general. But early buzz has been that it's an entertaining watch.

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## Run, Fat Boy, Run

Starring: Simon Pegg, Thandie Newton, Hank Azaria

Plot: Five years after he left his pregnant fiancée at the alter, the corpulent Dennis preps for a real life marathon with real life romantic consequences hanging in the balance.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: I love Simon Pegg movies. &quot;Shaun of the Dead&quot; and &quot;Hot Fuzz&quot; are two of the funniest movies I've seen in years. Unfortunately, those movies had

Pegg collaborating with director Edgar Wright and playing opposite of Nick Frost. This one is directed by David Schwimmer and there is no sighting of Nick Frost anywhere. Pegg is great...but I think this may be too much to overcome.

My Estimated Rating: Kelly Holcomb (2 footballs)

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## Stop-Loss

Starring: Ryan Phillippe, Abbie Cornish, Joseph Gordon-Levitt

Plot: Back home in Texas after fighting in Iraq, a soldier refuses to return to battle despite the government mandate requiring him to do so.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: This is going to be another in the long line of films about the war in Iraq that is going to absolutely bomb. And this one won't be simply because people don't yet want to spend their hard earned entertainment dollar on a depressing film about a depressing situation that is still going on...it will also be due to the fact that it's a muddled mess of a film.

My Estimated Rating: Jeff Garcia (1 football).

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## **Superhero Movie**

Starring: Drake Bell, Leslie Nielsen, Sara Paxton

Plot: A takeoff on superhero movies.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: Another total piece of crap movie in the same vein as "Meet the Spartans", "Date Movie" and "Scary Movie". Don't bother.

My Estimated Rating: Mike Phipps (1/2 football).

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## ***New DVD Releases for Tuesday, April 1<sup>st</sup>***

**[Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street](#)** - One of my top three movies of the year, along with "Juno" and "Michael Clayton". Brilliant adaptation of the Stephen Sondheim dark, gory musical about a demented barber's quest for vengeance against the sadistic judge who banished him to Australia so he could steal his wife and baby daughter. Johnny Depp is simply amazing in the role, and his singing isn't

great, but it's perfect for the part. Lots of throat slashing and cannibalism...so it's not for the kiddies.

**Alvin and the Chipmunks** - This one is for the kiddies. Jason Lee takes on the role of David Seville, manager for three CGI singing rodents. It made a ton at the box office, and is pretty good for the younger ones...but not necessarily great entertainment for the adults.

## ***Calendar Watch***

Next week: [Leatherheads](#), *Nim's Island*, *The Ruins*

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

[88 Minutes](#) - April 18<sup>th</sup> - Al Pacino as a college professor and forensic psychiatrist for the FBI receiving death threats telling him he only has 88 minutes to live.

*Deception* - April 25<sup>th</sup> - Hugh Jackman and Ewan McGregor in an &quot;Eyes Wide Shut&quot; sort of tale about a mild mannered accountant becoming entangled in the goings-on at an underground sex club.

[Iron Man](#) - May 2<sup>nd</sup> - The latest mega-budgeted superhero flick. Looks very promising, and the casting of Robert Downey, Jr. as the alcoholic billionaire who designs a supersuit.

[Speed Racer](#) - May 9<sup>th</sup> - Emile Hirsch, Matthew Fox, and Christina Ricci as Speed, Racer X, and Trixie in the Wachowski Brothers' (&quot;The Matrix&quot; trilogy) adaptation of the campy 1960s Japanese anime.

[\*The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian\*](#) - May 16<sup>th</sup> - The same four kids from the first movie return to Narnia...1300 years after their last visit in that enchanted land's time frame, to help restore the throne to the rightful heir.

[\*Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull\*](#) - May 23<sup>rd</sup> - Spielberg and Ford team up one more time, with Cate Blanchett as the romantic interest, and Shia LaBeouf

(&quot;Transformers&quot;) as  
Indy's son.

[Sex and the City](#) - May 30<sup>th</sup> -  
The movie version of the HBO  
series hits the big screen. Can  
we guys get our share of this  
pie and have a movie version  
of &quot;Deadwood&quot;?

[The Incredible Hulk](#) - June

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Looks to be much, much better than the Ang Lee stink-fest, with Edward Norton taking on the role of Bruce Banner.

[Get Smart](#) - June 20<sup>th</sup> -

Steve Carell, Anne Hathaway, and Alan Arkin take on the roles of Maxwell

Smart, Agent 99 and The Chief. As much as I hate movie adaptations of television shows, this one has potential.

[Wall-E](#) - June 27<sup>th</sup> -

Pixar's next masterpiece, about a garbage cleaning robot who dreams of the stars.

*Wanted* - June 27<sup>th</sup> -  
Look for this to make a  
box office star out of  
James McAvoy  
(&quot;The Last King of  
Scotland&quot;;,  
&quot;Atonement&quot;)  
as he plays a young man  
brought into a secret  
society of assassins by a  
hot, hot looking Angelina  
Jolie. Morgan Freeman

plays their boss.

[Hancock](#) - July 4<sup>th</sup> - Will Smith as a hard-living superhero needing the use of a public relations professional (Jason Bateman) to repair his image.

*Hellboy II: The Golden Army* - July  
11<sup>th</sup> -

The big red cigar chomping demon with a bad attitude is back for more butt kicking.

*The Dark Knight* -

# July 19

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- Batman is back, and this time he's tracking the Joker, played by Heath Ledger. Most likely the box office champion of 2008.

*X-Files 2* - July 25<sup>th</sup> -

Little is known yet about these further adventures of Scully and Fox...not even the title.

*Quantum of Solace* -

# November 13

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- The next James Bond film, picking up shortly after the events ending "Casino Royale";

*Harry Potter and  
the Half-Blood  
Prince* - November  
21<sup>st</sup> - The  
sixth of J.K.  
Rowling's seven  
books, setting the  
stage for the two  
part conclusion in

# 2010 and 2011.