

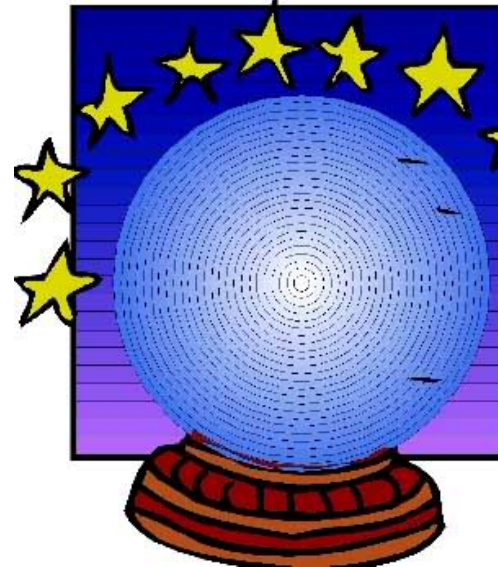
## The Crystal Ball - August 22 Releases

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Thursday, August 21 2008 7:00 PM -

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After four weeks at the top of the charts, finally, last week, "Tropic Thunder" knocked "The Dark Knight" out of the top spot. In any case, that didn't stop the Batman from becoming the second highest grossing film ever, now only behind "Titanic". Luckily, this weekend, we've got the Olympics and the Browns game on Saturday night, because this week's theater releases are weak. Mitch hits on all of them, as well as the week's DVD releases and Hollywood news and rumors in this week's Crystal Ball.



Last week, "Tropic Thunder" finally managed to dethrone "The Dark Knight" as the number 1 film, after four weeks at the top of the charts. In any case, that didn't stop the Batman from becoming the second highest grossing film ever, now only behind "Titanic".

That still doesn't mean that it's the most ticket sales, as ticket costs are much, much higher now than when Luke Skywalker first took to the silver screen.

In any case, next week I'll use this section of the Ball to talk about the Summer of 2008, as we look forward to Autumn, and a lot more adult fare.

## News and Rumors

~ The fanboys are up in arms about this one. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox studios has stated that they will be able to get an injunction

blocking the release of "Watchmen" in March of 2009. Seems Fox is arguing that they actually own the release rights to the DC Comic based film, which is already in the can. Fear not...I'd say there is only a very small chance that Warner Brothers won't reach a settlement with Fox on this one.

~ This is just so wrong. Universal studios is trying to entice fans of "Mamma Mia!" to return to the theaters over Labor Day by presenting a "Sing-Along Edition" of the film, complete with the lyrics of all the songs appearing at the bottom of the screen. My wife has already seen this film twice...once dragging me to it (I wasn't allowed to review it...but I think my best description might rhyme with "surgeon"). Thank God I'll be out of town for most of next weekend.

~ Paramount studios is planning to roll out newly restored editions of "The Godfather" and "The Godfather Part II" to theaters in September, prior to their release on DVD. My only question is if I can wait for it to be given to me as a Christmas gift. Doubtful...I'm sure I'll buy them the first few days they are out.

~ This bit of news gets to stand on it's own, rather than going into the next category. Due to the disappointment of 2006's "Superman Returns", director Bryan Singer and probably star Brandon Routh have been let go from any future projects. The studio is taking a hard look at the success of Christopher Nolan's Batman movies, and are looking at a way to reboot the Man of Steel in the same way.

**Stupid Remake and Sequel News:** A remake of "Poltergeist"...no casting news at this point, only hack writers. A movie about "Voltron"; filmed with the same technology used in "300". And a "Mission Impossible: 4" potential movie...but this one without Tom Cruise, who is said to be "too old".

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

Good thing you still have the last weekend of the Olympics, and the Browns game on Saturday night...because even though late August is always a dumping ground for crappy movies, this week really

takes the stinker cake.

No need for me to list individual estimated ratings.  
In the words of Ah-nuld in "True Lies";...

"They're ALL bad!"

## **Death Race**

**Starring:** Jason Statham, Joan Allen, Ian McShane

**Plot:** A former NASCAR champ is framed for murder so that he can drive in a notorious prison overseen by a warden that has created the country's most popular sport; a kill-or-be-killed car race.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: What the hell was such a great actress like Joan Allen thinking? I'm disappointed that Ian McShane is associated with this embarrassment as well, but I get the feeling his scene stealing character is the best part of it. Can this be considered a hybrid remake, as it not only takes the elements from the campy &quot;Death Race 2000&quot; (with Sly Stallone and Keith Caradine), but it's also a lame rip-off of &quot;The Running Man&quot; with the Governator, and Richard Dawson (his best movie role ever).

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**The House Bunny**

Starring: Anna Faris, Colin Hanks, Emma Stone

Plot: A Playboy bunny who was recently booted from the Mansion winds up becoming the new house mother for a sorority full of losers.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: Is this "Legally Blonde" meets "Animal House"? Who knows for certain, because I doubt anyone is going to go see it...especially when they learn that just because it's about Playboy, that doesn't mean there are going to be any naked girls in it.

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## The Longshots

Starring: Ice Cube, Keke Palmer

Plot: An eleven year old girl looks to be the first female to play in the Pop Warner football tournament.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: Something totally aimed at the family...which means that many parents are going to be bored stiff watching this totally formulaic sports flick that will pale in comparison to the pedestrian (but amusing) "Game Plan" from this time last year.

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## The Rocker

Starring: Rainn Wilson, Josh Gad

Plot: A former 80s hairband rock-god drummer leaps for a second chance after coercing his way into a garage band fronted by his nephew

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: Just as has happened for the last two weeks, we have a film that was released on Wednesday. This time, no one really noticed, as it barely reached the Top 10. An awful film with an awful idea, trying to make a leading man out of

&quot;Office&quot; star Wilson. I'm sure it'll be getting ignored on DVD in about a month.

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## ***DVD Releases for Tuesday, August 26<sup>th</sup>***

**What Happens In Vegas** - Dumb idea comedy that actually made some pretty decent money at the box office. Two drunk and stupid horny people (Ashton Kutcher, Catherine Diaz) end up getting MWI (Married While Intoxicated), and then hit for \$3 million before they can have it annulled. It co-stars Dennis Miller as the judge forcing them to live together. That should tell you how bad it is.

**Redbelt** - This might be a Mixed Martial Arts film that's worth taking a look at. Mostly due to the fact that it's written and directed by one of the best wordsmith's in the business, David Mamet, and the other because it stars the underappreciated Chiwetel Ejiofor. Tim Allen playing a smarmy MMA fight promoter is pretty intriguing as well.

## ***Calendar Watch***

Next week; Babylon A.D., College, Disaster Movie, Traitor

Upcoming Biggies (click on the

hyperlink to view the available trailers).

[\*Righteous Kill\*](#) - September 12<sup>th</sup> -  
Robert De Niro and Al Pacino together again as NY detectives working on a case that may be related to both a serial killer and a man they might have wrongly imprisoned years before.

[\*Burn After Reading\*](#) - September 12<sup>th</sup>  
- The latest Coen Brothers' movie, with Brad Pitt joining Frances McDormand, George Clooney, Tilda Swinton and John Malkovich in a dark comedy about missing memoirs

of a CIA agent.

[\*Eagle Eye\*](#) - September 26<sup>th</sup> - Shia LaBeouf and Michelle Monaghan as a slacker and a single mother who become unwitting members of a terrorist cell plotting a political assassination.

[\*Miracle at St. Anna\*](#) - September 26<sup>th</sup> - Spike Lee's tale of a a battalion of

black American soldiers who became trapped in a Tuscan village during WWII.

[The Express](#) - October 3<sup>rd</sup> - A must for Browns fans, the biographical tale of Syracuse running back Ernie Davis, the first African-American to win the Heisman Trophy.

[Body of Lies](#) - October 10<sup>th</sup> -  
Russell Crowe and Leonardo  
DiCaprio in Ridley Scott's  
spy tale of intrigue in the  
Middle East.

[Max Payne](#) - October 17<sup>th</sup> -  
Mark Wahlberg stars in the  
adaptation of the video  
game about a DEA agent  
out to avenge the deaths of

his family.

*Pride and Glory* - October  
24<sup>th</sup> -

Edward Norton and Colin Farrell in a story about a family of prominent NYC cops who are shaken to their core when a scandal is uncovered.

# *RocknRolla* - October 31 st

- Guy Ritchie hopefully back in form for another tale of London gangsters. Gerard Butler, Thandie Newton, Tom Wilkenson, and Jeremy Friggin' Piven star.

*Changeling* - October  
31<sup>st</sup> - Clint  
Eastwood's latest Oscar  
potential, with Angelina  
Jolie as a Prohibition  
era mother who begins  
to think that the  
kidnapped son who was  
returned to her might  
not really be hers.

# *Quantum of Solace* -

# November 7

th

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

[Australia](#) - November

14<sup>th</sup> - Baz

Luhrmann's epic tale  
set in WWII Australia.

With Nicole Kidman  
and Hugh Jackman.

Think "Gone  
with the Wind"  
with kangaroos.

# *The Road* - November 28 th

- Viggo Mortensen as a man walking with his son for months across a ravaged, post-apocalyptic landscape in search of civilization.

Charlize Theron  
co-stars.

*The Day the Earth  
Stood Still* -  
December 12  
th

- Keanu Reeves in a

remake of the  
classic 1951 sci-fi  
film.

*Twilight* -

December 12  
th

- the adaptation of the popular book series concerning a relationship between a non-blood drinking vampire and a teenaged girl.

# *Defiance* - December 12 th

- Daniel Craig and  
Live Schreiber as  
Jewish brothers in  
WWII Russian,  
leading a band of  
refuges in striking

back at the  
Germans. A major  
early Oscar  
contender

*Revolutionary*  
*Road* - December

19<sup>th</sup> -

Leonardo  
DiCaprio and Kate  
Winslet as a  
young couple  
raising a family in  
a Connecticut  
suburb during the  
mid 1950s. Sam

Mendes  
(“American  
Beauty”)  
directs the  
“Titanic”  
stars in their  
on-screen reunion.

# *The Spirit* -

# December 25

th

- Frank Miller's  
next comic book  
adaptation, done  
in the same style  
as "Sin

# City&quot;.

*Watchmen* - March 6, 2009 - The screen version of what is arguably

graphic novelist  
Alan Moore's  
greatest work.

**Blockbusters on**

**the Distant  
Horizon (movies  
that would seem  
to be big hits...as  
soon as they get  
made or  
released).**

*X-Men Origins:  
Wolverine* - May  
1, 2009 - Hugh  
Jackman goes it  
alone as the  
adamantium  
enhanced  
anti-hero. With

Live Schreiber as  
Sabertooth, and  
Ryan Reynolds  
as Deadpool.

*Star Trek* - May

8, 2009 - J.J.  
Abrams and a  
young cast  
reboot the  
franchise, going  
back to Kirk and  
Spock's days at  
Starfleet

# Academy.

*Angels and  
Demons* - May  
15, 2009 - Tom  
Hanks and Ron

# Howard follow-up to "The DaVinci Code";

*Terminator 4* - M

ay 22, 2009 -  
Christian Bale as  
John Conner as  
the franchise  
moves into the  
apocalyptic  
future.

*Transformers 2* -  
June 26, 2009 -  
The next chapter  
of Robots In  
Disguise!

*Public Enemy* - July 1, 2009 -  
Johnny Depp as John Dillinger.  
Co-starring  
Christian Bale,  
and directed by  
Michael Mann

*Harry Potter and  
the Half-Blood  
Prince* - July  
2009 - The sixth  
of J.K. Rowling's  
seven books,  
setting the stage  
for the two part

conclusion in  
2010 and 2011.

*The Taking of  
Pelham 123- Aug  
ust 7, 2009 -*

Denzel  
Washington,  
John Travolta,  
and James  
Gandolfini in a  
remake of the  
classic 1974 film  
about a hijacked

subway car.

*Shutter Island* -  
October, 2009 -  
Martin Scorsese  
working once

again with  
Leonardo  
DiCaprio in this  
mystery set in  
1954.

*Nottingham* - November, 2009 - Ridley Scot and Russell Crowe together again in a retelling of the Robin Hood legend, this time

through the eyes  
of the Sheriff of  
Nottingham  
(Crowe). With  
Sienna Miller as  
Maid Marion.

*Avatar* - Decemb  
er 18, 2009 -  
James  
Cameron's  
sci-fi/CGI  
extravaganza.  
The C.I.A. should  
take lessons

about secrecy  
from Cameron,  
as he's keeping  
info about this  
film very much to  
himself at this  
time.

*Iron Man 2* - May  
, 2010 - Right on  
the heels of the  
success of the  
first one, Marvel  
is quick to get  
Robert Downey  
Jr. back into his

titanium suit.

*The Chronicles of  
Narnia: The  
Voyage of the  
Dawn Treader -*

May, 2010 - The series goes off in a bit of a different direction, as those of you who love the books already know.

*Thor* - June 2010  
- Another Marvel  
superhero...but  
the Nordic God is  
about as bland  
personality-wise  
as Superman, so  
we'll see how it

goes.

*Harry Potter and  
the Deathly  
Hallows: Part I -  
2010 - The start*

of the End for the  
boy wizard and  
his battle against  
He-Who-Shall-no  
t-Be-Named

*Lincoln* - 2010 -  
Steven Spielberg  
directs the  
biographical film  
of the 16  
th

President (Liam  
Neeson)

*The Hobbit* -  
2010 - Guillermo  
del Toro directs  
and Peter  
Jackson will  
produce the  
prequel to  
&quot;Lord of

the Rings&quot;. Ian McKellen will return as Gandalf

*Fantastic*

*Voyage* - 2010 -  
Roland  
Emmerich  
("The Day  
After  
Tomorrow"  
, "10,000  
B.C.")

remakes the  
classic 1967  
movie about a  
miniaturized sub  
and crew  
operating on a  
scientist from  
inside his brain.

*The Avengers* -  
2011 - Iron Man,  
Hulk, Thor, and  
Captain America  
open up a can of  
whoopass on  
bad guys  
everywhere.

*Harry Potter and  
the Deathly  
Hallows: Part II -  
2011 - The end  
of the line for  
what will be  
beyond doubt  
the most*

profitable series  
in the history of  
film making.

*The Hobbit 2* -  
2011 - del Toro

and Jackson  
again, this time  
covering the  
time between  
the end of  
Tolkien's book,  
&quot;The  
Hobbit&quot;

and the start of  
LOTR.