

The Crystal Ball - January 16 Releases

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Friday night on The Cleveland Fan means it's once again Crystal Ball time here on the site. This week, Mitch previews the six films that hit the theaters this weekend as well as the five films that release on DVD. He also touches on the Golden Globes, which took place this past week, and tells our readers what happened and which films are likely to be the five nominated for Best Picture at the Academy Awards. Stay warm this weekend! It's movies Friday and Saturday night for me, with football on Sunday ...



The Golden Globes were held last weekend...so what did we learn?

* Slumdog Millionaire will go into the Oscars as the film to beat, as it cleaned up at the Globes.

* Probably the only other "sure thing" for Best Picture will be "Frost/Nixon". The other three nominations will be between "The Reader", "Gran Torino", "Doubt", "Revolutionary Road", "The Wrestler", and "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button", with "The Dark Knight" and "WALL-E" being the dark horses.

* Angelina Jolie will probably still be nominated for Best Actress, but I don't think she has a chance to win it. Not with Kate Winslet winning the Golden Globe for Best Actress, and Anne Hathaway winning the Critics Choice award over Brad's Old Lady for "Rachel Getting Married".

* Mickey Rourke should probably go ahead and get a spot ready on his display case for his Oscar. And look for Heath Ledger to be even more of a lock to win Best Supporting Actor.

One final personal note: This weekend I don't lose a daughter, I gain a great son-in-law as my eldest child Erin gets married to Aaron Fisher. Congratulations to the couple, and my best wishes to both for years and years to come.

News and Rumors

~ "Watchmen" will be released on March 6th, as planned. Terms weren't disclosed, but it was commonly believed that Warner Brothers would pay Fox cash, and a percentage of the profit. No skin off my nose, I'm just glad to see that the movie will be released on schedule.

~ I am starting to get a little worried that Iron Man may be falling victim to the same problem that befell Spider-Man...having too many villains. Emily Blunt ("The Devil Wears Prada") is said to be in line to play The Black Widow in the film. We've already been told that Mickey Rourke and Sam Rockwell will be in the film as villains, so it's getting a bit crowded.

~ We have an end point for the television series "24". The TV show will end after its eighth season

(it just started Season 7). After which, it will go to the big screen as a movie. I guess Jack won't be dying off this year, then...unless he's like Tony and can be brought back (oh, wait...they did that before as well).

~ Another TV series appears headed for the silver screen. The excellent, but short lived series "Jericho" has inspired a movie. Skeet Ulrich at least will reprise his role at the top of the billing. The movie would focus on an American wide look at the attacks at the center of the series, rather than just from the point of view of those people in that small Kansas town.

~ Plans are in the works for a biopic of the life of Steve McQueen. No word on casting at this point. Johnny Depp, anyone?

Stupid Remakes and Sequels

~ A second "Sex and the City" movie has been confirmed (previously just rumored). Gag.

~ Rumors of a "Scream 4" are being heard.

Double-gag.

~ In the upcoming remake of "The Karate Kid", it will be Jaden Smith playing the bullied boy taught to fight, and Jackie Chan playing Mr. Miyagi. Please just wax off this idea.

This week's new movie releases:

Defiance (expanding)

Starring: Daniel Craig, Liev Schreiber, Jamie Bell

Plot: In 1941, three Jewish brothers organize the largest armed rescue of Jews during the Holocaust

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: For some reason, this one isn't getting a great deal of love from many critics, although there are an equal amount that find this film Oscar-worthy.

Perhaps a little more action-adventure type scenes for this to be considered a "serious" film, but the subject matter is worth talking about, as this is based on a true story. I'll let you know what I think in the next week or so.

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Paul Blart: Mall Cop

Starring: Kevin James, Keir O'Donnel

Plot: When a shopping mall is overtaken by a gang of organized crooks, it's up to a mild-mannered security guard to save the day.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: This just looks dumb beyond belief...and the fact that it's being released in the wasteland of January should tell you that it's not even going to be one of those dumb movies that you can still have fun watching.

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My Bloody Valentine 3-D

Starring: No one worth talking about

Plot: A man returns to his hometown on the tenth anniversary of a Valentine's night massacre that killed 22 people. And it starts up again...so guess who gets the blame?

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: Clever advertising campaign on this, selling it as a date movie to go to just to enjoy the over-the-top antics...as opposed to trying to sell it as a serious horror film. And as it's looking right now, if you are into the genre (as we all know I'm not), this will be a good flick for you. Of all the films being released this weekend, it has the highest rating at Rottentomatoes.

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Notorius

Starring: Jamal Woolard, Anthony Mackie, Derek Luke

Plot: The story of the rise of Christopher Wallace, who became better known to the world as the rapper Notorious B.I.G.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: Another one with very split reviews. The consensus, however, is that it is a good subject, and the acting is decent, but it really suffers from a lack of talent behind the camera.

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Hotel for Dogs

Starring: Emma Roberts, Jake T. Austin, Lisa Kudrow

Plot: Orphaned teens are sent to live with their aunt. But once they meet a stray dog who needs their help, the siblings turn to a nearby abandoned house and turn it into a canine hostel.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: Another dog film. I'm about pooched out. This one is aimed strictly at children, and the plot is said to be very simplistic and predictable.

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Last Chance Harvey (expanding)

Starring: Dustin Hoffman, Emma Thompson

Plot: In London for his daughter's wedding (sounds familiar...except the London thing), a ruffled man finds his romantic spirits lifted by a new woman in his life.

The BeerBuzz: This one is getting some buzz for possible darkhorse Oscar consideration. A Romantic

Drama instead of a Romantic Comedy, it is getting praise for an above-average story that really shines with the chemistry between Hoffman and Thompson.

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New DVD Releases for Tuesday, January 20th

The Express - Very good football movie with a connection to the Browns, as it focuses primarily on the college career of Ernie Davis, the first African-American to win the Heisman Trophy. I don't like the stretches they made in the facts, especially the depiction of Art Modell, but that's really minor.

Max Payne - One of my Bottom Five movies of 2008. Another case of trying to adapt a video game

into a movie, with the people in charge totally forgetting about adding a plot. That may be OK in a movie like "Hitman", that is still entertaining. This one isn't.

Saw V - At least you know what you're going to be getting in these movies. The problem is, each one has been a bit worse than the last.

City of Ember - Major tank job at the box office for this film, with a couple of kids trying to find a way to get back to the surface of the Earth after the entire population had been having to live underground for centuries.

Igor - A bad, bad cartoon. Let's put it this way, when an animated film can't even make \$20 million at the box office, you can rest assured that it sucks.

Calendar Watch

Next week: [Frost / Nixon](#) (expanding to 800 theaters), [Revolutionary Road](#) (expanding to 800 theaters), *Slumdog Millionaire* (expanding to 1000 theaters), *Underworld: Rise of the Lycans, Inkheart*

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

[The Wrestler](#) - January (unannounced wide release date) - Mickey Rourke is picking up early Oscar buzz in this character study of a professional wrestler nearing the end of his performing days.

[*Taken*](#) - January 30th - Liam Neeson goes against type as a former special ops leader hot on the trail of slave traders who abducted his daughter.

[*The International*](#) - February 13 - Clive Owen and Naomi Watts in a thriller about an Interpol investigation of a world-wide bank funding murder and corruption. And you thought Wachovia was bad?

[*Watchmen*](#) - March 6 - The screen version of what is arguably graphic novelist Alan Moore's greatest work.

[*Duplicity*](#) - March 20 - Clive Owen again,

this time teaming with Julia Roberts as corporate spies looking to pull a con job of their own. Directed by Tony Gilroy ("Michael Clayton").

The Lovely Bones - March 27 - Peter Jackson's latest, about the ghost of a young, murdered girl watching over her family and friends' reactions to the event. Mark Wahlberg and Rachel Weisz star.

[X-Men Origins: Wolverine](#) - May 1 - Hugh Jackman goes it alone as the adamantium enhanced anti-hero. With Lieke Martens as Sabertooth, and Ryan Reynolds as Deadpool.

[Star Trek](#) - May 8 - 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 - Tom Hanks and Ron Howard follow-up to "The DaVinci Code";

[Terminator: Salvation](#) - May 22 - Christian Bale as John Conner as the franchise moves into the apocalyptic future.

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

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

[2012](#) - July 10 - Roland Emmerich's ("The Day After Tomorrow") tale of global cataclysm and the struggle of the survivors.

[Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince](#) - July 17 - 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- August 7 - Denzel Washington, John Travolta, and

James Gandolfini in a remake of the classic 1974 film about a hijacked subway car.

9 - September 9 - Tim Burton's latest animated strangeness, with Elijah Wood and Jennifer Connelly voicing characters fighting aliens in a post apocalyptic world.

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

The Road - (unannounced release date) - 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.

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 - December 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-not-Be-Named

Lincoln - 2010 - Steven Spielberg directs the biographical film of the 16th President (Liam Neeson)

The Hobbit - 2010 - Guillermo del Toro directs and Peter Jackson will produce

the prequel to "Lord of the Rings". 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, "The Hobbit" and the start of LOTR.