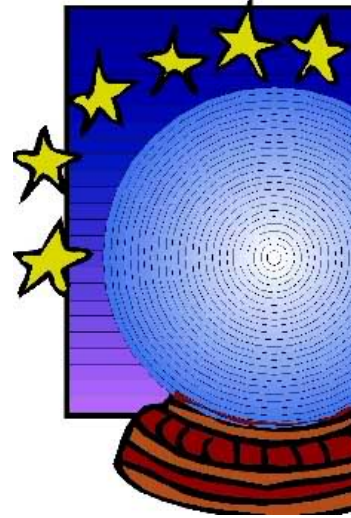


The Crystal Ball - Aug 4 Releases

Written by {ga=mitch}

Thursday, August 03 2006 7:00 PM -

In this weeks Crystal Ball, Mitch previews 'Talladega Nights' and 'World Trade Center' ... the two biggest Friday releases at the theaters this week. Mitch also hits on the films coming out on DVD, and the latest Hollywood rumors and future film news and developments.



There are no additional films coming out this summer that fit under the category of "Blockbuster" (neither "World Trade Center" nor "Snakes on a Plane" fit the usual criteria), so it's safe to do a post-mortem on the movies of the Summer of 2006; and it's been a season of disappointment. "X-Men: The Last Stand", "The DaVinci Code", "Mission Impossible", "Poseidon", and "Superman Returns" all came in below studio expectations.

The winners? Obviously "Pirates of the Caribbean", which will pass last year's "Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith" in the next two weeks. Two animated flicks, "Cars" and "Over the Hedge" far exceeded expectations (to the detriment of other animations such as "The Ant Bully", "Monster House", and this week's Clunker-To-Be, "Barnyard"). And some comedies did better than expected as well, with "Click", "The Break Up" and "The Devil Wears Prada" all going over \$100 million at the box office.

One comedy that will certainly be joining that group is being released this week, along with three DOA films. I'll also be previewing Oliver Stone's "World Trade Center" as it will come out next Wednesday before my next article.

News and Rumors:

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~ Bummer. Jenifer Lopez is dropping out of "Dallas". Now what does THAT say about the quality of film this will be? It's like Will Farrell refusing a script because it's too stupid, or Marvin Lewis refusing to draft a player because he's been in too much trouble with the law. I hope they replace her with someone like Madonna so I can keep my snarky comments going.

~ An interesting blurb for sci-fi fanatics. Bill Pullman is set to star in a movie about sci-fi writer Philip K. Dick in an indie film called "Panasonic". The film about the writer of "Bladerunner", "Minority Report", and "A Scanner Darkly" will bounce back and forth between reality and fiction. Sort of like the tales of my love life I spout off at the local bar. OK...maybe not as much fiction as that.

~ Hugh Jackman is looking at starring in a remake of the classic (read: older than dirt) musical "Carousel". The only reaction I could possibly have would be the line by the immortal Jackie Gleason as Sheriff Bufford T. Justice..."what in the HELL is the world coming to?"

~ I found it quite disturbing this week that I watched a trailer of the upcoming "Rocky Balboa" movie and actually thought to myself "this may not be bad". Shudder. Luckily, I have the cure for that...news that "Rambo IV" begins filming in October. In it, Sly becomes the geriatric MacGyver, foiling the bad guys with booby traps made of Metamucil, Depends, and Dentu-Cream.

~ Speaking of geriatric remakes..."Die Hard IV" is set to start filming in September. John McClane sees how many terrorists he can kill with his walker.

This week's new releases:

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Title: **Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby**

Starring: Will Ferrell, John C. Reilly, Sacha Baron Cohen

Plot: Idiot makes a car go around and around faster than other idiots while morons in the stands drink lots of PBR and yell barnyard noises while eyeballing their cousins lustfully.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: I'm not sure what I hate more; Will Farrell or NASCAR, so I'm probably NOT the best person in the world to be trying to judge this impartially. But the buzz is that this will be a huge hit like "Anchorman". The funniest thing is that NASCAR has been allowing the movie to tie into the sport big time, and the movie is actually a nasty satire ridiculing the sport and the people who watch it, Southerners particularly. I must admit that getting Cohen, the twisted genius behind "Ali G" to play a gay French Formula One driver making a crossover to Tobacco Road is brilliantly evil. Gary Cole is also reported to steal the show as Ricky's shiftless father.

Title: **Barnyard; The Original Party Animals**

Starring: the voices of Kevin James, Courtney Cox, Sam Elliot

Plot: Talking cows talk, sing, dance, and have an udderly great time.

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[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: The biggest thing that people can't seem to get over regarding this movie (myself included), is the fact that it has male cows with udders. WTF is that? And they look like the bottom of a toilet plunger with four knobs attached. Sorry...this has the look of BOMB all over it.

Title: **The Night Listener**

Starring: Robin Williams, Toni Collette, Rory Culkin

Plot: A radio host takes an interest in a vexing manuscript from a young man. As the long distant friendship evolves, he begins to doubt the validity of it, and travels to New York to find the truth.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: Only Johnny Drama in "Entourage" can rival Robin Williams for bad choices in movie roles. Where the hell is Gus Van Zant or Barry Levinson when you need a director to give this talented guy a role that doesn't suck? I think even the five people in the U.S. that liked "Final Cut" may get bored to tears with this one.

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(Note: Here's an answer to my question above. Wait for October, when Robin will star in Barry Levinson's "Man of the Year", playing a Rush Limbaugh type windbag talk radio host who runs for president on a lark. Also starring Christopher Walken and Louis Black. Major, major potential here).

Title: **The Descent**

Starring: Shauna MacDonald, Natalie Jackson Mendoza, Alex Reid (no, I don't know who any of them are...but I'm sure they all look good on film getting naked and then being terrorized by something).

Plot: A group of women spelunkers are stalked by strange predators.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: At last! The first horror show in months for me to ridicule! After writing that "plot" summary...all that's going through my mind is "You got fins to the left/fins to the right/and you're the only bait in town". Women stalked by strange predators? I didn't know that it was a documentary about New Orleans at Mardi Gras. Or Las Vegas pretty much any day of the year.

Title: **World Trade Center** (Opens Wednesday, August 9th)

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Starring: Nicolas Cage, Michael Pena, Maria Bello

Plot: Based on the true story of the last two people saved from the rubble of the WTC.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: Like the earlier "United 93", this film has generated major controversy just due to the subject matter, with cries of "it's too soon" echoing throughout the country. But I think this is different. First off; it's not a downer like "United 93" where you know everyone that you are watching are going to die...the film focuses not on the events leading up to the crash or those responsible, but instead on those that risked their lives to save others, and where then rescued by other heroes. Oliver Stone has a well earned bad reputation for twisting history to suit his views of "Art". The buzz on this one is that he stayed true to the events, and this is shaping up to be possibly the best reviewed movie of the year. I'll let you know my opinion of it next week in a review.

New DVD Releases on Tuesday, August 8th

Inside Man – Still the best movie I have seen this year. Spike Lee goes commercial for the first time in his career and hits a home run with his gripping crime thriller about a slick criminal mastermind (Clive Owen), a possibly corrupt police negotiator (Denzel Washington) and a mysterious NY power broker muddying up the waters (Jodie Foster). Rent This Movie.

Larry the Cable Guy: Health Inspector – If you like this movie...you ARE a redneck.

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Manderlay – Bryce Dallas Howard in the second of Lars Van Trier’s trilogy about how much America sucks (Trier has never been to America, by the way); with this one centered on a place in Alabama where slavery still existed in 1930. Hell, you look at any cube-farm in corporate America in 2006 and you’ll still find it there (rim shot). “Dogville” was the first of these flicks, and I have no idea what the third one will be. If you are the type that would know, and likes them, then you have no business on Swerb’s Blurbs at all.

CSA: The Confederate States of America: Interesting indie “mockumentary” about what the country would be like had the South won the Civil War, interspersed with wicked little racist “commercials” showing that America could be much, much worse.

Prison Break: Season One – Just in time to catch up what you missed (or get you hooked) before Season Two starts.

Calendar Watch:

Next week: *World Trade Center (Wednesday)*, *Zoom*, *Pulse*, *Step Up*

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

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[Snakes On a Plane](#) : August 18th

[Invincible](#) : August 25th

[Crank](#) : September 1st (Jason Statham...The Transporter...as a poisoned hit man who is really pissed).

Lucky You: September 8th (Eric Bana gambling movie...possibly the life story of Swerb)

[All the King's Men](#) : September 22nd

[The Departed](#) : October 6th (Scorsese's latest with the Cast To Die For. Jack Nicholson, Matt Damon, Leonardo DiCaprio, Mark Wahlberg, Martin Sheen, Alec Baldwin, Ray Winstone)

Man of the Year: October 13th

Flags of Our Fathers: October 20th

A Good Year: November 10th (Ridley Scott's latest with a kinder, gentler Russell Crowe)

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Casino Royale (007): November 17th