

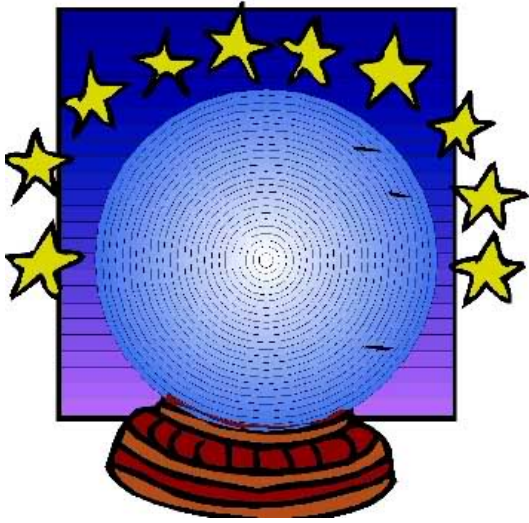
## The Crystal Ball - Aug 18 Releases

Written by {ga=mitch}

Thursday, August 17 2006 7:00 PM -

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"Snakes On A Plane" and "The Illusionist" are the big box office releases this weekend, but a host of notable flicks also get released on DVD as well today. Mitch is here as usual on Friday night to review all of these films, as well as to enlighten us as to the latest Hollywood news and gossip.



Three movies ended up within a few hundred thousands dollars of each other at the top of the Box Office scorecard last weekend: "Talladega Nights", "Step Up", and "World Trade Center". If that isn't a sign of full diversity, I don't know what would be. Although why anyone would pay money to see "Step Up" is a mystery I'd rather not explore.

### News & Rumors:

~ Next up in the land of Stupid Sequels is Ace Ventura 3. And no, Jim Carrey will not be starring in it, therefore the film will focus on Ace's son, who is taking over the business. I wonder how that one's going to work out...(eyes rolling)...after all, that bait-n-switch tactic of a hit Jim Carrey movie worked soooo well with "Son of the Mask" (\$74 million budget...\$17 million at the box office).

~ Stephen King fans rejoice. John Cusack, Samuel L. Jackson, and Mary McCormack are set to star in "1408", based on King's short story about a debunker of paranormal occurrences (Cusak) who encounters real terror when he checks into Room 1408 of Jackson's Dolphin Hotel. You want REAL terror at a hotel? I have some stories revolving around a hotel near the Browns Training Camp and some of the animals staying there that King couldn't dream up on his sickest days.

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~ Exceptions define the rule, and I may have found another exception to my rule of “TV Adaptations Suck”. Chris Nolan (“Momento”, “Batman Begins”) has signed on for a big screen adaptation of the quirky cult favorite “The Prisoner”, regarding a former spy who is kidnapped and placed in a freaky little village where he can’t escape. No sign yet as to whether the village is based upon Shelby, Ohio. Probably not, as that would be too bleak and EVERYONE would be trying to escape.

~ Sign of Suckitude To Come. Zak Penn, the hack that wrote “Elektra”, “X-Men 3”, and “Inspector Gadget” has been hired to pen the script for an adaptation of Marvel Comic’s “The Avengers”. Now all we need is Ang Lee directing and we’re guaranteed Gigli-esque wretchedness. Early casting for perfect Suckitude would be Michael Moore as Captain America, Chris Tucker as Black Panther, Jack Black as Thor , and Manute Bol as Ant Man.

### **This week’s new releases:**

Title: **Snakes On A Plane**

Starring: Samuel L. Jackson, Julianna Margulies, Nathan Phillips, and a frickin’ plane of snakes.

Plot: There are some snakes on a plane....d’uh.

[View Trailer](#)

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The BeerBuzz: No movie has ever generated as much Internet Buzz as this one. So much so that the studio re-shot some scenes, adding in more nudity and cursing...because what Samuel L. Jackson movie would be complete without him dropping f-bombs at "Deadwood" levels? Supposedly this is going to be a major fright fest, so if you're like me and have a spouse that screams during "jump scare" scenes (like the head popping out of the sunken boat in "Jaws"), take some earplugs and don't be stupid enough to be holding her hand during the movie, or it might get broken. Will the final product be up to the challenge of the hype? My guess is on "for the most part"...meaning a very good scary flick, but I think it might suffer a bit from the over-kill it's already received, so expect some backlash from some of the more anal retentive critics.

Title: **The Illusionist**

Starring: Edward Norton, Jessica Biel, Paul Giamatti

Plot: Norton plays an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century magician dealing with an inspector (Giamatti) hired to debunk him.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: I like the plot line and the cast, but this is one of those films that was previewed at Sundance to universal yawns. So look for the biggest trick to be how quickly this film can disappear from our collective memories as Chris Nolan's "The Prestige" will make the bigger splash in October. As a comparison, you can view the trailer of this film and then check out the trailer for "The Prestige" on the Calendar Watch. The Illusionist pales in comparison.

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Title: **Accepted**

Starring: That dude that plays a Mac computer in those "Mac/IBM" commercials, and some other people that might have been seen as waiters in Olive Garden spots.

Plot: High School slacker is rejected from every college so he invents his own to con his parents, but soon multiple losers enroll as well.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: Revenge of the Nerds type film garnered toward the fourteen year old boy in all of us. Yeah, right. The only thing this one has going for it is caustic comedian Lewis Black playing the man the kids "hire" to be the dean of the new college.

Title: **Material Girls**

Starring: The entire Duff family.

Plot: Cosmetic heiress sisters get a wake up call when a scandal strips them of their wealth

[View Trailer](#)

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**The BeerBuzz:** There are so many days when I am grateful that my daughter is no longer twelve years old...like now, so she won't be dragging me to see this debacle. The only good thing to say about it is that Hillary Duff is nowhere near as annoying as Lindsay Lohan.

### New DVD Releases on Tuesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Poseidon** – Big Boat gets hit by a Big Wave (a...ahem..."Rouge Wave". Let's not be politically incorrect and call it a tsunami) and turns upside down. Thousands die, but we're supposed to forget about all of that and cheer for the several that aren't stupid or unlucky. Actually, it's not a bad adventure flick, worth the \$4 at Blockbuster. Josh Lucas, Kurt Russell, and Richard Dreyfus do a great job. Other than the boat name and the big wave thing, this has nothing to do with the 1974 film "The Poseidon Adventure".

**Silent Hill** – Creep-fest that is a cut above the average. (A "cut"...I just slay me). Rhada Mitchell goes looking for what happened in the desolate town of Silent Hill, WV. Make up your own West Virginia jokes here.

**Phat Girlz** – I'm wondering if Phil Savage and Romeo Crennell are checking out the actresses in this film to see if any of them can play center.

**Just My Luck:** The aforementioned Lindsay Lohan in a plot that no one over the age of 13 could possibly give a rat's ass about. But if you happen to be stuck watching it with your ten year old, amuse yourself by counting the scenes where you can tell that the pathetic and spoiled Lohan was shitface drunk or hung over during the filming.

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**Elizabeth I** – Save yourself the trouble and rent the superior Cate Blanchett movie if you want to see the life of the famous queen (and I don't mean Rupaul).

### Calendar Watch:

Next week: *Invincible*, *Idlewild*, *Beerfest*, *How to Eat Fried Worms*

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

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

[Hollywoodland](#) : September 8<sup>th</sup> - Adrien Brody plays an investigator looking into whether or not the death of Superman actor George Reeve (Ben Afflack (gack!)) was a suicide or murder.

[The Black Dahlia](#) – September 15<sup>th</sup> – Brian DePalma's latest, a film noir treatment of a James Ellroy novel. Scarlett Johansson looks totally hot in it.

[All the King's Men](#) : September 22<sup>nd</sup> Sean Penn, Jude Law, and James Gandolfini in

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the classic remake of the thinly veiled tale of the life of Louisiana governor Huey Long.

[Children of Men](#) – September 29<sup>th</sup> – Futuristic movie with Clive Owen and Julianna Moore where women can no longer bear children, and mankind seems doomed to extinction until one woman mysteriously becomes pregnant

[The Departed](#) : October 6<sup>th</sup> - Scorsese's latest with the Cast To Die For. Jack Nicholson, Matt Damon, Leonardo DiCaprio, Mark Wahlberg, Martin Sheen, Alec Baldwin, and Ray Winstone in a story about a cop (Leo) who has infiltrated the mob, and a mobster (Damon) who has infiltrated the cops.

*Man of the Year*: October 13<sup>th</sup> – Robin Williams as a Rush Limbaugh type commentator who runs for President.

*Flags of Our Fathers*: October 20<sup>th</sup> - Director Clint Eastwood's tale of the men who raised the flag on Iwo Jima.

[The Prestige](#) : October 20<sup>th</sup> – Christopher Nolan (Momento) directs Hugh Jackman, Christian Bale, and Scarlett Johansson in a turn of the century mystery about two magicians. This one has some great early buzz.

[Lucky You](#) : October 27<sup>th</sup> Eric Bana/Drew Barrymore movie centering around the Poker Craze and the World Series of Poker.

[A Good Year](#) : November 10<sup>th</sup> - Ridley Scott's latest with a kinder, gentler Russell Crowe and

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a plot line revolving around a vineyard. Crowe and booze...always an interesting combination.

[Casino Royale](#) : November 17<sup>th</sup> - Daniel Craig in his first appearance as 007. Good early buzz on this one.

[The Fountain](#) : November 22<sup>nd</sup> – Hugh Jackman as a 16<sup>th</sup> Century Conquistador who finds the real fountain of youth and spends 1000 years searching for a way to save his love.

*Déjà Vu*: November 22<sup>nd</sup> – Denzel Washington in a Tony Scott time travel adventure.

[Rocky Balboa](#) – December 22<sup>nd</sup> – Adrian!!!! I want to watch Matlock!!!!

*The Good Shepherd* – December 22<sup>nd</sup> – Robert Di Niro directs Matt Damon, Anjelina Jolie and himself in a tale of the early years of the CIA.

*Dreamgirls* – December 25<sup>th</sup> – Big budget adaptation of the Broadway musical with Beyonce, Jamie Foxx and Eddie Murphy.