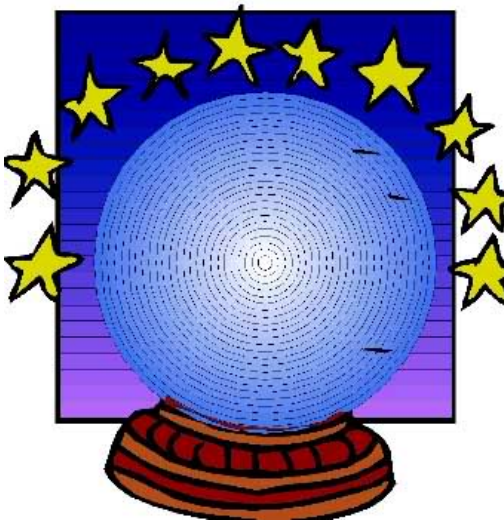
It's Friday night, and that means it's Crystal Ball time here at The Blurbs. While this is a crap week for theater releases, it's a good one for DVD releases with "Pirates" and "Miami Vice" leading the way. Mitch also gives us the skinny on the latest Hollywood projects, rumors, and news ... including a sequel to The DaVinci Code being in the works.



Blind Pig; meet acorn.

As predicted, “Déjà Vu” finished in third place last week, behind “Happy Feet” and “Casino Royale”. What? You want to remind me that I also said it would be the only new movie in the Top 5, and that “Deck the Halls” ended up #4? In the immortal words of Charlie Brown; “Tell your statistics to shut up”.

A couple of other comments about the current releases. I find it interesting that “Casino Royale” is the #1 movie in every country where it’s playing, except the U.S. I also find it interesting that you now are hearing blowhards on TalkRadio ripping into “Happy Feet” because “it sends a message about Global Warming, which hasn’t been proven to be true, yet!”

Psst…Mr. Talking(Shouting)Head…it also features animals that talk, sing, and tap dance…something else I’m quite sure hasn’t been proven yet. Now take a big swig of Lighten Up Juice, unclench your sphincter muscles, and take your kid to the damn movie.

News & Rumors:

~ Internet bitching might actually work! As reported here last week, New Line Cinema was planning to go on with the movie version of “The Hobbit” without director Peter Jackson (and with Sam Rammi, if rumors were to be believed). This was an “up yours” tactic by the studio since they hadn’t been able to absolve the lawsuit between them and P.J. concerning the $$ from “The Fellowship of the Ring”. But mostly due to a tremendous backlash from LOTR web geeks everywhere, MGM, the big financial partner with the distribution rights, is stating that they “support Peter as a director, and believe that when the dust settles, he’ll be making the movie.” Score one for the pocket protector sect.

~ The wonders of Hollywood…and a blurb to make Swerb see red. There will be a sequel to “The DaVinci Code” with Tom Hanks that will pick up sometime after “Sir Robert Langdon” has done all his heroic deeds in the first movie. The script will be based on Dan Brown’s novel “Angels and Demons”. Now here is the problem; “Angels and Demons” is set BEFORE “DaVinci Code”, not after. In other words, all of you people (Swerb) who hated DVC because it varied from the book are REALLY going to hate the sequel.

~ Linsday Lohan is set to star as Stevie Nicks in a biopic of the Fleetwood Mac singer’s early life, with Jaret Leto to play Lindsey Buckingham. Somehow, I don’t think this one will be making anyone forget Reece Witherspoon’s Oscar winning turn as June Carter Cash in “Walk the Line”. Hell, the only line Lohan ever walks is the DUI tests she gets…but then again, that may make her perfect to play Stevie.

~ The A&E television network has come out and said that viewers will barely notice the deletions of nudity, graphic violence and foul language when they start showing repeats of “The Sopranos” in January. Yeah, and I’m sure no one will notice that after the deletions, the shows are only 15 minutes long. Even Christopher Moltisanti and Paulie Walnuts aren’t stupid enough to buy that line of bull.

~ Stupid Sequel Update: “Beverly Hills Cop 4”, and “Starship Troopers 3”. Now I wasn’t even

aware that there was a “Starship Troopers 2” until I did a little research and found that it was a straight-to-video film from 2004. Maybe this time a bug can eat Axel Foley’s brain. I’m sure he’d find it a light snack.

~ Mel Gibson reportedly was thinking about reaching out to Michael Richards to talk to him about his recent “problems”. Wouldn’t that sorta be like Barry Bonds wanting to reach out to Shawn Merriman? I mean, how would the conversation even begin? “Hi, Michael. It’s Mel. So a Jew, a black man, and a homosexual walk into a bar…”

This week’s new releases:

What a load of garbage. This is by far the worst week of new releases since September. I guess studio execs figure everyone is busy shopping this weekend. If you want to take a break from it, go see some of the ones released in the last three weeks, and avoid this batch like the Browns offense avoids the End Zone.

Title: **The Nativity Story**

Starring: Keisha Castle-Hughes, Shohreh Aghdashloo, Oscar Isaac.

Plot: An unwed mother gives birth to The Savior

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: You really think I'm going to risk getting hit by a lightning bolt for making smart-assed remarks about this one? Sorry, even I'm not that foolish. In all seriousness, this is said to be very well done, directed by Catherine Hardwicke, who did a wonderful job with the insightful "Thirteen". The only "controversy" coming out of it is that the sixteen year old Castle-Hughes is now pregnant, making the promotion of the movie rather awkward.

Title: **Turistas**

Starring: Josh Duhamel, Melissa George, Olivia Wilde

Plot: Good looking young people are tortured to death by South American sickos.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: For those out there who liked "Hostel", but thought the plot was a little too intellectual, and the gore not quite as disgusting as it should be.

Title: **Van Wilder 2: The Rise of Taj**

Starring: I think they borrowed the Drama Club members of the local ECPI for this one.

Plot: None that I could decipher.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Considering that this doesn't star any of the actors from the first movie (and if you can't secure the employment of Tara Reid…you are really pathetic), and it has a different director, the loser that was responsible for "Boat Trip", this one will suck so many rotten eggs.

Title: **10 Items of Less**

Starring: Morgan Freeman, Paz Vega, Anne Dudek

Plot: A fading actor meets up with a fastidious grocery clerk while doing research for an upcoming role.

The BeerBuzz: Independent, artsy film to be viewed only by insomniacs desperately needing something to put them to sleep.

New DVD Releases on Tuesday, December 5th

Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest – The box office champion of 2006 and currently #3 all time world-wide with over one BILLION dollars raked in. And all of that for a movie that I rated "Incomplete" as it's the second of a trilogy. Nonetheless, just as "The Two Towers" was still great to watch, this film is also a visual marvel. Johnny Depp has created what may be one of the greatest characters ever in Captain Jack Sparrow, and his acting, along with Keira Knightley's, along with the special effects make it a "must have" for collectors.

Miami Vice – While "Dead Man's Chest" was the box office winner, this was one of the biggest financial failures of the year, costing $175 million to make while earning less that $65 million domestically. Michael Mann makes a bold decision in totally re-inventing his iconic 80s television show into a dark, moody post 9/11 thriller. I liked the casting (except for not having James Edward Olmos as Castillo) as I thought Colin Ferrell and Jamie Foxx to be better than Don Johnson and Phillip Michael Thomas…but I may be in a minority in that regard. Probably a decent rental…good acting, great location shots, dynamic action sequences. Just a really crappy script.

Zoom – Speaking of crappy, this "superhero" tale with Tim Allen might just make X-Men 3 look like Casablanca in comparison. Skip it. If you must watch superheroes, check out the "Heroes" marathon on the Sci-Fi channel.

Pulse – Horror flick about a web site actually infecting those that access it. I know of a place like that. It's called "The Watercooler" chat board of The Orange and Brown Report. Anyone going there ends up totally infected with pessimism towards the Cleveland Browns.

How to Eat Fried Worms– I like them with the liver of a census taker, some fava beans and a nice chianti…thpthpthpthp.

Beerfest– Beer: Good. Beerfest: Bad.

The Oh in Ohio – Cute Indie film centered around a frustrated Cleveland housewife (Parker Posey) who has never had an orgasm. Check out all the local shots of your favorite Cleveland attractions.

24: Season 5 – Just in time to get you caught up before the start of Season 6. 1.6 billion Chinese people are angry with Jack Bauer. Sounds like a fair fight.

Calendar Watch:

Next week: *Apocalypto* , *Blood Diamond* , *The Holiday, Unaccompanied Minors, Off the Black*

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

Eragon – December 15th – Swords and Dragon fantasy with Jeremy Irons. The inner geek in me is looking forward to it. But then again…lame attempts to rip off Tolkien will totally draw my wrath.

The Pursuit of Happyness – December 15th – Will Smith in a dramatic role about a single father struggling with raising his son in homeless shelters while working as a brokerage firm intern.

Rocky Balboa – December 22nd – I'll admit it…the trailer makes it look much better than Rocky IV or Rocky V.

The Good Shepherd – December 22nd – Robert Di Niro directs Matt Damon, Angelina Jolie and himself in a tale of the early years of the CIA.

We Are Marshall – December 22nd – Another uplifting movie with football as the backdrop…this one about the attempts to rebuild the Marshall football program after the tragic 1970 airline crash that killed 75 players, coaches, and staff.

Letters From Iwo Jima – December 22nd - Clint Eastwood's follow-up to "Flags of Our Fathers", showing the Battle of Iwo Jima from the perspective of the Japanese.

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

The Good German – December 25th – Oscar contender from Stephen Soderberg starring George Clooney, Cate Blanchett, and Tobey Maguire in post WWII Berlin.

Children of Men – December 25th - New release date for the futuristic Clive Owen and Julianna Moore film about a world where women can no longer get pregnant, dooming mankind.

Hannibal Rising – February 9th - Tale of how the young Hannibal Lecture became the cretin we all know and love.

Ghost Rider – February 16th - Nicholas Cage turns into a motorcycle riding superhero with a flaming skeleton head. (February)

The Number 23 – February 23rd – Mystery/ Supernatural Thriller with Jim Carrey and Virginia Madsen.

Zodiac – March 2nd - Jake Gyllenhaal and Robert Downey, Jr star in the tale of the Bay Area serial killer.

300 – March 9th - Frank Miller adaptation of the Frank Miller graphic novel about 300 Spartans defending Greece from the entire frickin' Persian Empire. Filmed in the same style as "Sin City".

Shooter – Political thriller with Mark Wahlberg as a sniper trying to stop an assassination. (March)

Reign Over Me – First major fictional piece dealing with the effects of 9/11 on the families, starring Adam Sandler (against type) and Don Cheadle (March)

Grind House – Two one-hour short horror stories, one from Robert Rodriguez, the other from Quentin Tarantino. (April)

Spider-Man 3 – The webslinger versus Venom, Sandman, and Harry Osborne picking up his father's GoblinGear. (May)

Shrek the Third – Justin Timberlake as young King Arthur. Gulp (May)

Pirates of the Caribbean: At the World's End – Captain Jack goes for the hat trick (May)

Ocean's Thirteen – Will someone please stick a fork in this franchise? (June)

Fantastic Four: The Rise of the Silver Surfer – No way does this film get completed by this date (June)

Live Free or Die Hard – John McClane strikes again (probably with his walker) (June)

The Simpsons Movie – ummmm…beeeerrrrrr (July)

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix – My wife and daughter will be there the first day (July)

The Bourne Ultimatum – Superspy Jason Bourne (Matt Damon) is back and looking for his roots (August)

Beowulf – Robert Zemeckis gets all medieval on us with a motion capture (like "Polar

Express”) adaptation of the epic poem (November)