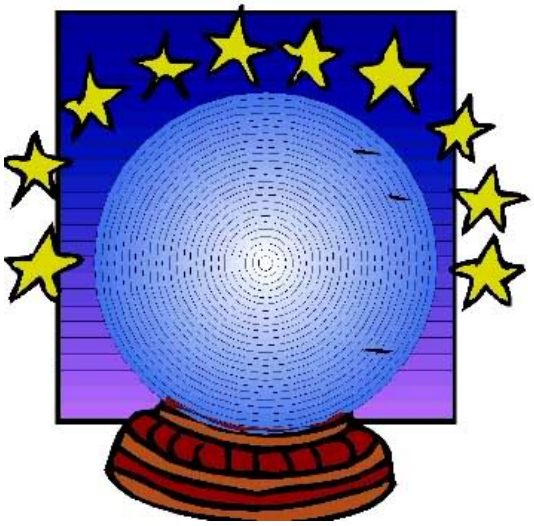
It's Friday night, which means it's "Crystal Ball" time here on The Blurbs ... our weekly column on all things Hollywood from the mega-talented Mitch Cyrus. It's about to be busy season for Mitch, as there are a slew of good movies he's planning to review for us in the coming weeks. In this weeks column, Mitch previews all the new theater releases ... as well as the DVD releases - of which there are plenty as Christmas looms.



Looks like I'm about to have a need to switch my alcoholic beverage of choice from beer to something with Red Bull, as I'm going to be quite busy over the next several weeks.

Three movies coming out this week that I'm interested in seeing…including the possibility of the first Romantic Comedy I'll review for Da Blurbs…as my wife already has my Sunday planned out since there won't be a Browns game to occupy my time. Of course, there wasn't really a Browns game last night to occupy my time…just three and a half hours of incompetent playing to frustrate the hell out of me.

News & Rumors:

~ After the huge success of "Gladiator" and the moderate success of HBO's "Rome", I should have seen this coming: a remake of "Cleopatra". Any mention of the names "J-Lo", "Jessica Simpson", or "Katie Holmes" in connection with this may cause me to yell even more obscene things than I did last night after Dennis Northcutt dropped a ball for the 21st time. As much as I love Scarlett Johansson, she's too pale for the part…same for Natalie Portman. Angelina Jolie might be a bit too old…but she'd still be at the top of my list. Jessica Alba might also work, although I'm not 100% sold on her acting skills. And I'm sure producers everywhere are

taking notes on my recommendations…just like Jeff Davidson takes my suggestions about how to best utilize Kellen Winslow, Jr.

~ Video games being made into movies may appeal to me even less than TV series adaptations, but this one is of interest. Timothy Olyphant, who plays tightly wound Sheriff Seth Bullock on HBO's "Deadwood" is set to replace Vin Diesel in the big screen adaptation of "Hitman". Now if they can just find a way to slip Ian McShane (Al Swearengen) into the movie, it might entice me to go see it.

~ I want to be Danny DeVito (except for the bit about having to sleep with Rhea Perlman…blech). Stay out drinking all night with George Clooney, show up on The View the next day still soused, say whatever obnoxious thing I want, and not have any major repercussions to my character. Although I still don't excuse him for "Deck the Halls".

~ So which break up has you more depressed this week? Kid Rock and Pamela Anderson? Jennifer Aniston and Vince Vaughn? Eddie Murphy and Scary Spice? Or Lance Bass and his boyfriend? Hah! It was a trick question. Unless your answer was "I don't give a rat's ass about any of them", you lose! (Yeah, I was really, really short of actual news to report on this week).

This week's new releases:

Three movies destined for the "Love Them Or Hate Them" categories…and one for the "Hate It" side.

Title: **Blood Diamond**

Starring: Leonardo DiCaprio, Djimon Hounsou, Jennifer Connelly

Plot: A mercenary, a fisherman, and an American journalist's lives become entwined as they search for a priceless diamond.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: One for the action/adventure film lovers. Leo's having a very good year, and if this movie was more of a standard drama and less of a Bond-type shoot-em-up, he might be getting pushed for an Oscar for this role as opposed to "The Departed". However, it is the third year in a row when we get an end of the year movie telling us how bad things are in Africa, following last year's "The Constant Gardener", and 2004's "Hotel Rwanda". I'm not really sure if that's a good thing or a bad thing.

Title: **Apocalypto**

Starring: Mel is the only person of interest regarding this movie. That's not to say the actors won't do a good job, it's just that you can't talk about the movie without Mel's name dominating the conversation.

Plot: One native Mayan decides that he'd really rather NOT have his heart cut out as a sacrifice to the gods, and runs like hell.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: The biggest problem I had with Mel's "The Passion of the Christ" was that he turned The Greatest Story Ever Told into The Greatest Slasher Story Ever Told. If extreme graphic violence shown throughout the entire movie isn't your thing…skip this one. If you're cool with blood and guts at a level that would make Quentin Tarantino turn greenish, you'll probably enjoy a adrenaline rush chase movie with incredible cinematography. Having viewed the ancient Mayan pyramid and ruins at Chichen Itza in Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, I'm fascinated by the culture of a people long gone. I'm just not sure that's enough to compensate for the gore.

Title: **The Holiday**

Starring: Cameron Diaz, Kate Winslet, Jude Law, and Jack Black

Plot: Two recently dumped women decide to swap houses for a vacation…one in London and the other in Los Angeles…both meeting up with new love interests.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Kate Winslet and Jack Black. That half of the story will probably make this Date Movie tolerable to me. Good early buzz that this is as satisfactory as last year's "The Family Stone" or 2004's "Love Actually", so it may end up being tolerable. Director Nancy Meyers also gave us "What Women Want", and "Something's Got to Give"…and as far as Chick Flicks go, I didn't leave the theater after watching them wanting to kill myself or

wondering why it is that women were not wanting to always see big explosions, mangled body parts, or naked bimbos like us guys. As mentioned, I'll let you know next week as I'll be reviewing this and "Blood Diamond".

Title: **Unaccompanied Minors**

Starring: Dyllan Christopher, Tyler James Williams, Gina Mantegna

Plot: A group of kids make their own holiday while snowed in at Chicago O'Hare airport

The BeerBuzz: "Home Alone" meets "It's a Wonderful Life". And if that sounds a little weird to you, then you've just gotten the gist of the buzz about this movie. Take your kids to something else unless you enjoy getting bored…my best recommendation would be to hold off until next week and take them to see "Charlotte's Web".

New DVD Releases on Tuesday, December 12th

Just in time Christmas, there is another batch of major movies coming out to purchase/rent this week. What a coincidence!

Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby – Who knew making fun of rednecks watching cars making four hour left turns could be so profitable? And where the hell is my cut? Damn…between this movie and "Stranger Than Fiction", I may have to remove Will

Farrell from the top of my "most talentless actor" list…which would put Ben Stiller back where he belongs.

World Trade Center – One of the best movies of the year. Oliver Stone hits every note right in this poignant snapshot of one of the few uplifting tales that came from that horrible day. Not much else to say that wasn't covered in my review .

Barnyard: The Original Party Animals – Another successful animated film from this year. I think we may end up having some sort of record for total box office receipts from cartoons by the time it's all said and done. For this one? One of the poorer ones as far as I'm concerned. Maybe I just can't get past the fact that the MALE cows have udders.

The Devil Wears Prada – I know what my wife will be ordering off from Netflix come Tuesday. The surprise hit of the summer, one that might even end up giving Meryl Streep an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actress for her turn as the diva boss from hell.

Calendar Watch:

Next week: *Eragon* , *The Pursuit of Happyness* , *Charlotte’s Web*

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

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)