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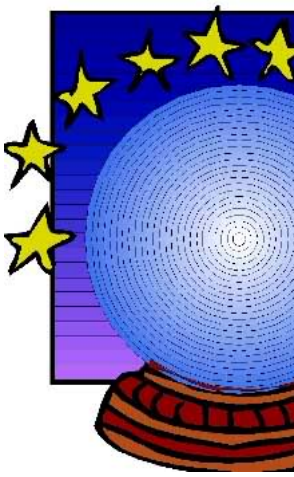

One of the interesting by-products of doing this column are the snide remarks and “what planet are you from?” looks from my wife when she either reads through it or I quote a particular line.

Case in point was my comment last week about me not “getting” “Stomp the Yard”, followed by a comparison of myself to Al Yankovic in the hilarious song parody/video “I’m Just White and Nerdy”.

Well, “Stomp the Yard” was the #1 movie...I’m still “White and Nerdy”, and my wife is considering adding the number to the local loony bin to our speed dial...especially after reading some of my comments in the “24” recaps.

News & Rumors:

~ The Golden Globe awards were given out on Monday. I didn’t watch much of it as I was too busy watching Jack Bauer, but I did catch the last hour and saw some of the major movie awards. No surprise at all for best actors and actresses, nor for “Dreamgirls” winning best Comedy or Musical. However, I was totally disgusted in “Babel” winning Best Drama. But don’t take that as an indication it has the Oscar for Best Picture wrapped up. For three out of the last

four years the winner of the Golden Globe for best Drama did not win Best Picture. Seriously, I know that many, many people I've talked to through TheClevelandFan didn't like "Crash"...and for those of you who didn't, I 100% guarantee you that you will HATE "Babel".

~ Speaking of the Golden Globes ceremony, if you missed it, you need to get on YouTube and watch Sacha Baron Cohen's hysterical acceptance speech for Best Actor in a Comedy or Musical. It's the first time in months I've heard him speak in his actual voice (non-Borat), and I was almost in tears laughing at his "thanks" in regard to the famous naked male wrestling scene with his fat co-star, who kept waving at the camera as he drank more wine. Cohen concluded his speech by thanking everyone in America "who hasn't yet sued me". Funny, funny stuff.

~ Meryl Streep, winner of Best Actress in a Comedy or Musical in the GG for her role in the comedy "The Devil Wears Prada" will now try her vocal skills out in a movie adaptation of the ABBA musical "Mama Mia!". I think I'll pass on this one.

~ News came out this week that there may only be one or two more seasons at the most for ABC's hit "Lost". The producers and writers have stated that they could not realistically maintain the series for more than 100 episodes (53 have shown so far), and they want to make sure it wraps up logically and doesn't just peter out with low ratings and poor stories like "Twin Peaks", "Alias", or "The X-Files". Good move. I love the show, but it needs to start answering more questions than it creates, and find a way to work towards a conclusion.

~ A few months ago I talked about Robert Downey, Jr taking the role of Tony Starks in the movie adaptation of "Iron Man". To that we add the news that Gwyneth Paltrow will also be in the film, playing Stark's personal assistant "Pepper" Potts. Let's hope this movie is better than the last sci-fi/fantasy flick Gwyneth filmed, the atrocious "Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow".

~ Penelope Cruz has denied a rumor that she is "intimately involved" with her best friend Salma Hayek. I defy you to show me one heterosexual man who is not getting some great images in his mind and contemplating the possibilities. Yes, Clarissa, I am a pig.

This week's new releases:

I freaking give up. Every damn week it seems, I read where "Miss Potter", "Letters From Iwo Jima", and "The Good German" are about to open up to a wide release. And every week they make a liar out of me by putting it off another week (or two...or five).

They are at least increasing theaters for two movies that feature the prohibitive favorites for Best Actor and Best Actress (Golden Globe winners Forrest Whitaker and Helen Mirren).

One brand new movie being released this week. That's it. The January of Suck continues.

Title: **The Hitcher**

Starring: Boromir (Sean Bean), Sophia Bush, Zach Knighton

Plot: A sadistic hitchhiker gets picked up by stupid people who he ends up terrorizing.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Damn...just when I was really getting appreciative of the fact that Sean Bean, one of my favorite actors, was finally getting some roles other than demented bad guys (particularly his excellent role as Odysseus in “Troy”), he goes for the cheap payday in this lame remake.

Title: **The Queen**

Starring: Helen Mirren, James Cromwell

Plot: A fictionalized account of the reported reactions of the Royal Family to the death of Princess Diana.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Helen Mirren needs to start working on her acceptance speech for the Best Actress Oscar for her portrayal as Queen Elizabeth II. By the way, very interesting at the Golden Globes that she won TWO awards...one as Elizabeth I in HBO’s “Elizabeth”, and the other for Elizabeth II. Yes, it’s fascination with obscure movie trivia like this that makes me nearly invincible on Buzztime Trivia movie games at Buffalo Wild Wings.

Title: **The Last King of Scotland**

Starring: Forest Whitaker, James McAvoy, Kerry Washington

Plot: The life of brutal Ugandan dictator Idi Amin as seen through the eyes of his personal physician.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Tour de Force for Forest Whitaker in a performance that makes the vicious Amin both more sympathetic and more disgusting. The only thing that bothers me is the "inspired by true events" thing...meaning that most of the movie is really a fictional story centered around a real person. In this case, the Scottish physician and the events concerning him are fictional, but the details about Amin's atrocities are real. I'll try to get past my doubts on the historical accuracy as this is one I'm looking forward to seeing.

New DVD Releases on Tuesday, January 23rd

Another week of poor theatrical releases and poor DVD releases

The Guardian – Kevin Costner NOT on a horse nor playing a jock. Add into it an actor that might make Josh Hartnett look talented in the form of Demi Moore's boytoy, and you've got a stinker of a movie about Coast Guard search and rescue swimmers.

Saw III – Those who like the first two will want to see this one as well. In my personal opinion, they will also want to see a good psychiatrist as well, but that's just me.

One Night With the King – “Historical” drama about a young Jewish woman who grows up to become the Biblical Esther. Seen by approximately 72 people in the theaters.

Sherrybaby – Well received small independent film with Maggie Gyllenhaal as a young single mother out of prison for heroin and trying to re-establish her life and regain custody of her daughter. A barrel of laughs, I’m sure.

Calendar Watch:

Next week, *Blood and Chocolate, Epic Movie, Catch and Release, Smokin’ Aces*

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

Notes on a Scandal – Oscar hopeful with Cate Blanchett and Judi Dench as a teacher involved in an affair with a young student, and the colleague who betrayed her. Limited release in December, no dates yet given for nation-wide release.

Hannibal Rising – February 9th - Tale of how the young Hannibal Lecture became the cretin we all know and love. As you know, February release dates normally indicate a bomb. The trailer is finally it, and it makes it look interesting...but you know that trailers could even make “The Black Dahlia” look to be worth a rent.

Ghost Rider – February 16th - Nicholas Cage turns into a motorcycle riding superhero with a flaming skeleton head. The closer we get to the actual release on this one, the more I'm convinced it's going to bomb big time.

The Number 23 – February 23rd – Mystery/ Supernatural Thriller with Jim Carrey and Virginia Madsen. I'm hoping this is the exception to the "February Stinker" rule, but I'm seeing in some places where they are calling this a "mystery comedy"...which doesn't sound good.

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

Wild Hogs – March 2nd - John Travolta, Tim Allen, Martin Lawrence and William H. Macy as four middle aged buddies take off for the open road on motorcycles, only to end up crossing paths with a Hell's Angels gang. Might be the Movie to Beat when it comes to next year's "Razzies" for "Worst Picture".

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".

Reign Over Me - March 9th – First major fictional piece dealing with the effects of 9/11 on the families, starring Adam Sandler in an impressive looking dramatic role (if you can believe it) and Don Cheadle.

Shooter – March 16th - Political thriller with Mark Wahlberg as a sniper trying to stop an assassination.

Sunshine – March 16th – A team of eight scientists are sent off in a spaceship to try to re-ignite part of the dying sun.

Lucky You – March 16th – Long delayed film centered around the World Series of Poker with Eric Bana and Drew Barrymore.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles – March 23rd – They're baaaaccccckkkk. Supposedly a little more adult oriented than the campy films from the 80s.

Rescue Dawn – March 30th – Christian Bale as a pilot shot down in Laos in the early years of the Vietnam War, and his efforts to escape captivity.

Grind House – April 6th - Two one-hour short horror stories, one from Robert Rodriguez, the other from Quentin Tarantino. (April). I may hate slasher films, but this one looks too good to miss.

The Kingdom – April 20th – Jamie Foxx, Chris Cooper, and Jennifer Garner in a story about an American team sent into the Middle East to investigate a terrorist attack on Americans in Riyadh.

Spider-Man 3 – May 4th - The webslinger versus Venom, Sandman, and Harry Osborne picking up his father's GoblinGear.

Shrek the Third – May 13th – Shrek & Donkey…together again. This time with the jolly green Scottish ogre trying to push off the king's crown onto a young Arthur.

1408 – May 13th – John Cusack as a famed debunker of paranormal activities encountering real terror in this adaptation of a Steven King tale.

Pirates of the Caribbean: At the World's End – May 25th - Captain Jack goes for the hat trick.

Ocean's Thirteen – June 8th – Ellen Barkin replaces Julia Roberts and Catherine Zeta-Jones in this edition. Talk about a "Brian Giles for Ricardo Rincon" level trade. Will someone please stick a fork in this franchise?

Fantastic Four: The Rise of the Silver Surfer – June 15th – This time the quartet go up against the Silver Surfer and the return of Dr. Doom. Please be better than the first one! (the trailer does look awesome).

Evan Almighty – June 22nd – Steve Carell's Evan Baxter from "Bruce Almighty" is now a Congressman chosen by God (Morgan Freeman) to receive His powers. A reported budget of over $200 million on this will either make it this year's "DaVinci Code" (big budget, big box office) or this year's "Poseidon".

Live Free or Die Hard – June 29th - John McClane strikes again (probably with his walker).

Transformers – July 6th – Michael Bay (hack, spit) tries to spin a former children's cartoon into an "Independence Day" type Armageddon movie. As much as I hate to admit it…the teaser trailer looks good.

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix – July 13th – These movies keep getting darker and better as they go. Voldemort (aka "relative of Art Modell") is back and targeting Harry and his friends for some nasty payback.

The Simpsons Movie – July 27th - ummmm…beeeerrrrrr

The Bourne Ultimatum – August 3rd - Superspy Jason Bourne (Matt Damon) is back and looking for his roots.

The Invasion – August 17th – Nicole Kidman and Daniel Craig in a sci-fi flick about an alien epidemic.

3:12 to Yuma – October 12th – Russell Crowe and Christian Bale in a remake of a classic Western with Bale as a farmer volunteering to escort a criminal (Crowe) to Yuma by train, with a battle of wits ensuing.

American Gangster – November 8th – Denzel Washington as a heroin kingpin from the Vietnam War era (he smuggled it back in the body bags of dead soldiers) and Russell Crowe as the investigator on his trail.

Beowulf – November 16th - Robert Zemeckis gets all medieval on us with a motion capture

(like “Polar Express”) adaptation of the epic poem.