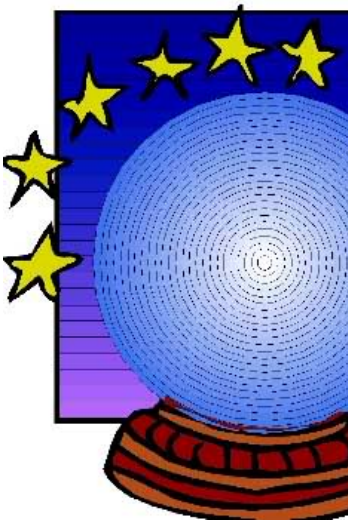
Two great releases this week. "Zodiac" at the theaters, which Mitch is hailing as the first Great Movie of 2007. It's directed by David Fincher, who gave us "Se7en" and "Fight Club" and chronicles the Bay Area "zodiac" serial killer of the 60's and 70's. I can't wait to see this one. Also, "Borat" (which I have yet to see) hits DVD on Tuesday. Mitch profiles all the new releases ... and also all the latest Hollywood news and scoop in this week's Crystal Ball.



The best thing I will say about the Oscars is that the best movie won. It was also about damn time that Martin Scorsese got his long deserved award for Best Director.

The awards show itself? Ugh. I needed a half dozen amphetamines with a double Red Bull chaser to deal with that much boredom. I will give myself credit though, not only for my excellent picks once again (six out of eight), but in discovering the whole Eddie Murphy classless act and writing about it on the message boards a few days before it as picked up in the mainstream press.

For those that missed it, Eddie the Jerk was highly favored to win the best supporting actor award. When Alan Arkin's name was announced, Eddie got so angry that he and his date (soon to be filing a paternity suit, I'm sure) stormed out of the auditorium. So he wasn't around to share Jennifer Hudson's celebration for her award.

Couldn't have happened to a more deserving ass.

News & Rumors:

~ The new Star Trek movie, reported on a couple of times here, now has an official release date: Christmas 2008. J.J. Abrams ("Mission Impossible 3", "Lost") will direct, and the cast will "probably" be Matt Damon as Captain Kirk, Adrien Brody as Mr. Spock, Gary Sinese as Dr. McCoy, and possibly James McAvoy ("The Last King of Scotland") as Mr. Scott. Excellent, excellent choices all around. Now if they can add Beyonce as Lt. Uhura, Scarlett Johannson as Yeoman Rand, and Natalie Portman as Nurse Chapel...

~ Previously mentioned Oscar winner Alan Arkin will re-team with his "Little Miss Sunshine" co-star Steve Carell in "Get Smart". As mentioned several weeks ago, Carell will assume the role made famous on TV by Don Adams, and will most certainly be excellent in it. Arkin, who was just cast, will probably be playing the head of CONTROL (or at least should be)...you know...the one to whom Max was always saying "Sorry about that, Chief". Anne Hathaway will be Agent 99, and The Rock and Terrance Stamp will be playing bad guys.

~ Are there any comic book heroes that are NOT part of a movie that has either been made recently or is in the works? Evidently not now, as Warner Brothers is looking into making a Justice League film. No word on whether or not they'll have the usual members Superman, Wonder Woman, Batman, The Flash, Green Lantern, Aquaman (Vincent Chase?), and Martian Manhunter. It would be cool if they'd get Brandon Routh to play Superman and Christian Bale to play Batman, however.

~ In the wake of the success for Irish Mob movie "The Departed", there will be one released later this year that looks interesting. "Eastern Promises" will look at the Russian mafia imbedded in London. Viggo Mortensen will play the ruthless mob leader, and Naomi Watts will be the innocent Russian midwife who turns everything upside down. Coming in September, I'll have links up as soon as they are available.

~ Big Pussy, aka Vincent Pastore, has already had to drop out of “Dancing with the Stars”. Some jokes just write themselves.

This week’s new releases:

One more week until “300” opens. The first “Must See” movie of the year, and I can’t friggin’ wait. In the meantime...

Zodiac

Starring: Jake Gyllenhaal, Robert Downey, Jr., Mark Ruffalo, Chloe Sevigny.

Plot: Two San Francisco Chronicle employees work along side a police detective to identify the serial killer terrorizing the Bay Area in the 60s and 70s.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: This is stacking up to be the first Great Movie of 2007. Early buzz is all positive...but I’ll let you know what I think next week. But given that it’s directed by David Fincher, the man who gave us “Se7en” and “Fight Club”, I have very high expectations.

Wild Hogs

Starring: John Travolta, Martin Lawrence, Tim Allen, William H. Macy

Plot: Fat, middle aged loser buddies decide to buy some Harley's and take off on a road trip.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: This is just going to flat out suck. I normally hold out hope for anything involving the great William H. Macy, but he's not going to be able to fend off the reek that is John Travolta, Martin Lawrence, and Tim Allen. Great publicity this week for the film...Scientology lunatic Travolta rambling on about how Anna Nicole Smith would still be alive had she been a Scientologist. Right, John...the only thing dumber than Anna Nicole has been Travolta's recent movies.

Black Snake Moan

Starring: Samuel L. Jackson and Christina Ricci

Plot: A God-fearing blues musician tries to help a troubled girl.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Love-it-or-Hate-it movie. For me, I love the casting, but hate the umpteenth variation of "weird people in the sticks of Southern America". But for some reason, those images of an underwear wearing Christina Ricci chained up are really making me hot. (and I'm

sure my wife will have something acerbic to say about that).

Amazing Grace

Starring: Ioan Gruffudd, Albert Finney, Michael Gambon

Plot: Biography of William Wilberforce, the 18th Century English politician that attempted to end slavery throughout the Empire.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: This slipped by last week. I normally don't preview "limited releases" that only open in LA, NY, and sometimes Chicago. I thought this one would be the same, but you can pretty much find it in any city now. Better late than never, I guess: Gruffudd (Reed Richards in "Fantastic Four") does an admirable job in a surprising history lesson. A good one to keep an eye out for when it comes out on DVD.

New DVD Releases on Tuesday, March 6th

Same broken record from last week. One great movie and two pieces of cow excrement.

Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorius Nationof Kazakhstan – Nothing much more can be said about this...by far the best comedy of the year (although "Talladega Nights" was pretty good as well). Think "Jackass" with a brain and social wit. Sacha Baron Cohen is a genius.

Fast Food Nation – Greg Kinear stinking it up again in what was supposed to be a dark comedy about cow manure getting into the meat of a McDonald's rip off chain's burgers. The burgers aren't the only things infested with bullshit in this film.

Let's Go to Prison– Let's not, and pretend we did. That would also apply to seeing this movie.

Calendar Watch:

Next week; *300 !!!!* (and nothing else is coming out in wide release...everyone knows that going up against "300" is like a TV show going against "American Idol"...it's near suicide).

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

Shooter – March 21st - Political thriller with Mark Wahlberg as a sniper being set up by the government to take the fall for an assassination.

Reign Over Me - March 23rd – 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.

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.

Blades of Glory – March 30th – Remember when I said I liked Will Farrell in "Talladega Nights"? Don't expect the same warm reaction to this sophomoric effort.

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

Perfect Stranger – April 13th – Hopefully Halle Berry is off the schneid with this thriller about a reporter investigating the death of a friend that through the internet got involved with a powerful married man (Bruce Willis)

Aqua Teen Hunger Force Colon Movie for Theaters – April 13th – The Adult Swim cartoon featuring a floating drink, container of fried, and a meatball hits the big screen. Why?

Fracture – April 20th – Anthony Hopkins back in Hannibal Lecter Full Creepy Mode as a man toying with a young D.A. (Ryan Gosling) after he is freed on a technicality for attempting to kill his wife.

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

Lucky You – May 4th – Long delayed film centered around the World Series of Poker with Eric Bana and Drew Barrymore. Unlucky them...they're opening the same weekend as Spider-Man

Shrek the Third – May 18th – Shrek & Donkey…together again. This time with the jolly green Scottish ogre trying to push off the king's crown onto a young Arthur.

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. Al Pacino in a role sure to induce his characteristic overacting won't help either. 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.

1408 – July 13th – John Cusack as a famed debunker of paranormal activities encountering real terror in this adaptation of a Steven King tale. Saw the trailer the other day, and it nearly scared the crap out of me.

The Simpsons Movie – July 27th - ummmm…beeeerrrrrr

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

Underdog – August 3rd – Combination of animation and live action. Let's hope it's more "George of the Jungle" than "Scooby-Doo".

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

The Kingdom – September 28th – 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.

3:12 to Yuma – October 5th – 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.

The Golden Age – October 5th – Cate Blanchett and Clive Owen in a follow up of the award winning “Elizabeth”.

American Gangster – November 2nd – 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.

Lions for Lambs – November 9th – Robert Redford directs himself, Tom Cruise (yeck) and Meryl Streep in this political thriller.

Beowulf – November 16th - Robert Zemeckis gets all medieval on us with a motion capture (like “Polar Express”) adaptation of the epic poem.

His Dark Materials: The Golden Compass – December 7th – Major, major push from the studios for this big budget fantasy...designed to be the first of a franchise. Nicole Kidman and Paul Bettany star.