As Mitch notes in this week's Crystal Ball, as we head into the dog days of summer, we also go into the days of dogs for movies ... with little to no major releases at the theaters in August. However, we do have one solid release this week, as "Bourne Ultimatum" comes out today to rave reviews, and you'll see Mitch's review of it here in a few days. There's also one very solid release on DVD this week, and Mitch tells us about it in this weeks column.

As we head into the dog days of Summer, it is only appropriate that we go into the Days of Dogs for movies…and I'm not talking Dawgs, as in Cleveland Browns. There will be a few exceptions, of course, starting out with the action thriller "Bourne Ultimatum" coming out today to rave reviews (I'll give you my opinion in a few days as I'm seeing it tonight)…but for the rest of it; the month is a complete dumping ground of stupidity and mistakes.

Here's what's coming in the next four weekends: "Daddy Day Camp", "Skinwalkers", "The Last Legion", "Illegal Tender", "Mr. Bean's Holiday", "The Nanny Diaries", "WAR", "Balls of Fury", "Death Sentence", and the appropriately named "Superbad". I look through that list, and think of J.K. Simmons' great line as J Jonah Jameson in "Spider-Man", looking through Parker's pictures and saying, "Crap. Crap. Crap."

Good thing there is so much great golf to be watched this month.

News & Rumors:

~ Well here's a perfect tie in to our website. The NFL is set to jump into the movie making business, and will be creating a movie based upon legendary Green Bay Packers coach Vince Lombardi. The film will focus on the week leading up to the 1967 NFL Championship game between the Packers and the Dallas Cowboys; the game referred to as "The Ice Bowl". No information yet regarding the potential cast.

~ It may be awhile yet before we get another Indiana Jones film, but here might be the next best thing (snicker). Jack Black will produce and star in the movie "The Lost Adventures of Stone Perlmutter, Jr." The comedy is being described as a faux documentary concerning a 1979 discovery of lost footage of Stone as he traveled the world in search of the Yeti, El Diablo, the Lost Tomb of Jesus, and other great mysteries. Hopefully he'll find Cliff Lee's lost pitching ability as well.

~ For a bit of bad news…it is official that there will be a remake of the horrible 70s film "Death Race". The original 1975 crapfest starred Keith Carradine and a little known actor named Sylvester Stalone. This one will feature Tyree Gibson and Jason Statham. It is now official. Statham can only act in movies where he spends most of the time behind the wheel of a car ("Italian Job", "The Transporter", "Crank"). Maybe it has something to do with his work visa.

~ Hunter S. Thompson Lives! Johnny Depp will once again channel the gonzo journalist in "The Rum Diaries". The film will follow Thompson's exploits while working for a struggling newspaper in San Juan, Puerto Rico in the late 1950s. No idea if it will be the same anarchic drug-trip as when Depp last portrayed Hunter in "Fear and Loathing In Las Vegas".

~ Acid tongued music mogul Simon Cowell will try his hand at movie making, creating "Star Struck", a fictional cross between "American Idol" and "Fame", following ten contestants in a singing competition through their journey to mediocrity. Unfortunately…that's not the worst news coming out of Hollywood

this week. That would be…

~ Paris Hilton will co-star in "Repo!: The Generic Opera", a musical thriller set in 2056. And I've just given myself a headache simply by trying to contemplate the whole thing.

This week's new releases:

You throw out Matt Damon's latest flick, and this week may be even worse that last week's Triumvirate of Tanks when "No Reservations", "I Know Who Killed Me" and "Who's Your Caddy" gave performances that could only be described as "Oldberto Hernandez-esque"

The Bourne Ultimatum

Starring: Matt Damon, Joan Allen, David Strathairn, and Julia Stiles

Plot: Amnesiac superspy Jason Bourne starts putting together the puzzle that is his life, in addition to closing in on the secret that is the Treadstone Project.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: All the major players are back, including director extraordinaire

Paul Greengrass, giving this film nothing but positive early reviews. I'll be judging for myself tonight. By the way…did you ever notice that the three great super spies of our time all have the same initials? Jason Bourne, James Bond, and Jack Bauer.

Underdog

Starring: Peter Dinklage, Alex Neuberger, and the voices of Jason Lee and Amy Adams.

Plot: A lab accident gives a beagle superpowers.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Damn. I so wanted to like this movie, based on the trailers. Alas, it was not even made available to critics for advanced screenings, a sure sign of suckitude. The little kids will probably enjoy it, however…but that doesn't take the disappointment away in knowing this will NOT be a "hidden gem" for me…just another "Fat Albert" or "Inspector Gadget".

Hot Rod

Starring: Adam Samberg, Isla Fisher, and Ian McShane

Plot: A klutzy daredevil plans to jump the Snake River canyon with a moped.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: I have seen the trailer for this film several times during the summer, and I simply cannot find a single thing in it that I could possibly enjoy. Other than maybe viewing it just to give out another "Spergeon Wynn" rating. Samberg may think of himself as the next Will Farrell…but this looks like he's the next Jimmy Fallon.

Bratz

Starring: Skyler Shaye, Logan Browning, Janel Parrish, and Nathalia Ramos.

Plot: Four best friends face off against a domineering student body president in their first year of high school.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: A movie based upon a toy? Somehow, I don't think this is going to rival "Transformers" in any way, shape or form. The only fascinating thing about this movie was the fact that Paula Abdul was supposed to have a prominent role in it, but she either dropped out, or was fired…take your pick. My condolences to any of you that have daughters between the ages of 6 and 10…as you're going to be stuck watching this in a theater full of giggling girls. A word of advice: Bring a flask.

El Cantante

Starring: Marc Anthony and Jennifer Lopez

Plot: A biography of salsa musician Hector Lavoe.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: I'm sure that the egomaniacal Lopez viewed this as another artsy Latin movie about an artist and that it could win big awards, like "Frieda". It isn't. Like everything else the former Gigli "star" touches, it becomes all about J-Lo the superstar, and her husband, director, screenwriter, and producer all lack the balls to tell her "no". Hence, you get this mess.

New DVD Releases on Tuesday, August 7th

Just like at the theaters, we have one decent movie coming out on DVD…and a lot of junk. On the other hand, all you Elvis junkies out there can rejoice, as "Elvis: That's the Way It Is", "Jailhouse Rock", "This Is Elvis", and "Viva Las Vegas" are all being released in special editions on Tuesday. On a personal note…I'm really hoping that there are NO Elvis Junkies who are regular readers of this column.

Disturbia– One of the surprise hits of this year is this teenaged adaptation of "Rear Window" staring Shia LeBeouf as a voyeur under house arrest who notices that his next door neighbor (David Morse) may just be a deranged serial killer. Top of the Netflix Queue for this one.

Teenaged Mutant Ninja Turtles – A major disappointment. Really failed to re-generate the fun that was seen both in the original cartoons and the first movie mixing puppetry and live action. OK CGI animation, but it's a lot of "been there…done that"

I Think I Love My Wife – A man is tempted by the ex-mistress of an old friend. And Chris Rock continues down a path towards irrelevance previously blazed by Cuba Gooding, Jr.

Are We Done Yet? – Sequel to the completely awful "Are We There Yet?" All I can hope is that when it comes to this series, the answer is "YES".

Unaccompanied Minors – A bunch of unaccompanied minors become stranded in a large Midwestern airport during the holidays,

and band together to create their own makeshift celebration. No, that doesn't sound too interesting to me, either.

Calendar Watch

Next week: *Rush Hour 3*, *Stardust, Daddy Day Camp, Skinwalkers*

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

The Invasion – August 17th – Nicole Kidman and Daniel Craig in an adaptation of the sci-fi classic "Invasion of the Body Snatchers"

Shoot ‘em Up – September 7th – Clive Owen and Monica Bellucci protecting a baby from sinister Paul Giamatti. I was so there anyway, and then I found out that in one scene Owen and Bullucci are having sex while in a shoot out. Check out the trailer, as it is one of the best I

have seen.

3:10 to Yuma – September 7th – 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 Brave One – September 14th – Jodie Foster going all Charles Bronson-DeathWish on some thugs.

Eastern Promises – September 14th (limited) – Naomi Watts as a London midwife drawn into the Russian Mob, headed by Viggo Mortensen.

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.

Michael Clayton – October 12th – George Clooney as a top law firm's "fixer" (the type of person played by Jodie Foster in "Inside Man"…IOW, a shady power broker/dirty tricks expert).

Hitman – October 12th – Deadwood's Timothy Oliphant follows up his portrayal as the chief

villain in “Live Free or Die Hard” in this action/adventure film where he play…what else…a hitman. Look for it to be in the same vein as “The Transporter”, and a hit (heh…I kill me).

The Golden Age – October 12th – Cate Blanchett and Clive Owen in a follow up of the award winning “Elizabeth”…this one looks to be better than the first, with much more action as it focuses on England’s defeat of the Spanish Armada.

We Own the Night – October 12th – Joaquin Phoenix, Mark Wahlberg, and Eva Mendes in a story of a nightclub owner (Phoenix), his police officer brother (Wahlberg), and the conflict with the mobsters who run Phoenix's nightclub. And yes, if you are counting, that's FOUR movies I deem "interesting" debuting on the same day. I get the feeling that will change, and some of them will move their release date.

Rendition – October 19th – Reese Witherspoon, Jake Gyllenhaal, Meryl Streep and Alan Arkin in a political thriller with Gyllenhaal as a CIA agent troubled by witnessing questionable interrogations.

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.

Bee Movie – November 2nd

– Animated flick with Jerry Seinfeld as a bee who files

a lawsuit against mankind for eating honey.

Lions for Lambs – November 9th

– Robert Redford directs himself, Tom Cruise (yeck) and Meryl Streep in this political thriller.

Fred Claus – November 9th – Vince Vaughn as Santa's embittered little brother. With Paul Giamatti. Another slightly naughty Christmas fairy tale that will make a bundle of cash.

Beowulf – November 16th

- Robert Zemeckis gets all medieval on us with a motion capture (like "Polar Express") adaptation of the epic poem. Crispen Glover as the monster Grendel and Angelina Jolie as Grendel's mother? I'm

there.

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 Daniel Craig star (their second collaboration this year), along with Sam Elliot and Eva Green.

Leatherheads –

December 7th

– George Clooney in an old fashioned screwball comedy set in 1925. George is an aging football legend who now owns a pro team, and is competing for the

affections of Renee Zellweger with his star player.

I Am Legend - December 14th – Will Smith in what

is basically a remake of the Chuck Heston apocalyptic film “The Omega Man”.

National Treasure: Book of Secrets –

December 21st

– Follow-up to the hugely popular guilty pleasure “National Treasure” with Nick Cage back at his wacky best.

P.S., I Love You – December 21st

– Hillary Swank, Gerard Butler, and Harry Connick Jr. in an award contender about a widow who

discovers love letters written by her recently deceased husband (Butler) that are meant to help her begin the next chapter of her life.

The Other Boleyn Girl – December 21st – Natalie Portman as Anne Boleyn, Scarlett Johansson as her sister Mary, and Eric Bana as King Henry VIII. I

expect this to blow the tepid Showtime series “The Tudors” out of the English Channel.

Charlie Wilson’s

War – December 25th – Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts, and Philip Seymour Hoffman in an Oscar contender about the charismatic and

eccentric Texas Congressman who orchestrated the funding of the Afghans against the Soviet Union in the early 80s.

Sweeny Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street – Limited release in December – Tim Burton's adaptation of the

macabre Steven Sondheim musical about a deranged barber bent on revenge (Johnny Depp) and the meat pie baker that assists

him (Helena Bonham Carter), who uses the bodies to make delicious snacks.

Untitled J.J. Abrams Project – January 18th

– You've seen the buzz generating hand held camera trailer

during “Transformers”, and wondered what it’s all about. We don’t know yet, but we’re thinking it should be fun.