David Chase speaks! The creator of "The Sopranos" has been tight-lipped since the controversial ending of the hit HBO show, and finally speaks about it in an interview Mitch has linked in his "News & Rumors" section of this week's Crystal Ball. Mitch also hits on all the new releases this week, including "Saw IV" at the theaters and "Spiderman 3" on DVD. It's our Friday night staple here at The Cleveland Fan ... it's The Crystal Ball.

David Chase Speaks!

As long time readers of TheClevelandFan know, we devoted a great deal of attention to the Greatest. TV Show. Ever., aka "The Sopranos". And as most people in the world knows, fan or not, the final show had EVERYONE talking for weeks about the final blackout ending.

Swerb originally hated it...I loved it, and actually convinced Swerb of its coolness in my last recap of the show.

Well, this week, creator David Chase has come out and pretty much told all of you bloodthirsty heathens that were crying for Tony's whacking to shut the hell up. In a recent interview , included in "The Sopranos: The Complete Book", to be published this week, Chase states "the New Jersey mob boss had been people's alter ego. They had gleefully watched him rob, kill, pillage, lie and cheat. They had cheered him on. And then, all of a sudden, they wanted to see

him punished for all that. They wanted 'justice' ...

"The pathetic thing -- to me -- was how much they wanted HIS blood, after cheering him on for eight years."

Chase also speculated that A.J. would probably become a low-level movie producer, but would stay out of dirty mob business, and that Meadow would "learn to operate in the world in ways that Carmela never did."

News and Rumors

~ The "sequel" to "The Da Vinci Code" has been fast tracked. Tom Hanks will return as Robert Langdon, with director Ron Howard, writer Akiva Goldsman and producer Brian Glazer all back as well for "Angels & Demons". Now the book was supposed to take place BEFORE "Da Vinci Code", but we can't have that, so they'll re-write Dan Brown's best seller so that it will be after Robert took care of that nasty albino priest. Shooting begins in February, and it's supposed to be in theaters next Christmas time.

~ I noted earlier about the effort to do a remake of the suspense film "The Taking of Pelham One Two Three". Casting has been announced, with John Travolta eating up even more scenery as the villain hijacking the train, and Denzel Washington as the security guard trying to stop him. Tony Scott will direct.

~ Tony Scott is also involved in two other interesting remakes. One is

of the 1979 cult classic "The Warriors". No cast listed, but the location will change from Coney Island to Los Angeles. The other will be a mini-series retelling of Michael Crichton's "The Andromeda Strain". Cast includes Benjamin Bratt, Rick Schroder, Christa Miller, and Eric McCormack.

~ Mark Wahlberg has replaced Ryan Gosling as the male lead in Peter Jackson's next film "The Lovely Bones", one day before filming was set to begin. Rumors are flying about the "why", with one story that has credence being that Gosling was just too difficult to work with, so PJ fired him. There is precedence in this, as Jackson replace Stuart Townsend at the last minute with Viggo Mortensen in the role of Aragorn in "Lord of the Rings".

~ "Heat" collaborators Michael Mann and Robert De Niro will team up again in the crime thriller "Frankie Machine". De Niro will play a retired mob hitman who now runs a bait shop. He agrees to help the son of a mob boss over a dispute with another Mafioso, but then realizes that he's being setup.

~ Jerry Bruckheimer is set to revive "The Lone Ranger" to film. Why?

This week's new movie releases:

It's the weekend before Halloween. Which means we must have at least one totally sucky horror film being released.

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Saw IV

Starring: A couple of people that had just finished up doing a summer stock version of &quot;Dames at Sea&quot; in upstate New York.

Plot: Exactly the same as the other three.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Critically, the first &quot;Saw&quot; movie was a rousing success. But ever since, it's been like making a copy on a dirty copying machine, and then using that copy to make another, and so forth. By the time you get to the fourth one, it's completely muddled up, and looks nothing like the original. The psychological thrills are out, and all that is left is the gore.

My Estimated Rating: Mike Phipps (½ football)
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Dan In Real Life

Starring: Steve Carell, Juliette Binoche, Dane Cook

Plot: A widower who writes an advice column while trying to raise three young girls meets and falls for a woman who turns out to be his brother's girlfriend

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: When Carell plays these types of beaten-down-by-life everyman, it's usually a pretty good movie. This should be a pretty palatable light comedy, although I'm not sure I can buy Dane Cook in anything.

My Estimated Rating: Bill Nelson (2 ½ footballs)
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The Darjeeling Limited (Expanded)

Starring: Owen Wilson, Adrian Brody, Jason Schwartzman

Plot: Three estranged brothers set off on a train voyage across India to re-connect after the death of their father. Hilarity ensues!

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Another piece of whimsy from Wes Anderson, who seems to be the Kevin Smith of whimsy. The creepy part of the whole thing is that Owen Wilson's character is bandaged up because he might have just tried to commit suicide...life imitates art. Bottom line; if you like Anderson's other movies, such as &quot;Rushmore&quot;, &quot;The Royal Tanenbaums&quot;, and &quot;The Life Aquatic&quot;, then you'll like this as well.
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My Estimated Rating: Kelly Holcomb (2 footballs)

New DVD Releases on Tuesday, October 30th

Spider-Man 3 **-** Another one that will do about a bazillion dollars in DVD sales and rentals. Good conclusion of the first arc of three stories, with Tobey Maguire's Peter Parker dealing with a bevy of baddies, including the Sandman (Thomas Hayden Church), the new Green Goblin (James Franco), and some alien goop that becomes his new suit. But the best parts are when he's battling himself and trying to hold on to his relationship with Mary Jane. Good film, but could have been a classic had it not tried to do so much in so little time...but still a lot of fun to watch.

Captivity - Torture porn with Elisha Cuthbert as a model being held captive and abused by a

madman. Panned as total trash even by horror film lovers.

In the Land of Women - In the Land of Estrogen...just shut up and keep a low profile. Here's part of the plot summary from IMDB. "His world in complete disorder after his break-up with a famous actress, Carter, a young soft-core porn writer, goes to suburban Detroit to care for his sickly grandmother. While there, he forms a special bond with the family that lives across the street and changes the life of each woman there". Gag. Vomit.

El Cantente - Jennifer Lopez bosses around the entire planet, especially her cuckold husband Marc Anthony in the boring ass tale of "the King of Salsa" Hector Lavoe. I always thought someone named Pace was the King of Salsa.

Calendar Watch

Next week: *American Gangster*, *Bee Movie*, *Martian Child*

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

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.

Hitman - November 21st - 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 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, let's hope it's better than "The Invasion"), along with Sam Elliot and Eva Green.

Atonement - December 7th - Artsy British film with Keira Knightley and James McAvoy, about a 13 year old girl who changes several lives when she accuses her older sister's lover of a crime he did not commit.

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.

Charlie Wilson's War

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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.

The Other Boleyn Girl - February 29th

- 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.

10,000 B.C. - March 7t

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- Roland Emmerich, he of "The Day After Tomorrow", gets to unleash his big-budget vision of mammoth hunters in this film that is NOT a remake of "One Million Years B.C." Bummer. I

was hoping of a really good visual update to Rachel Welch in that fur bikini.

21. - March 21st - Swerb's favorite upcoming movie, the true tale of six MIT

students that are trained by one of their professors (Kevin Spacey) in the art of card counting. They later take down Vegas casinos for millions.