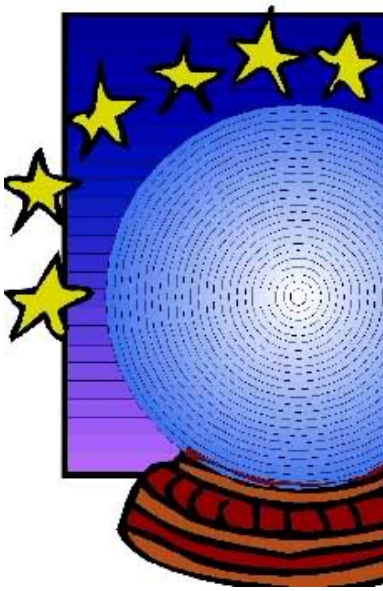
Mitch calls January "the toilet of movie releases", and says not to expect anything different this year. While 2008 is littered with blockbuster films that will hit the theatres, expect none of significance before Valentine's Day. We've got a great DVD release this week in "3:10 To Yuma", and Mitch hits on that, as well as the latest projects of Sasha Baron Cohen (Borat) and Daniel Radcliffe (Harry Potter) in this week's Crystal Ball.



Welcome to the new year, same as the old year.

January is the toilet of releases (February and September are close seconds). Almost nothing good is ever released in this month of cold weather and a billion football games. Last year, we got to see such illustrious films as "Code Name: The Cleaner", "Primeval", "Happily N'Ever After", "The Hitcher", "Blood and Chocolate", and my personal favorite, "Smokin' Aces".

Don't expect anything different this year. The only thing for the entire month that looks slightly interesting is J.J. Abrams' "Cloverfield". Meanwhile, "Rambo" might have an early lock on the "Razzies" for 2009.

The only good thing about the month is that highly rated films that had previously only been released in New York or Los Angeles will start hitting screens nationwide, giving us a chance to see "Atonement" and "There

Will Be Blood".

But for this week, expect another 1-2-3 sweep for "National Treasure", "Alvin and the Chipmunks" (WHY?), and "I Am Legend",

News and Rumors

~ Sacha Baron Cohen may have retired his "Borat" character, but he's not hurting for work. He's just signed on to play Abbie Hoffman in Steven Spielberg's "The Trial of the Chicago Seven". It's not going to be released until 2010, since Spielberg first has to complete his Indiana Jones movie, and then will direct Liam Neeson as "Lincoln", along with producing the companion piece to "Band of Brothers" called "The Pacific".

~ There is also life after "Harry Potter", as Daniel Radcliffe has beaten out Heath Ledger and Orlando Bloom to land the role in a new movie about a slain photojournalist. "Journey" will star Radcliffe as Dan Eldon, one of four journalists stoned to death by a mob in Somalia in 1993. Sounds like a real upbeat film.

~ Bryan Singer will evidently not be returning to the director's chair for next summer's "Superman Returns" sequel. And after re-watching the film on cable for the first time in a year just a few weeks ago, I'd have to say that it's probably a good thing, as the movie just wasn't that good.

~ Vanity Fair has the following description of the new Indiana Jones movie "The story is set in 1957, and this time Dr. Jones goes up against cold-blooded, Cold War Russkies-led by Cate Blanchett in dominatrix mode-instead of the Nazis he squashed like bugs in previous installments. Making a return alongside Ford is Karen Allen, as Marion Ravenwood, Indy's pugnacious true love, last seen in the first film. Rising star Shia LaBeouf joins the cast in a role that no one connected with the film will confirm is the love child of Indy and Marion."

This week's new movie release:

Only one this week, and it's totally forgettable.

One Missed Call

Starring: Edward Burns, Shannyn Sossamon

Plot: A detective investigates the mysterious calls received by a college student learns that she's one of many people who have received such communications - ones that reveal the date, time, and details of their death.

The BeerBuzz: The first release of the new year threatens to rival the box office take of last year's first movie, "Code Name: The Cleaner", which cleaned up all of $8 million at the box office. Remember when Ed Burns was considered "the next big thing" after "The Brothers McMullen" and "Saving Private Ryan"? Now he's reduced to making stupid horror movies.

My Estimated Rating: Mike Phipps (½ football).

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New DVD Releases from Tuesday, January 1st and next Tuesday, January 8th

Personally...the only thing I plan on watching next Tuesday evening is the Tivo of Ohio State kicking LSU's ass.

3:10 to Yuma **-** One of only three movies released in 2007 that I've given four footballs (so far). Christian Bale and Russell Crowe star in this excellent remake of the classic Western. Crowe is a famous outlaw being transported to a prison train by an escort group headed by Bale. With the threat of Crowe's gang attacking at any moment, the two men conduct a battle of wit and wills.

Death Sentence - Kevin Bacon in a seriously violent movie about a man going all Charles Bronson on bad guys after his son is killed.

Dragon Wars - Chinese import that's probably not much different than "Aliens vs Predator: Requiem"...just with dragons and Gozilla level overdubbing.

Shoot &Isquo;Em Up **-** Guilty pleasure of mine was watching Clive Owen and Paul Giamatti hamming it up in this live action cartoon film about a mysterious stranger and his lactating hooker friend trying to save a newborn baby from crazed killers. Best line from the film; "Is he THAT good, or do we just SUCK?" Exquisite Garbage is my best description.

Resident Evil: Extinction - Any chance this franchise can become extinct?

WAR - Jet Li and Jason Statham in the lamest kung fu movie of the year. Statham is quickly turning himself into the Steven Segal of the 21st century with his movies getting more and more stupid each time.

Sunshine - Unique sci-fi flick about a team of scientists flying out to try to re-ignite a dying sun. Didn't quite catch on with the masses as it didn't have the big stars or big entertainment hooks, focusing a lot more on the science of it all. I plan on putting it on the Netflix queue.

September Dawn - Exploitation film about the 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre, where a bunch of Mormans killed 120 men, women and children for no good reason whatsoever. Right wing pundits screamed that it was Hollywood attempting to sabotage Mitt Romney's campaign. I countered in "The Crystal Ball" that it was B.S. as the movie stunk, and would be quickly forgotten. It barely made $1 million. I was right again.

Calendar Watch

Next week (January 4th) *First Sunday, In the Name of the King: A Dungeon Siege Tale, The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything, The Bucket List*

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

Cloverfield - 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.

Rambo - January 25th - John Rambo and a group of mercenaries go to Thailand. I was OK with the way Stallone handled "Rocky Balboa". I think all of that goodwill he build up gets burned in this mess. The January release date pretty much assures a stinker.

Vantage Point - February 22nd -

Dennis Quaid, Forest Whitaker, and Matthew Fox in a political thriller/mystery showing five different points of view to an attempted assassination of the President.

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...but since it's gotten pushed back to the waste-land of February releases, I don't have a good feeling about it.

10,000 B.C. - March 7th - 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.

Horton Hears a Who - March 14th -
Not content to have made Dr. Suess spin in his grave with

"How the Grinch Stole Christmas", Jim Carrey now takes on the voice of Horton the Elephant in this animated tale.

Pride and Glory - March 14th

- Ed Norton and Colin Farrell in a tale of a multi-generational family of

NYPD officers and an investigation of corruption that could tear the family apart.

21. - March 28th - 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.

Leatherheads - April 4th - George Clooney and Renee Zellweger in an old fashioned screwball comedy set in 1925 about an aging football

legend and the college hotshot he's drafted for his pro team both fighting for the heart of an intrepid up-and-coming journalist.

Iron Man - May 2nd - The latest mega-budgeted

superhero flick. Looks very promising, and the casting of Robert Downey, Jr. as the alcoholic billionaire who designs a supersuit.

Speed Racer - May 9th - Emile Hirch, Matthew

Fox, and Christina Ricci as Speed, Racer X, and Trixie in the Wachowski Brothers' ("The Matrix" trilogy) adaptation of the really rotten 1960s Japanese anime.

The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian - May 16th - The same four kids from the first movie return to Narnia...1300 years after their last visit in that enchanted land's time frame, to help

restore the throne to the rightful heir.

Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull - May 23rd - Spielberg and Ford

team up one more time, with Cate Blanchett as the romantic interest, and Shia LaBeouf ("Transformers ") as Indy's son.

The Incredible Hulk - June 13th

- Looks to be much, much better than the Ang Lee stink-fest, with Edward Norton taking on the role of Bruce Banner.

Get Smart - June 20th - Steve Carell, Anne Hathaway, and Alan Arkin take on the roles of Maxwell Smart, Agent 99 and The Chief. As much as I hate

movie adaptations of television shows, this one has potential.

Wall-E - June 27th - Pixar's next

masterpiece, about a garbage cleaning robot who dreams of the stars.

Wanted - June 27th

- Look for this to make a star out of James McAvoy ("The Last King of Scotland") as he plays a young man brought into a

secret society of assassins by a hot, hot looking Angelina Jolie. Morgan Freeman plays their boss.

The Dark Knight - July 19th

- Batman is back, and this time he's tracking the Joker, played by Heath Ledger.

Most likely the box office champion of 2008.