Technical difficulties prohibited my Crystal Ball column from posting last week. This was a blessing to pretty much everyone, as the week's releases for both movies and DVDs blew chunks. After all; there are only so many ways I can use the word "suck" in one article.

There is a much better line-up for this weekend, however.

Title: The Sentinel

Starring: Michael Douglas, Kiefer Sutherland, Kim Basinger, and Eva Longoria.

View Trailer

Plot: There is a plot to kill the President, and a senior Secret Service agent (Douglas) is the main suspect, so he must try to solve the mystery while avoiding capture by his protégé (Sutherland).

The BeerBuzz: Jack Bauer playing by the rules? Doesn't seem right to me. I do find it interesting that we have a show where a subplot is an alleged affair between a secret service agent and the First Lady (Basinger)…opening the weekend in which Aaron Pearce, the intrepid secret service agent in "24" has disappeared after he was supposed to hook up with the First Lady. (Oh, wait…Fox Films made the movie…24 is on Fox TV…nevermind).

Just something to make you go "hmmmm". For this movie; it has the making of a good thriller. The only question is if Douglas is still up to the task to lead an action thriller, or if he's gone the way of Harrison Ford. But Douglas has been doing these types of intense mysteries for a long time, and doing them quite well in

movies such as “The Game”, “Disclosure”, “A Perfect Murder”, and “Black Rain”. If there is a decent script connected to this, I expect a satisfying movie. I’ll let you know next week, as I’ll be reviewing this film.

Title: American Dreamz

Starring: Hugh Grant, Dennis Quaid, Mandy Moore, Willem Defoe.

View Trailer

Plot: A recently re-elected, but still unpopular and dopey President decides he wants to appear on the finale of a hugely popular singing talent show hosted by an obnoxious Brit. The two contestants in the finale are a win-at-all costs Midwestern trailer trash girl and a show tune loving man who is secretly a terrorist.

The BeerBuzz: If there has EVER been a phenomenon needing to be publicly roasted on its own petard, it’s American Idol. There is so much potential here, and I’d love to see something that has a lot of laughs due to an intelligent, biting script. Unfortunately, I get the feeling director Paul Weitz may be painting with too broad of a brush. Going after American Idol, President Bush, post 9/11 hysteria, and the Iraq War in one film looks like a recipe for disaster for the man who previously brought us such decent films like “In Good Company”, “About a Boy”, and “American Pie”. I hope I’m wrong, but this one looks like a turkey.

Title: Silent Hill

Starring: Radha Miller, Sean Bean, Laurie Holden

View Trailer

Plot: A mother loses her daughter in a deserted town that appears to be haunted.

The BeerBuzz: Sean Bean! Guess who’s a 90% probability of being the Bad Guy? As opposed to every other horror flick released this year, this one isn’t a remake or a blood&gore-fest, instead opting for an attempt at a smart script and shocks rather than slashes. All of this probably means that no one will go to see it.

New DVD Releases on Tuesday, April 25th

Aeon Flux – Charlize Theron in one of the worst movies of the year. Yep…Halle Berry had her Catwoman suit…Nicole Kidman had her broomstick in "Bewitched", and now Charlize has a spandex bomb of her own following an Oscar for Best Actress in this horrid remake of the cult anime classic. So I guess next year we'll see Reese Witherspoon either flitting around in an invisible jet as "Wonder Woman", or else using a weird Hungarian accent in the big screen adaptation of "Green Acres".

Match Point – Well received film from Woody Allen about an engaged former tennis pro who falls for a femme-fatale type (Scarlett Johansson) who happens to be dating his supposed best friend (and future brother-in-law). I haven't really liked anything from Woody Allen since "Crimes and Misdemeanors"…but it just so happens that this movie is being compared favorably to that 1989 hit. The fact that all characters in this film are well drawn out, and like Ahnuld said in "True Lies"…"they're ALL Baaad"…points to a possibly entertaining flick.

Shopgirl – Clare Danes, Steve Martin, and Jason Schwartzman in a light comedy about a love triangle between a bored salesgirl, a rich businessman, and an aimless professional student. If you were into "Lost in Translation", "Rushmore", or "L.A. Story", this might be a good rent for you. Anything to make me forget Martin's horrible, horrible Peter Sellers ripoff from earlier this year.

Casanova – Heath Ledger in a comedy about the famed lothario finding someone he truly loves. This also was pretty well received by the critics…but after "Brokeback Mountain", I'm not sure how I can get through a movie featuring Ledger as a big ladies guy without coming up with numerous snide comments. But that's just me.

Tristan and Isolde – This was supposed to be one of those "Excalibur", "King Arthur", or "Knight's Tale" type of medieval England spectacles based on ancient tales that usually do pretty well with American audiences. Unfortunately, James Franco and Sophia Myles were boring as hell playing the star-crossed English Knight and Irish Princess. An Iambic Pentameter Gigli.

Calendar Watch:

Next week: United 93, Stick It, R.V., Akeelah and the Bee

The Upcoming Biggies:

Mission Impossible 3: May 5th

Poseidon: May 12th

The DaVinci Code: May 19th

X-Men: The Last Stand: May 26th

Click: June 23rd

Superman Returns: June 30th

Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest: July 7th

Miami Vice: July 29th

Snakes On a Plane!: August 18th

Casino Royale (007): November 17th