September is upon us, which means here comes football season. And a slow month at the box office. So instead of News & Rumors this week, Mitch takes some time to recap what was an exciting summer of movies here in 2008, headlined by films like "The Dark Knight", "Indiana Jones", "WALL-E", "Iron Man", and "Hancock". And as always, Mitch previews this week's releases at the theaters and on DVD.

So we head into the month of September, welcoming the onslaught of meaningful football games (and meaningless Indians games), and bidding adieu to the Summer Blockbuster Season (although I'm not sure I'd call anything released in August a ‘Blockbuster').

No room for "News and Rumors" this week, so I can recap the Summer of the Bat (again, not to be confused with the wooden things used by Indians players to wave fruitlessly at baseballs).

Superheroes Rule! Of course, this entire summer will be remembered for the mega-millions raked in by "The Dark Knight", but the Ying to the Joker's Yang wasn't the only one of the spandex set making waves. "Iron Man" came in a very respectable #2 at the box office with $317 million, due to the bravura performance from Robert Downey Jr. in the title role. Meanwhile, Will Smith continued to prove that he's box office gold; with his troubled superhero "Hancock" at #4 for the year with $226 million and counting.

But two other comic book heroes underperformed, as Edward Norton playing Bruce Banner was not enough to compensate for a bad script and still poor CGI in "The Incredible Hulk", although it still made slightly more than Ang Lee's 2005 mess with Eric Bana. Meanwhile, Guillermo del Toro's inspired imagination was not enough to make a hit out of "Hellboy II", which petered out at $75 million.

No Surprise. Lucas, Spielberg, and Ford combine for a $300 + hit with "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull" (no surprises with the movie either, unfortunately), and Pixar rakes in another ton of cash along with critical accolades with "WALL-E".

Surprise, Surprise! As always, certain movies come out of nowhere to be hits. "Kung Fu Panda" was supposed to pale next to "WALL-E" in the animated flick department, but it made almost as much money as it's flashier competitor. "Wanted" came in under-the-radar, but a clever last minute advertising campaign emphasizing the over-the-top action worked, and the James McAvoy/Angelina Jolie assassin flick pulled in $133 million.

And then we have reminders that estrogen can dominate as well, with "Sex and the City" and "Momma Mia!" shocking everyone by blasting through the $100 million barrier. 4 ½ combined hours of my life that I'll never get back.

Disappointments. The studios will still make money on these, but there was so much more expected from "Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian". On the comedy front, Adam Sandler's latest infantile character driven film "You Don't Mess with the Zohan" will end up behind several other comedies this summer ("Tropic Thunder", "Get Smart", and probably "Pineapple Express"), while "Forgetting Sarah Marshall" failed to achieve the same heights as last year's similar comedy "Knocked Up".

The Bombs. Every summer, you have two or three films that were expected to do big things, and totally tank. This year, there are two of them, as the Wachowski Brothers blew more money than Art Modell with the awful "Speed Racer", while no one really wanted to believe in Chris Carter, as his "X-Files 2: I Want to Believe" struggled to make $20 million.

Two movies that were intended as comebacks for guys that make a mint whenever they play an animated donkey and a Scottish Ogre crashed and burned. No on really wanted to "Meet Dave", which would have required watching Eddie Murphy mug for the camera for 2 hours. Likewise Mike Myers needs to go back to the fake bad British teeth, as "The Love Guru" couldn't even make more money than "Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay".

And then there was M. Night Shyamalan's "The Happening". Just thinking about that mess makes need to work to repress my gag reflex.

This week's new movie releases:

And I thought last week's new movies were bad (they were).

Babylon A.D.

Starring: Vin Diesel, Michelle Yeoh, Mélanie Thierry

Plot: A mercenary takes a high-risk assignment where he must escort a

woman out of Russia, not knowing that she is carrying a synthetic virus that could bring about the end of mankind.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Just when I though Vin Diesel couldn't do anything worse than "Chronicles of Riddick". A complete mess of a movie that can't figure out if it wants to be "Blade Runner" or "Children of Men". Trust me; it's neither. And as it's currently clocking at a 7% approval rate on rottentomatoes.com , it may end up being even worse than "Meet Dave".

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College

Starring: Drake Bell, Kevin Covais, Andrew Caldwell

Plot: A wild weekend is in store for three high school seniors who visit a local college campus as prospective freshmen.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Yes, it's the geeky kid from two seasons ago on "American Idol" who reminded everyone of "Chicken Little". Another lame rip-off of "Porky's", "American Pie", and "Superbad"...this one is more like "LameBoringBad".

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Disaster Movie

Starring: No one with even an ounce of dignity.

Plot: No plot, just more lame jokes about current films and pop culture

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Jason Friedberg and Aaron Seltzer must be stopped. At one point, you would have great filmmakers in the business of creating spoofs. Mel Brooks, the Zucker Brothers and Jim Abrahams, and even Woody Allen. But they would make spoofs of a genre of movies, creating witty, original scripts and characters to lampoon Westerns, Horror films, Disaster Films, or Spy Films. Now? You just have these two idiots that keep cranking out trash that simply parades around stupid knockoffs of movies seen in the last 12 months. Trey Parker and Matt Stone have more talent in their pinkies than Friedberg and Seltzer

will ever even dream of having.

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Traitor

Starring: Don Cheadle, Guy Pearce, Jeff Daniels

Plot: An FBI agent heads up a conspiracy investigation tracking a former special ops officer with ties to Afghan rebels. But the suspect is more than he appears to be.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: I'll probably end up checking this one out. Cheadle is always great, and the concept looks good, but there are conflicting reports about the delivery (script) being a little too much like "Bourne-Lite".

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Hamlet 2 (Expanded Release)

Starring: Steve Coogan, Elisabeth Shue, Catherine Keener

Plot: A High school drama teacher looks to bring his Shakespearian sequel to the stage despite a classroom full of disinterested students, potential budget cuts, and his own lack of talent.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Sometimes the worst thing to do is try to make a film that is aimed at the artsy critics, and then fall on your ass. Coogan has managed to do so, as the majority of critics loved his concept...and then saw the film and realized that the main character wasn't the only one who lacked talent.

DVD Releases for Tuesday, September 2nd

Nothing!

Seriously...there is not a single movie that was released nation-wide that is being released during this Labor Day weekend. There are a couple of releases

that only hit the theaters in LA and NY, such as "The Life Before Her Eyes" and "August".

There is a reason these films weren't released anywhere else. They sucked.

Calendar Watch

Next week; *Bangkok Dangerous*

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

Righteous Kill - September 12th - Robert De Niro

and Al Pacino together again as NY detectives working on a case that may be related to both a serial killer and a man they might have wrongly imprisoned years before.

Burn After Reading - September 12th - The latest Coen Brothers' movie, with Brad Pitt joining Frances McDormand, George Clooney, Tilda Swinton and John Malkovich in a dark comedy about missing memoirs of a CIA agent.

Eagle Eye - September 26th - Shia LaBeouf and Michelle Monoghan as a slacker and a single mother who become unwitting members of a terrorist cell plotting a political assassination.

Miracle at St. Anna - September 26th - Spike Lee's tale of a a battalion of black American soldiers who became trapped in a Tuscan village during WWII.

The Express - October 3rd - A must for Browns fans, the biographical tale of Syracuse running back Ernie Davis, the first African-American to win the Heisman Trophy.

Body of Lies - October 10th - Russell Crowe and Leonardo

DiCaprio in Ridley Scott's spy tale of intrigue in the Middle East.

Max Payne - October 17th - Mark Wahlberg stars in the adaptation of the video game about a DEA agent out to avenge the deaths of his family.

Pride and Glory - October 24th - Edward Norton and Colin

Farrell in a story about a family of prominent NYC cops who are shaken to their core when a scandal is uncovered.

RocknRolla - October 31st - Guy Ritchie hopefully back in form for another tale of London gangsters. Gerard Butler, Thandie Newton, Tom Wilkenson, and Jeremy Friggin' Piven star.

Changeling - October 31st - Clint Eastwood's latest Oscar potential, with Angelina Jolie as a Prohibition era mother who begins to think that the kidnapped son who was returned to her might not really be hers.

Quantum of Solace -

November 7th

- The next James Bond film, picking up shortly after the events ending "Casino Royale"

Australia - November 14th

- Baz Luhrmann's epic tale set in WWII Australia. With Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman. Think "Gone with the Wind" with kangaroos.

The Road - November

28th - Viggo Mortensen as a man walking with his son for months across a ravaged, post-apocalyptic landscape in search of civilization. Charlize Theron co-stars.

The Day the Earth Stood Still - December 12th - Keanu Reeves in a remake of the classic 1951 sci-fi film.

Twilight - December 12th - the

adaptation of the popular book series concerning a relationship between a non-blood drinking vampire and a teenaged girl.

Defiance - December 12th - Daniel Craig and Live Schreiber as Jewish brothers in WWII Russian, leading a band of refuges in striking back at the Germans. A major early Oscar

contender

Revolutionary Road - December 19th

- Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet as a young couple

raising a family in a Connecticut suburb during the mid 1950s. Sam Mendes ("American Beauty") directs the "Titanic" stars in their

on-screen reunion.

The Spirit - December 25th - Frank Miller's next comic book

adaptation, done in the same style as "Sin City".

Watchmen - March 6, 2009 - The

screen version of what is arguably graphic novelist Alan Moore's greatest work.

Blockbusters on the Distant Horizon (movies that would seem to be big hits...as soon as they get made or released).

X-Men Origins: Wolverine - May 1, 2009 - Hugh Jackman goes it alone as the adamentium enhanced anti-hero. With Live Schreiber as

Sabertooth, and Ryan Reynolds as Deadpool.

Star Trek - May 8, 2009 - J.J. Abrams and a young cast

reboot the franchise, going back to Kirk and Spock's days at Starfleet Academy.

Angels and Demons - May 15, 2009 - Tom Hanks and Ron Howard follow-up to "The DaVinci Code"

Terminator 4 - May 22, 2009 - Christian Bale as John Conner as the franchise moves into the apocalyptic future.

Transformers 2 - June 26, 2009 - The next chapter of Robots In Disguise!

Public Enemy - Jul

y 1, 2009 - Johnny Depp as John Dillinger. Co-staring Christian Bale, and directed by Michael Mann

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince - July 2009 - The sixth of J.K. Rowling's seven books, setting the stage for the two part conclusion in 2010 and 2011.

The Taking of Pelham 123- August 7, 2009 - Denzel Washington, John Travolta, and James Gandolfini in a remake of the classic 1974 film about a hijacked

subway car.

Shutter Island - October, 2009 - Martin Scorsese working once again with Leonardo DiCaprio

in this mystery set in 1954.

Nottingham - November, 2009 - Ridley Scot and Russell Crowe

together again in a retelling of the Robin Hood legend, this time through the eyes of the Sheriff of Nottingham (Crowe). With Sienna Miller as

Maid Marion.

Avatar - December 18, 2009 - James Cameron's sci-fi/CGI extravaganza. The

C.I.A. should take lessons about secrecy from Cameron, as he's keeping info about this film very much to himself at this time.

Iron Man 2 - May, 2010 - Right on the heels of the success of the first one, Marvel is quick to get Robert Downey Jr. back into his titanium suit.

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader - May, 2010 - The series goes off in a bit of a different direction, as those of you who love the

books already know.

Thor - June 2010 - Another Marvel superhero...but the Nordic God is

about as bland personality-wise as Superman, so we'll see how it goes.

Harry Potter and the Deathly

Hallows: Part I - 2010 - The start of the End for the boy wizard and his battle against He-Who-Shall-not-Be-Named

Lincoln - 2010 - Steven Spielberg directs the biographical film of the 16th President (Liam Neeson)

The Hobbit - 2010 - Guillermo del Toro directs and Peter Jackson will produce the prequel to "Lord of the Rings". Ian McKellen will

return as Gandalf

Fantastic Voyage - 2010 - Roland Emmerich ("The Day After

Tomorrow", "10,000 B.C.") remakes the classic 1967 movie about a miniaturized sub and crew operating on a

scientist from inside his brain.

The Avengers - 2011 - Iron Man, Hulk, Thor, and Captain America

open up a can of whoopass on bad guys everywhere.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part II -

2011 - The end of the line for what will be beyond doubt the most profitable series in the history of film making.

The Hobbit 2 - 2011 - del Toro and Jackson again, this time covering the time between the end of Tolkien's book, "The Hobbit" and

the start of LOTR.