In three years of writing "The Crystal Ball" for us on Friday nights, Mitch doesn't ever think he's seen a week like this one, bereft of even a single movie being released at the theaters or on DVD that's worth seeing. Good thing it's Oscars weekend, and there's a whole host of good hoops games and the Kelly Pavlik fight on Saturday night. Be sure to check back in this weekend for Mitch's review of "Slumdog Millionaire" and his Oscars preview on Sunday.

For those of you looking to see what's coming out this week in the theaters or DVD that might be worth watching, let me answer that with one simple word.

Nothing.

In the three years of doing this column, I don't think I've ever had a weekend with the level of "yuck" that I'm seeing right now.

Looks like it'll be a weekend of previously released DVDs, maybe catching "The International" at the theaters, and then watching the Oscars on Sunday. I'll have my preview with predictions posted Sunday morning.

News and Rumors

~ There may be an involvement from Linda Hamilton in the new Terminator series. Ms. Hamilton confirmed that she is talking with director McG about doing a voice-over for the film. It would be nice for her to appear onscreen as well in flashback sequences, but we'll take what we can get.

~ We have a sports related bit of movie news, more relevant due to the subject matter. The writer behind the true-life sports movie "The Rookie" will be behind "The Blindside", which will focus on the true story of Michael Oher, projected to be one of the top draft picks in this year's NFL draft. O her was a homeless Africa-American teen who was taken in by an affluent white family who saw promise in him.

However, the new environment provided new challenges for the young man.

Sandra Bullock will play Leigh Anne Touhy, who takes in Oher with her husband.

~ What's with Angelina Jolie and the CIA? Next up, "Salt", a spy thriller about Evelyn Salt, a CIA officer fingered as a Russian sleeper spy.

Live Schreiber will play Salt's CIA boss and friend.

~ Earlier I stated that the first film Arnold Schwarzenegger would make after his term as Governor ends would be a sequel to "True Lies". Looks like he has a smaller roll first, playing himself in the action flick "The Expendables", to be directed by his buddy Sylvester Stallone, and co-starring Mickey Rourke, Dolph Lundgren, Jason Statham, and Jet Li.

They'll play a group of mercenaries assigned to kill a South American dictator (who I'm sure will have some resemblance to Hugo Chavez).

That's one serious overdose of testosterone, isn't it? (or is it an overdose of HGH?)

~ Earlier it was stated that Emily Blunt would be playing the Black Widow in "Iron Man 2". But she's too busy, so they are looking to replace her with Scarlett Johansson. I'm sure that will really upset Swerb.

~ This has got to be the dumbest original idea for a movie I've ever seen. Elton John's production company is set to produce "Pride and Predator", a film where an alien ship crash lands into 18th century England, right in the middle of the period portrayed in the Jane Austin book "Pride and Prejudice".

The snooty Englishmen put aside all of their strict society rules and mores to battle the aliens.

There are no words fit to describe the level of suck this has reached.

Stupid Remakes and Sequels

~ Ben Stiller, Robert De Niro, Owen Wilson, Blythe Danner and Teri Polo will all be back for the third movie of the "Meet the Parents" franchise, this one to be called "Little Fockers". And yes, I'm putting this into the "stupid" category. Deal with it.

This week's new movie releases:

These movies are so bad, I don't even feel like going through the effort to find links to their trailers.

Madea Goes To Jail

Starring: Tyler Perry, Keshia Knight Pulliam, Derek Luke

Plot: A 6'5" man in grandma drag goes to jail and meets wacky people

The BeerBuzz: OK...if you liked the others, you'll probably like this. The only thing I find interesting in it all is the idea of little Rudy Huxtable playing a hooker.

Next thing you know, someone will be telling us that Greg Brady slept with his stepmother (what?)

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Fired Up!

Starring: A couple of second tier guest stars from television...one of them a 31 year old trying to pass himself off as a teenager in this movie.

Plot: Two high school jocks decide to ditch their annual football training sessions for cheerleading camp, thinking that they'll get lots of sex.

The BeerBuzz: Isn't this clever? They are promoting this using its initials! So it's FU! OK...let's put it this way, this is as close to a "straight-to-DVD" film as you are likely to see, as it's only being released to 1,800 theaters...which will probably drop to 180 next week.

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New DVD Releases for Tuesday, February 24

***Sex Drive* -** A high school senior drives cross-country with his best friend to hook up with a babe he met online.
Even Seth Green as a wise Amish farmer couldn't convince people to go see this crap-fest.

***The Haunting of Molly Hartley* -** A girl trying to just get by in a new school can't escape the dark secret that awaits her when she turns 18. Evidently, everyone else was able to escape, as pretty much any slasher/horror film can make at least $20 million at the box office unless it really sucks.

This one made $14 million.

Draw your own conclusions.

***What Just Happened* -** Robert De Niro plays a fading Hollywood producer in this comedy/drama that focuses on two weeks of his life as he tries to get a new picture made.

When a film starring Robert De Niro doesn't get released nationwide, and only pulls in $2 million at the box office, you know something was wrong.

***Religulous* -** I missed putting this on last week, so since I have a LOT of space available, I'll include it here. This is a complete "love it or hate it" movie, based upon your viewpoints of politics and/or religion.

Bill Maher makes fun of religious people in a Borat kind of way.

Your gut reaction to that last sentence is probably all you need to go on regarding whether or not you should rent it.

Calendar Watch

Next week: *Jonas Brothers: The 3D Concert, Street Fighter: The Legend of Chun-Li (IOW, it's not going to get any better next week).*

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

Watchmen - March 6 - The screen version of what is arguably graphic novelist Alan Moore's greatest work.

Duplicity - March 20 - Clive Owen again, this time teaming with Julia Roberts as corporate spies looking to pull a con job of their own. Directed by Tony Gilroy ("Michael Clayton").

The Soloist - April 24 - Jamie Foxx and Robert Downey Jr. as a street living mentally disturbed man who is also a virtuoso cellist. Downey Jr. plays the down and out reporter who discovers and befriends him.

X-Men Origins: Wolverine - May 1 - 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 - 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 - Tom Hanks and Ron Howard follow-up to "The DaVinci Code"

Terminator: Salvation - May 22 - Christian Bale as John Conner as the franchise moves into the apocalyptic future.

Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen : - June 26 - The next chapter of Robots In Disguise!

Public Enemy - July 1 - Johnny Depp as John Dillinger. Co-starring Christian Bale, and directed by Michael Mann

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince - July 17 - 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 - Denzel Washington, John Travolta, and James Gandolfini in a remake of the classic 1974 film about a hijacked subway car.

9 - September 9 - Tim Burton's latest animated strangeness, with Elijah Wood and Jennifer Connelly voicing characters fighting aliens in a post apocalyptic world.

Shutter Island - October 2 - Martin Scorsese working once again with Leonardo DiCaprio in this mystery set in

1954.

2012 - November 13 - Roland Emmerich's ("The Day After Tomorrow") tale of global cataclysm and the struggle of the survivors.

The Lovely Bones - December 11 - Peter Jackson's latest, about the ghost of a young, murdered girl watching over her family and friends' reactions to the event. Mark Wahlberg and Rachel Weisz star.

Avatar - December 16, 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.

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

The Road - (unannounced 2009) - 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.

*Nottingham - (*unannounced 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.

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. Kevin Kidd (Rome) is said to be playing the title role.

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.