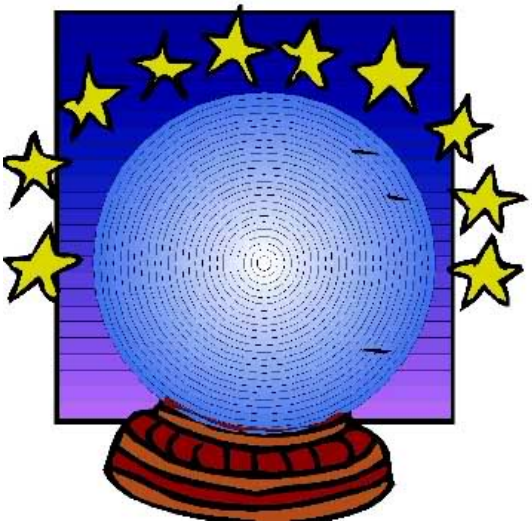
With a quiet week for releases at the theaters, Mitch uses this weeks edition of the Crystal Ball to review the winners and the losers of the summer box office season. And included as always are reviews of the weeks releases, the latest Hollywood news and rumors, and a list of the coming projects set to hit the theaters in the months to come.



That resounding SPLAT! you heard was the sound of Snakes on a Plane crashing to earth. The number one movie the first week it opened, once word got out that the reality was nowhere near the hype, it dropped faster than the Indians April lead in the AL Central.

Speaking of winners and losers (Indians)…now that it's September, let's do a quick post mortem on the Summer Blockbusters and find out who won and lost regarding the all important dollar figures (critical comments aside…sorta).

Winners:

1. *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest*. Estimated Budget - $225 million. Current domestic box office - $410 million. Profit - $185 million (not counting world wide, where it's also cleaning up. Capt. Jack Sparrow has bin berry, berry good to Disney).

2. *The DaVinci Code*. WHAT?!?! I thought that thing was a bomb?!? Think again. Estimated Budget - $125 million. Domestic box office - $217 million. Profit - $92 million

3. *The Break Up*. Estimated Budget - $52 million. Domestic Box Office - $120 million. Profit - $68 million.

4. *Click*. Estimated Budget - $70 million. Domestic Box Office - $135 million. Profit - $65 million

5. *Talladega Nights*. Estimated Budget - $73 million. Current domestic box office - $125 million. Profit - $52 million. If making fun of rednecks is this profitable, where is MY cut?

Losers:

5. *Mission Impossible 3*. Estimated Budget - $150 million. Domestic box office - $133 million. Loss - $17 million. And Tom Cruise was shocked that he was dropped?

4. *Lady in the Water*. Estimated Budget - $75 million. Domestic box office - $41 million. Loss - $34 million. I somehow doubt this will temper the ego of M. Night Shyamalan, which has reached Billickian proportions.

3. *Miami Vice*. Estimated budget - $135 million. Current domestic box office - $65 million. Loss - $70 million. Next time Michael Mann might want to spend a few more bucks on a script writer.

2. *Superman Returns*. Estimated budget - $270 million. Current domestic box office - $195 million. Loss - $75 million. Not a good summer for superheroes. X-Men 3 made a profit of $25 million, far, far below what the other two raked in.

1. *Poseidon*. Estimated budget - $160 million. Domestic box office - $60 million. Loss - $100 million. Since Warner Brothers put out both this bomb and Superman Returns…guess how much fun it would be to sit in their board meetings right about now?

News & Rumors:

~ Test audiences evidently didn't think that much of the new Spider-man movie, so the principals have been called back in for additional filming of more action sequences. I'm just hoping this isn't a sign that Spidey 3 will suck as bad as X-Men 3.

~ Paul Giamatti will work for Tom Hanks on an upcoming HBO mini-series about the life of second President John Adams. The series will focus heavily on Adams' tireless work spearheading the American Revolution. The series is scheduled to be shown in March 2008.

This week's new releases:

You can tell it's the last holiday of the summer, because Hollywood has assumed that everyone will want to be outside this weekend, hence the release of three movies that don't inspire many to rush to the theater. And it's even worse on the DVD side, with only one new movie release showing up on shelves on Tuesday.

Title: **Crank**

Starring: Jason Statham, Amy Smart

Plot: A man is injected with a poison that will kill him if he doesn't keep his adrenalin flowing.

The BeerBuzz: Statham has developed a good fan base of his action flicks after his "Transporter" movies. This will probably be the #1 movie of the weekend, unless it can't beat out "Invincible" in its second week. Look for hundreds of ignorant rednecks to be pissed off when they get to the theater and find out that just because the title is "Crank", that doesn't mean the employees of the multiplex are handing out crystal meth rocks.

Title: **The Wicker Man**

Starring: Nicolas Cage, Ellen Burstyn, Leelee Sobieski

Plot: A local sheriff investigates a missing girl on a really creepy island.

The BeerBuzz: Remake of a classic 1973 horror flick. Unlike the earlier remake of the summer, "The Omen", they've changed things around in this one, with the creepy island being dominated by a bunch of creepy women…all of which are someone's ex-wife or mother-in-law…and it can't get much creepier than that. Another fine edition to Nic Cage's strange career; right up there with "Lords of War", "The Weather Man", and "Windtalkers".

Title: **Crossover**

Starring: Anthony Mackie, Wesley Jonathan, Wayne Brady

Plot: Two best friends who are talented basketball players go to LA with different intentions; one to play for UCLA, the other to play for a streetball championship.

The BeerBuzz: Wayne Brady as a bad guy? All I can think of is the Chapelle skit where Brady would do his happy singing routine, and then kill some cops. This obviously can't be as funny, so if you must get your basketball fix; stay up until 3 AM and watch LeBron in the World Championships.

New DVD Releases on Tuesday, September 5th

United 93 – No jokes on this one. If you are ready for it, this is a moving, excellent rendition of that fateful 9/11 flight. Or so I've heard, as I'm not quite there yet.

Lost: the Complete Second Season – Just in time to watch all the weirdness to get you ready for the third season. I will say that the second season is not as confusing as the first. Which means I'm only 95% confused now. Still a great series.

Calendar Watch:

Next week: *Hollywoodland, The Covenant, The Protector*

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

The Black Dahlia – September 15th – Brian DePalma's latest, a film noir treatment of a James Ellroy novel. Scarlett Johannson looks totally hot in it.

All the King’s Men : September 22nd Sean Penn, Jude Law, and James Gandolfini in the classic remake of the thinly veiled tale of the life of Louisiana governor Huey Long.

Children of Men – September 29th – Futuristic movie with Clive Owen and Juliana Moore where women can no longer bear children, and mankind seems doomed to extinction until one woman mysteriously becomes pregnant

The Departed : October 6th - Scorsese's latest with the Cast To Die For. Jack Nicholson, Matt Damon, Leonardo DiCaprio, Mark Wahlberg, Martin Sheen, Alec Baldwin, and Ray Winstone in a story about a cop (Leo) who has infiltrated the mob, and a mobster (Damon) who has infiltrated the cops.

Man of the Year : October 13th – Robin Williams as a Jon Stewart type commentator/comedian who runs for President as an Independent to shake things up…and wins.

Flags of Our Fathers: October 20th - Director Clint Eastwood's tale of the men who raised the flag on Iwo Jima.

The Prestige : October 20th – Christopher Nolan (Momento) directs Hugh Jackman, Christian Bale, and Scarlett Johansson in a turn of the century mystery about two magicians. This one has some great early buzz.

Lucky You : October 27th Eric Bana/Drew Barrymore movie centering on the Poker Craze and the World Series of Poker.

A Good Year : November 10th - Ridley Scott's latest with a kinder, gentler Russell Crowe and a plot line revolving around a vineyard. Crowe and booze…always an interesting combination.

Casino Royale : November 17th - Daniel Craig in his first appearance as 007. Good early buzz on this one.

The Fountain : November 22nd – Hugh Jackman as a 16th Century Conquistador who finds the real fountain of youth and spends 1000 years searching for a way to save his love.

Déjà Vu: November 22nd – Denzel Washington in a Tony Scott time travel adventure.

Rocky Balboa – December 22nd – Adrian!!!! I want to watch Matlock!!!!

The Good Shepherd – December 22nd – Robert Di Niro directs Matt Damon, Anjelina Jolie and himself in a tale of the early years of the CIA.

Dreamgirls – December 25th – Big budget adaptation of the Broadway musical with Beyonce, Jamie Foxx and Eddie Murphy.