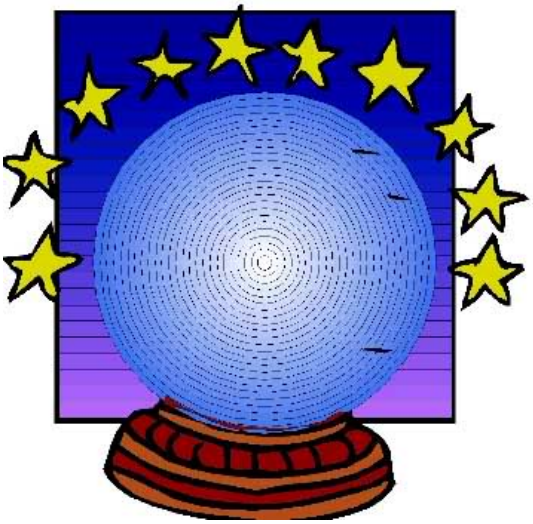
With the Browns bye week upon us, Mitch urges everyone to get out to a theater and see "The Departed" this weekend, which he hails as one of the top films of the year. As far as today's releases go, "Man Of The Year" starring Robin Williams is generating the most buzz. Also, Mitch sadly reports on two new Stallone projects that would be better left undone: Rocky VI and Rambo IV.



OK…bye weekend for the Browns. So if you have time in between all those projects you plan to work on now that you have Sunday free, get down to the multiplex and check out “The Departed”.

It cleaned up at the box office last week, as the critically acclaimed gangster film blew away the competition. Look for it to either hold on to the top spot, or drop no lower than #2 as the Barry Levinson/Robin Williams political comedy “Man of the Year” attempts to displace it.

News & Rumors:

~ The upcoming “Iron Man” movie has gotten a couple of more injections of legitimacy in the form of Terrance Howard (“Crash”, “Hustle and Flow”) being cast as Tony Stark’s (Robert Downey, Jr) best friend Jim “Rhody” Rhodes. Add that to the news that Jon Favreau will direct, and it looks like this one actually has some potential to not suck.

~ Not content to guzzle raw eggs mixed with Centrum Silver vitamins in Rocky VI, Stallone is

also planning to start filming Rambo IV in January. Rambo, some other mercenaries (read; cannon fodder) and his Kevlar Depends will take on pirates who have taken some missionaries hostage. No word yet on whether or not they're getting Dick Van Dyke to play Dr. Sloan to help him Diagnose the Murders, or Andy Griffith to play his trusty lawyer companion Matlock.

~ Speaking of geriatrics, George Lucas states that he is "still working on" the concepts/plotline/etc of Indiana Jones 4…so it might be ready for Harrison Ford to film just in time for him to dump Calista Flockhart for being too old and take up with Dakota Fanning. Now being at the tail end of the Baby Boom, I understand the desire to keep our icons going…but doesn't there have to be SOME limit on how many 60+ 'manly-men' we see in these kind of flicks?

This week's new releases:

In a related note; over the next several weeks, I'll be previewing several films that would have been previously released in limited locations (usually NY and LA) as they open to more of the country. These are often smaller, "serious" films that are geared for the awards season.

For now, keep your eyes open for these three films that may end up playing at a theater near you soon:

"The Queen". Helen Mirren is a lead pipe lock for a Best Actress nomination for her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth II in the weeks following the death of Princess Diana.

"The Last King of Scotland". Forrest Whitaker will also garner major awards considerations for his portrayal of the despotic former ruler of Uganda, Idi Amin.

"Little Children". Best Picture buzz surrounds this suburbia drama/romance starring Kate Winslet, Jennifer Connelly, and Patrick Wilson.

Films opening nationwide this week:

Title: **Man of the Year**

Starring: Robin Williams, Laura Linney, Christopher Walken, and Louis Black

Plot: Jon Stewart type comedian runs for president on a lark. And wins.

The BeerBuzz: A lot of potential on this one. Robin teaming back up with the man who put him in his best early film, "Good Morning, Vietnam"? The director behind the camera of the brilliant political satire "Wag the Dog" wading into that pool again in our Autumn of Discontent towards all politics? This has "hit" written all over it…but then again, this may be another "Patch Adams". Could very much be a "love it or hate it" movie…something that doesn't bode well.

Title: **The Grudge 2**

Starring: The former star of "Joan of Arcadia", a former guest star on "The Gilmore Girls", and

a bunch of people who would kill just to have those mediocre credits on their resumes.

Plot: Continuation (sort of) of the first one…Tokyo is still a bad place to be an American Nurse as that creepy looking little boy and his curse are still out and about.

The BeerBuzz: The original was a surprise hit in 2004, and since they've brought back most major movie-making players at least (director and writers), then fans of the first will probably be pretty happy with this one.

Title: **The Marine**

Starring: A steroids taking WWE poser and some D-list Hollywood lightweights needing a paycheck (Robert Patrick)

Plot: Rent "Con Air", and you pretty much have the basics; minus the actors with talent or a script with complete sentences.

The BeerBuzz: The first movie put out by WWE head honcho Vince McMahon, the one man who makes Brian Billick modest in comparison. Look for it to be about as successful as his last venture outside of the rasslin' world…the XFL. Evidently the "star" of this tripe, John Ceda, is known in the WWE world as "Prototype". How appropriate that he is starring in a prototypical bomb.

New DVD Releases on Tuesday, October 17th

The Break-Up – From the sounds of it; Jennifer Aniston and Vince Vaughn really have broken up, so we can finally ignore all that PR crap and just enjoy a pretty decent comedy that is said to not cop out at the end in using the standard schmaltzy conclusions normally associated with this genre. I'm sure it's similar to some of my break-ups…with the teeny-tiny exception that neither of my ex-wives looked anything like Jennifer Aniston. Details, details.

The Omen – Much like "Psycho", this is a movie that is pretty much a 100% re-imaging of the Gregory Peck version. So why bother? Besides, I already know it isn't true. My son has not sired any offspring yet (to my knowledge), so there cannot be a Son of Satan running around out there.

Over the Hedge – Well made CGI adaptation of the comic strip, with Bruce Willis, Garry Shandling, and Steve Carrel providing the voices of animals adapting to living next to suburbia. I'm hoping that eventually they'll attack the "leaders" of my Home Owners Association ("what do you MEAN that I can't paint my house Orange and Brown and build a new garage in the shape of a football helmet?")

American Dreamz – Box office bomb that may be worth a look. Satirical rips on American Idol (NO!!! I'd have never guessed!) and George Bush with Hugh Grant as the Simon Cowell "star" of a popular amateur music show and Dennis Quaid as the know-nothing president who makes an appearance on the show to boost his ratings. If this prompts Bush to show up on American Idol, I swear I will do an Elvis and shoot my damn TV (the 20" one in the den…no way do I go after the large screen HDTV).

Calendar Watch:

Next week: *Flags of Our Fathers* , *The Prestige* , *Marie Antoinette, Flicka*

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

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.

Stranger Than Fiction – November 10th – Will Ferrell tries to replicate Jim Carrey's success in the break-from-comedy surrealistic drama in which he plays a man who hears the voice of an author in his head as she contemplates how to kill him off, thinking he is only a fictional character. Strange indeed.

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. The early buzz on this one is that it's going to bomb big time.

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

Apocalypto : December 8th – Mel Gibson's latest controversial movie filmed entirely in a dead language, this one focusing on the decline and fall of the Mayan Civilization.

Blood Diamond – December 15th – Leonardo DiCaprio, Jennifer Connelly, and Djimon Hounsou have various reasons to search for a priceless diamond in Sierra Leone.

Rocky Balboa – December 22nd – I'll admit it…the trailer makes it look much better than Rocky IV or Rocky V.

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

We Are Marshall – December 22nd – Another uplifting movie with football as the backdrop…this one about the attempts to rebuild the Marshall football program after the tragic 1970 airline crash that killed 75 players, coaches, and staff.

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

The Good German – December 25th – Another Good Movie (I kill me). Oscar contender from Stephen Soderberg starring George Clooney and Kate Blanchette in post WWII Berlin.

2007 Attempts at Blockbusters (most dates are nothing more than educated guesses at this

point).

Children of Men – New release date for the futuristic Clive Owen and Julianna Moore film about a world where women can no longer get pregnant, dooming mankind. (January)

Zodiac – Jake Gyllenhaal and Robert Downey, Jr star in the tale of the Bay Area serial killer (January)

Ghost Rider – Nicholas Cage turns into a motorcycle riding superhero with a flaming skeleton head. (February)

Reign Over Me – First major fictional piece dealing with the effects of 9/11 on the families, starring Adam Sandler (against type) and Don Cheadle (March)

300 – Frank Miller adaptation of the Frank Miller graphic novel about 300 Spartans defending Greece from the entire frickin' Persian Empire. Filmed in the same style as "Sin City". (March)

Grind House – Two one-hour short horror stories, one from Robert Rodriguez, the other from Quentin Tarantino. (April)

Spider-Man 3 – The webslinger versus Venom and Sandman. (May)

Shrek the Third – Justin Timberlake as young King Arthur. Gulp (May)

Pirates of the Caribbean: At the World's End – Captain Jack goes for the hat trick (May)

Ocean's Thirteen – Will someone please stick a fork in this franchise? (June)

Fantastic Four: The Rise of the Silver Surfer – No way does this film get completed by this date (June)

Live Free or Die Hard – John McClane strikes again (probably with his walker) (June)

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix – My wife and daughter will be there the first day (July)