

Best and Worst: Movies of 2007

By Levi Snyder
Staff Writer

As we students travel that long road back to class, our heads drooping and arms full of books, it becomes quite clear that summer has come to an end. With the end of this season of fun also comes the end of one of summer's most enjoyable features, the summer movie. Every summer, millions flock to the Cineplex for that big screen experience and this summer was no different. It was a season of surprises and successes as well as a season of disappointments and failures. But, most of all, it was a season of fun. Looking back on this summer at the movies, I present the best and worst of the summer movie season.

This summer, the competition was steep, but the three films on this list were up to the challenge. All three were entertaining and smart and stood out from the large crowd of summer flicks. These are the top three of summer 2007.

One of the first movies is "Mr. Brooks." This film starring known good guy actor Kevin Costner as a serial killer with split personalities doesn't sound like a summer block buster and, in fact, it was not. However, this delightfully dark, well written, and superbly acted film turned out to be the most intriguing movie of the summer. The film tells the story of Earl Brooks (Costner), owner of a successful box company and a family man, but also a ruthless killer. Instead of simply portraying him as a villain, the film shows that Brooks is a man tortured by a disease that cannot be treated. His need to kill is destroying his life. Costner turns in a performance that will make you forget all about the charmers he has played in the past. He is sinister, yet tortured. As evil as he is, Costner makes the audience root for Earl Brooks. It is a remarkable performance. The film also benefits from some great twists and turns, a creepy soundtrack and some comic relief from stand up comic Dane Cook. Cook costars as a photographer that catches Brooks in the act. In a

summer of big, flashy sequels and adaptations, it was this film that chose to engage the audience not with special effects and loud noises, but with well developed characters and situations. "Mr. Brooks" was the surprise of the summer and the best of the bunch.

Next is the outlandish young adult comedy, "Superbad." On the surface, it is your standard R-rated teen comedy. Two teens spend one crazy night in the pursuit of alcohol

believe it is safe to say that it delivered the goods. This fourth installment of the "Die Hard" saga combined humor, amazing stunts, and a few clever twists to create one satisfying summer flick. The plot throws New York cop John McClain (Bruce Willis, reprising his role from the previous three films) into a war against computer terrorists attempting to shut down the entire U.S. computer system. McClain faces off against them

enjoyed for years. This great summer flick, once again, proves this.

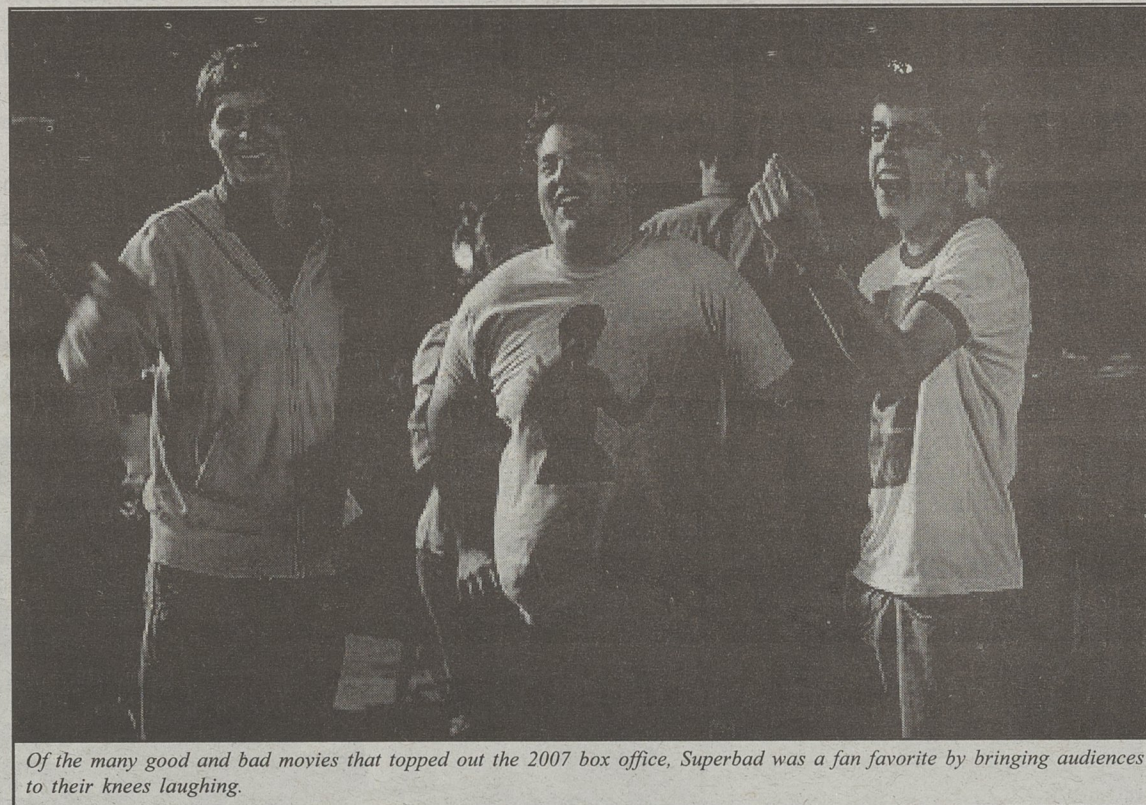
The third time was not the charm this summer as the three worst films of the summer were all third installments of major film franchises. These films all seemed to have dropped the ball on their third time out.

Starting of the worst is "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End." Dead is the key word here. After

blander fight to the death between Capt. Jack and Davy Jones. And, of course, their quest for the Dead Man's Chest comes to an end. Though Depp still holds a great deal of charm as the sleazy Capt. Jack, it is not enough to save this dismal mess of a sequel. When the film finally does end, even that moment is not a happy one, because possibilities of another film are hinted at. In my opinion, this chest, and by chest I mean this film franchise, should remain buried.

The big green ogre, donkey, and the rest of the crew return for Shrek's 3rd fairy tale adventure but most of the magic is gone. Though the film salvages a few laughs, mostly from Eddie Murphy's hilarious voice work as Donkey, the rest seems somewhat familiar and boring. In this chapter, Shrek discovers that Fiona is pregnant and struggles with the fact that he is not yet ready to be a father. After spending time with Fiona's cousin, a young king Arthur, and teaching him valuable lessons, he realizes that he possesses the tools to be a good dad. One of the things that was always very appealing about the Shrek films was their negations of fairy tale lessons. The films were simply funny. Now because of an increased focus on the lesson and not on clever humor, there is now little to diversify Shrek from any other family film. A series that, at the beginning, seemed bold and full of energy now seems to be running on empty.

"Spider-Man 3" was the sequel that came out of the gate with much potential. Peter Parker and Mary Jane's relationship was beginning to progress, new and interesting villains were being introduced, and this third chapter seemed to be destined for greatness. Unfortunately, what followed were the same old things we had seen in the first two films. Mary Jane once again struggles with the fact that Peter is a super hero, Harry Osborne is once again trying to kill Peter, and Peter is once again in danger of being fired from his job at The Daily Bugle. Though the



Of the many good and bad movies that topped out the 2007 box office, Superbad was a fan favorite by bringing audiences to their knees laughing.

and girls. Raunchy hilarity ensues. Behind the off color humor, however, is a heart. The team who brought you "Knocked Up" and "The 40 Year Old Virgin" has once again created a gross out comedy with a soul. While dishing out mile a minute jokes and awkward situations, "Superbad" also paints a portrait of two friends about to leave for college and be separated for the first time. Though never overly sentimental, the film presents the bond that friends can form and how that bond often helps them through awkward situations. Hilarious and heartfelt, "Superbad" was the comedy of the summer.

One of the last good movies of the summer is "Live Free or Die Hard." This was the action film that everyone was waiting for and I

against them in a series of car chases and helicopter stunts that are nothing short of mind blowing. Though sometimes preposterous in nature, the action in the film is amazing, combining new age computer technology with old fashion stunt work. What keeps the film going, however, is its ageless star. Bruce Willis still holds the ability to get banged up, blow things up, and save the day all while spouting off one liners that, after all of these years, continue to have bite. The film pits the old guy from Brooklyn against new technology and I don't think I am ruining any thing by saying that he, once again, is victorious. He is, after all, Bruce Willis and seeing old Bruce take on the bad guys is something movie goers have

two entertaining entries in the Pirates series, the life seems to have been sucked out of the franchise by this tedious and confusing mess of a final chapter. In this installment, the crew is, once again, rushing to save Will Turner from the clutches of Davy Jones. This time, however, they must first rescue Capt. Jack Sparrow from Davy Jones Locker. What Exactly Davy Jones's Locker is or how exactly the pirates are able to get there to get Jack is not clearly explained and therefore quite confusing. Also, this confusing sequence proves to be the only entertaining scene in the film. The other two hours and thirty five minutes are full of bland little affairs, like a world wide pirate meeting, all leading up to an even