

The year 2003 at the box office:

A look back at the sad comedies, laughable dramas, and even a few movies worth watching

By Ross King
Editor

There are many things that happened in 2003 that we will never forget: the war with Iraq, the beginning of the LeBron James era, OSU winning the Fiesta Bowl, the election of "The Govenator", and the big blackout, just to name a few.

There are also several things that happened in 2003 that we cannot wait to forget: Britney Spears' 55 hour wedding, Steve Bartman, Bennifer... I'm just going to stop right there.

Fortunately, my task isn't to talk about all of those things. My focus is on what this past year brought to the box office. Thanks to monthly trips to the theatre and working in a video store for three months, this task should not only be fun, but simple. Here is a month-by-month list of the good, the bad, and the **Giglis** of 2003.

January

The beginning of the year brought several movies I had no desire to see in the theatres, but ended up enjoying when they came out on video over the summer.

In comedy, Ashton Kutcher finally debuted as a character that wasn't totally stupid when he co-starred in **Just Married** with Brittany Murphy. It turned out to be rather funny and I ended up buying it. It's a good date movie, or one to watch when you just need a good laugh without having to think much (as the lead actor pretty much illustrates).



Other films released in January that I'd recommend are the great action movie, **The Recruit**; another good comedy, **A Guy Thing**; and a surprisingly entertaining movie, **Kangaroo Jack**. Don't knock it until you've watched it.

Looking on the other end of the spectrum for this month finds Kid Rock's acting debut in **Biker Boyz**. I didn't watch this one because I try to stay away from movies with spellings like "Boyz" or that include Kid Rock. But my guess is that it's probably bad.

February

There was only one film I really liked in February, **The Life of David Gale**. Kevin Spacey was brilliant, once again, in a powerful movie about the death penalty.

Other releases that weren't my cup of tea include: **Shanghai Knights**, the disappointing sequel to **Shanghai Noon**; **How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days**, a subpar romantic comedy; and **Old School**. I only saw a few parts of this movie, but every one of them was ridiculously annoying. To each his own, I guess.

Gods and Generals also came out in February, but I don't watch war movies, so ask your local war/history buff about this one.

March

Bringing Down the House was probably the most interesting movie of March. Steve Martin teamed up with Queen Latifah... I don't think anyone saw that coming. However, it was a pretty funny movie, though not quite "the funniest movie ever," as Larry King put it. This movie raised some controversy because of its overt stereotypical characters, but that kind of added to the humor of it.

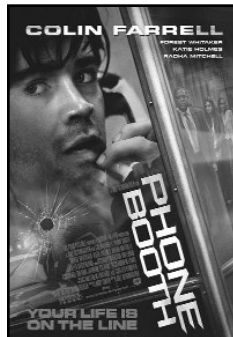
A View from the Top, a movie about flight attendants, came in under the radar (no pun intended) when it finally hit theaters after being postponed due to the tragedies of Sept. 11. Gwyneth Paltrow and Christina Applegate are both wonderful in the film, and Mike Myers is hysterical in his small supporting role as a flight attendant wanna-be who's grounded because a unique handicap.

Bend it Like Beckham is probably the most talked about movie coming out of this month, dealing with females and sports. **Head of State** with Chris Rock turned out to be an OK comedy with a unique look at politics.



April

April was a month of odd movies. First of all, imagine if you will a meeting, a meeting of movie people. They want to make a movie. They have a star for the movie, but they don't have a movie for the star. They look out the window and they see... a phone booth. "Hey! Let's put the star in the phone booth for an hour!" Fast forward now to April 2003 and you have: **Phone Booth**. My opinion of **Phone Booth** is simple: At least it wasn't longer. It was only one hour and 20 minutes long.



The next week brought the weirdest movie I have ever seen: Rob Zombie's **House of 1000 Corpses**. I put it in at the video store because of the surprising list of people that reserved it before it came out. I'd never head of it so I thought I'd see what it was about. Weird, odd, there aren't enough words like this to describe this movie.

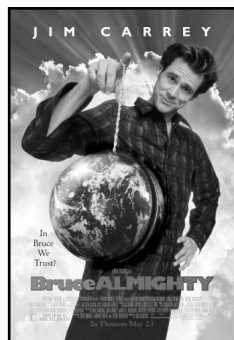
A week later brought cinematic relief, with a humorous look at the life of folk singers in **The Mighty Wind**. The cast of **Best in Show** and **Waiting for Guffman** once again entertained in their own off-the-wall way.

One more week, one more weird one: **Malibu's Most Wanted**. Which I'm proud to say I did not see.

The final week of March brought a reminder of just how incredibly messed up this culture is with **The Real Cancun**. Not only didn't I see it, but thankfully the place I worked for didn't even buy it so this trash wasn't spread any farther.

May

May was a big month for both sequels and new concepts alike. We were introduced to **Finding Nemo**, Disney/Pixar's latest digital masterpiece; **Bruce Almighty**, Jim Carey's surprisingly thought-provoking religious experience; and **The Italian Job**, another look at the growing genre of fast-car flicks.



Two sequels were big in the month of May, neither of which you probably need reminded of because they were two of the biggest movies of the year. I speak of course of **X2** and **Matrix: Reloaded**.

June

The sixth month of 2003 was also one of sequels. There was **2 Fast 2 Furious**, which I thought was as good as the first, neither better or worse; **Charlie's Angels 2**, which was better than the first; and **Dumb and Dumberer** which I haven't brought myself to see because I don't want to spoil my love of the first one.

Oh yeah, and **Justin to Kelly** came out in June, too. But I don't think anyone wants to talk about that.

July

July is supposed to be a month of summer blockbusters. What came was the year's so-called best and worst. I haven't seen **Legally Blonde 2** because too many people have called it, "The worst movie I have ever seen." The People's Choice Awards just named **Pirates of the Caribbean** the best movie of the year. My favorite movie of the month was **Johnny English** starring Mr. Bean himself, Rowan Atkinson. The people I went with to see it were almost falling out of their chairs, this movie was so funny. Oh yeah, there was a movie about horses, too, that was kind of popular. I think it was called **Seabiscuit**.

August

This month showed exactly how bad American film can be. We were introduced to **Gigli**, **Grind**, **My Boss' Daughter**, **Freddy vs. Jason**, and **Open Range**. None of which I've thankfully seen, but I also have never heard a good thing about any of them.

September

September brought a continuation of bland theater. Nothing caught my attention. Movies that were supposed to be good but seemed to bomb were **Matchstick Men** and **Duplex**.

October

Finally some films worth attending. One of my favorite films of the year hit theaters in October: **School of Rock** starring Jack Black. I liked this movie for many reasons. First, its plethora of great rock songs. Second, it showed Jack Black can be funny and mostly clean. It was just a great, feel-good flick that I'd recommend to anyone.

Other movies from October that I didn't get to see, but am looking forward to renting, are **Kill Bill Vol. 1**, **Runaway Jury**, and **Radio**.

November

November brought the movie we'd all been waiting for: **The Matrix Revolutions**. At least, a few months before, it was supposed to be the one we'd all been waiting for, but when it finally came out, it didn't get that great of response. I personally didn't try to go see it until Thanksgiving break and I could only find it in one theatre in my area, which was very surprising.

One other note from November is that the Looney Tunes have finally completely sold out. Along with the Geico commercials, they sank low enough to do a movie with Brandon Fraiser. I speak, of course, of **The Looney Tunes: Back in Action**.

December

Gee, there was some movie that came out in December that I think was/is kind of popular... something about some short guys and their jewelry... oh yeah, I think it's called **Lord of the Rings: Return of the King**. Everybody already knows about that, so I'll move on.



December also brought **Big Fish**, which I've heard good things about; **Stuck on You** starring Matt Damon and Greg Kinnear, which turned out to be a great movie; **Mona Lisa Smile** starring some of the best actresses of our generation plus Julia Roberts; and several others that seem like they could be worth a watch, including yet another version of **Peter Pan** and **Cheaper by the Dozen**.

Well, that's the year 2003 at the movie theatre. It was definitely a roller coaster ride with many ups and downs, and I can't wait to get back on the ride for this year's films, especially what could be the biggest release we've ever seen Mel Gibson's **The Passion of the Christ**.

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