

Let's start with the ugly, the films which were wretched beyond belief: so bad you would pay *not* to see them. [Dead Bang](#), a lame brain action thriller starring Don Johnson, was definitely dead and anything but a bang; dead bore was more like it. The plot was incoherent and altogether unbelievable, and the characters were either underdeveloped, superfluous, or both. [Skin Deep](#) was a tedious comedy written and directed by Blake Edwards. John Ritter played an alcoholic womanizer in mid-life crisis; he spent the movie drinking, having sex, crashing his Mercedes, getting arrested, and singing horrendously at the piano. *Young Einstein* was stupid and contrived—just what you'd expect from someone named Yahoo Serious. Mr. Serious' one-dimensional performance lost its novelty faster than you could say  $E=mc^2$ . Eddie Murphy's directorial debut, [Harlem Nights](#), was a puddle of profanity, paper thin characters, and putrid violence. Murphy's pitiful script demeaned women and wasted a fine cast. [Tango and Cash](#) was a brain dead *Lethal Weapon* rip-off starring Sylvester Stallone and Kurt Russell. Screenwriter Randy Feldman's shockingly stupid story line didn't have one original bone in its body.

So much for the ugly, let's move on to the bad: films which weren't awful but which were the biggest disappointments of the year. Terry Gilliam's *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* was all flash and no substance. The dazzling special effects just couldn't make up for the sluggish pace and un compelling characters. [Star Trek V: The Final Frontier](#) sucked Dilithium crystals! It

was the worst film of the series, a shockingly poor follow-up to the wonderfully successful *Star Trek IV*. William Shatner's pretentious story tasted too much like a potluck dinner of science fiction leftovers. In [Casualties of War](#), Michael J. Fox's tender moments with rape victim Thuy Thu Le were heartfelt and stirring. Unfortunately, the film's clumsy screenplay engulfed the actors in a cross-fire of clichés, and director Brian De Palma failed to offer any fresh insights into the war, making the repugnant violence seem unnecessary. Director Terry Jones disappointed Monty Python fans with [Erik the Viking](#), a futile attempt to combine *The Holy Grail* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The movie didn't work either as a comedy or as an adventure, and it wasted John Cleese in a cameo role. Oliver Stone's manipulative melodrama *Born On the Fourth of July* had only one saving grace: Tom Cruise. But even Cruise's surprisingly good performance couldn't overcome Stone's ram-it-down-your-throat direction and John Williams' syrupy score.

That's it for the bad and the ugly; how about the good? I'd like to briefly mention two nuggets which the critics blasted and the public avoided. [UHF](#), Weird Al Yankovic's big screen debut, is, as far as I'm concerned, the funniest *Airplane*-type comedy since *Airplane*. Sure, the television parodies are stupid, but more often than not, they are also hilarious. The same is true of the race track gambling comedy [Let It Ride](#) starring Richard Dreyfuss: the movie *is* light-weight fluff, but it charms your pants off with its whimsical humor.