

P.P.L.A.U.S.E

SUMMER of the SEQUELS

AND MORE...

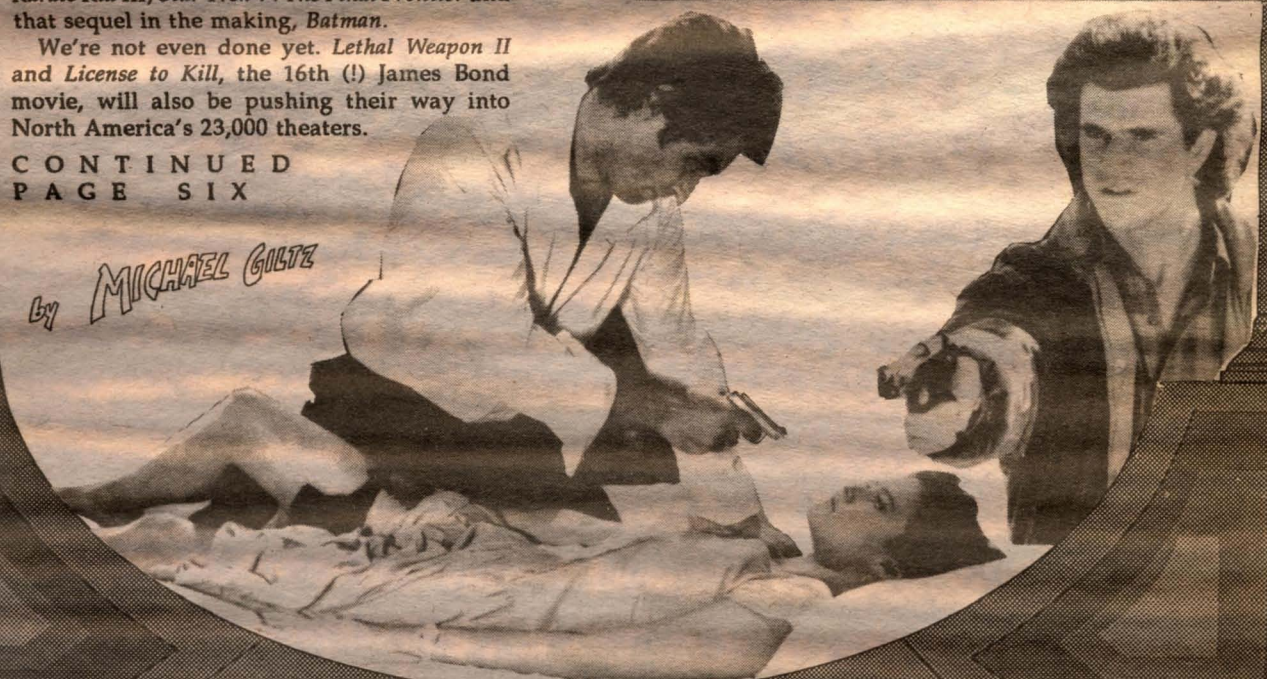
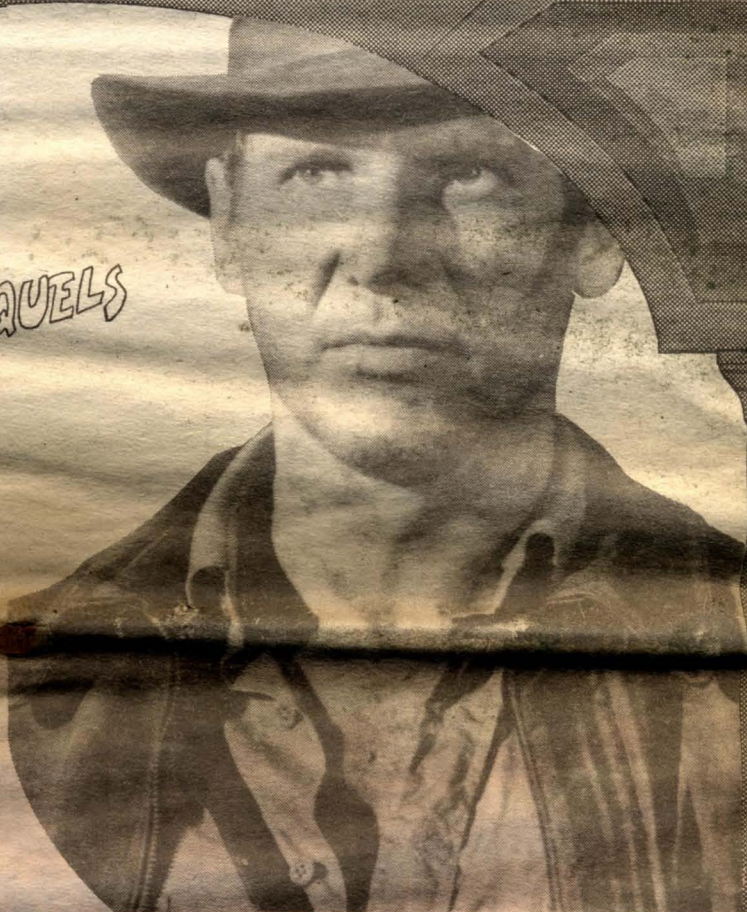
You will go to the movies this summer — again and again and again. Yesterday's premiere of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (see review page 7) marked the onslaught of the big budget comedies and adventures that power Hollywood's most profitable season.

Well on their way to another record-setting year, the major studios are looking forward to a bumper crop of highly anticipated movies. Highly anticipated, perhaps, because they're so darn familiar; among the other sequels vying for your attention are *Ghostbusters II*, *The Karate Kid III*, *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* and that sequel in the making, *Batman*.

We're not even done yet. *Lethal Weapon II* and *License to Kill*, the 16th (!) James Bond movie, will also be pushing their way into North America's 23,000 theaters.

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by MICHAEL GILTZ



They'll be joined by *Pink Cadillac*, a Clint Eastwood action-comedy with Bernadette Peters; *Turner & Hooch*, a cop and his dog comedy starring Tom Hanks; and *The Abyss*, an underwater epic directed by James Cameron, the man behind *The Terminator* and *Aliens*.

Hollywood even threw in a few dramas for variety. Peter Weir, who helmed *Witness* and *The Mosquito Coast*, is at the head of *Dead Poets Society*, a drama about an unconventional teacher in an all-male boarding school. It's the first film for Robin Williams since his breakthrough into movie-stardom with *Good Morning, Vietnam*. Also look for *Great Balls of Fire*, the story of rocker Jerry Lee Lewis that re-teams *The Big Easy*'s duo of actor Dennis Quaid and director Jim McBride.

Two real wild cards are *Young Einstein*, an Australian comedy written, directed and starring someone named Yahoo Serious — who deserves to be famous for that reason alone — and *Erik The Viking*, a "comedy with a conscience" from Monty Python veteran Terry Jones.

Naturally, not all of these movies can be hits. But with so many films that have a built-in audience, at least three and possibly five or six of these movies will gross over \$100 million. Another three to five movies will gross over \$50 million.

Five or ten years ago, this was unthinkable. After the unconventional success of *Jaws* convinced studios to go for a wide release on opening weekend (1000 or more screens), summer became dominated by two or three flicks that made all the dough. If nothing broke out, a handful of movies would bounce

lion.

Now they have the best of both worlds. The last few summers have seen two or three blockbusters and a group of respectable hits massed below them. This across-the-board success of such a wide range of movies may be one of the best indicators of how strong Hollywood's current boom times are.

To help you wade through all of those Roman numerals, *APPLAUSE* has combed such industry publications as *Variety* and *Hollywood Reporter* to get the latest buzz on the movies they expect you to see. Below we've made predictions as to which pix will click and why, as well as fingering the ones we think (or hope) won't do as well as expected.

THE BIG BOYS

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade — the last two entries in this saga are among the top 10 grossing movies of all time and this might very well join them there. Spielberg finds it very difficult to make an unenjoyable movie, and when the subject at hand isn't wife abuse and poverty, that isn't a problem. Throw in the cross-generational appeal of Sean Connery and River Phoenix and there isn't a soul in the world who won't want to see this one at least twice.

The Abyss — this is the real zinger of the summer. It has a marvelous cast headed by Ed Harris, and director James Cameron pulled out all the stops — and budget restraints — for this underwater extravaganza. People have spent the last two years talking about the box office poison of baseball movies, but we can't even think of a well-made, popular movie set under the ocean. Well, we can now.

Batman — inspired by the revisionist



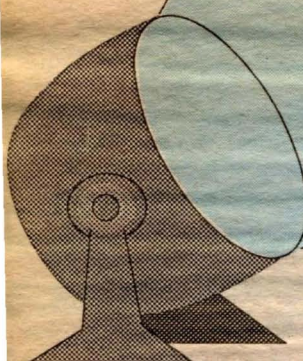
Sean Connery and Harrison Ford beg

Dark Knight comic books in which Batman is seen as a vigilante, this boasts Jack Nicholson as the perfect Joker and the visual flair of Tim Burton, who directed *Beetlejuice* and *Pee Wee's Big Adventure*. Michael Keaton seemed an odd, even goofy, choice for the superhero, but by all accounts he's done it. This is also the only big flick to have a strong music tie-in — a new album by Prince, including the first single, "Batdance." Only its dark and violent nature will

SUMMER LINE UP

Here is a list of the big summer releases. Inevitably, some of these will be a bust and less well-known flicks will click with audiences and provide sequel fodder for summers to come.

<i>Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade</i>	May 24
<i>Pink Cadillac</i>	May 26
<i>Star Trek V: The Final Frontier</i>	June 9
<i>Ghostbusters II</i>	June 16
<i>Batman</i>	June 23
<i>Honey, I Shrunk The Kids</i>	June 23
<i>The Abyss</i>	June 28
<i>Karate Kid III</i>	June 30
<i>Great Balls of Fire</i>	In June
<i>License to Kill</i>	July 14
<i>Lethal Weapon II</i>	July 14
<i>Turner & Hooch</i>	July 21
<i>Young Einstein</i>	In July



keep this one from going completely through the roof.

Ghostbusters II — it would have to be truly awful to pull in less than \$100 million, but even a solid comedy will suffer in comparison to the original, the top-grossing comedy of all time and a true gem. Certainly neither Murray nor Aykroyd have had any luck since then. Lightning will strike again, but everyone was so desperate for a hit that they didn't seem to take any chances. The



HERB RITTS

son as *The Joker* in *Batman*.

early trailers don't look very funny either.

MAJOR HITS

Star Trek V: The Final Frontier — this is a rare instance where the sequels have continued to grow in popularity. *Star Trek IV* was the top-grossing entry so far, with \$110 million in the till. But this one should reverse the trend. The crew is simply too old for much more of this and first-time movie director William Shatner will probably be little more than competent. Here's hoping they don't try to milk any more sequels out of a respectable string of flicks.

License to Kill — remarkably, while the James Bond series is the most lucrative one ever, no individual movie has yet to break the \$100 million barrier. Timothy Dalton has added a much welcome harder edge to the character of Bond that will keep it alive for another string of hits. But unless the producers finally drop such predictables as a car with fancy gadgets and vapid, female side-kicks, this will remain a sturdy but unremarkable vehicle.

Turner & Hooch — this cop and his dog movie promises to be the second Tom Hanks flick to be the best of a slew of similar-minded fare. It will follow the insipid Jim Belushi vehicle, *K-9*, as well as a cable television series called *Rin Tin Tin: K-9 Patrol*. What possesses these people to jump on such an unexciting premise? Are they that desperate for ideas?

Young Einstein — only *E.T.* and *Crocodyile Dundee* have earned more money in this movie's native Australia, where writer/director/star Yahoo Serious is a full-fledged celebrity. He is genuinely odd and promises to generate plenty of publicity for this off-beat hit. Could easily grow much, much bigger.

Dead Poets Society — the industry buzz

grows on this drama set in the late '50s about a renegade professor in an all-boy's school. Director Peter Weir has a luminous touch and Robin Williams is primed to carry a role where he doesn't resort to his stand-up routine. While quite serious, it looks to be much more uplifting than Weir's *The Mosquito Coast*. Also, it and *Great Balls of Fire* have the drama market to themselves.

DOGS

The Karate Kid III — the sequel made more money than the original, God help us all, but it won't happen again. The formula was predictable but enjoyable the first time around. Now it will be extremely tiresome. Of course, failure at the box office is a relative term. If *Kid III* grosses less than \$50 million, it's a bust.

Lethal Weapon II — it's probably just wishful thinking to hope this doesn't do as well as its inexplicably popular predecessor. Yes, Mel Gibson and Danny Glover had a nice chemistry. But the movie looked cheap and director Richard Donner did a sloppy job. Considering the trailer for this one involved toilet humor, it's doubtful things have improved much. They're expecting a blockbuster, but this should stall around \$50 million.

Pink Cadillac — Clint Eastwood is showing his age and this story of a bounty hunter looks mighty familiar. Bernadette Peters should spice things up considerably, yet it won't be enough. The regular fans will come and precious few others. They'll be in line to see *Indiana Jones* again.

Honey, I Shrunk The Kids — this depressing entry looks like it came from the same Disney that made *Herbie the Love Bug Goes to Monte Carlo*, the same Disney that thought good family entertainment had to be witless and dumb.

BLOCKBUSTERS

These movies are destined to make \$100 million or more:

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade

The Abyss

Batman

Ghostbusters II

HITS

These movies could make anything from \$50 million or more:

Star Trek V: The Final Frontier

Turner & Hooch

License to Kill

Young Einstein

Dead Poets Society

DOGS

These movies won't do nearly as well as expected:

The Karate Kid III

Lethal Weapon II

Pink Cadillac

Honey, I Shrunk The Kids