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# The Box Office Blahs



## ScreenTime

GREG W. LOCKE

### Out This Week:

What an awful, awful week for major new releases. Documentary *African Cats* will open on 1,200 screens, making it one of the widest documentary openings in years. It may be well-made but, content wise, it looks like one of the most pedestrian docs ever to see wide release. Next up, opening on 2,100 screens around the country, is the new Tyler Perry movie, which we refuse to talk about. Tyler Perry movies, beginning right now, will not be discussed in this column. Why not? Because they're low-brow garbage. If you don't understand that, you might be reading the wrong column. Also opening wide is *Water for Elephants*, a period piece with a solid cast and a lousy trailer. Maybe it's good. If so, whoever cut the trailer should return his paycheck.

As usual, a number of smaller movies will begin to test and/or play here and there around the country. To be honest, none of them sound worthwhile this week. Here's hoping *Win Win* gets a solid expansion sometime soon. To be honest with you, there are only two major releases over the next few months that we're peeing our pants over: Terrence Malick's long-awaited *The Tree of Life* (May 27, fingers crossed), which we predict will be the best film of 2011; and J.J. Abram's first true auteur work, *Super 8* (June 10), which looks like it could be the best true summer blockbuster in years. May they both play on Fort Wayne's new IMAX screen soon.

**Tops at the Box:** Fox's silly looking new animated feature, *Rio*, took the No. 1 spot last weekend, selling \$40 million in tickets over its first three days. Kids sure do love movies, good or bad. Like pretty much any animated feature these days, *Rio* is getting good reviews and selling big tickets overseas. Industry experts predict that the movie will have already sold about \$250 million worldwide by this time next week.

**Also at the Box:** Wes Craven's fourth *Scream* film took the No. 2 spot, bringing in just under \$20 million over its first three days, about half what the studio predicted. A big fan of the first two films of the series, both written by Kevin Williamson (an industry schmo wrote the third, completely awful movie), ScreenTime took a trip to the theater for the fourth movie. Totally lame. With a big budget and a big cast, it's hard to see this movie not going down as a major failure, even if it ends up breaking even (or even making a profit) come home video time.

Taking the No. 3 spot last week at the box was *Hop*, that really stupid-looking, live action/animated mash-up Easter flick starring Penney from "The Big Bang Theory." Now out for 17 days, *Hop* has somehow already brought in about \$83 million, including \$11 million last weekend. The weekend's No. 4 movie, *Soul Surfer*, brought in just under \$8 million while the incredible *Hanna* rounded out the Top 5, bringing in just over \$7 million over its second week, upping its 10-day today to about \$23 million. Is *Hanna* the best movie of 2011 so far? Easily. In fact, we're thinking about going to see this style-fest a second time while it's still on the big screen.

**ScreenRant:** I recently ranked and listed my favorite Richard Linklater films for my website, ZeCatalist.com. Coming in at No. 6, behind five stone-cold classics, was a tiny little 1996 indie style-fest called *SubUrbia*. Having only made about \$700K in theaters, the movie has never been released on DVD, despite at one time having a cult following similar to Linklater's *Dazed and Confused* and *Slacker*. Those two movies, both issued by the Criterion Collection, almost feel like brothers to *SubUrbia*, forming what is something of a trilogy of hangout/slacker/screw-off movies. The film features some beautiful cinematography and pretty amazing dialogue, and it's been said that Linklater once asked the CC folks to issue the movie. Instead they opted to begin working on reissues of his *Before Sunset* and *Before Sunrise* films (both included in our Linklater Top 5). Once upon a time I owned a VHS copy of the *SubUrbia* which I gave to a friend, thinking the flick would eventually come out on DVD. No dice. Having not seen the movie in 10 years, I noticed that it finally became available via Netflix. The transfer looks pretty dingy, but I suppose it's better than nothing. Please, please, please Criterion Gods, put this out on DVD someday.

**New to Home Video:** There's not a whole lot slated for home release this coming Tuesday, April 26, though the very cool-looking Criterion edition of Brian De Palma's classic *Blow-Out* will hit shelves on both Blu-ray and DVD, as will Criterion's version of Terry Gilliam's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. Also out is season 14 of "South Park."

[gregwlocke@gmail.com](mailto:gregwlocke@gmail.com)

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