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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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Box Office Prophets -- Maybe Not

By the way, there were lots of odd comments and mistakes in the usually spot-on analysis by Box Office Prophets of the weekend box office. They expect "a lot of Borat lookalikes in the months and years ahead." What could that possibly mean, since this movie is such a one-off, unique phenomenon? How could another studio rip off the idea of "Borat?" Show an Uzbekistan reporter visiting Canada? ("Jackass" was a similar oddity and you don't see the movies filled with low-budget reality rip-offs do you?) They speculate that Fox changed the number of venues in order to generate buzz about the movie. That's giving Fox way too much credit since all the buzz was negative: Fox was telling the industry that the movie wasn't tracking, no one seemed to know "Borat" was coming out and they were afraid it was opening on too many screens. Not exactly the smartest way to build positive buzz for your movie. Now BOP thinks Fox is right to open it onto as many screens as possible, while I think they should keep the phenomenon going by starting off more slowly and expanding to only, say, 1200 screens instead of 2500 or BOP's 3000. They also say "Borat" is the start of a wonderful franchise. I wonder how comic Sacha Baron Cohen could ever use Borat again now that he's famous. They'll certainly make a sequel and I suppose people could be fooled again, but I think the future with Borat is a more purely fictional film. But again, you can always be surprised that seemingly omnipresent hits like Borat can still be under the radar for some. Still, it's not an obvious or easy franchise. Finally, they're wrong when they say FOX bought the sequel for \$42.5 mil. It was Universal that paid \$42.5 mil for Cohen's next movie, and it's not a Borat sequel but a similar road movie starring the flamboyantly gay Bruno. Moving on, they say Martin Short has appeared in a lot of films that should have done better at the box office and then they list the animated movies "Treasure Planet" and "The Prince Of Egypt," and the live action movies "Jungle2Jungle" and "Mars Attacks!" as examples. They really think those movies SHOULD have done better?

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