

THEY COULD SOLVE
NATURE'S BIGGEST
MYSTERY.

IF THEY ONLY
HAD A CLUE.



Don Johnson wouldn't escape this time.

THE HIDDEN (1987)

Starring Kyle MacLachlan, Michael Nouri Director Jack Sholder Rated MA15+ Out February 5 Rent/Buy

GIVEN HOW CELEBRATED 1980s ACTION movies are, it's astounding that *The Hidden* remains so under-appreciated. Perhaps that's why Hollywood hasn't yet remade it, but rest assured that someone, some day will do just that. Whether it'd be possible to do a better job is debatable, because this blend of car chases, shoot-outs, gooey sci-fi, thriller, buddy-cop comedy and blasting heavy metal is about as satisfying as pop moviemaking gets.

Borrowing from *Alien*, *The Thing* and *The Terminator*, but anticipating elements of *Twin Peaks*, *The X-Files* and Denzel Washington horror flick *Fallen*, this has Michael Nouri as a hard-nosed LA cop who's faced with an outbreak of homicides committed by seemingly ordinary citizens gone berserk. Kyle MacLachlan appears as an FBI agent to lend assistance. Turns out that these crimes are being committed by a rock'n'roll-loving, sports

car-fancying alien slug that can hop from body to body. "He sees something he wants, he steals it," Kyle explains. "If something gets in his way, he kills it. And right now, he's hiding out in your city."

Made for just \$5m and directed by Jack Sholder, best known for 1985 sequel *A Nightmare On Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge* (see page 84), *The Hidden* rockets into action from the opening frames in which a dude walks into a bank, calmly shoots up the place and people, grabs some cash and roars off in a Ferrari. The chase that follows is top notch and culminates in the fiery, bloody spectacle of our perp's demise. A cop describes the one-man crime wave's stats as: "He killed 12 people, wounded 23 more, stole six cars, most of them Ferraris, robbed eight banks, six supermarkets, four jewellery stores and a candy shop. Six of the ones he killed he carved up with a butcher knife. Two of them were

kids. He did all that in two weeks. If anyone deserves to go that way, it sure in the Hell was him." Of course, the alien inside's far from dead and is soon checking out of hospital in a new body, which it again uses to satisfy its lust for breaking speed limits, fist-in-the-air rock and ultra violence.

The Hidden is A-grade adrenaline, with its action and fx remarkably fresh 22 years on. But what really makes it work is the fine balance of the serious and tongue-in-cheek, best exemplified in the chemistry between Nouri and MacLachlan. These two cops are as different as you can get, for reasons that aren't too hard to guess, but the understanding and friendship they develop gives

the movie its warmth, humour and even heart. When writer Jim Kouf gets this formula right, which he did again in 1987 with *Stakeout* and more recently in the first *National Treasure* film, the result is a lot of fun. He and Sholder are smart enough to embrace all the clichés of the genres they're mashing up and then give 'em a flip. They're having a laugh when the alien drives his Ferrari at two guys carrying a plate of glass across a road, but just see where they take it. Same goes for Hunters & Collectors' anthemic *Say Goodbye*, used here perfectly.

Check it before they wreck it.
DVD EXTRAS None.
MICHAEL ADAMS
FILM ★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

IT'S ASTOUNDING THAT *THE HIDDEN* REMAINS SO UNDER-APPRECIATED - AND IT'S DOUBTFUL ANY REMAKE COULD BE AS GOOD.

BEAT STREET (1984)

Starring Rae Dawn Chong, Guy Davis, Jon Chardiet Director Stan Lathan Rated TBC Out Now Rent/Buy

PITY POOR 50 CENT: THE WALKING bicep's itchy trigger finger would be made redundant in 1984's New York City, where, according to this film, gangs battled with dance moves rather than semi-automatic weapons.

The second Hollywood film to cash in on the then popular craze of breakdancing, *Beat Street* acts more as a fascinating cultural document of early hip-hop rather than a decently plotted or well acted film.

The so-called "four elements" of hip-hop are represented in the central characters: Aspiring MC/DJ Kenny, his breakdancing younger brother Lee and their graffiti artist friend Ramon, with the trio embarking on a mission to get famous off their mad hip-hop skills, yo.

The film's main attraction is the appearance of several founding fathers of hip-hop: Kool Herc, the Rock Steady Crew, Afrika Bambaataa and Grandmaster Melle Mel & The Furious Five among the more notable.



The rarely-seen hologram gyro-fart wowed the cubic zirconia convention.

This is undoubtedly dated and flimsy, but those after some reasonably ace breakdance battle scenes - and proof that you can actually wear a racoon's tail on your head and still look cool - will find much to love.

DVD EXTRAS None.
JAMES JENNINGS
FILM ★★☆☆☆ EXTRAS ★★★★★

KILLER KLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE (1988)

Starring Grant Cramer, Suzanne Snyder, John Allen Nelson, John Vernon Director Stephen Chiodo Rated M Out February 16 Rent/Buy

WHILE THERE'S A PERVERSE JOY IN watching a film named *Killer Klowns From Outer Space*, you can be pretty certain from the outset that the filmmakers haven't set out to create the next Daniel Day-Lewis Oscar vehicle. Instead, the unholy trinity of Chiodo brothers Stephen, Charles and Edward birthed a tribute to cult '50s B-grade sci-fi flicks that remains faithful to that genre with abominable acting, tragic special effects and a bulimic plot so thin that you can practically hear it throwing up in a toilet cubicle.

The Special School-simple premise revolves around grotesque alien Klowns, for reasons unknown, landing their Big Top-style spaceship near a small American town to harvest the local residents as food (as alien Klowns are wont to do). There are rare funny moments - the Klowns using a balloon dog as a hunting mutt is a highlight - but scenes involving popcorn guns, bodies wrapped in fairy floss and pies to the



Blanchett: is there any role she can't play?

face should give you a fair indication of the level of humour on offer.

Cult movie fans may find it an interesting curio; everyone else should sit tight until Fincher does the "alien clown" concept justice. DVD EXTRAS Commentary, deleted scenes, featurettes. Impressive for this vintage schlock.
JAMES JENNINGS
FILM ★★☆☆☆ EXTRAS ★★★★★



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MA 15+
RESTRICTED
Strong sexual references and drug use, Coarse language

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