

Reviews

"Alien Nation"
 Starring James Caan and
 Mandy Patinkin
 Directed by Graham Baker
 Rated R

"Alien Nation" is a science
 fiction thriller that combines

gripping action, social
 commentary and various
 subtleties to make for an
 entertaining and exciting
 movie.

The film is set in Los
 Angeles, circa 1991. A race of
 beings from outer space, bred
 for slave labor, has been

assimilated into human
 society after their ship landed
 in the Mojave Desert three
 years earlier. The bulbous-
 headed humanoids are
 commonly called
 "newcomers" but
 contemptuously referred to as
 "slags." The newcomers live

in a community known as
 "Slagtown" and work
 undesirable jobs. Their
 experience is shown as almost
 parallel to that of the
 immigrants who came to
 America in the 19th and 20th
 centuries.

James Caan stars as Matt

Sykes, a bigoted detective
 whose partner is killed by a
 shotgun-wielding newcomer
 who had just robbed a store
 and killed its newcomer
 owner. Sykes then volunteers
 for duty with Detective San
 Francisco (Mandy Patinkin),
 whom Sykes refers to as
 "George." George is the first
 newcomer to rise to the rank
 of detective. Sykes takes
 George as his new partner
 only because he knows
 George will be helpful in
 finding the newcomer who
 killed his old partner.

As the two work together
 they soon overcome
 stereotypes and become
 friends. Before long, the
 mismatched couple uncover a
 sinister plot that is best not
 revealed here.

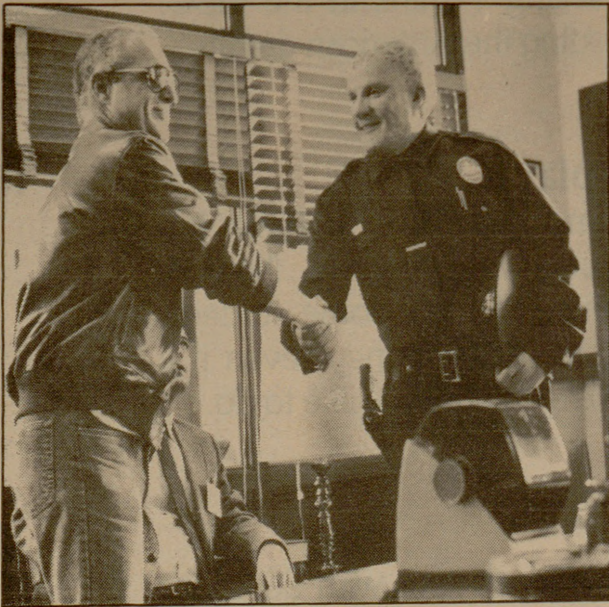
"Alien Nation" is especially
 interesting in its use of small
 details. For example, Caan
 drives past a theater where
 "Rambo 6" is playing. At
 another point a radio disc
 jockey introduces a current
 radio hit as "a blast from the
 past." There's even a Pepsi
 billboard showing a
 newcomer doing flips over
 the popular soda.

James Caan and Mandy
 Patinkin play off of one
 another well and make a
 good acting team. The
 contrast between Caan's
 hard-nosed bigot character
 and the quiet family man
 Patinkin plays provides some
 great scenes. Terence Stamp,
 whose recent appearances
 include roles in "Young
 Guns" and "Wall Street," is
 noteworthy as well, playing
 the film's alien villain, William
 Harcourt.

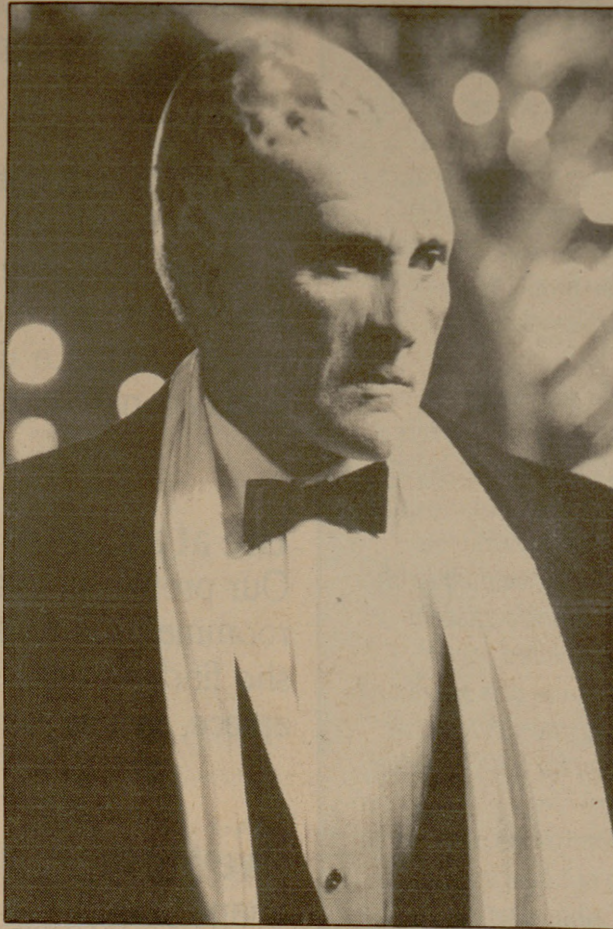
Director Graham Baker
 gives the movie a dark and
 violent nature with fast-
 paced, bloody action and lots
 of night scenes.

"Alien Nation" has the
 potential to appeal to a wide
 range of moviegoers with its
 combination of science fiction
 and thriller elements, as well
 as its futuristic look at a new
 minority.

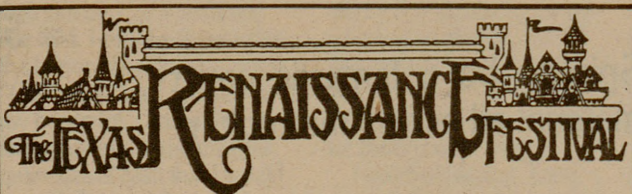
Review by Shane Hall



James Caan and Mandy Patinkin star as Sykes and George, police detectives from different worlds who team up to catch a murderer in "Alien Nation," a science fiction thriller set in the future.



Terence Stamp stars as Harcourt, an evil entrepreneur and "newcomer," who comes to Earth from another planet.

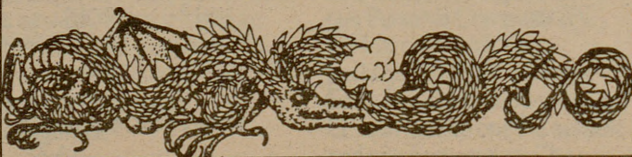


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Rating Key

- ***** — A classic. Not to be missed.
- **** — Excellent.
- *** — Some flaws, but good overall.
- ** — Fair.
- * — El stinko.



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