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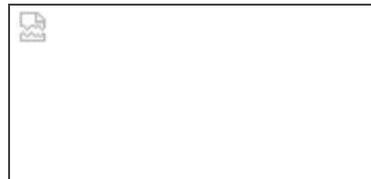
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- [Kristina](#): Just saw all these guys on Oprah talking about this flick. Man, Terrance Howard has been through so ... [\[entry\]](#)
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ESCAPE FROM EARTH - the fanboy version? (Review)



Being a bit of a massive John Carpenter (I own every single one of his films, even the dreg!!) you've all seen me blat about on the site with tidbits about what he's planning, what's going on with his films etc. I love the guy's early work with a passion but at the same time I'm not adverse to [throwing in my two-pennies worth about him clutching at straws](#) when it is required.

I thought I'd put a few lines down as last month I had the opportunity and sit down and read the script for a proposed third installment of John Carpenters **Escape From...** series. I use the term proposed very literally seeing as the script was handed to me by a friend as a thank you present, pulled from somewhere within the wonderful worldwide web, and nothing on the script that I held had any direct link to Carpenter himself. Maybe I was reading a fan script in the vein of all those clunky fanboy **Indiana Jones** screenplays? Either way, was it any good?

Well everyone knows what a fantastic cult little B-grade actioner the original **Escape From New York** was, and of course everyone knows what an overblown mess the follow-up **Escape From LA** turned out to be - although Roger Ebert would strangely disagree! When reading this 'fanboy' offering (I am guessing it's a fanboy offering anyway because I've never heard of Richard Rober - the script's author and his writing is questionably unprofessional to say the least!) what is a great surprise is just how disappointing it turns out to be to even "consider" more adventures with Kurt Russell's Snake Plissken.

What isn't so surprising is just how unoriginal the actual set-up and execution is. Masquerading as some sort of 'trait' the script opens on Snake Plissken imprisoned in a high security underground lock up, worshipped by the incarcerated masses as some sort of 'Godfather' for which he unwelcomes the attention. Within a matter of fifteen pages a prison break is executed but Snake refuses to join the hundreds of prisoners all breaking for the surface... that is until he finds the underground prison is primed with an explosive device and the whole unit is about to blow!

Reluctantly escaping to the surface, it is revealed... big shock time... that the prison was actually underneath the surface of the moon and Snake is 'a long way from home'. Having been a bit too far behind the 'crowd', Snake is immediately captured by what can only be described as 'moon cops' and incarcerated. Cut forward, through the bullshit, and Snake is told yet again that his freedom is buyable. Immunity for life is one 'job' away...

... A gang of the escaped prisoners have hijacked a ship that is carrying a nuclear warhead (wah the fuh?!?) and have escaped back to Earth - not realising that during their time inside prison Earth has been the result of 'four nuclear wars' and the planet is a nuclear wasteland. The Earth is also a fragile structure as a result of the blasts and it is explained that, now that new life has been started on the Moon and it's surrounding planets, should another nuclear blast hit Earth it will crush it and the debris will fly towards all new "societies" and destroy it all. No question is ever made of what effect the underground prison explosion had on the moon or surrounding planets!!!

The gang are unaware of this when they land and threaten to detonate the nuclear warhead they have acquired, unless they are given that all important immunity and safe-passage to a new life with a few million dollars thrown in - even in the future, even in space, it all comes down to money right? With a shake of his head and the line *How great can human life be when it keeps needing saved by a scum-sucking son of a bitch like me?,"* Snake takes on the job and is blasted back to Earth.

What is immediately noticeable straight away from this point is that unlike the previous two films there is no 'time cap' - there is no bomb in Snake's neck, no virus or anything that is forcing him to do the job within a time frame that give the first two that all important "race against time". Here the script deals with the job as something that Snake is sent to do and complete successfully in order to be free 'forever'. If it takes him a couple of years to do it is not questioned :)

What follows from here is a couple of ludicrously over the top action sequences/shoot-outs/fights with Snake picking each of the gang off one by one until eventually he comes into control of said warhead and the hunter, somewhat predictably, becomes the hunted. There are brief lulls where Snake meets up with various dwellers and side-characters. There's a one-scene suggested love interest that is set up and brushed away within three pages.

Eventually the script runs into the Snake vs Gang Leader fight sequence, Snake prevails and - in an attempt at originality - Snake disappears off into space with the warhead by his side, threatening the government with the idea that if his new found freedom is ever brought into question and/or they ever decide to come looking for him, he'll use the warhead upon them... an empty threat dealt with in a rather trite manner seeing as Snake has risked life and limb in order to stop said warhead being set off in the first place don't you think?

Overall, the slight interest in reading this (the overall writing is so questionable that it has to be a fanboy script) and catching up with a cool character like Snake Plissken is quashed when you realise that even if a script was developed professionally through the studio or even if this script was polished and put into production, there really is nothing new at all that they have to say about the character. Whilst that hasn't stopped many a franchise ploughing ahead anyway, for a series of films like the **Escape** series, it is a dead duck for this particular one. The first was a flop that found cult status over a ten year period, the second was a disaster that even hardcore fans have ignored and even in completing a script for a third which is clearly a "wish list" of OTT action sequences and sarcastic Snake-like asides, there really is nothing impressive or interesting about it.

I do hope that one day before he calls full-blown retirement or leaves his mortal coil altogether, Carpenter is given a chance by the studio to go out and make his 'dream' western with his muse, Kurt Russell, by his side. But the route of sequelising his cult classics, if this script is anything to go by, is not the sort of avenue of dreams he should go down.

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Sounds like that T3 script by that Daniel Perez guy - he whined for years that Cameron wouldn't make his script, even though it was the best, and got lots of press. I read it, thinking it must be pretty good, and it was shit. Full of boring action scenes, and old Arnie lines. My favourite was where the humans were talking about how they have to keep moving and running to stay alive. Arnie's response? "Yes. If I was human, I would be a running man". Fucking awful.

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But it's not all these fanboys fault. I know for a while I worked on my own personal 'Big Trouble' sequel script... simply because Carpenter talks about his dream of putting together his Sergio Leone tribute western and then when he gets the chance to shoot something he rehashes his old classics with the SAME traces of 'Rio Bravo', which subsequently make no money (actually that's not true - all of his last few films have been deemed "flops" but all have been such mid-level budgeted flicks that by the time the DVD comes round they've all turned a profit!!) and then make it hard for him to bargain for his "dream project".

Also, nearly ever interview over the past few years has seen him talk up sequels to his past hits that are NEVER going to see the light of day. Fanboys latch onto that thinking 'Hey Carpenter really wants to do it and I have a really cool idea for it so maybe if I can just get my idea to him then...'

Remember, by the mid-eighties/start of the 90s when the Village of the Damned remake style dreg kicked in, the only thing Carpenter was actually famous for was turning down/walking away from TOP GUN, AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN, EXORCIST II, STAYING ALIVE, YOUNG GUNS, Tom Cruise for STARMAN, and a slew of other projects that all turned out to be big successes (Exorcist sequel being the exception)!

Regardless though, you look back over the likes of ASSAULT, HALLOWEEN, ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK, THE THING, CHRISTINE and the like and you really miss his contribution to cinema these days. Instead of having to make the likes of GHOSTS OF MARS because it is the only project he can lay his hands on with the budget he is allowed, I would be very interested to see what he could do with carte blanche over any project/any budget...

... Maybe if he took a walk over to Eli Samahan's FRANCHISE PICTURES with his fabled western screenplay in his hands, we might get the opportunity to see the 'dream' come alive once and for all!

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"...My favourite was where the humans were talking about how they have to keep moving and running to stay alive. Arnie's response? "Yes. If I was human, I would be a running man". Fucking awful..."

MY favourite was where Arnie steals his leathers from a gay stripper and says 'Talk to de hand!' and... oh