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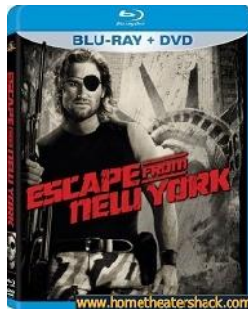
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**Escape From New York - Blu-ray Review**



**Title:** Escape from New York  
**Starring:** Kurt Russell, Lee Van Cleef, Ernest Borgnine, Adrienne Barbeau, Isaac Hayes, Donald Pleasence  
**Directed by:** John Carpenter  
**Written by:** John Carpenter  
**Studio:** MGM  
**Rated:** R  
**Runtime:** 99 Minutes  
**Release Date:** 8/3/2010

Synopsis: (4 out of 5)  
 Video: (4 out of 5)  
 Audio: (3.5 out of 5)  
 Extras: (2 out of 5)  
 Overall: (4 out of 5)

**Synopsis:** ★★★★★

*"In the year 1988 the crime rate in the United States rises 400%. The once great city of New York becomes the one maximum security prison for the entire country. A fifty foot containment wall is erected along the New Jersey shoreline, across the Harlem River, and down along the Brooklyn shoreline. It completely surrounds Manhattan Island. All bridges and waterways are mined. The United States Police Force, like an army, is encamped around the island. There are no guards inside the prison, only prisoners, and the worlds they have made. The rules are simple, once you go in; you don't come out...."*

'Escape from New York' tells the tale of S.D. Snake Plissken, a former military hero who has been arrested for armed robbery and sentenced to life in New York Maximum Security Prison. Now, about to be deported to the island, Snake is given the opportunity to erase his past transgressions with one single act of heroism when Air force One crashes behind the prison walls and the president is taken hostage by the inmates. All he has to do is sneak in, rescue the president and a recording on nuclear fusion that he is carrying, and get back within twenty-four hours. Oh yeah, and if he doesn't make it he will die due to an explosive that has been implanted in his neck.

John Carpenter wrote *Escape from New York* in 1976 as a commentary on the Watergate scandal and the general cynical view of the United States at the time. Inspired by movies such *Death Wish* and *The Warriors*, *Escape from New York* was Carpenter's sci-fi take on the way things were headed at the time but it would take four years before studios would approve the project. Made on a budget of \$6 million dollars, *Escape from New York* would prove to be a commercial hit when it would go on to gross over \$50 million worldwide at the box office and I can't help but wonder how much this movie would have flopped had Carpenter given in to requests from the financial backers of the movie and cast Charles Bronson or Tommy Lee Jones in the role of Snake Plissken.



**Rating:**  
 Rated R for strong language and violence.

**Video:** ★★★★★  
*Escape from New York* sports a 1080P, MPEG-4 AVC transfer with a 2.35:1 aspect ratio and the results, when taken in context, are great. I was very concerned about this transfer as 20th Century Fox was doing the work, yes I know MGM made the movie but MGM hasn't actually done home video in several years. My main reason for concern can be best summed up by pointing to the latest *Predator* Bluray and a little thing called DNR (Digital Noise Reduction). So how did it

look? I can honestly say that my fears were wrong and Escape from New York has never looked better.

**What's Good:**

This is where it gets tricky. 'Escape from New York' looks like an extremely accurate representation of the original vision from 1981. There is a fair amount of natural grain that gives the image a very gritty feel. Colors are well represented even though they are muted due to the dark nature of the image itself. Flesh tones are very natural looking and at times border on reference quality images however; those scenes are extremely brief in duration and can easily be missed if you are not paying attention.



**What's Not So Good:**

Video junkies will not find anything of interest here. Though the image is sharp and there are no edge enhancement issues to speak of, the image quality itself is not the greatest which really is the direct result of the low budget and incredibly dark manner in which the film was shot. Black levels are finite and shadow delineation can be non-existent at times which is unfortunate because this movie could have been a marvel to see had technology and budget not been so limited.

**Audio:** ★★★★★

'Escape from New York' has been given an upgrade in the sound department with a 5.1 DTS-HD-MA uncompressed codec and much like the video, it has never sounded better. Don't get me wrong, that doesn't mean that there is all of a sudden this huge soundscape that will put your system through the wringer but, this is a vast improvement over previous releases. Dialogue is clear and the textures are fair and there is a smoothness to Snake's voice as he utters "call me Snake" and it really sounds great. Additionally, there is more surround activity than I recall from the DVD but most of it is atmospheric sounds that show up from time to time.

As I said, this is an overall improvement when compared to other releases of Escape from New York however; by today's standards it is very lacking. Due to the technology that was available back in 1981, the sound effects are overly bright and "tinny" sounding. Gun shots and molotov explosions sound extremely suppressed and breaking glass just sounds exaggerated.

**Extras:** ★★

Kind of weak on the extras front but, it does come with an updated DVD version that contains a single movie trailer but that's about it.

**Overall:** ★★★★★

The chances are that if you are reading this review you only have one question; "is it worth upgrading from DVD?" My answer to that is absolutely. If you love 'Escape from New York' as a movie then there is no doubt in my mind that you will enjoy this high definition transfer. On the other hand, if you have never seen the movie then I would definitely recommend a rental.

Until I watched this Bluray, I thought a remake of 'Escape from New York' was a great idea. A patch wearing, long haired, cynical, double tough anti-hero is just what this world needs however; there is absolutely no way that I can fathom anyone capturing the embodiment of Snake Plissken. It would be similar to trying to recast Harry Callahan from the 'Dirty Harry' movies, it just isn't going to work no matter who they get. Until next time campers, have a good day and in case I don't see ya later, a good afternoon, a good evening, and a good night! 🤪

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