

[Public Enemy - It Takes A Nation: The First London Invasion 1987](#)

DVD released: May 5, 2005.

Approximate running time: 60 Minutes

Aspect Ratio: 1.85:1 Non-Anamorphic Widescreen

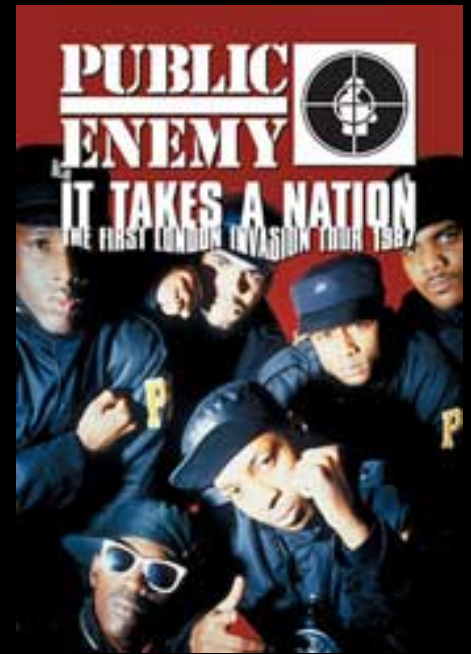
Rating: NR

Sound: Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound

DVD Release: MVD

Region Coding: Region 0 NTSC

Retail Price: \$16.95



Reviewed by:

Ian Jane on July 30, 2005.

Quick links: [\[video\]](#) [\[audio\]](#) [\[extras\]](#) [\[overall\]](#)

The Film

Before Flavor Flav ran off with Brigitte Nielson to reality TV Hell and soured the band's image, Public Enemy were probably the tightest, most consistent of the hip hop bands to emerge out of the 1980s. They were also incredibly intense with their politics and with their music and they weren't afraid to speak their minds about everything from the media to the Commander In Chief of the day to drug addiction to the current state of emergency services in the United States.

In 1987, Public Enemy, on an opening slot for L. L. Cool J, hit the shores of England for the first time and this video serves as a time capsule for that event (complete with a cameo from Mr. Cool J himself). How it plays out is through a series of concert clips spliced in and amongst some interesting interviews done by members of the British press, the majority of which are with Chuck D. and Flav, who were following the event.

The outspokenness of the band in these pieces makes for an interesting listen both musically and biographically speaking despite the fact that many of the topics discussed might seem dated to those who weren't around at the time this was filmed (like I said, this is more or less a time capsule).



There's not a lot of candid footage or behind the scenes footage here but what is included is pretty interesting and it's nice to see the band when they're not trying to be so serious. There's a fun moment where L. L. Cool J and Flavor Flav get together on an impromptu session and an entertaining (and possibly prophetic, considering the lows he's hit lately) spot where Flav gets put in place by an English senior citizen.

Overall though, what counts is the live footage and that makes up the bulk of the footage on this video. Public Enemy treats the English audience to a solid selection of their better, angrier work and they put a lot into their stage show.

There's no small amount of energy on stage and the chemistry between Flavor Flav and Chuck D is strong. Terminator X, Professor Griff, and of course the S1W's are all here and doing their thing and despite the fact that the video does a rather poor job of capturing audience reactions and participation, the show is a good one.

It's just too bad the quality is so poor, speaking of which, that brings me to....



The 1.85:1 non-anamorphic letterboxed image is in pretty poor shape and the picture looks like it was taken from a VHS source for this release, with all the inherent deficiencies of that medium made glaringly obvious on this DVD. The colors are faded, the black levels are weak, and the image is very soft and very fuzzy and lacks and real definition or detail. To top it all off, the copy sent for review, as you can tell from the screen shots, has been bugged. This is endless annoying and makes giving the video an accurate grade rather difficult.



Audio

2.5/5

Sadly, the audio only fares about as well as the video does, maybe just a little bit better. The 5.1 mix isn't any clearer than the 2.0 Stereo mix and simply just puts some crowd noises in the back end of the setup. You can hear what people are saying and most of the music but that's about as good as it gets. This DVD sounds like a bootleg concert recording, not like a professionally recorded piece.

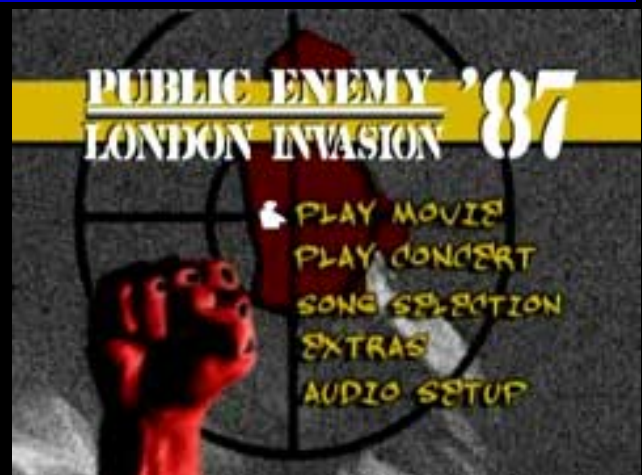
Extras

3/5

Two live tracks from a 2003 Public Enemy performance done in Australia are included in the extra features section that are of markedly better quality than the feature itself. Public Enemy frontman Chuck D gives a full length commentary overtop of the feature that proves to be pretty interesting.

He basically gives us a sixty-minute history lesson on Public Enemy's early years and the impact that their success had on the hip hop industry. He's got a good sense of humor about everything but manages to be intelligent and interesting throughout the duration of the track. A still gallery is also included featuring a generous portion of Public Enemy photos and the like.

The DVD set is also supposed to come with a bonus audio CD, however the test disc sent for review purposes didn't include that CD so I've got no idea if it's any good or not.



Overall**2.5/5**

If you can overlook the less than ideal audio and video quality, this release serves as a nice time capsule of the Public Enemy that existed in 1987, a vastly different animal than it was in its later years. Chuck D's commentary is pretty interesting as well, and if you're a fan, *Public Enemy – It Takes A Nation: London Invasion 1987* is worth looking into.

Film Rating		DVD Rating
Director:	N/A	Film: ★★★
Writer:	N/A	Video: ★★
Released:	1987	Audio: ★★★
Cast:	Public Enemy, LL Cool J	Extras: ★★★
		Overall: ★★★

[\[Home\]](#) [\[Review Index\]](#) [\[Top of Page\]](#)

© copyright DVD Maniacs 2001-2002