



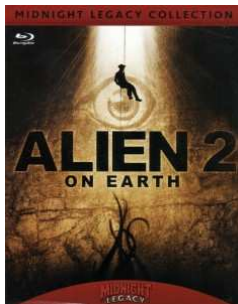
[Midnight Legacy Blu-ray](#)

Alien 2: On Earth

March 8th, 2011 | article by [Kevin Pyrtle](#)

Tags: [1980](#), [Apocalyptic](#), [Belinda Mayne](#), [Ciro Ippolito](#), [Cult](#), [Gore](#), [Horror](#), [Italy](#), [Michele Soavi](#), [Science Fiction](#)

a.k.a.: *Alien 2: Sulla Terra / Alien Terror*
 Year: 1980 Company: GPS Runtime: 84'
 Director: [Ciro Ippolito](#) Writer: [Ciro Ippolito](#) Cinematography: [Silvio Frascetti](#)
 Music: [Guido and Maurizio De Angelis](#) (as [Oliver Onions](#)) Cast: [Belinda Mayne](#), [Mark Bodin](#), [Roberto Barrese](#),
[Benny Aldrich](#), [Michele Soavi](#), [Judy Perrin](#), [Don Parkinson](#), [Claudio Falanga](#), [Vincenzo Falanga](#), [Ciro Ippolito](#)
 Disc company: [Midnight Legacy](#) Video: 1080p 1.85:1 Audio: DTS-HD MA 2.0 English
 Subtitles: None Disc: BD50 (All Region) Release Date: 03/22/2011 Product link: [Amazon.com](#)
Alien 2: On Earth is the first release in the [Midnight Legacy Collection](#), and is reviewed here from a screener provided by the company.



When a manned NASA space mission returns from orbit sans crew the world is stunned, but telepathic speleologist Thelma ([Belinda Mayne](#)) senses that something far worse is on the horizon – something to do with strange blue rocks that have begun showing up all over. Thelma puts her fears aside to lead a spelunking expedition in the American southwest, but is forced to confront them head-on when the rocks begin sprouting meaty alien monsters with a penchant for human destruction. . .

Those of you convinced that [Luigi Cozzi's](#) *Contamination*, in which throbbing alien eggs that make people explode are sent around the world by the possessed owner of a coffee plantation, is the strangest of the gory Italian knock-offs of [Ridley Scott's](#) *Alien* should think again, as [Ciro Ippolito's](#) obscure 1980 effort *Alien 2: On Earth* definitely holds its own in the oddball department. I apologize for my unabashed adoration of this one in advance – it's just hard for this reviewer to hate any film that tries so hard to tie a failed space mission, ominous rocks, telepathy, caving, apocalyptic doom-and-gloom and bowling together, even if the end results are a little suspect.

Made on the cheap and shot largely on location in and around San Diego, *Alien 2's* title implies more connection with the Scott film than actually exists – indeed, its narrative owes more to the science fiction of the past than anything contemporary. The idea of malignant rocks harboring extraterrestrial threats recalls *The Monolith Monsters*, *Quatermass II* and *The Outer Limits' Corpus Earthling*, while the doom-heavy climax evokes the nihilistic conclusion of *Goke: Body Snatcher From Hell*. Throw in the concept of telepathy, a load of footage from NASA's Apollo program and a dread fascination with bowling alleys and you end up with a film that, aside from the title and the presence of space-monsters, bares very little resemblance to its inspiration at all. That's just fine by me, as *Alien 2* is far more interesting (if far less coherent) for the trouble.

Writer and director [Ippolito](#) (who appears in the film as a television news director) spends the first half and more of *Alien 2* trying to ratchet up the unease through a series of odd and tenuously connected circumstances – a failed space mission, the appearance of strange pulsing rocks, and Thelma's visions of a monster-filled world. The effort works, to an extent, but is waylaid early and often by all the oddball drama (including a gratuitous scene of bowling and lots of pseudo-comedic banter) and rampant ambiguity. Typical is a scene in which Thelma heads to a beach, calls out to a man on a boat, stands by while he rows to shore, has a hurried conversation with him about imaginary monsters and psychological problems, and leaves. The scene is so unfocused that the point (Thelma's admission that she feels alone in a world of monsters), along with its potentially interesting psychological ramifications, is minimized, lost in all the filler.



The film eventually departs sunny San Diego, pushing Thelma and her crew out into the (suspiciously wet) desert cave in which most of *Alien 2*'s action takes place. When a young Michele Soavi (here in what looks to be his first major film role) gifts the expedition leader a strange blue rock the audience knows the fun is about to begin. It's as transparent setup as any I can think of (gather a bunch of people in a dark, creepy place and throw monsters at them until few, if any, survive), but I love it all the same. Here patience with the incongruous early drama is soundly rewarded, and Ippolito finally dishes out the bloody goods.

Of these just one appears directly inspired by *Alien*, and features one of the monsters (they look like meaty sock puppets) erupting from within an unfortunate victim's eye socket (a great setup that, like several others, is entirely spoiled in the show-all theatrical trailer). From here viewers are rocketed into a 20-minute cavalcade of human destruction, in which explorer after explorer wanders off towards certain alien dismemberment. None of the attacks are terribly convincing, but it's all good bloody fun bolstered by a healthy dose of weirdness. My favorite bit has Thelma wielding her dubious psychic powers, staring into the eyes of a possessed comrade until his head explodes! It plays as a premonitory nod to Cronenberg's bizarro classic *Scanners*, which wouldn't see release until the following year.

More so than any of the over-the-top violence, the quirks of *Alien 2* are what have earned it a special place in this reviewer's heart. As far as I'm concerned this is a B-movie goldmine, complete with oddball diversions into supernatural territory (Thelma's eyes suddenly glow green in one scene, as she tries to communicate with a fellow explorer), shameless plot contrivances (a sprained ankle that's forgotten as soon as its duties to the immediate plot are served), and yes, that inexplicable obsession with bowling (aside from the early dramatic scene, *Alien 2* revisits the bowling alley on less friendly terms for its creepy conclusion). There's even a gratuitous flying rat, a go-to gag in Italian horror cinema and the only scare of the film that had me jumping.

It's a pity that *Alien 2* has been such a rarely seen commodity up until now, and its IMDB entry stands as proof positive of its obscurity – the film has fewer than 300 votes as of this writing. I'd say that just makes this under appreciated slice of Euro-schlock all the more ripe for rediscovery. My unfettered enthusiasm for *Alien 2* may not make much sense, but neither does the film itself, and that's all the silly sub-logic I need to lend it my recommendation.



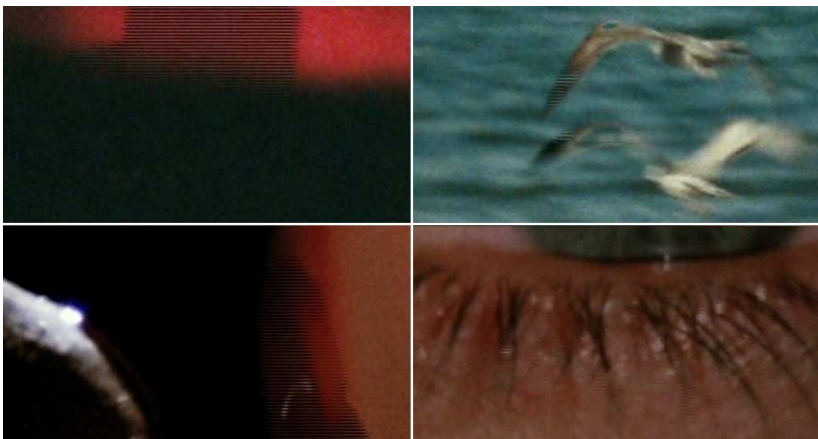
Midnight Legacy deserve props for thinking outside the box. I'd only previously seen the film via bootlegs of various foreign VHS editions (it has never had an official US release until now), and the 1080p 1.85:1 presentation here is nothing short of a revelation. Who would have thought that a low-budget *Alien* cash-in more than thirty years old could look so *good*?

Newly transferred at 2K from the original negative, *Alien 2* likely looks better here than it ever did in theatres. Color and contrast are exceptional throughout. Browns, oranges and yellows dominate in the subterranean sequences, while the bright exterior photography exhibits a range of vibrant hues. Detail is at high levels throughout and consistent with the 35mm shooting format, and unnatural manipulations are nowhere in evidence. The video receives a dynamic AVC encode at an average bitrate of 31 Mbps (37 Mbps maximum) – the fine grain 35mm texture is *very* well supported and artifacts are negligible. Damage is minimal, and there are very few visual indications that the source is as old as it is. I suspect that if this disc were to be screened in a theatrical environment no one in the audience would be the wiser as to its video origins. Color me impressed.



A comparison between the past and the present - that's a snapshot from an old VHS edition in the lower right. The jump in quality is impossible to ignore.

That said, there are a couple of minor issues worth mentioning. First off is a strange video aberration that crops up from time to time, in which small portions of specific frames (see the examples below) are rendered as though they are interlaced. I can't explain *how* a progressive transfer could present with what appear to be field errors, but double checking between my PC and stand-alone player assures me that the errors are there. The anomalies are so minor as to pass by unnoticed in regular viewing (I only picked up on them when scanning the video frame-by-frame to capture images for this article) and posed no impediment to my appreciating the film at all. The only other potential issue is more subjective in nature. In all of the other versions I am familiar with the final scene and closing credits of *Alien 2* are filtered so as to appear red-orange – here they are presented as originally photographed, with no unnatural color filtering. I'm at a loss as to which was the original intention, and the additional footage included as an extra only compounds the confusion in showing a brief extract from the scene filtered *blue*. I'd say the conclusion works just as well either way, but with at least three possibilities available I'd be interested in knowing which Ippolito had in mind. (**Addendum, 03/14:** Apparently the DP was consulted as to the tinting of the final scene and credits, hence the choice here to go with the unfiltered original footage)



Four examples of the mysterious field glitch detailed above. Please note that these images (small samples from MUCH larger frames) have been enlarged to 2x for ease of viewing. Click on the image to see the samples full-size.

In keeping with the original masters, audio is presented in DTS-HD MA 2.0 English (1.5 Mbps) and can sound quite strong at times. The score from the De Angelis brothers (under the Oliver Onions banner) is clearer than ever before, as are the icky, over-the-top sound effects, but the occasional hiss, pops and clicks of the original mix are also in evidence. Some restorative work has been done to repair some of the more egregious damage, with the Italian audio master sourced for a few extended bits not covered by the English track (no dialogue is effected), and the track remains faithful to its origins in overall fidelity. There are no subtitles, sadly, and the Italian opening and closing credits go untranslated.

The supplemental package is limited (this is *Alien 2: On Earth*, after all), but interesting. First up is an English-language export trailer with the on-screen title *Alien 2*, sourced from a Dutch VHS and presented in 480p. The trailer is faded and graced with foreign language subtitles, but am glad it has been made available all the same. The only other extra is an 11 minute collection of silent alternate footage sourced from the negative B-roll, presented here in full 1080p (AVC, 31.3 Mbps average video bitrate). The majority of this is dedicated to special effects outtakes, several of which reveal the low-tech methods by which the film's illusions were accomplished, with the final 3 minutes being the pristine master for the film's theatrical trailer (without intertitles). A list of thanks rounds out the on-disc content. The disc is held in a standard Blu-ray case featuring newly-produced but film appropriate artwork (it looks to be based on the French poster), with the entire package housed in a cardboard slipcase.

Minor quibbles aside, I found myself quite taken with this Blu-ray of *Alien 2*. It certainly sets a high standard for future Midnight Legacy releases, and has left me wondering what other Euro-shock obscurities might be in the pipeline. This disc is a must for Euro-cult completists, and fans of *Alien 2* will want to indulge.

in conclusion

Film: Beloved Video: Excellent Audio: Very Good + Supplements: Good +

Harrumphs: No subtitles and a few video anomalies. Otherwise this is solid.

Packaging: Standard Blu-ray case in cardboard slipcover.

Final Words: I can't rightly explain why, but I love this film, and am pleased to finally have a copy of it that's worth watching.

Midnight Legacy deserve praise for thinking outside the box with this one – this is a company to watch.

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Next up, Shout! Factory's Triple Bill of Great Texas Dynamite Chase / Georgia Peaches / Smokey Bites the Dust. Look for it in a day or two.

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Even with the Galaxina / Crater Lake Monster BD review done, I still have 5 films across 2 DVD packages to cover before this week is done.

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@dcastalk Thank! The disc has its

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