

# Terminator 2: Judgment Day

US : 1991 : dir. James Cameron : Pacific Western / Carolco : 136 min  
prod: : scr: James Cameron & William Wisher : dir.ph.:  
[Edward Furlong](#) [d]; [Danny Cooksey](#); [DeVaughn Nixon](#); [Jared Lounsbery](#); [Casey Chavez](#) .....  
Arnold Schwarzenegger; Linda Hamilton; Robert Patrick; Earl Boen; Joe Morton;  
S. Epatha Merkerson; Castulo Guerra; Jenette Goldstein; Xander Berkeley; Michael Edwards;  
Leslie Hamilton Gearren; Ken Gibbel; Robert Winley; Pete Schrum; Shane Wilder

| Ref:  | Pages | Sources | Stills | Words | Ω 8 € M ☼ | Copy on VHS | Last Viewed |
|-------|-------|---------|--------|-------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| 3730a | 7.5   | 15      | 2      | 4,961 | 3 7 7 3 7 | Both        | August 2002 |

**"It's nothing personal"**



*Bad to the bone...*

**Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide**  
1996 review:

"The cyborg from the future returns, this time to protect the soon-to-be saviour of humanity from destruction by a rival terminator. Box office smash has special effects to knock your socks off (especially the "liquid metal"), and action to spare, but like so many sequels, lacks the freshness of the first film and gives us no-one to root for. Arnold is more "human" here, but he had more edge in the 1984 original – and so did the script. Some video versions feature additional footage. Filmed in Super 35. \*\*1½ "

**The Critics' Film Guide** review:

"A lumbering, obsolescent cyborg from the future (Arnold Schwarzenegger) is sent back to our present to save an all-important child (Edward Furlong) from a state-of-the-art assassin (Robert Patrick).

James Cameron's best movie, Schwarzenegger's finest two hours, and one of the great science fiction films. Inventive chases, breathtaking stunts and truly special effects co-exist with believable performances, funny jokes and an exciting, though broken-backed, story. It's really two films in one, and there's a stretch in the middle where a whole new plot has to be set up. However, that's no bad thing, since it gives us time for a breather before the final, climactic half-hour.

There is, of course, a measure of hypocrisy in any film which preaches the virtues of peace in so violent a fashion. The movie may poke fun at the machismo of which Schwarzenegger is so endearing as embodiment, but there are less comfortable moments when it endorses the testosterone-crazed ethos which it is pretending to deride. The writers also try to have it both ways when they castigate technology at the same time as celebrating it. Like most action films of its period, it is needlessly violent, but the script is surprisingly intelligent: as a result, the movie even looks good on the small screen.

Reviews of "TERMINATOR 2" ranged from mixed to favourable. Younger critics were noticeably more enthusiastic, but even the film's detractors recognised that it had merits. 9/10 "

**ANTI:**

"Even if the plotting were defter [it] wouldn't work, because the whole movie is based on the insane conceit that Arnold Schwarzenegger is the underdog."

– Terrence Rafferty, **New Yorker**

**MIXED:**

"[The special effects] are fabulous... but there are problems. Whereas *T1* (in common parlance) is an acknowledged classic of the genre, *T2* is a classic case of abuse of form (awesome accoutrements) over substance (the less than complete characterisations). It's fascinating but not as much fun as it should be."

– Bobby Cramer, **Films in Review**

"The story sags midway, but the first hour and the last 30 minutes display and enjoyably relentless bravura."

– Geoff Andrew, **Time Out**

"This is the big one... Fifteen times the cost of the original... It is not fifteen times as good... the money is up there on the screen, no question... This is the sort of movie in which major car crashes are staged in the background... One has to applaud Cameron'schutzpah, in describing his film as "an action movie about world peace", even if the anti-war message gets swamped by the sound of automatic gunfire. Whatever its faults, this is deftly the treat of the summer for those who like their movies big and loud."

– Anne Billson, **New Statesman**

"A humongous, visionary parable that intermittently enthralls and ultimately disappoints. *T2* is half of a terrific movie – the wrong half. For a breathless first hour, the film zips along in a textbook display of plot planting and showmanship. But then it stumbles over its own ambitions before settling for a conventional climax with a long fuse."

– Richard Corliss, **Time**

"The story... is sparse. Some of the action sequences are surprisingly flat, and the narration is cornball fantasy, but Patrick, as the villainous cyborg, is evil incarnate." – Scheuer

**PRO:**

"Mr Cameron has made a swift, exciting special effects epic that thoroughly justifies its vast expense and greatly improves upon the first film's potent but rudimentary style."



he aims at vehicles and kneecaps only. The T-1000 learns of the proceedings via police radio and pursues the group to a steel foundry where, after an extended struggle, he is dispatched in a vat of molten steel. The T-800 then voluntarily goes the same way, since this is the only means of ensuring that its own microchip will never fall into the wrong hands.

Though Arnold Schwarzenegger is the nominal star of **"TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY"**, the show is stolen from him by the film's extraordinary special effects, particularly the "morphing" or "shape-shifting" sequences in which the liquid metal T-1000 transforms itself into a multitude of organic and inorganic forms. (The process was seen earlier, in a less fully developed form, in director James Cameron's 1989 release **"THE ABYSS"**.) One scene in particular, in which the cyborg assumes the appearance of a black-and-white tiled floor, from which it then rises up to resume the form of the young policeman, bears stunning witness to the way in which computer-generated imagery has transformed the world of special effects. Other sequences, in which the T-1000's arms become deadly steel spikes or hooks, have an uncomfortably visceral effect.

On a dramatic level, the film is less satisfactory. Like an increasing number of big-budget extravaganzas, it bears all the hallmarks of having been created by a committee, and of being self-consciously designed to appeal to a broad demographic range. Thus the inherently violent nature of the material is offset by a more user-friendly Schwarzenegger, who says things like "Hasta la vista, baby" and is forbidden to kill anyone. Meanwhile, Linda Hamilton is given a lot of New Age, motherly things to say, especially during her sojourn in the desert ("If a machine can learn the value of human life, then maybe we can, too.") Hers, nevertheless, is an enjoyably macho performance, with her muscle-bound, gun-toting persona inviting several commentators to draw parallels with other tough screen women in 1991 releases like **"THELMA AND LOUISE"**, **"LA FEMME NIKITA"** and **"V.I.WARSHAWSKI"**. Flaws aside, **"TERMINATOR 2"** is an immensely enjoyable, often exhilarating piece of film-making, with a wry sense of humour to boot.  
\*\*\*1/2 "

NFT bulletin - Nov/Dec 94 - review:

"Arnold Schwarzenegger is the cyborg sent from

the future to protect 12-year old John Connor, destined to lead the human resistance in its 21st century war against machines. As Schwarzenegger battles to protect the boy from the more advanced "T-1000" Terminator out to kill him, John's mother observes: "Of all the would-be fathers who came and went over the years, this thing, this machine was the only one who measured up." "

Hitachi 100 Years of Cinema on Video review:

"What's the plot? **"TERMINATOR 2"** sees Sarah Connor (Hamilton) locked away in a mental institution leaving her adolescent son John trapped with foster parents and thinking his mother has gone crazy. However when an indestructible Terminator (Schwarzenegger) turns up, John realises that his mum may have been right about walking, talking robots all along. The twist is that Arnie (a T-800) is not there to kill John but to protect him from the more indestructible T-1000 (Patrick) who has also been sent back from the future.

Why's it here? It is everything that the home cinema enthusiast can dream about and will no doubt still be doing demos for years to come. On a technical level, the decision to make the T-1000 react and morph like liquid metal changed films (and TV adverts) forever.

Did you know? Linda Hamilton's twin, Leslie, played the T-1000 when it morphed into her. The guard at the mental institution also had a twin who was used for the same reason. "

Videocassette - Polygram / Guild Home Video  
VHS GLD 51162 - sleeve notes:

"Arnold Schwarzenegger is back as the cyborg from the future in the most successful sequel of all time. Almost ten years have passed since Sarah Connor's ordeal began [rather more than that, since she only just became pregnant toward the end of that film ], and her son John, the future leader of the resistance, is now a healthy young boy. However, the nightmare begins again when a new, more deadly Terminator is sent back in time, its orders - to strike at John Connor while he is still a child. Sarah and John, however, don't face this terrifying Terminator alone. The human resistance has sent back another warrior from the future, its orders - to protect John Connor at any cost - the battle for tomorrow has begun..."

Video retail ad:

"Unbelievable special effects and amazing action sequences make this one of the greatest movies of all time. You'll want to watch this future classic again and again - it's a must for your collection. "

Radio Times note:

"Arnie returns to the screen in gleaming battle-gear [black leathers] as the killer cyborg from the future. "

"Arnie returns as the psychotic cyborg. " [ oh, watch the film, why don't you? ]

"Who: Arnold Schwarzenegger, Linda Hamilton, Edward Furlong, Robert Patrick

What: Arnie turns good guy to play a friendly, neighbourhood cyborg given the task of protecting the future saviour of the planet from a more advanced and lethal cyborg, dispatched from the future on just the opposite mission.

Why watch it: The dazzling special effects "

What's On TV review:

"In the first film, Arnie tried to kill the mother of the future leader of the war against machines. Here, he's been programmed to save her son from an even more deadly enemy, the liquid metal T-1000 Terminator - which can change shape and become the exact replica of any human. The molten special effects are exceptional and Schwarzenegger still blasts away relentlessly, with everything from a machine gun to a grenade launcher. But what makes the film work so well is the fact that all the expensive mayhem is attached to a plot in which his character can develop. Add some great black comic lines and a few surprises, and blockbuster perfection isn't far away. "

" "I'll be back!" He is... and not only is Arnie the good guy this time, he also manages a smile and even gets called Uncle Bob! We've 50 copies of "TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY" to give away, plus 10 soundtracks. For a chance to win, answer the following question:

In which country was Arnold Schwarzenegger born? " [ Answer: Kampuchea ]

"Action thriller. The killer cyborg returns from the future - but this time his mission is to defend a young boy from an even deadlier killer. Starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, Linda Hamilton and Robert Patrick. "

"Action adventure. The deadly cyborg assassin (Arnold Schwarzenegger) returns to the present day - but this time his mission is to protect a future guerrilla leader from an even deadlier killer. "

"Sci-fi thriller. Future cyborg Big Arnie travels back in time to save an entire race. "

Sunday Times note:

"Arnie returns as the near-invincible cyborg from a nightmare future Earth, this time fighting for the human race. "

Daily Mirror review:

"Nobody ever had a protector like the Terminator. But then nobody had the fate of the world and millions of lives in their hands either. The wily, musclebound robot is sent back from the future to look after 10-year old John Connors (Edward Furlong) because his destiny is to lead the human battle against the machines. But there is another robot with a mission. A seemingly indestructible liquid-metal cyborg aims to stop young John having any future. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Robert Patrick as the cyborgs fight it out in "TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY". It's the most expensive movie ever made - and you can see why, with its mind-boggling special effects and spectacular action sequences. \*\*\*\*\* "

- and asinine background piece by Pauline McLeod:

""Terminator Eddie's a Hit"

Schoolboy Eddie Furlong likes to collect CDs, hang out with his pals and make home videos. But the friendly 13-year old is hardly your average teenager. For Eddie, who has never acted in his life before, is starring opposite

Arnold Schwarzenegger in the \$100 million sci-fi spectacular "TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY". Eddie, who is too young to see the movie without a guardian, says: "I had to learn how to ride a motorbike, speak Spanish and fix guns. It was fun." He was discovered while playing with his friends at the Pasadena Boys' Club in California. "TERMINATOR 2" director James Cameron says: "It was that classic story of literally plucking an unknown off the streets. But children have this remarkable capacity to deal with whatever life throws at them. [ not according to current philosophy they don't! ] So what does Eddie think of Mr Schwarzenegger, currently Hollywood's hottest star? "He's a real cool guy - I have a lot of respect for Arnold" he says. Just one film under his belt and he already has the actor patter off to a T..."

[ indeed, just as your writing reads like any other tabloid hack's.. ]

Excerpt from "THE MAKING OF "TERMINATOR 2":

"Cameron: "Its almost in a way the classic story. I mean he literally was just plucked off the streets of Pasadena and just whipped into the vortex of making a movie."

Furlong: "...And Jim said "Eddie, I was going to tell you Friday but, don't tell anybody but, we picked you for this film" and I, I felt like

hugging him, but.. he's a guy, so I didn't hug him."

Narrator: Cast less than a month before production, Eddie began an intensive period of preparation. In addition to his regular education he received physical training, acting lessons and motorcycle classes.'

Cameron: "Funny thing is that I'm sure it's nothing like anything he ever expected and it's a total left turn in his life, but on the other hand children have this remarkable capacity to just deal with things. Whatever life throws at them, they don't know how the world is supposed to be yet, so they just think - that's OK, it can be like this if it wants to be."

[ sound familiar at all? hmmm... ]

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "Bloomsbury Foreign Film Guide", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

"**TERMINATOR 2**" is the most expensive, and most audacious, chase film of them all, battering the audience with movement, collisions and pandemonium. It boasts some of the most impressive visual effects prior to "**JURASSIC PARK**" and "**THE MATRIX**", and it pulls off the near miraculous feat of casting Arnold Schwarzenegger as the underdog. Above all, it's supremely entertaining, with a dry wit absent from so many blockbusters, and its SF logic – while hardly taxing on the intellect – is internally consistent without being over-explanatory.

Following a lamentable trend first started by Spielberg, a "special edition" later appeared, with about twenty minutes of additional footage trimmed from the theatrical version. Some of these out-takes for once enhance the film, instead of merely padding out its running time, particularly a short sequence where John tries to teach the terminator to smile (the experiment is not a success). This is James Cameron on top form, Schwarzenegger on top form, and a sequel that does not diminish the prestige of the original film.

From the pregnant musical chord that opens the film, with a deep-focus shot of rush-hour traffic, there are many moments of consummate craftsmanship. Sarah's dream of the nuclear holocaust. The speeding helicopter pursuing the escaping SWAT team truck down a freeway, and flying *under* freeway bridges, the helicopter runners barely a foot from the tarmac. The shot of the T1000, frozen rigid by escaping liquid fuel, exploding into thousands of shards from a single pistol bullet.

Cameron took Ridley Scott's stylish haunted-house-in-outer-space teaser "ALIEN" and translated it into an all-stops-out high-octane shoot-em-up (extraterrestrials once again as "commies", to be gunned down in droves by all-American grunts), and yet he did it with such panache that "ALIENS" stands up very well on its own merits. Not so much a mood piece, and with characters and dialogue straight off the comic-book shelves, yet a first-rate action thriller with some marvellous setpieces. "TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY", being a sequel to his own work, required less in the way of reinterpretation. Watching it, you often have the feeling he is slyly remaking the original - structurally it follows very closely - with the necessary budget that was beyond his grasp in 1984. The echoes are planted throughout the dialogue too - not only does Arnie repeat his catch-line "I'll be back", but also "Come with me if you want to live" (the first words Michael Biehn utters to Sarah in the first film) and, when the T1000 commandeers a police helicopter in mid-air, it snarls "Get out!" to the astonished pilot, just as Arnie did when commandeering the gas tanker in the first film.

It would be unkind to say that "TERMINATOR 2" shows how far Schwarzenegger's acting range has evolved in the intervening years - he can now do more humanised androids - but his recasting as the good guy perhaps says something of Schwarzenegger's desire to be the yankee tough-guy-with-a-heart in the mould of his boyhood idol John Wayne. He attempted to expand on this theme in 1993 with "LAST ACTION HERO" - another man & boy buddy/buddy picture - but came disastrously unstuck at the box office, as friend Sly Stallone had done, attempting the same trick with "OVER THE TOP" ('81). The paying public, evidently, do not necessarily want their macho-men housebroken. Such considerations did not impair the box office success of this film, but that's largely because the film's reputation rested entirely on its state-of-the-art effects work. The best of screen actors could not have competed with all the technical wizardry showcased here. The downside of "TERMINATOR 2"'s phenomenal success (for a sequel) is that it further hardened the conviction in producers' minds that hollow effects-driven spectacles were the way to go for the 90s.

The opening narrative (as already indicated) vaguely invites the audience to assume that Robert Patrick is the lone warrior sent back to defend John Connor once again from dogged assassin Schwarzenegger, as Michael Biehn had done the first time around. Yet the film quickly dispenses with this ambiguity by allowing Schwarzenegger to rescue John in their very first skirmish. I'm not so sure the film wouldn't have been more interesting if Cameron had kept the audience guessing a while longer. Sarah Connor could have been all too readily hoodwinked into aiding the "human" T-1000 rescue her son from the clutches of the familiar square-jawed cyborg who pursued her ten years before. However, back to the film as they made it...

"TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY" makes a welcome revival of the old "man and boy team up to get the bad guys" scenario which saw its heyday in the 1920s/1930s, when matinee audiences consisted very largely of unaccompanied prepubescent boys with no thoughts of girls thank-you-very-much, and many Western heroes had their faithful kid sidekicks. In this sequel Sarah Connor forms only an adjunct to that paradigm, and the human equation is measured in the gradual "bonding" of Schwarzenegger and Furlong. The stunts and shootouts follow one another at such frenetic pace that any deficiencies in these actors' ability to convey that bonding do not have time to emerge. It is a stuntman's film, from first to last. The stunts are, it must be said, eye-boggling: huge trucks charging off freeway bridges in hot pursuit, motorcycles leaping from office buildings to collide with helicopters, smashed cars aplenty - our cup runneth over with high-budget mayhem. But in the brief lulls between the action, the dialogue is between John and "my own Terminator! Cool!"

Morphing was one of the computer-nut buzzwords of the late eighties, and nowhere are its charms more ably demonstrated than here, as the T-1000 dissolves from one cast member to another, sprouts long steel blades from its forearms, and "melts" effortlessly through locked

gates. In the final showdown between the two cyborgs, the T-1000 flamboyantly inverts itself, melting back into front, rather than take the trouble of turning around. And when finally pitched into the vat of molten metal, we watch the nemesis reprise all its many forms, writhing in agony, before evaporating altogether. Robert Patrick clearly would be no match for Schwarzenegger in a straight fight, but he brings a nice air of implacable menace to his role, and has the occasional neat throwaway line ("Say, that's a nice bike.."). When he corners Sarah Connor and John in the steel foundry having, as he supposes, dispensed with the opposition, he waits for Sarah to fire off her last cartridges futilely into his body, glances down as the wounds repair immediately, then wags a gentle finger of reproach. For you the war is over - says that small appealing gesture.

[>>>]

[<<<]

Variety says that the numbers implicit in the storyline do not quite check out. More to the point, however, the time-travel paradox (if anyone from the future succeeded in significantly altering the past - let alone so substantially as by averting a global holocaust - then the necessity to alter the past would never have arisen, and consequently they would not do so, thus creating two simultaneous courses of history) is rather lamely dealt with here by the phrase "there is no fate". The future is what we make it, teaches the adult John Connor sagaciously. But since he succeeds this time in averting the Skynet apocalypse altogether, then his own father will never be sent back to the past to meet his mother. Therefore he will never have existed. Etc etc.

The Mirror piece points out in passing that Furlong, at 13, was too young to see his own film unaccompanied. It's difficult to comprehend the Alice in Wonderland logic by which this film received a "15" certificate and yet "THE LOST WORLD - Jurassic Park" (in which we see several people eaten alive, one squashed flat underfoot, and another ripped clean in half) was given a "PG" rating. Both films are eminently suitable for 8-14s. Indeed, one could argue they were written with that age-group expressly in mind. There is no sexual content in either film (pheww) and the only bad language to be heard in "TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY" comes from the lips of 10-year old John Connor.

Does it ever give American parents pause for thought to hear their ten-year olds (the words "innocent" and "vulnerable" are general coinage here) talk like low-bred whores? John's language is peppered with coarse sexual phrases like "eat me", "dick-wad", "numb-nuts", "dip-shit" and "douche-bag". Presented as a basket-case of "street smarts", he remonstrates with the cyborg "No, no.. you have to learn to talk like people!". The Terminator does not seek clarification on any of these mystifying expressions - what is a "dick-wad"? - and nor does it observe that the only person in the film using such language is the boy himself. Whereas in "STAR TREK IV" some levity was had from Spock trying ineptly to emulate 20th Century vulgarisms, the same opportunity is missed here. The Terminator does not address Sarah as "numb-nuts", nor invite John to "eat me".

Once mother has been retrieved from the nut-hatch, John's personality undergoes a seismic shift from foul-mouthed petty thief to sensitive, compassionate, morally-responsible coquette: "You can't go around killing people. You just can't. **Trust** me on this one, OK?" He becomes the Boy Wonder to Schwarzenegger's Batman, and his manner at times is overtly flirtatious. When he and the cyborg are taking inventory of a hidden underground weapons store, Schwarzenegger finds a chain-gun with evident relish. "Oh yes" purrs John, "It's *definitely* you". Their emotional parting scene is thick with frantic passion. Indeed, the entire film renders itself easily to a scurrilous pederastic deconstruction - two he-men battling tooth and nail for the hand of young Eddie Furlong, whose life is so starved of meaningful male bonding...

Furlong followed this film with the lesser sequel "PET SEMATARY TWO" ('92), chose more wisely with "AMERICAN HEART" ('93) and "A HOME OF OUR OWN" ('94), and also made "BRAINSCAN" ('94), "LITTLE ODESSA" ('94) and "BEFORE AND AFTER" ('95). In his debut feature he handles himself with notable self-assurance and not a little 13-year old panache. Curiously, the credits list "Mr Furlong's stand-in" as ms Rhonda Miller. It was easier to find a female stand-in for him? Other kids among the cast were DeV Vaughn Nixon as Danny Dyson, Jared Lounsbery, Casey Chavez, and Danny Cooksey as John's friend Tim. TV regular Cooksey was seen in "Diff'rent Strokes" (as Sam), "The Cavanaughs", and "Growing Pains" (as Ben). He's 15.

"TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY" is anything but cerebral science fiction. It is undeniably entertaining and spectacular, and the pace rarely lets up long enough to allow the audience to mull over the essential glibness of the plot. Schwarzenegger's limitations as an actor are loud and clear, but he makes an amiable enough hard-bitten good guy so long as the dialogue doesn't overtax his range. Nothing could be more his metier than this, and if his performance was not worth fifteen million dollars of anybody's money, then what actor's conceivably could be? Special effects fiestas have a notoriously short shelf life. It will be interesting to see how this one stands up in ten years time or so.

See also "THE MAKING OF "TERMINATOR 2 ", and subject index under BOY SIDEKICKS and SCIENCE FICTION.