

Taken - Blu-ray

It's a man on a mission but do you care?

by Stuart Miles published on 17 February 2009

"They have taken his daughter, he will hunt them, he will find them, and he will kill them" is the basic premise for Taken starring Liam Neeson, but is a man on a rampage really that interesting to watch? We grab some popcorn and get watching.

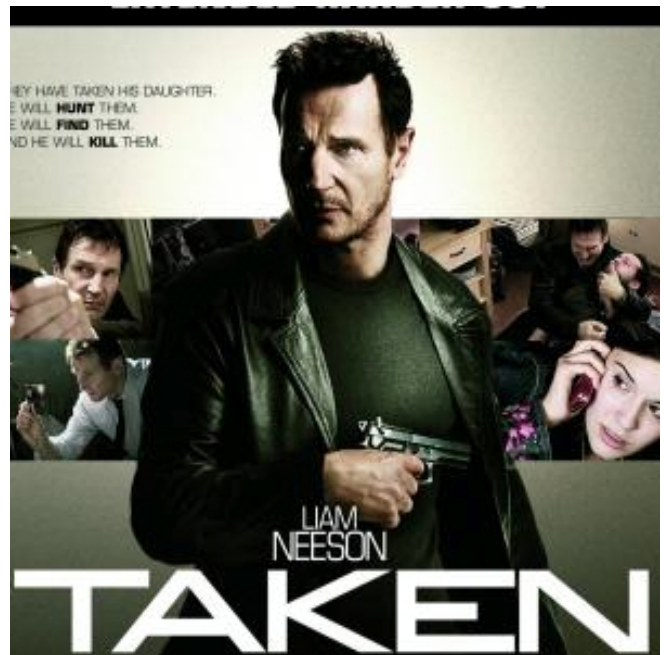
A rather strange career move on the surface of things, Liam Neeson (Schindler's List, Love Actually, Darkman) plays an over protective Father who's daughter ends up being "taken" when she is on a trip to Paris with a friend. Neeson being ex-CIA (of course) and clearly hard, jumps on a plane and then spends the rest of the movie putting the pieces of the puzzle together to get her back within the 96 hours he supposedly has before she is lost forever.

The first 15 minutes or so are the usual happy life scene setting before the death count really starts to rack up. The story, co-written by Luc Besson (Fifth Element, Leon, Taxi) is simple but well paced, as slowly but surely our hero homes in on his daughter laying waste to those who stand in his way.

With all the focus on Neeson, he does well to give the role the precision and cold-heartedness it needs. At times the fear for his daughter does come through, but for the most part this is business, and his business is killing.

"They are going to take you", he describes down the phone to his daughter methodically before she is bundled out of her Parisian flat. As a father to a daughter myself, it's harrowing stuff, but you know that all's going to be well in the end - well you hope anyway.

After those mandatory 15 minutes of fluff, the action, as we've already said, kicks in and it's Bourne style all the way - lots of heads smashing into walls, neck braking, and no CGI. In fact one



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of the extras on the Blu-ray even allows you to keep track of the violence with a killed, injured, time remaining and distance travelled monitor at the top of the screen. 33, 13 and 11,720.5 miles for those interested.

Other extras on the Blu-ray will be lost on most people with the French element to the production (writer, producer, direction and location) coming through. Avant Premiere is a French language film of the French premiere. Great if you speak French, but with no subtitles, not very helpful if you don't. French will also been needed for Le Making-of, the usual on set documentary that offers little apart from how everyone loved working with everyone else. While Neeson and Maggie Grace (the daughter) both speak English, the French director Pierre Morel refuses to come out of native tongue.

With no director's commentary (probably a good thing) the only other extra is an Inside Action feature that sees pivotal action sequences shown side by side. However with no explanation and two small screens taking up your television it's hard to work out what's what.

VERDICT

The Blu-ray version is the "Extended Harder Cut" and although we haven't seen the original to compare, the film lives up to the billing.

Think Bourne without the "Who am I stuff" and then add a flair of Besson (yes there is a car chase along the river Seine in Paris) and finally Neeson's cold business-like approach to the character and you've got a film that was surprisingly refreshing.

Don't get us wrong, this is no Oscar contender, but as a film to watch with a couple of mates on a Saturday night, it's unlikely to disappoint.

Rating: 18

Staring: Liam Neeson, Maggie Grace

Directed by: Pierre Morel

At a glance

What is it?

Action thriller

Good

Well paced, Neeson as the cold but thoughtful father

Bad

The first 15 minutes - we want action

Verdict

This is no Oscar contender, but as a film to watch with a couple of mates on a Saturday night, it's unlikely to disappoint

Price £12.99

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/3841/taken-blu-ray-liam-neeson>

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Extras: Real Time Mission Intelligence, Inside Action - side by side comparisons, Le Making of, Avant Premiere.

This Blu-ray was kindly loaned to us by Play.com, the UK's favourite online entertainment retailer.