

ARTS

The pizza-eating artists return: *TMNT II*

by F.W. Cameron

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Secret of Ooze Alliance

Totally bodacious, dudes. The four screamin' green ones have been rushed back onto celluloid, less than a year after their first appearance in theatres.

This time around the movie is aimed more at the kids, which is a good thing. It takes out all of the complications of trying to make the movie appeal to adults, which was a major failing in the first *TMNT* movie.

This time the turtles are trying to find *The Secret of Ooze*. You know, the mutagenic green gunk which made Michealangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, Donatello, and Master Splinter what they are today (a hugely successful merchandising campaign). The movie is subtitled *The Secret of Ooze*, which isn't quite true. It's more the rescue of the ooze but we'll get to that in a moment.



Michealangelo, Leonardo, Raphael and Donatello, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (not the painters), are back in *The Secret of the Ooze*. Just when you thought you wouldn't have to hear anybody scream, "Cowabunga..."

Gnarly, let's get to it.

One of my problems with the first movie was the violence and the swearing (which was to appeal to the adults I suppose). Well, hey, no probs with this one. No one swears and there are no spine shuddering sound effects as baseball bats connect with skulls.

Now, don't misunderstand me, there are plenty of fight scenes, but they play out more as action, than violence.

The violence is minimized. The turtles never really break out their weapons. No nun-chucks are used. Instead, there is a parody of chucking used in one fight scene when one

of the turtles uses sausages as chucks. I didn't see sai's (those little dagger things) in the whole hour and a half. In fact, the only weapon used regularly is that quarter staff thingy that one of the turtles carries around.

The erratic and blatant evolution of sub-plots is also missing from this movie. It's not that the sub-plots are better written, it's that they are, for the most part non-existent.

The script is pretty linear with few waverings from the main course. I'm not complaining. Why complicate a movie about Ninja Turtles? What asides there are, are well written, but then they aren't as ambitious as the sub-plots in the first movie.

The biggest complaint one can have with this movie, are the holes in the script — those vague inconsistencies which plague all movie makers and bring great scripts down to being adequate, or good, or, if we are all lucky, very good.

The holes in this movie are generally minor, and not worth mentioning, except for the gaping hole caused by the title. We never do find out the Secret of the Ooze.

Okay, we know it was a laboratory accident (or was it?), which was shipped off to be buried in a landfill site. Our suspicion is aroused when Donatello believes that there is more to it than just an accident. His suspicion is never put to rest, and neither is ours, especially when the company and scientist which made the ooze, disappears. I know, we'll find the true secret of the ooze in *TMNT III*. Fine, I can wait.

There is one last major problem with the movie, and I apologize to all the rap fans. That problem is *Vanilla Ice's* cameo appearance. The idea sounds good, get this hugely popular rap dude to sing to the rhythm of a fight. But it's lost, man, the rhythm of the fight is lost to cuts of *Vanilla Ice* watching it. Then out of no where he starts rapping the "Ninja Rap." It really stretched my willing suspension of reality to the limits.

While I'm on the subject though, the sound mix on the "Ninja Rap" should have concentrated more on the song than the background noise of the fight. I couldn't hear a word he was singing/saying/rapping.

Despite these two rather large flaws, and an assortment of minor ones, this is a fine movie. The kids loved it, the teens in the audience enjoyed it and many of the parents I talked to are going to recommend it to other parents.

So grab your little brothers and sisters and try to get them to tell you what COWABUNGA means.



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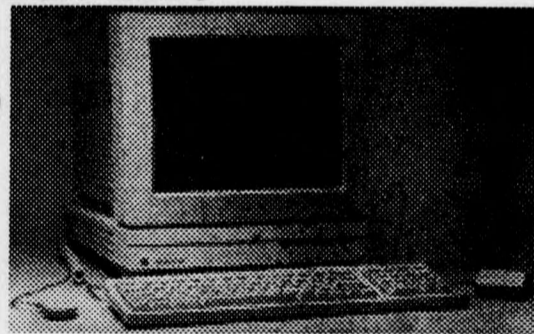
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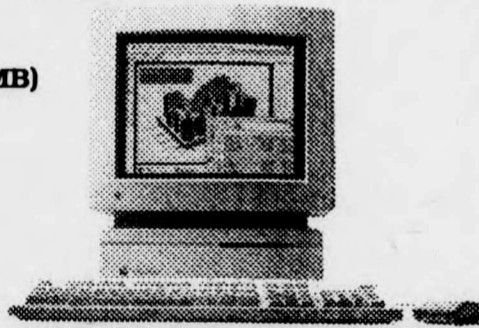
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