

Have a look at this Terminator 2 fan restoration project

Terminator 2: Judgment Day was – and is, for some – the standard-bearer for bombastic tentpole action films after it was released in 1991, but many of its fans have been less than enthusiastic about its Blu-ray releases. In recent years, though, people who love the movie have been restoring it using 35mm prints, and one of those efforts has been making the rounds over on X.

Jon W., who frequently posts about movies and projects like these, compiled a few screenshots in a thread comparing the new version with other transfers. They didn't credit the person working on this directly, but did post a screenshot of text from "the person who restored Terminator" – Googling some of it verbatim led me to Rob's Nostalgia Projects.

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A big part of this effort is aimed at "fixing" the coloring of this movie, which is very muted throughout – that was pretty common in a lot of movies back then, especially grim films like *Terminator 2* or *Robocop*. I'm not sure it's an improvement, but I do like some of what's seemingly aimed for here.

Take the fan project's (top) now-much-warmer shot from a scene in which Robert Patrick's T-1000 questions some youths about John Connor's whereabouts and other versions of the movie. It

makes the scene feel more like it's set in the early morning or late evening, which makes sense given the long shadows in this and other, adjacent sequences. I've always thought there are parts of this movie that are too cold-looking for me, and this gives it some life it doesn't otherwise have.

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But there are a lot of places it doesn't work – for instance, the transition from these blue shadows to the sandy colors where the sun hits the ground is too harsh. Comparing this shot to the lower one from the Blu-ray, as well as my almost 30-year-old copy of The Ultimate Edition DVD, it seems like the dustier brownish gray of those transfers is just how director James Cameron wanted it to look.

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The fan version's heavy-handed coloration also shows up in the above shot, where much of the detail that was there before ends up crushed in blown-out reds. But the Blu-Ray version of this scene has a weirdly salmon-colored pall that goes redder a few moments later. Again, I'm not sure it's better, but the fan version's colors do feel a little more consistent at times.

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Ultimately, the biggest benefit this transfer gives the movie, in my opinion, is letting the movie be grainy. People complain that the Blu-ray transfers overuse digital noise reduction, resulting in a sort of waxen look, and seeing the film grain in 1080p is really comforting, somehow. It's just a shame the

color grading feels so unpolished.

Still, I applaud efforts like this as much as I do the folks who brought us the *Star Wars* theatrical restoration project known as “The Silver Screen Edition,” which attempts to deliver the version of that movie as it was shown in theaters originally before it even had “Episode IV: A New Hope” added to the opening text crawl.

I might not prefer this version of *Terminator 2*, but it’s still fun to watch in the same way that turning the color saturation down on my TV just to see how my color movies look in black and white is. Especially when you’ve seen the same movie a hundred times, and you just want something a little different.

<https://www.theverge.com/2024/4/27/24142560/terminator-2-judgment-day-35mm-fan-restoration>