

= Battlefield Earth (film) =

Battlefield Earth (also referred to as Battlefield Earth : A Saga of the Year 3000) is a 2000 American science fiction action film based upon the first half of L. Ron Hubbard 's 1982 novel of the same name . Directed by Roger Christian and starring John Travolta , Barry Pepper , and Forest Whitaker , the film depicts an Earth that has been under the rule of the alien Psychlos for 1 @, @ 000 years and tells the story of the rebellion that develops when the Psychlos attempt to use the surviving humans as gold miners .

Travolta , a long @-@ time Scientologist , had sought for many years to make a film of the novel by Hubbard , the founder of Scientology . He was unable to obtain funding from any major studio due to concerns about the film 's script , prospects , and connections with Scientology . The project was eventually taken on in 1998 by an independent production company , Franchise Pictures , which specialized in rescuing stars ' stalled pet projects . Travolta signed on as a co @-@ producer and contributed millions of dollars of his own money to the production , which commenced in 1999 and was largely funded by German film distribution company Intertainment AG . Franchise Pictures was later sued by its investors and was bankrupted in 2004 after it emerged that it had fraudulently overstated the film 's budget by \$ 31 million .

Battlefield Earth was released on May 12 , 2000 . The film was a major critical and commercial failure and has been called one of the worst films of all time . Reviewers panned the film , criticizing virtually every aspect of the production including Travolta 's acting , which many described as " hammy " , overuse of angled shots and slow @-@ motion , poor script , several plot holes and narrative inconsistencies , art direction , and dialogue . Audiences were reported to have ridiculed early screenings and stayed away from the film after its opening weekend , which led to Battlefield Earth failing to recoup its costs . The film went on to receive a total of nine Golden Raspberry Awards , which until 2012 was the most Razzie Awards given to a single film . It has since become a cult film in the so bad , it 's good vein .

Travolta originally envisioned Battlefield Earth as the first of two films to be adapted from the book , as the screenplay only covered the first half of the novel . However , the film 's poor performance at the box office , as well as the collapse of Franchise Pictures , ended plans for a sequel .

= = Plot = =

In the year 3000 , Earth has been ruled for 1 @, @ 000 years by the Psychlos , a brutal race of giant humanoid aliens . The remnants of humanity are either enslaved by the Psychlos and used for manual labor or survive in primitive tribes living in remote areas outside Psychlo control . Jonnie Goodboy Tyler (Barry Pepper) , a member of one such tribe , leaves his home in the Rocky Mountains on a journey of exploration . He joins forces with Carlo (Kim Coates) , a hunter , but both men are captured by a Psychlo raiding party and transported to a slave camp at the Psychlos ' main base on Earth , a giant dome built over the ruins of Denver , Colorado .

Terl (John Travolta) , the Psychlo security chief on Earth , has been condemned by his superiors to remain indefinitely at his post on Earth as punishment for an unclear incident involving " the Senator 's daughter " . Aided by his deputy , Ker (Forest Whitaker) , Terl devises a plan to buy his way off the planet by making a fortune using human slaves to mine gold in radioactive areas . Psychlos are unable to visit such areas due to the explosive interaction of the gas that they breathe with radionuclide particles . Terl selects Jonnie as his " foreman " for the project and gives him a Psychlo education using a rapid @-@ learning machine . Terl gives Jonnie a party of slaves and a Psychlo flying shuttle and orders him to go out and find gold .

After learning the Psychlos ' language , history , and myriad other things from the rapid learning machine , Jonnie plots a human uprising against the Psychlos . He obtains gold from Fort Knox to satisfy Terl 's demands , and uses the free time to plot a revolution . Jonnie and his followers find an abandoned underground U.S. military base with working aircraft , weapons , fuel and nuclear weapons . They use the base 's flight simulators to train themselves in aerial combat . When Terl returns , he orders more gold to be extracted , and tells how in the 21st century the Psychlos

conquered Earth in a matter of minutes . Jonnie warns Terl that he will be overthrown and the humans will retake Earth , and cites the United States Declaration of Independence as inspiration , to which Terl scoffs .

After a week of training , the rebels launch a mass uprising against the Psychlos using Harrier jump @-@ jets and other weapons . Carlo sacrifices himself to destroy the dome over Denver , and the Psychlos inside suffocate in Earth 's atmosphere , which they are unable to breathe . Jonnie captures a Psychlo teleportation device and uses it to teleport an atomic bomb to the Psychlo home world . The ensuing detonation causes the entire Psychlo atmosphere to explode , wiping out the Psychlo world . The film ends with the humans in control of Earth but facing an uncertain future , along with Terl and Ker who survived the base destruction . Terl is now imprisoned inside Fort Knox in a makeshift cell of gold bars , while Ker sides with the victorious humans , and helps in their hard effort to rebuild their civilization .

= = Cast = =

= = Production = =

= = = Initial deals = = =

After Battlefield Earth was published in 1982 , L. Ron Hubbard suggested that a film version of the book was in the works . He gave an interview in February 1983 to the Rocky Mountain News in which he told the reporter , " I 've recently written three screenplays , and some interest has been expressed in Battlefield Earth , so I suppose I 'll be right back in Hollywood one of these days and probably on location in the Denver area for Battlefield Earth when they film it . "

Hubbard 's comments suggest that he saw himself being directly involved in the film 's production ; author Stewart Lamont suggests that Hubbard may even have envisioned directing it , given his previous work on Scientology training films . In October 1983 , the film rights were sold by the Church of Scientology 's in @-@ house literary agency , Author Services Inc . , to Salem Productions of Los Angeles . Two films were envisaged , each covering half of the book and tentatively budgeted at \$ 15 million each . William Immerman was set as the producer for the film . Veteran screenwriter Abraham Polonsky and British director Ken Annakin were hired to produce a film breakdown , with production scheduled to begin in 1985 . In November 1984 , Santa Monica public relations firm Dateline Communications announced a nationwide contest to promote the film . First and second place prizes were an all @-@ expense paid trip to the film 's production location and a paid walk @-@ on part in the film , and other announced prizes included a trip to Los Angeles for the world premiere , records , cassettes , and hardcover and paperback copies of the novel . A 30 @-@ foot (10 m) high inflatable figure of the film 's villain , Terl , was erected by Scientology officials on Hollywood Boulevard in 1984 in an effort to promote the production , and auditions were held in Denver . The low @-@ budget project soon collapsed , and Hubbard died soon afterwards , in 1986 .

Travolta had converted to Scientology in 1975 and subsequently became one of the Church of Scientology 's most prominent supporters . Hubbard sent him an autographed copy of Battlefield Earth when the book was first published in 1982 ; he reportedly hoped that Travolta would turn the book into a film " in the vein of Star Wars and Close Encounters of the Third Kind " . While Travolta was interested , his influence in Hollywood at the time was at a low after participating in a series of flops . He gained renewed influence with the success of the 1994 film Pulp Fiction , which garnered Travolta an Academy Award nomination for Best Actor . He had not forgotten Hubbard 's wishes to see the book on the big screen and took on the task of making Battlefield Earth into a movie . Travolta described the book in interviews as " like Pulp Fiction for the year 3000 " and " like Star Wars , only better " . He lobbied influential figures in Hollywood to fund the project and was reported to have recruited the aid of fellow Scientologists in promoting it . According to Bill Mechanic , the

former head of Twentieth Century Fox , " John wanted me to make Battlefield Earth . He had Scientologists all over me . They come up to you and they know who you are . And they go , ' We 're really excited about Battlefield Earth ' . " This did not impress Mechanic : " Do you think in any way , shape , or form that weirding me out is going to make me want to make this movie ? "

Travolta 's involvement in Battlefield Earth was first publicized in late 1995 . He told the New York Daily News that " Battlefield Earth is the pinnacle of using my power for something . I told my manager , ' If we can 't do the things now that we want to do , what good is the power ? Let 's test it and try to get the things done that we believe in . ' " It was assumed from the start that Travolta would star in and produce the film , which would be distributed by Metro @-@ Goldwyn @-@ Mayer ; J. D. Shapiro would write the screenplay . Shapiro was eventually fired because he refused to accept some suggestions from the studio producers that changed the tone of his script , including removing key scenes and characters . In 1997 Travolta 's long @-@ time manager Jonathan Krane signed a two @-@ year deal with Twentieth Century Fox under which that studio would release Battlefield Earth instead of MGM , but the deal with Fox also fell through . James Robert Parish , author of Fiasco : A History of Hollywood 's Iconic Flops , comments that both MGM and Fox regarded the project as too risky on several grounds . Its heavy reliance on special effects would be very expensive , pushing the budget up to as much as \$ 100 million ; Hubbard 's narrative was seen as naïve and outdated ; and the " Scientology factor " could work against the film , negating Travolta 's star power . As one studio executive put it , " On any film there are ten variables that can kill you . On this film there was an eleventh : Scientology . It just wasn 't something anyone really wanted to get involved with . "

= = = Franchise Pictures = = =

In 1998 , the project was taken over by Franchise Pictures , a recently established company whose head , Elie Samaha , a former dry cleaning mogul @-@ turned @-@ nightclub owner , specialized in rescuing stars ' pet projects . Franchise sought out stars whose projects were stalled at the major studios , bringing them aboard at reduced salaries . Samaha 's approach made waves in Hollywood , earning him a reputation of being able to produce star vehicles more cheaply than the larger studios . His unorthodox deals raised eyebrows and the entertainment industry magazine Variety commented that they were " often so complex and variable as to leave outsiders scratching their heads " . As Samaha put it , " I said , ' If John wants to make this movie , what does he want to get paid ? ' ... Because I do not pay anybody what they make . That is not my business plan . ' " He learned of Battlefield Earth from Cassian Elwes , an agent at the theatrical agency William Morris , and approached Travolta . A deal was soon struck and financing was arranged ; Travolta significantly reduced his normal fee of \$ 20 million , lowering the film 's cost from the \$ 100 million that had previously been forecast , and costs were reduced further by using Canadian locations and facilities .

The film was set up as an independent production for Morgan Creek Productions which would release the film through Warner Bros. in the U.S. under an existing distribution agreement . Travolta 's company JTP Films was also involved , and Travolta invested \$ 5 million of his own money in the production . Warner Bros. allocated \$ 20 million for the film 's marketing and distribution . Franchise retained the foreign rights , licensing the European distribution rights to the German group Intertainment AG in exchange for 47 % of the production costs which were set at \$ 75 million . The Intertainment deal later became the focus of a legal action that bankrupted Franchise . Samaha forecast that the film would be a hit : " My projected numbers on Battlefield Earth are really conservative . I 'm already covered internationally , and there 's no way I 'm going to lose if the movie does \$ 35 million domestically . And Travolta has never had an action movie do under \$ 35 million . "

According to Samaha , he got around the " negative factor " of the Scientology connection by the simple expedient of " yell [ing] at everyone , ' This is a science @-@ fiction film starring John Travolta ! ' again and again " . Samaha acknowledged that " everyone thought I was crazy or mentally retarded " for taking on the project , but pitched the film as " Planet of the Apes starring

John Travolta " . Others in Hollywood were still skeptical ; an unnamed producer was quoted by the Los Angeles Daily News as saying that " Battlefield Earth has the stench of death . It should never have been made . It 's an \$ 80 million vanity project for Travolta . " Travolta 's theatrical agency William Morris was also said to be unenthusiastic , reportedly leading to Travolta threatening to leave them if they did not help him to set up the film . Fellow Scientologist Tom Cruise was said to have warned Warner Bros. that he thought the movie was a bad idea . This was later denied by his spokesperson .

= = = Author Services Inc. and Church of Scientology = = =

In 1999 , Author Services Inc. said that it was " donating its share of the profits from the film to charitable organizations that direct drug education and drug rehabilitation programs around the world " . It was reported that the merchandising revenues would be passed on to the Scientology @-@ linked groups Narconon , a drug rehabilitation program , and Applied Scholastics , which promotes Hubbard 's Study tech , with movie @-@ related sales of the book funding the marketing of Hubbard 's fiction books and the L. Ron Hubbard Writers of the Future contest . The size of the revenue deal was not disclosed by the parties ; Trendmasters , the makers of the Battlefield Earth line of toys , stated that its deal was strictly with Franchise Pictures , which declined to comment , and Warner Bros. stated that its role was limited to distribution and had nothing to do with the associated merchandising deals .

In February 2000 , Church of Scientology spokesman Mike Rinder told Tribune Media Services that any spinoff deals based on Hubbard 's novel would benefit Author Services Inc. while another church spokesman , Aron Mason , stated , " The church has no financial interest in Battlefield Earth . Author Services is not part of the Church of Scientology . They are a literary agency without any connection to the church . "

Travolta 's manager Jonathan Krane denied that the Church of Scientology was playing any part in the production : " I 've never even dealt with or talked to the church on this . This is an action @-@ adventure , science @-@ fiction story . Period . The movie has nothing to do with Scientology . " Krane stated that the film had been financed " without a dollar coming from the Scientologists " . Some people in Hollywood feared that Travolta was using his box office draw to promote Scientology teachings , and one film producer stated , " This film could encourage kids to embrace the whole strange world of Scientology . " Travolta stated , " I 'm doing it because it 's a great piece of science fiction . This is not about Hubbard . I 'm very interested in Scientology , but that 's personal . This is different . " In a separate interview Travolta commented on the perceived similarities between Battlefield Earth and Scientology : " Well , they are kind of synonymous ... L. Ron Hubbard is very famous for Scientology and Dianetics . On the other hand , he 's equally as famous in the science fiction world . So for people to think that ... look , I don 't want everybody to try Scientology . I don 't really care if somebody thinks that . I 'm not worried about it . You can 't be . The truth of why I 'm doing it is because it 's a great piece of science fiction . I 'm going to be the wickedest 9 @-@ foot alien you 've ever seen in your life . "

= = = Pre @-@ production = = =

Travolta and his manager , Jonathan Krane , took the lead in hiring the on @-@ set personnel . They initially approached Quentin Tarantino to direct the film . When Tarantino declined , Roger Christian , a protégé of George Lucas , was recruited as the director on the advice of Lucas . Christian had most recently been the second unit director on Lucas ' Star Wars : Episode I ? The Phantom Menace . Patrick Tatopoulos was signed to develop the production design and costumes , including the design of the alien Psychlos , and Czech @-@ American composer Elia Cmiral was signed to provide the film 's score . Travolta and Krane also signed the cinematographer and most of the principal actors . Corey Mandell , a screenwriter who had previously worked with Ridley Scott on Blade Runner , signed on to write the script for the film , which had previously gone through 10 revisions . Mandell stated in an interview , " I am not a Scientologist ... I came on board because

John asked me to read the book and said , ' It 's not a religious book . It 's a science @-@ fiction story . There 's nothing sacred about the story , nothing of the religious philosophy . I was given this to read purely as science fiction ? to see whether it was intriguing as a movie . And it was . "

= = = Filming = = =

Filmed in Canada , principal photography took place in Montreal , Saint @-@ Jean @-@ sur @-@ Richelieu and several other Quebec locations during the summer and autumn of 1999 . In January 1999 , Travolta flew his private Boeing 727 on a secret visit to Montreal to scout out locations for shooting . The film was reported to have been the most expensive production shot in Canada up to that point . It was also reported that the production costs would have been twice as high had the film been shot in the United States . Almost every shot in the film is at a Dutch angle , because , according to Roger Christian , he wanted the film to look like a comic book .

Travolta 's wife Kelly Preston also appeared in one scene , playing Terl 's " baldish Psychlo girlfriend " . Travolta originally saw himself in the role of Jonnie , but by the time the movie was actually made , Travolta felt he was too old to play the role , and took the role of the main villain instead . Travolta 's role in the film required what he described as an amazing physical transformation : " I wear a tall head apparatus with strange hair . I have amber eyes and talons for hands . It 's quite remarkable ... I 'm on 4 @-@ foot stilts . " To star in the film , Travolta turned down the movie The Shipping News and postponed production on Standing Room Only .

The film was " plagued by bad buzz " before release with the media speculating about the possible influence of Scientology and commenting on the production 's tight security . As the film was entering post @-@ production , the alternative newspaper Mean Magazine obtained a copy of the screenplay . Mean 's staffers changed the script 's title to " Dark Forces " by " Desmond Finch " and circulated it to readers at major Hollywood film production companies . The comments that came back were unfavorable : " a thoroughly silly plotline is made all the more ludicrous by its hamfisted dialog and ridiculously shallow characterizations " , " a completely predictable story that just isn 't written well enough to make up for its lack of originality " . One reviewer labeled the screenplay " as entertaining as watching a fly breathe " .

= = Release = =

Battlefield Earth was released on May 12 , 2000 , three days after the 50th anniversary of the publication of Hubbard 's book Dianetics : The Modern Science of Mental Health , a date celebrated by Scientologists worldwide as a major Scientology holiday . Its premiere was held on May 10 , 2000 at Grauman 's Chinese Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles .

= = = Box office = = =

The film 's scathingly bad reviews and poor word @-@ of @-@ mouth led to a precipitous falling @-@ off in its grosses . Having earned \$ 11 @,@ 548 @,@ 898 from 3 @,@ 307 screens on its opening weekend , its take collapsed by 67 percent to \$ 3 @,@ 924 @,@ 921 the following weekend , giving an average take of \$ 1 @,@ 158 per screen . The film made 85 percent of its entire domestic gross in its first 10 days and flatlined thereafter , with earnings dropping a further 75 percent by the end of its third week to \$ 1 million . The following week , facing earnings of just \$ 205 @,@ 745 , Warner Bros. attempted to cut its losses by slashing the number of screens at which the film was being shown . The number was reduced from 2 @,@ 587 to 641 . By its sixth weekend on release , the film was showing on 95 screens and had made \$ 18 @,@ 993 in a week ? less than \$ 200 per screen .

The film ultimately earned \$ 21 @,@ 471 @,@ 685 in the United States and Canada and \$ 8 @,@ 253 @,@ 978 internationally for a total of \$ 29 @,@ 725 @,@ 663 worldwide , falling well short of its reported \$ 73 million production budget and \$ 20 million in estimated marketing costs . Financially , it is regarded as one of the most expensive box office bombs in film history .

In a 2006 list of " The top 10 biggest box office failures " , Kat Giantis of MSN Movies placed Battlefield Earth as tied with Inchon for number seven .

= = = Merchandising = = =

A limited range of merchandising was produced for the film , including posters , a soundtrack CD by Elia Cmiral recorded by the Seattle Symphony , and a re @-@ released version of the novel with a new cover based on the film 's poster . Trendmasters also produced a range of action figures of the main characters , including an 11 @-@ inch (280 mm) figure of Travolta as Terl voicing lines from the film such as " Exterminate all man @-@ animals at will ! " , " You wouldn 't last one day at the academy " , " Man is an endangered species " , and " Ratbastard ! " . In Hubbard 's novel the term " Ratbastard " is never used , and Terl instead refers to Jonnie Goodboy Tyler as " rat brain " .

= = = Home media = = =

A special edition DVD was released in 2001 , deleting one scene and including two additional scenes which added two minutes to the film 's running time . The DVD includes commentary tracks with director Roger Christian and production , costume and creature designer Patrick Tatopoulos , as well as special features including John Travolta 's alien makeup test . Jeff Berkwitz of Sci Fi Weekly wrote that " ... the Battlefield Earth Special Edition DVD is packed with information , offering an enlightening glimpse into the creative process behind this imperfect but entertaining picture " . Randy Salas of the Star Tribune described it as the " Best DVD for a bad movie . " A review of the DVD release in the Los Angeles Times was more critical : " A dated visual style , patched @-@ together special effects and ludicrous dialogue combine in a film that is a wholly miserable experience . "

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical reception = = =

Upon release , Battlefield Earth was heavily panned by critics , and is often considered one of the worst films ever made . On Rotten Tomatoes , the film has a " rotten " score of 3 % based on 148 reviews with an average rating of 2 @.@ 3 out of 10 . The critical consensus states : " Ugly , campy and poorly acted , Battlefield Earth is a stunningly misguided , aggressively bad sci @-@ fi folly " . On Metacritic , the film had an average score of 9 out of 100 , based on 33 critics indicating " Overwhelming dislike " .

Chicago Sun @-@ Times film critic Roger Ebert gave the film the rating of half a star out of four and described it as " like taking a bus trip with someone who has needed a bath for a long time . It 's not merely bad ; it 's unpleasant in a hostile way . I watched it in mounting gloom , realizing I was witnessing something historic , a film that for decades to come will be the punch line of jokes about bad movies . " Leonard Maltin rated the film a " BOMB " in his book Leonard Maltin 's Movie Guide , writing : " Clumsy plot , misplaced satire , unbelievable coincidences and a leaden pace trample Travolta 's weird but amusing performance . " David Bleiler gave the film one star out of four in the TLA Video & DVD Guide , writing : " This is disjointed , tedious and every bit as bad as its reputation . " Jon Stewart mocked the film on his television program The Daily Show , describing it as " a cross between Star Wars and the smell of ass " .

Rita Kempley of The Washington Post commented : " A million monkeys with a million crayons would be hard @-@ pressed in a million years to create anything as cretinous as Battlefield Earth . This film version of L. Ron Hubbard 's futuristic novel is so breathtakingly awful in concept and execution , it wouldn 't tax the smarts of a troglodyte . " Elvis Mitchell of The New York Times wrote : " It may be a bit early to make such judgments , but Battlefield Earth may well turn out to be the worst movie of this century " and called it " Plan 9 from Outer Space for a new generation " . The

British film critic Jonathan Ross said : " Everything about Battlefield Earth sucks . Everything . The over @-@ the @-@ top music , the unbelievable sets , the terrible dialogue , the hammy acting , the lousy special effects , the beginning , the middle and especially the end . " The Hollywood Reporter summarized the film as being " a flat @-@ out mess , by golly , with massive narrative sinkholes , leading to moments of outstanding disbelief in the muddled writing and shockingly chaotic mise en scène that 's accompanied by ear @-@ pummeling sound and bombastic music " .

Particular points that critics held up for censure included its use of angled camera shots (which , according to the director himself in different reports , are used in all but one frame of the film or even in every single frame) , derivative special effects and unbelievable plotting . The Providence Journal highlighted the film 's unusual color scheme : " Battlefield Earth 's primary colors are blue and gray , adding to the misery . Whenever we glimpse sunlight , the screen goes all stale yellow , as though someone had urinated on the print . This , by the way , is not such a bad idea . "

The film is profiled in Better Living Through Bad Movies by Scott Clevenger and Sheri Zollinger , who comment : " So what new truths have we gleaned from Battlefield Earth ? First , we have learned that spirituality is a fine thing , but it 's probably best to avoid joining denominations that make action movies . " In 2010 , screenwriter J.D. Shapiro wrote an apology letter in The New York Post , saying that his draft was completely different from the final product , and he was very ashamed of the poor quality of Battlefield Earth ? " The only time I saw the movie was at the premiere , which was one too many times . "

The film was reported to have been greeted with widespread derision in preview screenings for the public and critics . An audience of Los Angeles entertainment journalists , critics and others greeted the film with guffaws and hoots at a screening in Century City , while other viewers in Washington , D.C. and Baltimore responded with derisive laughter or simply walked out . At a post @-@ launch publicity event , Travolta , on asking assembled journalists if they had enjoyed it , received no reply . He later asserted that other filmmakers had enjoyed the movie : " When I felt better about everything was when George Lucas and Quentin Tarantino , and a lot of people that I felt knew what they were doing , saw it and thought it was a great piece of science fiction . " Christian also spoke of an initially positive reception , mentioning an enthusiastic response from both the audience and Tarantino .

Responding to the criticism , one of the film 's producers , Elie Samaha , complained : " [The] critics were waiting for us to ... chop our heads off . Everybody hated Scientology for some reason . I didn 't know people were so prejudiced . " He argued that despite the film 's poor performance it would cover its costs in due course : " Maybe [in] the second cycle with Internet , and HBO , and DVD , you always make your money ... so I 'm not going to lose sleep over one movie that did not perform for us . "

The reviews were not uniformly negative . Bob Graham of the San Francisco Chronicle wrote that the film " effectively presented " the " wary , uncomprehending relationship " between the humans and the Psychlos . A review at JoBlo 's Movie Reviews was also positive ; Berge Garabedian wrote , " Despite starting off like a bad Star Trek episode , this film eventually graduates to a higher level with great special effects , some really slick bad @-@ ass aliens , an intriguing premise and a good flow of loud , campy fun . " Luke Thompson of New Times LA wrote : " Think Independence Day without the ponderous build @-@ up or self @-@ importance . Imagine how much more enjoyable the other blockbuster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ moment , Gladiator , might have been if Joaquin Phoenix had addressed every one of his rivals as ' Rat brain . ' " Sean Axmaker of the Seattle Post @-@ Intelligencer wrote positively of the interaction between Travolta and Whitaker in the film , comparing them to Abbott and Costello . Axmaker wrote that they provide " ... much @-@ needed comic relief in an otherwise humorless paean to freedom " . Axmaker also wrote positively of the production design used in the film , commenting that the director had created " a world of crumbling dead cities and empty malls turned into human hunting grounds ... " Hap Erstein of The Palm Beach Post commented : " ... production designer Patrick Tatopoulos contributes some good work , imagining the ruins of Denver and Washington , D.C. , with echoes of Planet of the Apes . "

Battlefield Earth frequently appears on worst film lists , and is included on Rotten Tomatoes ' " 100 Worst of the Worst Movies " list . Rotten Tomatoes ranked the film 27th in the 100 worst reviewed films of the first decade of the 21st century . The Arizona Republic listed it as the worst film of 2000 ,

and called it a " monumentally bad sci @-@ fi flick " . Richard Roeper placed the film at number five on his list of " 40 movies that linger in the back chambers of my memory vault like a plate of cheese left behind a radiator in a fleabag hotel " . In 2001 the film received the " Worst Picture " award from the Dallas @-@ Fort Worth Film Critics Association . James Franklin of McClatchy @-@ Tribune News Service put the film as the worst of his " summer blockbuster bombs " list , giving it a rating of four stars for " traumatic " on his scale of how the films " generate a perverse sense of nostalgia " . Christopher Null of Filmcritic.com listed the film 's villain Terl at number 8 of his " 10 Least Effective Movie Villains " , writing : " we still can 't imagine how anyone would go face to face with one of these creatures and react with anything other than simple laughter " . In her book I Love Geeks : The Official Handbook , Carrie Tucker cites Battlefield Earth as a cult classic " in the ' so bad it 's good ' genre . "

South Park parodied the film at the 2000 MTV Movie Awards . The MTV short was the first time South Park had satirized Scientology , in a piece entitled " The Gauntlet " . The short was primarily a Gladiator parody , with the characters fighting Russell Crowe in the Roman Colosseum ; it included " John Travolta and the Church of Scientology " arriving in a spaceship to defeat Crowe and attempting to recruit the boys into Scientology . Travolta , along with his fellow Scientologists , was depicted as a Psychlo , as he appeared in the film .

= = = Golden Raspberry Awards = = =

Battlefield Earth swept the 2000 Golden Raspberry Awards and received seven " Razzies " , including Worst Movie of the Year , Worst Actor (Travolta) , Worst Supporting Actor (Pepper) , Worst Supporting Actress (Preston) , Worst Director (Christian) , Worst Screenplay (Mandell and Shapiro) and Worst Screen Couple (Travolta and " anyone sharing the screen with him ") . This tied for the highest number of Razzies won by a single film at that time , with Showgirls achieving seven wins in 1995 . Battlefield Earth was later awarded an eighth Razzie for " Worst Drama of Our First 25 Years " . In 2010 , the film received an award for " Worst Picture of the Decade " , bringing its total number of Razzie Awards to nine and consequently setting a record for the most Razzies won by a single film . That record was surpassed in 2012 when Jack and Jill won ten awards .

As Travolta did not attend to collect his trophies , an action figure of Terl , his character , accepted them in his place . Travolta responded a week later to the awards : " I didn 't even know there were such awards . I have people around me whose job it is to not tell me about such things . They 're obviously doing their job . Not every film can be a critical and box office success . It would have been awful only if Battlefield Earth was neither . That 's not the case . It is edging toward the \$ 100m mark which means it has found an audience even if it didn 't impress critics . I 'd rather my films connect with audiences than with critics because it gives you more longevity as a performer . " He later insisted that he still felt " really good about it . Here I was taking big chances , breaking a new genre . "

Pepper said that he regretted not having been invited to the Razzies and blamed the film 's failure on " a weak script and poor production values " . Writer J. D. Shapiro received his Worst Screenplay award from Razzies founder John J. B. Wilson during a radio program ; he commented that Travolta had called the script " the Schindler 's List of science fiction " . Shapiro also made an appearance to pick up the Worst Picture of the Decade award at the 30th Golden Raspberry Awards , giving a speech quoting negative reviews , and thanking both the studio for firing him and Corey Mandell for " rewriting my script in a way I never , ever , ever ? could have imagined or conceived of myself . "

The film 's producer , Elie Samaha , declared that he welcomed the " free publicity " , as " the more the critics hit Battlefield Earth , the more DVDs it sells . It is the kind of film that makes a movie legend and we feel we have enough staying power to last long after the critics have quieted down . "

= = Controversies = =

= = = Scientology influence = = =

Stacy Brooks , then @-@ president of the Lisa McPherson Trust , stated : " There 's no way that this movie would be happening without Scientology 's backing ... This is one example of how Scientology insinuates itself in various aspects of the culture . " Mark Bunker characterized the film as a recruitment tactic for the Church of Scientology , stating , " It 's designed to introduce L. Ron Hubbard to a whole new generation of kids . It 's there to plant a favorable seed in children 's minds . " Bunker criticized the promotional methods of the film ? instead of granting interviews about the film to the press , John Travolta went on a book tour and signed copies of L. Ron Hubbard 's novel . Bunker stated , " When Michael Caine goes around to promote The Cider House Rules , he doesn 't tour bookstores and sign copies of John Irving 's novel ... Through the movie tie @-@ in with the book , kids will send in the card to get their free poster , and eventually be introduced to Dianetics . " Scientologist Nancy O 'Meara , at the time treasurer of the Foundation for Religious Freedom and currently treasurer of the Scientology @-@ run New Cult Awareness Network , responded to Bunker 's statement : " Gimme a break ... That 's like saying people are going to go see Gladiator and then suddenly find themselves wanting to explore Christianity . "

Before the film was released , rumors and allegations began to circulate that Battlefield Earth contained subliminal messages promoting Scientology . Former Scientologist Lawrence Wollersheim , in a press release issued by his group Fight Against Coercive Tactics Network , said that the Church of Scientology " has placed highly advanced subliminal messages in the Battlefield Earth film master to surreptitiously recruit new members from the movie audience and to get the audience to develop a revulsion for psychiatry and current mental health organizations and practices " . Other critics said that the film " is a veiled attempt to gain converts and influence " , and that writers were gagged from making connections between Scientology and the film with threats of lawsuits . Warner Bros. dismissed the claims as " silly nonsense " , the Church of Scientology denounced them as " hogwash " and the media reacted with skepticism ; as the Scottish journalist Duncan Campbell put it , " the only subliminal voice I could detect came about 10 minutes into this 121 @-@ minute film and it seemed to be saying Leeeaaaave thissssss cinemmmaaaa noooow " . When asked about the similarities between the film and Scientology beliefs in intergalactic travel and aliens , church spokesman Aron Mason stated , " That 's a pretty crude parallel ... You 'd have to make some serious leaps of logic to make that comparison . " John Travolta also stated that the film was not inspired by Scientology tenets .

= = = Fraud by Franchise Pictures = = =

Following the failure of Battlefield Earth and other films independently produced by Franchise Pictures , The Wall Street Journal reported that the FBI was probing " the question of whether some independent motion picture companies have vastly inflated the budget of films in an effort to scam investors " . In December 2000 the German @-@ based Intertainment AG filed a lawsuit alleging that Franchise Pictures had fraudulently inflated budgets in films including Battlefield Earth , which Intertainment had helped to finance . Intertainment had agreed to pay 47 % of the production costs of several films in exchange for European distribution rights , but ended up paying for between 60 and 90 % of the costs instead . The company alleged that Franchise had defrauded it to the tune of over \$ 75 million by systematically submitting " grossly fraudulent and inflated budgets " .

The case was heard before a jury in a Los Angeles federal courtroom in May ? June 2004 . The court heard testimony from Intertainment that according to Franchise 's bank records the real cost of Battlefield Earth was \$ 44 million , not the \$ 75 million declared by Franchise . The remaining \$ 31 million had been fraudulent " padding " . Intertainment 's head Barry Baeres told the court that he had only funded Battlefield Earth because it was packaged as a slate that included two more commercially attractive films , the Wesley Snipes vehicle The Art of War and the Bruce Willis comedy The Whole Nine Yards . Baeres testified that " Mr. Samaha said , ' If you want the other two pictures , you have to take Battlefield Earth ? it 's called packaging ' " . Baeres commented : " We would have been quite happy if he had killed [Battlefield Earth] " .

Intertainment won the case and was awarded \$ 121 @. @ 7 million in damages . Samaha himself was declared by the court to be personally liable for \$ 77 million in damages . The jury rejected Intertainment 's claims under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) statute , which would have trebled the damages if Franchise had been convicted on that charge . The judgment forced Franchise into bankruptcy a few months later . The failure of the film was also reported to have led in 2002 to Travolta firing his manager Jonathan Krane , who had set up the deal with Franchise in the first place .

= = Follow @-@ ups and sequels = =

Battlefield Earth is significantly shorter than its source novel , covering only the first 436 pages of the 1 @, @ 050 @-@ page book . A sequel covering the remainder of the book was originally planned at the outset . When asked during promotion of the film if there would be a Battlefield Earth 2 , Travolta responded , " Sure . Yeah . " Travolta asserted that the first film would become a cult classic , stating that there were already fan websites dedicated to the film . Corey Mandell , the scriptwriter for the first film , was commissioned to deliver the script for the sequel , and Travolta , Pepper and producer Krane were all signed up to the sequel in their contracts for the first film . Christian and Whitaker were approached to reprise their respective roles , and the producers planned for a 2003 release date so as not to compete with George Lucas ' Star Wars : Episode II ? Attack of the Clones .

Despite Travolta 's earlier statements , plans for a sequel never came to fruition . According to James Robert Parish 's Fiasco : A History of Hollywood 's Iconic Flops , the disastrous performance of Battlefield Earth and the collapse of Franchise Pictures made it very unlikely that a live @-@ action sequel will be made . In a 2001 interview , Travolta stated that a sequel was not planned : " Ultimately the movie did \$ 100 million when you count box office , DVD sales , video and pay per view ... But I don 't know what kind of number it would have to do to justify filming the second part of the book . And I don 't want to push any buttons in the press and stir anybody up about it now . " Author Services announced in 2001 that Pine Com International , a Tokyo @-@ based animation studio , would produce 13 one @-@ hour animated television segments based on the book and rendered in a manga style . The plans appear to have fallen through , and according to Parish , " little has been heard of the series since " .