



## Wicked City

Yoshiaki Kawajiri

Japan, 1987

90 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Production Company: Japan Home video/  
Streamline Pictures

Producer: Carl Macek, Kenji Jurata,  
Makoto Seya

Screenplay: Kisei Choo, Greg Snegoff  
(English Version)

Cinematography: Kinichi Ishikawa

Editor: Harutochi Ogata

Art Director: Kazuo Ojika

Print Source: Streamline Pictures, 971 N.

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Foreign Sales Agent: Streamline Pictures,

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Mak Tai Kit

Hong Kong, 1992

90 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Production Company: Film Workshop

Producer: Tsui Hark

Screenplay: Tsui Hark, Roy Szeto

Original Story: Hideyuki Kikuchi

Cinematography: Andrew Lau, Joe Chan

Principal Cast: Jacky Cheung, Leon Lai,

Michelle Li, Yuen Wo-ping, Tatsuya

Nakadai, Roy Cheung, Carmen Lee

Print Source: Film Workshop, 13 Wiltshire

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A peace treaty is at stake. The co-signees are, on one hand, a race of powerful, shape-changing creatures from a parallel dimension and, on the other, mankind. The treaty will be signed so long as agents from both sides are able to keep the VIP envoys alive. But dark forces will stop at nothing to undermine the pact and leave the Earth open for invasion and eventual conquest.

This is the central premise of the two feature films named *Wicked City*, two very different, explosive and mind-shattering takes on the same dystopic vision.

The first, an animated feature made by legendary director Yoshiaki Kawajiri in 1987, shocked Japan with its graphic sex and violence, and sophisticated film-noir animation technique. Its story of a sober society ripped apart by radical alien terrorists fits perfectly a Japan still smarting from charges of xenophobia. The film has not been available until now, with a newly dubbed print financed in America by Streamline Pictures.

The second *Wicked City* is a Film Workshop remake of Kawajiri's film, this time starring real people. Undaunted by the story's demanding visual pyrotechnics, producer Tsui Hark uses all the Hong Kong special-effects tricks he can muster: battling martial arts masters ride the tops of airplanes, an actual vagina

dentata snaps its menacing jaws, every object imaginable takes flight, and seemingly normal objects are hideously transformed.

Curiously enough, the Hong Kong version also presents a transparent political allegory, only this time the aliens are right across the border, and the treaty date is 1997.

■ Noah Cowan

### Yoshiaki Kawajiri's

directorial debut was *The Lensman*, made between 1979 and 1984, and was the first animation feature to extensively use computer-generated graphics. He has since honed his craft with more adult-oriented films, culminating in the great success of *Wicked City*. His feature films include *Lensman* (79-84), *Neo-Tokyo* (86), "Running Man" segment), *Wicked City* (87), *Goku: Midnight Eye* (89), and *Cyber City OEDO 808* (90-91).

### Mak Tai Kit

was born in Taiwan and graduated from National Normal University. He began making short films in college and directed his first feature *Ah Fu* in 1985. He is also a director for MTV Asia. His feature films include *The Heroes*, *The Losers* (86), *Adracadama* (87), *Sir, Tell Me Why?* (88), *All Night Long* (89), *To Spy With Love* (90), and *The Wicked City* (92).