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Courtesy of Universal Pictures

Nine children with supernatural powers wreak havoc on the tiny coastal town of Midwich in "Village of the Damned."

Has-beens populate new 'village'

By Gerry Beltz
Film Critic

We need movies like "Village of the Damned" to showcase the stars of yesterday because we don't have "Fantasy Island" or "The Love Boat" to do it anymore.

Has-beens like Christopher Reeve, Kirstie Alley and Mark Hamill came out of the woodwork to star in this piece of horror schlock ... and it's not good schlock either.

John Carpenter — who has done incredible work in the past with stuff like "Halloween," "Escape From New York" and "The Thing" — has begun to lose his grip on quality work, and this remake of the 1960 classic is a perfect example.

The small town of Midwich has a very Norman Rockwell look and feel, and life is just so happy and blissful.

However, for no apparent reason everyone goes unconscious for exactly six hours (with horrific results for the guy standing by the barbecue).

This also sets the record for the quickest appearance by a has-been

guest star (Michael Pare, "Streets of Fire") as the driver of a pick-up truck that falls asleep at the wheel.

Everybody wakes up, and as the weeks pass, ten women become pregnant. The pregnancies date back to the day everyone was unconscious.

The town doctor (Reeve) is understandably perplexed. Added to this is the arrival of a mysterious group of government officials in expensive suits and sunglasses led by a chain-smoking epidemiologist (Alley).

Nine of the 10 children survive childbirth, and as they grow, their latent telepathic powers grow with them. These white-haired whelps soon begin to wreak havoc throughout the town in the name of "survival."

As far as plot and script go, the movie sucks. There is very little horror or suspense anywhere in the film, except for the eyedrops scene. That one had everybody in the theater squirming.

The special effects were pretty good, especially the eyes of the kids. However, it was better in the original. Everybody acts as if they were in a

The Facts

Film: "Village of the Damned"
Stars: Christopher Reeve, Kirstie Alley, Mark Hamill
Director: John Carpenter
Rating: R
Grade: D+
Five Words: Horror remake lacks substance, quality

movie-of-the-week except for Hamill, who plays the town's gun-toting minister. He's probably just happy to be in a movie that's not being released straight to video.

Another familiar face is Linda Kozlowski from the "Crocodile Dundee" flicks. There have been laundry soap commercials with more talent.

Spend two bucks and rent the 1960 original "Village of the Damned" and spend the other two bucks on refreshments.

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