district nine

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## context

### Production

Director: Niell Blomkamp

* Moved from South Africa to Canada when he was 18
* Grew up in S/A during the Apartheid and witnessed the horrors of racial discrimination and segregation firsthand
  + Described his hometown as an urban prison
  + He interviewed real people who lived in Johannesburg (trying to get genuine answers, the aliens were the refugees from places like Zimbabwe who were migrating there, conflict between the white and the Zimbabwe Africans)
* Peter Jackson funded and produced the movie
* There's 2 versions of D9 - "alive in Joburg" and the official version which was funded properly

### Ideological

* Beliefs of the time
* Apartheid means "apartness" in Afrikaans
* Segregation was a part of the law
* The white minority was fearful of losing their culture because there were less of them
* The government was composed of the minority of white people who enforced segregation of the whites from the non-white through racial discrimination
  + Racial superiority and fear empowered this movement
  + Group areas act 1950 -> the government called for all non-white people (the majority) to separate themselves from the white community by living in separate areas, using separate public facilities and prohibiting interracial marriages in 1950
* The population registration act called for south Africans to identify and register themselves according to their skin colour/racial group
  + They would be treated differently based on the group that they belonged to
  + "The plight of the film's crustacean like extra-terrestrials can be easily read as a metaphor for the persecution of the South African blacks under apartheid … the country's impoverished peoples oppress on another" (Blomkamp, 2009)

### District 6

* Working-class area just off the centre of Cape Town
* Established as a community of freed slaves, merchants, labourers and immigrants
* The people in D6 put up a resistance
* The last people only left in the mid 70s
* It became a local and international symbol of the suffering caused by apartheid
* People were allowed to go back or get financial compensation
* Now called Zonnebloem

### Historical Context

* Your race affected where you would live, go to school or get work
* Black africans were forcibly removed to homeland "townships" - where provision of services such as health and education was much inferior to other areas, perpetuating the system of segregation, or living seperately
  + "It's not such the whites and blacks. You have coloureds, you have the Nigerians and Zimbabweans coming in as refugees, you have tribal factions within that. It's massively broken up and stratified. It's an incredibly tense environment, so then to add aliens is almost just like one more layer, an they happen to go right in at the bottom" (Greg Broadmore)

## scene analysis

### Opening scene

* Vikkus putting the mic on (awkward/dork/nerd)
  + Doesn’t seem very smart or anything
  + Cameraman giving him instructions etc.
* alien affairs workers
* Engage with other species on behalf of humans
* Longshot - establishing the setting
  + The divide between the city and the D9 area
* Hovered there for 3 months and then they cut their way into the ship (helicopters above)
* Malnourished, unhealthy, aimless -> the 'creatures'
* Ferry the aliens to a temporary camp below the ship

○ Fenced then militarised then became a slum

* "there's a lot of secrets in district nine" -some guy
* Established the people as experts - name job and they had interviews with them
* Looks like new-reel footage
* The prawns are really vulnerable
* The world was watching so they had to do the right thing
* Kept them away in fear - behind a barbed wire fence
* Birds-eye view of D9 to show the living conditions
* 'they spent so much money on keeping them here' 'at least they're keeping them separate from us'
* 'the aliens will not be going home' 'the aliens are here to stay'
* Alien weapons caches seized -> fake news things
* They look like prawns (derogatory, clear attitudes forming, represented as craxy - fighting and eating trash, thugs, violent - causing mayhem and destruction)
* Referred to as a virus
* All of the opinions of people are negative
* Jumpcuts between all of the shots -> jumbled and all over the place
* After 20 years, people had had enough
* Living happily and safely that the prawns are safely far away from them
* 'wikus isn't a very smart boy but he was a wonderful son'
* 'it's almost as big as my wedding day'
* Juxtaposition of wikus to the army guys (in his brown vest thingy vs the all black armour stuff)
* Interview his family
* Juxtaposition -> wikus saying the camp is comfy but then it shows the field with the lil huts that are on the dirt
* It's his father in law -> maybe why he got the job
* 'I don’t think he can be forgiven for what he did, it was like a betrayal'
* Not suitable for the job, he seems super calm, causal and whatnot and people are in the interviews saying about something bad happening to him
* Those interviews would have taken place after the documentary unfolded
* Lot of guns and whatnot
  + Not going to conduct a peaceful mission, if you were just exchanging contracts you wouldn't bring guns
* He's weak next to the british soldier (the bald guy)

### Eviction scene

* "the prawns don't really understand the concept of ownership of land"
* News scene footage
* News reporter
* Handheld cameras
* Going in there to get a signature on a piece of paper but it looks like they're entering a warzone (bulletproof vests)
* Wikus is super naïve and he thinks that it is reasonable
* \*loads gun\*
* Shaky cam (blurry and whatnot)
* They have human tendencies but the humans think they're stupid
  + Animalistic (cat food etc.)
* Bribery
  + Sign the paper and he gets his reward
* Gang of nigerians (headed by alessandro??a???)
* Finds the eggs in this place
  + Wikus is taking the things out of the eggs and joking around about them dying (sleeping)
* They set the building with the eggs on fire
  + "it's almost like a popcorn" -> Joking around about the eggs being on fire
* He was finding the burning of the building funny (but he just killed a bunch of babies)
* Cut to an interview with the guy who runs the labs????
  + With the timer down the bottom - lab footage (archival footage), scientific tests being run
* Corruption
  + They are only interested in the technology, they don't care about the aliens
* Turning point in our representation of the points
  + Before this point they were represented as animals but now you see that they are intelligent and can talk to each other and have feelings
  + Personifies them as things with feelings (given more human characteristics)

### Experimentation scenes

* Camera from his perspective looking up from the table
* The time at the bottom -> the time has disappeared (timelapse)
* Breathing sounds, random eery noises, medical jarble
* Hyperventilating almost, grunting sounds
* Drill into his arm, screaming from wikus
  + "a strong pain reaction, it means the nerve has completely fused, it's like it's fully integrated"
* "stand by, stand back" "and fire"
* He's subject 2B (he has a subjects card for referral from the footage)
* The contrast between the suits and the scientists in their blood-spattered coats
* When the screen divides into 4 like surveillance videos
* "what did you say about your wife?" "FUCK YOUR WIFE"
* Getting him to pull the trigger on a bunch of guns
* Physical deterioration - pale, sweaty
* Not actually talking to him, they aren't answering his questions
* Prawn walks out and vikkus "I'll shoot the pig but I won't shoot the prawn"
* "he didn't do anything to you"
* The prawn has an X on it's body
* The prawn gets shot and it's blood goes all over vikkus - vikkus starts shaking and whatnot
* Them all standing around his body while he is on a medical bed
* Holding his hand, then saying you can cut him up (very cold, talking about killing him and carving him up for his body parts) -> they don't recognise him as a human anymore
* Next of kin is his father in law

### Connection between Wikus and Christopher Scenes

* Called the prawn 'sir'
* Vikkus collapses and they drag him down into the cellar thing they have
  + He doesn't deserve their love or help at all
* He changed his mind because it seeks his own purpose
* How Christopher is different to the other prawns
  + He can communicate
  + He's not violent
  + Patient, calculated (planning his escape for 20 years)
* He has the lil guy
* "we are the same" - lil guy
  + "we're not the same, we're not the fucking same" - wikus (extreme closeup of him being offended by the lil guy and you can see the stress in his face)

### Recovery of battery scenes

* Juxtaposition - going in to attack Wikus and they’re the ones who are caught off guard when he comes to them
* Cross-cutting (from wikus and christopher to the army man) -> tension, impression of being hunted

### Closing scenes

* He's his friend now - he wants to help him
  + He's not a very good candidate for a hero (he's more of an antihero)
* Wikus "don't make me go through all of this and not make it"
* Last known footage of Wikus
  + They think he's been captured by the aliens and could currently be held hostage
  + His dad: "he died in my mind a long time ago"
* Sad music
* Metallic flower -> found it at her front door
  + Friends said to throw it away but she didn't
* Cuts to shot of Wikus as a prawn making the flower

## the changing perspective of Wikus

### ​​Start:

* Ignorant
  + He blindly believes that MNU is telling the truth
* Juxtaposition:
  + The army
  + The campsite
  + Vs what Wikus is saying about how they're going to be peaceful and just hand them a piece of paper to tell them to move out
* Interviews sitting at the desk
  + Goofy smile on his face
  + Close up to see his expression
  + Physical appearance
  + He's proud of his job
  + By including his wife it shows his ignorance is genuine
* It shows he has good relationships by including the interviews of his family
  + He's a good person actually
* He accepts events as presented to him
  + He doesn’t question his actions
* When he begins to transform he hates himself
  + And he sees how people treat him now as just a test subject

### End:

* He realises his ignorance
  + He's had the perspective of how bad MNU is towards the prawns then he changes his attitude
* Once he experiences the prejudice firsthand he comes to realise
  + His relationship with Christopher
* Physical change (looks like a prawn and by the end is fully a prawn)
* His language changes

## perspectives

### Director

Providing a critical view of the apartheid

Make it seem more realistic

* Body cameras
* Interviews with people

Choice in main character

So many interviews saying that prawns are bad but they're actually

The media lies

### Christopher

​​Wikus took his stuff and helped him out - empathetic

Has human characteristics

## Representations

### MNU

* Manipulative
* Deceiving
* Greedy
* Selfish
  + Only interested in the alien tech and weapons

### The general public

* The people they interview in the streets
* Single-minded
* Believe what they see on the media and are gullible
* Passive - believe what they are told
* They turned on Wikus
* He was waiting in line to get the food and the people turned on him
  + They brought out their guns and shi

### The shift in the representation of the prawns

* Cannibalism
* Victim representation
  + When you see the exploitation
* Human representation
  + Getting to know Christopher
* They ripped the guy apart
  + Vicious
* They're intelligent - he uses the technology well
* Caring
  + He has a son