

# Blade Runner: The Final Cut review – a

**Mark Kermode,** **sci-fi classic**

*Observer film critic*

Sun 5 Apr 2015 07:59 BST **32** masterpiece, back on the big screen in this definitive version, is an unforgettable experience



**“I**’ve seen things you people wouldn’t believe...” When making the 2000 documentary *On the Edge of Blade Runner*, I asked Rutger Hauer why he thought Harrison Ford was so reluctant to talk about what is now considered a timeless sci-fi classic. “He’s such a dumb character,” Hauer replied mischievously of Ford’s android-hunter Deckard. “He gets a gun put to his head and then he fucks a dish-washer!”

Ford, with his *Star Wars* cachet, was *Blade Runner*’s top-line draw, but it’s Hauer’s movie all the way, his shimmering “replicant” providing the tonal touchstone for Ridley Scott’s severally reworked masterpiece. The Dutch actor even contributed his own infinitely quotable couplet to the film’s epochal “tears in rain” scene, a moment as iconic as *Casablanca*’s “Here’s looking at you, kid”. As for Deckard, the stooge who falls for Sean

Young's artificial charms in rain-drenched 2019 LA, Scott had his own way of explaining Ford's robotic performance, a unicorn-themed conceit drawn not from Philip K Dick's source but born out of a simple miscommunication between screenwriters Hampton Fancher and David Peoples.

Having flopped in 1982, *Blade Runner* took years to find an audience, and to find itself - this "Final Cut" from 2007 supersedes an earlier "Director's Cut", cleaning up assorted blips (verbal, visual) in addition to stripping the tacked-on voiceover and dopey "happy ending" which marred the original release. Back on the big screen, *Blade Runner* remains an overwhelming experience, with Doug Trumbull's photographic effects and Larry Paull's production designs melding seamlessly with location shots of downtown LA to create a groundbreaking "retro-fitted" future. Vangelis's glistening score is all landscape synths, tingling strings and yearning romantic melodies, while Syd Mead's vehicles drive the action delightfully. But in the end Hauer's eyes have it - gazing into a future already lost in the past; shimmering, piercing, undying.

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