

## Document Citation

Title	<b>The brother from another planet</b>
Author(s)	Todd McCarthy
Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	1984 May 23
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	15
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	The brother from another planet, Sayles, John, 1984

**The Brother From  
Another Planet**  
(U.S. - COLOR)

Cannes, May 17.

An A-Train Films production. Produced by Peggy Rajske, Maggie Renzi. Directed, written, edited by John Sayles. Camera (Movie-lab color), Ernest R. Dickerson; music, Mason Daring; production design, Nora Chavoo-shian; art direction, Steve Lineweaver; costume design, Karen Perry; sound, Eric Taylor; assistant director, Craig Laurence Rice. Reviewed at the Cannes Festival (Market), May 16, 1984. (No MPAA rating). Running time: 104 MINS.

The Brother ..... Joe Morton  
Fly ..... Darryl Edwards  
Odell ..... Steve James  
Smokey ..... Leonard Jackson  
Walter ..... Bill Cobbs  
Noreen ..... Maggie Renzi  
Sam ..... Tom Wright  
Bernice ..... Ren Woods  
Rickey ..... Reggie Rock Bythewood

Also with: John Sayles, David Strathairn, Rosetta Le Noire, Fisher Stevens, Josh Mostel, Michael Mantel, Jaime Tirelli, Edward Baran, Caroline Aaron, Herbert Newsome, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Sidney Sheriff Jr.

John Sayles takes a turn toward offbeat fantasy in "The Brother From Another Planet," a vastly amusing but progressively erratic look at the Harlem adventures of an alien who will undoubtedly be called a black E.T. Sci-fi angle gives the film a chance to reach a notably wider audience than have Sayles' previous three directorial efforts. Teen and college viewers rep the key target market, but an

(Continued on page 15)

**Reviewed At C**

(Continued from page 14)

**The Brother From  
Another Planet**

enterprising Yank distributor should attempt to arouse interest in the black community as well.

Financed on a shoestring by Sayles himself and almost entirely without the special effects generally associated with "alien" cinematic exploits, "Brother" begins with a tall, mute, young black fellow seeming to be dumped uncere-moniously in New York harbor. Within minutes, he makes his way to Harlem, where his unusual, but not truly bizarre, behavior raises some cackles but in most respects blends into the neighborhood.

Roughly the first third of the ac-tion takes place in a local bar, and Sayles' outstanding talent with dia-log is given free rein in the fre-quently funny comments and ex-changes of the regulars.

Since he doesn't speak, the Brother represents a mostly pas-sive character except for his mys-terious healing powers, which not only enable him to cure physical injuries but to earn a job in a video arcade, since he can fix cantaker-ous video games with a pass of the hand.

On the subway, the Brother is given a fabulously entertaining display of ace cardsmanship by young Broadway legit thesp Fisher Stevens, and is later introduced to the pleasures of the flesh by jazz singer Dee Dee Bridgewater.

Pic is essentially a series of be-havioral vignettes, and many of them are genuinely delightful and inventive. Once the Brother dis-covers the Harlem drug scene, however, tale takes a rather un-pleasant and, ultimately, confus-ing turn, and much of the consid-erable promise and good will develop-ed over the first hour is dissipated.

Pursuing the missing Brother around the streets of Harlem are two alien bounty hunters, one of whom is played by Sayles himself. Pair ultimately confronts its prey, but while a happy ending ensues, handling of the climactic section is quite awkward, as it's hard to tell exactly what's going on.

Ultimately, feeling persists that the full potential of this wonderful idea was not quite achieved, but pic does deliver enough pleasure, of both sophisticated and broad-casted types, that it will surely be accorded a fine Stateside recep-tion.

Because final reel or two tend to run down, film seems overlong, but, despite infinitesimal budget, tech credits and overall look are quite acceptable. — *Cart.*