

= Scream (1996 film) =

Scream is a 1996 American slasher film written by Kevin Williamson and directed by Wes Craven . The film stars David Arquette , Neve Campbell , Courteney Cox , Matthew Lillard , Rose McGowan , Skeet Ulrich , and Drew Barrymore . Released on December 20 , 1996 , Scream follows the character of Sidney Prescott (Campbell) , a high school student in the fictional town of Woodsboro , California , who becomes the target of a mysterious killer known as Ghostface . Other main characters include Sidney 's best friend Tatum Riley (McGowan) , Sidney 's boyfriend Billy Loomis (Ulrich) , Billy 's best friend Stu Macher (Lillard) , film geek Randy Meeks (Jamie Kennedy) , deputy sheriff Dewey Riley (Arquette) , and news reporter Gale Weathers (Cox) . The film combined comedy and " whodunit " mystery with the violence of the slasher genre to satirize the cliché of the horror genre popularized in films such as Halloween and Friday the 13th . The film was considered unique at the time of its release for featuring characters who were aware of real world horror films and openly discussed the cliché that Scream attempted to subvert .

Based partly on the real @-@ life case of the Gainesville Ripper , Scream was inspired by Williamson 's passion for horror films , especially Halloween (1978) . The script , originally titled Scary Movie , was bought by Dimension Films and was retitled by the Weinstein Brothers just before filming was complete . The production faced censorship issues with the Motion Picture Association of America and obstacles from locals while filming on location . The film went on to financial and critical acclaim , earning \$ 173 million worldwide , and became the highest @-@ grossing slasher film in the US in unadjusted dollars . It received several awards and award nominations . The soundtrack by Marco Beltrami was also acclaimed , and was cited as " [one] of the most intriguing horror scores composed in years . " It has since earned " cult status . " Scream marked a change in the genre as it cast already @-@ established and successful actors , which was considered to have helped it find a wider audience , including a significant female viewership .

Scream was credited with revitalizing the horror genre in the 1990s , which was considered to be almost dead following an influx of direct @-@ to @-@ video titles and numerous sequels to established horror franchises of the 1970s and 1980s . These sequels drew decreasing financial and critical success , as they exploited clichés upon which films in the genre had become reliant . Scream 's success spawned a series of sequels , though only Scream 2 , released in 1997 , achieved a level of commercial and critical success equal to the original film . In the years following the release of Scream , the film was accused of inspiring and even inducing violent crimes and murders .

= = Plot = =

High school student Casey Becker receives a flirtatious phone call from an unknown person , asking her , " What 's your favorite scary movie ? " The situation quickly escalates as the caller turns sadistic and threatens her life . He reveals that her boyfriend Steve Orth is being held hostage . After Casey fails to answer a question correctly about horror films , Steve is murdered . When Casey refuses to cooperate with the caller , she is attacked and murdered by a masked killer . Her parents come home to find her body hanging from a tree .

The following day , the news media descend on the town and a police investigation begins . Meanwhile , Sidney Prescott struggles with the impending one @-@ year anniversary of her mother 's murder by Cotton Weary . While waiting at home for her friend , Tatum Riley , Sidney receives a threatening phone call . After she hangs up she is attacked by the killer . Sidney 's boyfriend , Billy Loomis , arrives shortly after , but after he drops his cell phone , Sidney suspects him of making the call and flees . Billy is arrested and Sidney spends the night at Tatum 's house .

Billy is released the next day . Suspicion has shifted to Sidney 's father , Neil Prescott , as the calls have been traced to his phone . School is suspended in the wake of the murders . After the students have left the school , Principal Himbry is stabbed to death in his office . Tatum 's boyfriend , Stu Macher throws a party to celebrate the school 's closure . The party is attended by Sidney , Tatum , their friend Randy Meeks , and multiple other students . Reporter Gale Weathers attends uninvited

to cover the situation , as she expects the killer to strike . Tatum 's brother deputy sheriff Dewey Riley also looks out for the murderer at the party . Tatum is killed during the party after having her head crushed by the garage door . Billy arrives to speak to Sidney privately , and the two ultimately consummate their relationship . Dewey and Gale investigate a nearby abandoned car . Many party attendees are drawn away after hearing news of Himbry 's death ; Sidney , Billy , Randy , Stu , and Gale 's cameraman Kenny remain .

After having sex , Sidney and Billy are attacked by the killer , who seemingly murders Billy . Sidney escapes the killer and seeks help from Kenny , but he gets his throat slit by the killer . Sidney again flees . Gale and Dewey , having discovered that the car belongs to Neil Prescott , return to the house . They believe Neil is the killer and has come to the party to continue his spree . Gale attempts to leave the scene in her van but drives off the road and crashes to avoid hitting Sidney . Meanwhile , Dewey is stabbed in the back while investigating in the house , and Sidney takes Dewey 's gun . Stu and Randy appear and accuse each other of being the killer . Sidney retreats into the house , where she finds Billy wounded but still alive . She gives Billy the gun ; he lets Randy into the house and shoots him . Billy reveals he has feigned his injuries and is actually the killer ; Stu is his accomplice .

Billy and Stu discuss their plan to kill Sidney and frame her father , whom they have taken hostage , for their murder spree . The pair also admits to killing her mother , Maureen . Billy says he was motivated to seek revenge on Maureen because she was having an affair with Billy 's father , which drove his mother away . Gale , thought dead by the killers , intervenes , and Sidney takes advantage of this to turn the tables on her attackers , killing Stu . Randy is revealed to be wounded but alive . Billy attacks Sidney but she shoots him through the head , killing him . As the sun rises and police arrive , a badly injured Dewey is taken away by ambulance and Gale makes an impromptu news report about the night 's events .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

Scream was originally developed under the title Scary Movie by Kevin Williamson , an aspiring screenwriter . Influenced by a news story he was watching about a series of grisly murders by the Gainesville Ripper , Williamson became concerned about intruders upon finding an open window in the house where he was staying . He was inspired to draft an 18 @-@ page script treatment about a young woman , alone in a house , who is taunted over the phone and then attacked by a masked killer . The treatment remained as a short story while Williamson worked on another script , Teaching Mrs. Tingle , a thriller that he would eventually sell but that would languish in development hell for many years . Struggling to pay his bills , Williamson secluded himself in Palm Springs and focused on the development of his Scary Movie treatment , hoping for a quick sale to meet his financial needs . Over the course of three days , Williamson developed a full @-@ length script as well as two separate five @-@ page outlines for potential sequels ? Scary Movie 2 and Scary Movie 3 . He hoped to entice buyers with the potential for a franchise . In an interview , Williamson said that one reason he focused on the Scary Movie script was because it was a film he wanted to watch , born of his childhood love of horror films such as Halloween , but " nobody else [was] making it " . His appreciation for previous horror films became evident in the script , which features inspiration from and references to films such as Halloween , Friday the 13th , A Nightmare on Elm Street , When a Stranger Calls , and Prom Night . Williamson listened to the soundtrack for Halloween for inspiration while writing the script . Excerpts from the soundtrack appear in the film .

By June 1995 Williamson brought the Scary Movie script to his agent , Rob Paris , to put out for sale . Paris warned him that the level of violence and gore in his script would make it " impossible " to sell . Following the script 's purchase by Miramax , Williamson was required to remove much of the gorier content , such as graphic depictions of the internal organs of gutted murder victims " rolling " down their legs . However , once Craven was secured as director , he was able to bring

much of the excised content back . Williamson was going to remove a scene in the school bathroom featuring Sidney , as he felt it was awkward and out of place in the film . Craven insisted the scene should remain , as he felt it developed the character and her relationship with her deceased mother . Williamson later confirmed that he was glad that Craven proved him wrong about the scene . Dimension Films head Bob Weinstein realized while reviewing the script that there were thirty pages (approximately thirty on @-@ screen minutes) without a murder , so he instructed Williamson to have another character killed .

Williamson included the death of the character Principal Himbry (Winkler) based on this input and in doing so inadvertently resolved a problem in the script 's finale . Williamson had struggled to find a reason for several extraneous characters to leave a party scene so that the killer could attack , finally determining that the announcement of the discovery of Himbry 's corpse would serve to remove the non @-@ essential characters who are so upset that they leave the party before (and enabling) the start of the murders . Concerning the killer 's motive , Williamson felt it was essential for the audience to learn why the antagonists had become killers , but he also felt it was potentially scarier if they had no motivation . Opinions at the studio were split between those who believed a motive was needed for resolution and those who felt the action was scarier without one . As there were two killers , Williamson decided to do both : Billy Loomis had the motive of maternal abandonment , while the second killer , Stu Macher , jokingly suggests " peer pressure " as his motive when prompted .

= = = Development = = =

The script for what was then known as Scary Movie went on sale on a Friday in June 1995 , but received no bids . By the following Monday , the script had become the subject of a significant bidding war among a host of established studios , including Paramount Pictures , Universal Pictures , and Morgan Creek Productions . Producer Cathy Konrad read the script and felt it was exactly what the Weinstein brothers of the fledgling Dimension Films ? then a part of Miramax ? were looking for . Dimension had previously released several horror films and intended to focus on that genre . Konrad brought the script to Bob Weinstein 's assistant , Richard Potter . Believing it had potential , he brought it to Weinstein 's attention . Studios began to drop out of the bidding as the price of the script increased , and the final two bidders were Oliver Stone , who was at the time working under Cinergi Pictures , and the Weinsteins of Dimension Films . Williamson agreed to a bid of \$ 400 @,@ 000 from Miramax , plus a contract for two sequels and a possible fourth unrelated film . Williamson said he chose Dimension because he believed they would produce Scary Movie immediately and without significantly censoring the violence in the script . Craven read the script before he became involved in the production , and considered convincing a studio to buy it for him to direct . However , by the time Craven read the script , it had already been sold .

Bob Weinstein approached Craven early in the planning stages , because he felt Craven 's previous work in the genre that combined horror and comedy would make him the perfect person to bring Williamson 's script to screen . Craven was already busy developing a remake of The Haunting and was considering distancing himself from the horror genre . He was growing weary of the inherent misogyny and violence . Weinstein approached other directors , including Robert Rodriguez , Danny Boyle , George A. Romero , and Sam Raimi . Williamson said that they " didn 't get it " ; he was concerned that having read the script , many of the directors believed the film to be purely a comedy . Craven was approached again but continued to pass in spite of repeated requests . When production of The Haunting collapsed , Craven was freed from that commitment and found himself in need of a project . Meanwhile , Drew Barrymore had signed on to the film at her own request . When he heard an established actress wanted to be involved , Craven reasoned that Scary Movie might be different from other films of the genre he had previously undertaken , and he contacted Weinstein to accept the job .

As the film neared completion , the Weinstein brothers changed the film 's title from Scary Movie to Scream . They were inspired by the Michael Jackson song of the same name . Bob Weinstein considered Scary Movie to be an unsuitable title as , in addition to the horror and violence , the film

contained elements of satire and comedy ; Weinstein wished for that to be better conveyed by the title . The change was effected so late into production that congratulatory gifts bore the original name . Williamson and Craven immediately disliked the new title , and considered it " stupid " . Both later remarked that the change turned out to be positive , and that Weinstein had been wise to pick the new title . Following a highly successful screening of the film in front of a test audience and Miramax executives , Craven was offered a two @-@ picture contract for sequels to *Scream* .

Sony Pictures filed a lawsuit against Dimension Films and Miramax , claiming that the title " *Scream* " infringed on the copyright of Sony 's own *Screamers* (1995) , released the previous year . After the case was settled out of court ? the details remain confidential ? *Scream 2* producer Marianne Maddalena considered that the case was a result of other issues between the two companies and did not truly pertain to the film 's moniker . Maddalena confirmed that the studio was free to use the *Scream* brand for future films .

= = = Casting = = =

Scream was a turning point in terms of casting for the horror genre , which normally involved relatively unknown actors . The genre was considered unsuitable for bigger names as the films had lower budgets and often attained negative critical response . Drew Barrymore read the script and was interested in being involved . She approached the production team herself to request a role . Barrymore , a member of the Barrymore family of actors and granddaughter of actor John Barrymore , had become a star in her own right following her appearance in *E.T. the Extra @-@ Terrestrial* (1982) . The producers were quick to take advantage of her unexpected interest , and signed her to play the lead role of Sidney Prescott . Her involvement was believed to be instrumental in attracting other popular actors to the film in spite of its smaller budget , and in causing Craven to reconsider his decision to direct the film . Before filming began , Barrymore was faced with unexpected commitments that meant she would no longer be available to play the demanding lead role . She instead played the smaller role of Casey Becker , which allowed her to remain involved and still gave the production the advantage of her stature . Killing off one of their biggest stars early in the film was considered a calculated risk , but it was believed that it would be so shocking and unexpected that the audience would then believe that any character could die . Actresses including Alicia Witt and Brittany Murphy auditioned for the lead role of Sidney ; the producers also approached Reese Witherspoon , though she never auditioned . Craven had seen Neve Campbell in the TV show *Party of Five* and asked her to audition for the part . He believed she could portray a character who was " innocent " , but who could also realistically handle herself while dealing with the physical conflict and emotions required by the role . Campbell was initially reluctant to perform in another horror film so soon after her supporting role in *The Craft* . After a successful audition , Campbell accepted an offer to play the lead character . She accepted because *Scream* would be her first leading role , and because she adored the character , saying " She 's a fantastic character for any kind of movie . "

For the character of news reporter Gale Weathers , the studio wanted a recognizable actress . They auditioned Brooke Shields and Janeane Garofalo . Courteney Cox , who was starring in the sitcom *Friends* at the time , approached the production herself to pursue the role . She was interested in playing a " bitch " character to offset her " nice " *Friends* image . This image was the main reason why the producers initially refused to consider Cox for the part . Cox continued to lobby the studio as she felt she could believably play the character ; her efforts ultimately succeeded . Actresses Melinda Clarke and Rebecca Gayheart auditioned for the role of Tatum Riley , before Rose McGowan was cast . The casting director believed she best embodied the " spunky " , " cynical " but " innocent " nature of the character . The studio felt the strong female cast of Campbell , Barrymore , Cox , and McGowan would help draw a significant female audience to the film . Gayheart would later land a role in *Scream 2* .

Kevin Patrick Walls and Justin Whalin were among the final candidates for the key role of Sidney 's boyfriend Billy Loomis . Whalin took part in auditions with Campbell . Skeet Ulrich ultimately secured the role . The producers viewed him as " perfect " for the part and noted his resemblance to a young

Johnny Depp as he appeared in A Nightmare on Elm Street , one of the many films Scram references . Ulrich and Campbell had worked together on The Craft shortly before Scram . They believed the experience helped them be more comfortable with each other , which allowed a more natural portrayal of the relationship between their characters . Though he failed to win the Loomis role , Walls remained in the film in the minor role of Steve Orth , boyfriend of Barrymore 's Casey Becker . David Arquette was also approached for the role of Billy Loomis but he asked to read for the part of Dewey Riley after reading the script . The role , described as " hunky " , was considered ill @-@ fitting for Arquette 's lean , slender appearance and approach but Arquette was still allowed to audition for the part . Craven appreciated his softer , funnier approach to the character , and gave him the role . Matthew Lillard was cast as Billy 's equally sadistic friend Stu Macher by chance after accompanying his then @-@ girlfriend to an unrelated audition taking place elsewhere in the same building . Casting director Lisa Beach saw Lillard in the hallway and asked him to audition for the part . He got into the role with " incredible ferocity " . The role of Randy Meeks was contested between Jamie Kennedy and Breckin Meyer . The producers favored Kennedy , believing him to best embody the role . As he had no major roles prior to Scram , the studio wanted a more prominent actor than Kennedy to play the character . The producers were adamant that he was the best choice and successfully fought to keep him . Roger L. Jackson , voice of the character Ghostface , was picked at the end of several weeks of local casting in Santa Rosa , where parts of Scram were filmed . The producers had originally intended to use his voice only as a placeholder , dubbing over it during post @-@ production . They decided that Jackson 's contribution was perfect and kept it . Craven described it as an " intelligent " and " evil " voice that would become irreplaceable to the series . To aid their performance , Jackson was never allowed to meet the other actors , preventing them from associating a face with the menacing voice . Jackson was present on the set and spoke to actors by phone to help aid their performance .

The cast was rounded out by W. Earl Brown , who played Gale Weather 's cameraman Kenny ; Joseph Whipp , who portrayed Sheriff Burke ; Lawrence Hecht as Neil Prescott (Sidney 's father) ; and C.W. Morgan as Hank Loomis (Billy 's father) . Liev Schreiber appeared in a minor role as Cotton Weary , the framed killer of Sidney 's mother and Linda Blair made a brief cameo as a TV reporter outside the school . Henry Winkler appeared as Principal Himbry , an aggressive school principal . He remained uncredited so as to not draw attention away from the young main cast .

= = = Filming = = =

Principal photography for Scram took place over eight weeks between April 15 and June 8 , 1996 , on a budget of \$ 15 million . The Weinsteins wanted to film in Vancouver as it was estimated that they could save \$ 1 million in costs compared to shooting in the United States . Craven was adamant about filming in the United States , and making a film that looked " truly American " . The argument over where to film almost led to Craven being removed from the project , but the Weinsteins eventually agreed to keep the production in America . Location scouts looked at North Carolina as a possibility , but found that sites that seemed appropriate for the film 's requirements would have required extensive building , repairs , or modification , which would have inflated costs .

Attention was next turned towards California ; scouts discovered Sonoma County and the cities of Santa Rosa , Healdsburg , and the nearby Tomales Bay . The house of Barrymore 's character is situated southeast of Santa Rosa on Sonoma Mountain Road , directly facing the house used in the horror film Cujo (1983) . The home of Sidney Prescott is located near Calistoga , north of Santa Rosa . Tatum 's home is situated on McDonald Avenue in Santa Rosa , next to the houses used in Pollyanna (1960) and Shadow of a Doubt (1943) . The home of Lillard 's character , which is the location for the entire third act , is a house on Tomales Road east of Tomales Bay that had only recently become available after the death of its owners . The Woodsboro town square , including the fountain where many of the cast sit in an early scene , is represented by the Healdsburg town square . For the Woodsboro high school , Craven desired a building that looked " American " , and the producers approached Santa Rosa High School . The school board insisted on seeing the script and immediately objected to the violence against teenage children and the cynical , dark dialogue ,

including that of the fictional school principal . Local newspapers criticized the project , and irate parents objected to such a film taking place at their children 's school . Comparisons were made between film violence and the kidnap and murder of Polly Klaas three years prior , which had left the area sensitized toward violence . The producers received support from the school 's students and some local residents , who recognized that economic benefits would be generated by the film 's presence . Others argued for the film 's First Amendment rights . The dispute resulted in a three @-@ hour debate scheduled for April 16 , one day after filming was to begin . Unwilling to be delayed , Craven began filming as scheduled on the 15th . He started with the opening scene of the film , which features Barrymore ; the scene took five days to complete . The result of the Santa Rosa debate was that permission would be denied . The production was forced to find another location for the school , and ended up filming at the Sonoma Community Center , southeast of Santa Rosa .

The progress of filming was criticized early on . Bob Weinstein disliked the Ghostface mask , believing it was not " scary " . Upon reviewing the dailies footage of the opening scene , the studio was concerned that the film was progressing in an unwanted direction . They considered replacing Craven . To assuage their concerns , Craven and editor Patrick Lussier , developed a rough , workprint version of the opening 13 minutes of the film to demonstrate how the completed film might turn out . After viewing the new footage , the studio was content to let Craven continue as director . Weinstein , having seen the mask in action , was satisfied that it could be scary . The third and final act of the film , over forty minutes long , is set at a house party where Ghostface strikes . It was shot at a vacant property in Tomales over 21 nights . The scene , labelled " Scene 118 " , was considered the most difficult to shoot as it took place entirely in one location yet featured the individual stories and deaths of multiple characters . Actors spent weeks undertaking intense emotional and physical scenes while coated in fake blood and wounds . As the scene was set during the evening , production had no choice but to halt at dawn .

Director of photography Mark Irwin was fired during filming of *Scream* 's finale , a week before principal photography was to be completed . Upon review of the dailies , Craven found the footage was out of focus and unusable . Irwin was initially ordered to fire his camera crew . He retorted that if his crew were to be fired , they would also have to fire him . The producers fired him and replaced him with Peter Deming , who finished the film .

= = = Special effects and design = = =

To produce the many grisly effects for the film , the producers recruited KNB Effects team Howard Berger , Robert Kurtzman , and Gregory Nicotero . One of their first tasks was the production of a mask for the film 's killer . In his script , Williamson had only described the antagonist as a " masked killer " , which gave Craven no specific information on what type of mask to use or how to conceal the body . While location scouting , Maddalena discovered the Ghostface mask hanging from a post inside the house previously used for the film *Shadow of a Doubt* . Craven wanted to use it , but the mask design was owned by Fun World , a costume company . He was told to create one that the production could own . KNB developed multiple design sketches varying from deformed faces to monstrous visages riddled with fangs . Craven found nothing like the Ghostface design , so he had KNB develop a mask that was based on it , with enough differences to avoid any claim of copyright . The team developed several molds based on the Ghostface design , but Craven found none were as suitable as the mask he wanted to use . Desperate to use the design , Craven finally convinced the studio to approach Fun World and gained permission to use the mask . While negotiations were in progress , he had KNB make a mask that was very similar to the original mask , but was appropriate for use in filming . The mask they produced , made of a thin foam , was used in two scenes of the film : the opening scene with Barrymore 's character and the murder of Principal Himbry . Craven disliked the mask due to its slight differences from the original , and thus used the Fun World design for the rest of filming .

KNB Effects created over 50 gallons of fake blood , normally composed of corn syrup and food dye , to create the special effect of severe wounds . For the penetrating effect of knives , the production used collapsible blades to prevent injury . An umbrella with a retractable tip is used as a stabbing

weapon in the finale . Ulrich wore a protective vest beneath his shirt to help prevent harm while a stuntwoman attacked him with it . The second thrust missed the vest and stabbed Ulrich on his chest , impacting a wound from an open heart surgery operation . Ulrich 's genuine pain was captured on film and used in the release version of *Scream* .

Two of the most complex special effects in the film were the corpses of Barrymore 's and Walls ' characters , Casey Becker and Steve Orth . Their deaths involved the character being gutted from ribcage to pelvis , essentially hollowing out the torso of internal organs , with the guts " rolling " from the wound . To allow Walls to continue to move and feign death while displaying the wound , KNB designed a chair with no back . The actor would kneel behind it while his upper body , head , and arms were positioned within the chair 's seating area . An anatomical model representing the character 's torso and legs was positioned in the chair and disguised so that the actor 's upper body and the model appeared to be one piece . The fake abdomen was filled with rubber , latex , and gelatin pieces smeared in fake blood ? the " internal organs " ? which could then fall free . The other effect involved Barrymore 's character being gutted and hung by the neck from a tree . The team utilized a similar approach , but replicated Barrymore 's entire body , as it would be impossible to conceal her real body and display the special effect of her character having been gutted .

= = = Post production = = =

After filming was completed in June 1996 , Craven spent two months editing the final product . He encountered repeated conflicts with the Motion Picture Association of America film rating system (MPAA) concerning the content of scenes . He was forced to tone down or obscure the more intense scenes and overall violence to avoid an NC @-@ 17 rating , which is considered " box office suicide " ? cinemas and retail chains often refused to stock NC @-@ 17 titles . Though Dimension had previously released NC @-@ 17 @-@ rated films , the rating made those films difficult to market and attract an audience . Dimension was desperate for a less @-@ restrictive R rating , but the producers felt the demanded cuts would remove key elements from the film and reduce its quality . The opening scene featuring Barrymore was one of the most difficult parts to process through the MPAA , who required cuts based on its " intensity " . Craven lied to the MPAA , claiming he had only one take of the scene and could not replace it with something less intense ; the MPAA allowed the scene .

Craven sent eight different cuts of the film to deal with complaints . Problematic scenes included the gutting death of Steve Orth (Walls) , where he was required to remove any movement of the character 's internal organs ; the throat @-@ cutting of Kenny , where he had to trim the end of the scene , as the MPAA felt the actor 's pained expression was too " disturbing " ; and they had to shorten the length of time spent viewing the crushed head of Tatum Riley . The MPAA still held issue with a scene from the finale , where the killers (Ulrich and Lillard) stab each other , creating large amounts of visible blood . The MPAA required that the blood could not be seen in motion ? falling to the floor from the body . It seemed unlikely that the film would be able to achieve an R rating without further significant cuts . With the film 's release date drawing closer , Bob Weinstein intervened and personally contacted the MPAA . He believed they misunderstood the film and to which genre *Scream* really belonged , and were focusing too much on the horror elements . Weinstein explained that although he agreed with their assessment that the film was " intense " , the film also had comedic elements and satire ; it was not just a horror film glorifying violence . The MPAA reviewed their decision ; shortly thereafter the film was granted an R rating .

= = = Music = = =

The *Scream* score was provided by fledgling composer Marco Beltrami , his first time scoring a feature film . Craven 's assistant Julie Plec had requested input on composers who were " new " , " fresh " , and " wonderful " , and was given Beltrami 's name by several people . Beltrami was contacted for samples of his work . Craven , impressed by what he heard , requested Beltrami come to the set to view the opening thirteen minutes of the film containing the introduction and the death

of Barrymore 's character . Beltrami was tasked with scoring a piece of music for this scene , which would be reviewed by the producers and the Weinstein brothers . Beltrami was hired to score the entire film on the basis of this sample . Beltrami had no prior experience scoring a work of horror . Craven and editor Patrick Lussier advised him on how to deliver music that would raise the tension and how to use stings to punctuate the more intense moments . Craven wanted the music to intentionally raise tension during scenes where audience expectations were already raised by their experience of previous horror films . The volume would be raised to indicate that the killer is hiding behind a door , but nothing would be present upon its opening .

Beltrami decided to intentionally disregard conventional horror score styles . He approached the film as a western , taking influence from Ennio Morricone , a prolific composer for many westerns . When scoring a theme for the character of Dewey (Arquette) , Beltrami approached him as a " quirky " wild west sheriff , using a Morricone @-@ style guitar accompaniment . Sidney Prescott 's theme , titled " Sidney 's Lament " , features a female choral arrangement expressing " sorrow " concerning the character 's situation . Beltrami states that the voice " spoke " for the character , " lamenting " the loss of her mother . Christian Clemmensen of Filmtracks called the " haunting " vocals of the track the " voice of the franchise " . The song was used throughout the film 's sequels .

= = Release = =

Scream held its premiere on December 18 , 1996 at the AMC Avco theater in Westwood , Los Angeles , California . Bob Weinstein ordered that the film be released on December 20 , 1996 , a date others were critical of as it was the Christmas period where seasonal and family films were more prevalent . Weinstein argued this fact was in the film 's favor as it meant that horror fans and teenagers had nothing interesting to watch during the December period . When Scream 's first weekend takings amounted to only \$ 6 million , it was considered that this release date gamble had failed , but the following week , takings did not drop but increased and continued to increase in the following weeks leading to a total U.S. gross of over \$ 100 million and high critical praise .

= = = Box office = = =

The film opened in 1 @, @ 413 theaters , taking \$ 6 @, @ 354 @, @ 586 in its opening weekend , opening in second against Beavis and Butt @-@ head Do America , and almost \$ 87 million in its initial release . It was re @-@ released to theatres on April 11 , 1997 , and accrued a further \$ 16 @. @ 2 million , for a total domestic gross of \$ 103 @, @ 046 @, @ 663 , and a worldwide lifetime gross of \$ 173 @, @ 046 @, @ 663 . Scream remains the most successful of the Scream film series , receiving a largely positive critical reception . Scream 2 generated a worldwide gross of \$ 172 @, @ 363 @, @ 301 , less than \$ 1 million below that of the first film and \$ 11 million more than Scream 3 . As of 2013 , Scream is currently the 577th highest grossing movie worldwide . In the United States , without adjusting for inflation , the film is the twentieth highest @-@ grossing horror film , and remains the highest @-@ grossing slasher genre film , directly followed by Scream 2 and Scream 3 .

Despite competition from other box office fare such as Tom Cruise 's Jerry Maguire and Tim Burton 's Mars Attacks ! , its release during the Christmas season , and Variety labeling it " D.O.A. " before it was even released , Scream became the fifteenth highest @-@ grossing film of 1996 , well placed amongst big @-@ budget blockbusters released that year such as Independence Day and Mission : Impossible . It was shown in cinemas for nearly eight months after its release .

= = = Critical reception = = =

The film holds a 79 % approval rating on the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes based on 66 reviews . On review @-@ aggregate site Metacritic , the film holds a score of 65 out of 100 based on 25 reviews , indicating " generally favorable " reviews . Peter Stack of the San Francisco Chronicle appreciated the shift from the teen slasher films of the 1980s and their " endless series of

laborious , half @-@ baked sequels . " Kevin Thomas of The Los Angeles Times called *Scream* " a bravura , provocative sendup of horror pictures " and complimented the film for being " scary and gruesome " while avoiding a sense of " morbidity " . Empire 's Adam Smith called it " Clever , quick and bloody funny . " Williamson 's script was praised as containing a " fiendishly clever , complicated plot " which " deftly mixes irony , self @-@ reference and wry social commentary with chills and blood spills . " Time Out London lauded the film 's intelligence and scares , while praising the casting , saying " at last , a horror movie to shout about ! " Film4 cited Craven 's own *New Nightmare* (1994) and its cast of self @-@ aware characters as inspiration for *Scream* , but declared that while *New Nightmare* was a " noble failure ? pretty smart , but crucially not very scary " that *Scream* was " not merely clever ... it is , from its breathtaking opening sequence (with Barrymore as the woman in peril) onwards , simply terrifying . "

Roger Ebert of the Chicago Sun @-@ Times gave the film a positive review of 3 out of 4 stars , appreciating " the in @-@ jokes and the self @-@ aware characters " , but was confused over whether the level of violence was " defused by the ironic way the film uses it and comments on it . " The New York Times ' Janet Maslin was not as appreciative , saying " not much of ' *Scream* ' is that gruesome " . She wrote that Craven " wants things both ways , capitalizing on lurid material while undermining it with mocking humor . Not even horror fans who can answer all this film 's knowing trivia questions may be fully comfortable with such an exploitative mix . " Despite being critical of the film itself , calling it " one experiment that needed more lab time " , Variety complimented the " strong " ensemble cast , singling out the performances of Campbell and Ulrich as " charismatic " . The BBC claimed that the film had promise , saying " It appeared to be clever , dangerous , witty , and fresh " but went on to label it as derivative of the films it satirized : " *Scream* runs out of humour , and in turn robs itself of the chance to get the audience to take the thrills and gut @-@ spills it offers seriously . "

== Awards ==

Scream received several awards and award nominations following its release , including the Saturn Award for Best Actress for Campbell , Best Writing for Kevin Williamson , and Best Horror Film ; it received Saturn nominations for Best Director for Wes Craven and Best Supporting Actor for Ulrich and Barrymore . Craven was awarded the Grand Prize at the Gérardmer Film Festival . The film was awarded the 1997 Best Movie by the MTV Movie Awards , while Campbell received a nomination for Best Female Performance .

== Home media ==

Scream was released in the United States on AC3 Laserdisc (uncut) on July 2 , 1997 , VHS on December 2 , 1997 , and on DVD on December 3 , 1997 . A DTS Laserdisc (uncut) was released on August 26 , 1998 followed by a Collector 's Edition DVD of the film on December 8 , 1998 , containing the film , the theatrical trailer , cast interviews , a director 's commentary , and behind the scenes information . These releases were all undertaken by Buena Vista Home Entertainment . Following the release of *Scream 3* , *Scream* and its first two sequels were collected in " The Ultimate *Scream* Collection " by Dimension Films on September 26 , 2000 , a boxset containing the three films and a bonus disc containing " Behind the *Scream* " , a 30 minute documentary about the production of the three films , and additional material , including screentests and outtakes .

Scream was also released on Laserdisc in France , Hong Kong , Japan , and the United Kingdom in 1997 ; Germany and a Japanese Special Edition in 1998 .

Scream remained unreleased on DVD in some foreign territories , including Europe , until 2001 . The Japanese DVD released in 1998 contained both the R @-@ rated version of the film , plus the original " Director 's Cut " , which restored the gore / violence removed by the MPAA . *Scream* was released in Europe with *Scream 2* and *Scream 3* on February 26 by Buena Vista Home Entertainment . Each package contained additional content found in the Collector 's Edition version of the US release , including deleted scenes , outtakes , theatrical trailers , music videos , and crew

commentary . The three films were also sold as a collection called the " Scream Trilogy " , released on February 26 , 2001 .

On March 29 , 2011 , two weeks prior to the release of Scream 4 , Scream was released in US territories on Blu @-@ ray by Lionsgate Home Entertainment . The Blu @-@ rays present the films in 1080p high definition . The releases contain all the additional materials found on the Collector 's Edition DVD , including outtakes and deleted scenes .

= = Albums = =

= = = Soundtrack = = =

The Scream original soundtrack was released on December 17 , 1996 , by TVT Records . The soundtrack features 11 songs ? most of which appeared in various scenes in the film ? plus a piece from the film 's score , " Trouble In Woodsboro " / " Sidney 's Lament " , by Beltrami . The Alice Cooper version of " School 's Out " appeared in the film following the closure of Woodsboro high school , but it was replaced with a cover version of the song by The Last Hard Men on the album . An acoustic cover of Blue Öyster Cult 's " Don 't Fear the Reaper " , performed by Gus Black , plays softly in the background while Sidney and Billy discuss their relationship . Analyst Jeff Smith describes the musical choice as :

An ironic comment on the brutality we have just seen in the opening sequence . More importantly , however , the allusion to the Blue Öyster Cult classic recasts the song 's title by literalizing its meaning . While the title itself invokes the Reaper as a popular symbol for death , the film presents us with an actual person , who not only dresses as the Grim Reaper but also unleashes homicidal vengeance on the other characters of the film . The irony here , of course , is that Billy himself proves to be one of the film 's dual slashers and is , in fact , the " Reaper " to be feared .

The song " Red Right Hand " by Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds , heard in the first film , is also used in Scream 2 and Scream 3 . Nick Cave performs a version of the track written specifically for Scream 3 in that film . An alternate version of the music video " Drop Dead Gorgeous " by Republica , featuring clips from the film , was shown on music networks such as MTV . Although the song can be heard in the film , it is not included on the soundtrack album . The song was also used in one of the film 's television commercials . The soundtrack album was not considered a success , failing to chart on the Billboard 200 . AllMusic awarded the album 3 stars out of 5 .

= = = Score = = =

The Scream score by Marco Beltrami was released by Varèse Sarabande on July 14 , 1998 , on a CD titled " Scream / Scream 2 " , which also contained tracks from the score of Scream 2 . The release consisted of only six tracks ? " Sidney 's Lament " , " Altered Ego " , " A Cruel World " , " Trouble in Woodsboro " , " Chasing Sidney " , and " NC @-@ 17 " ? with a runtime of only 12 minutes , compared to over an hour of music made for the film and the more common 30 ? 45 minutes of music found in other original scores . Some reviewers felt the restricted runtime was a result of the high cost of releasing a composer 's music commercially , combined with Varèse Sarabande 's unwillingness to pay .

The score to Scream received generally positive reviews , with Mikael Carlsson labeling it as " some of the most intriguing horror scores composed in years " . Filmtracks.com claimed the scores had " cult status " , awarding it 3 stars out of 5 . AllMusic said that the score " perfectly captured the post @-@ modern , hip scare @-@ ride of the Scream movies " , also giving it 3 stars out of 5 .

= = Sequels = =

Williamson had attached five @-@ page proposals for potential sequels to Scream when he originally sold the script , hoping to entice prospective buyers into buying a film and a franchise .

When Dimension Films bought the script , they secured Williamson for two future *Scream* films , should the original prove successful . After a highly positive test screening of *Scream* at which executives from Dimension Films and Miramax were present , Craven was signed to direct the two future sequels . After the film 's box office and critical success , the first sequel was greenlit and sent into production while *Scream* was still in theaters . The second picture was given an increased budget . The surviving cast ? Campbell , Cox , Arquette , Kennedy , and Schreiber ? all returned , as well as much of the original crew , including editor Patrick Lussier and composer Marco Beltrami . A third film followed shortly after , again with the crew and surviving cast returning to create what was , at the time , the concluding film in the *Scream* trilogy . The three original films , released in a five @-@ year period , followed the story of Sidney Prescott 's encounters with a succession of killers adopting the Ghostface disguise . The films also analyze her relationship with her deceased mother , who inadvertently initiates the events depicted in the films . *Scream 2* fared as well financially and critically as its predecessor , while *Scream 3* fared significantly worse on both counts , with critics deriding the film as having become what the original had so deftly satirized .

Fifteen years after the release of *Scream* and eleven years after the release of the last film in the series , The Weinstein Company released a new sequel , *Scream 4* , on April 15 , 2011 . Campbell , Cox and Arquette all return to their roles , and Craven , Williamson , and Beltrami return to the production side . The Weinstein Company stated that the success of *Scream 4* could lead to potential sequels and a new *Scream* trilogy , with Campbell , Arquette , Craven , and Williamson all having been contracted or expressed interest in appearing in future installments .

= = Controversies = =

In the years following the release of *Scream* , the film has been accused of inspiring copycat crimes and inducing violent acts .

In January 1998 , 16 @-@ year @-@ old Mario Padilla and his 14 @-@ year @-@ old cousin , Samuel Ramirez stabbed Mario 's mother , Gina Castillo , 45 times , killing her . The case became known as the " *Scream* murder " and fell under intense media scrutiny after the boys claimed they were inspired by *Scream* and *Scream 2* . The pair confessed to needing the money acquired from Gina 's murder to fund a killing spree , purchase two Ghostface costumes , and a voice @-@ changer used by the character in the film . During their trial , psychologist Madeline Levine who studied the effect of violence on children , stated , " There were a whole bunch of reasons why they acted out that way . But did the movie provide a blueprint ? Absolutely . " The case was expected to highlight the effect of violent films on teenagers . However , presiding judge John Cheroske ordered that evidence pertaining to *Scream* be barred and that the case not be referred to as the " *Scream* murder " , refusing media access to the courtroom , intending that the case was tried as murder and nothing else .

On January 17 , 1999 , 13 @-@ year @-@ old Ashley Murray was stabbed multiple times in the head and back before being left for dead by his then @-@ friends Daniel Gill , 14 , and Robert Fuller , 15 . He was later found and saved by an elderly man walking his dog . The pair were dubbed the " *Scream* attackers " after it emerged that they had watched *Scream* shortly before the attack and drawings of the Ghostface mask were found among their possessions . Their actions were additionally blamed on physical abuse , drugs and exposure to black magic in their home life . Murray , who later testified against the pair , stated that he believed the film may have influenced the pair to attack him .

On May 4 , 1999 , following the Columbine High School massacre and increasing news media reports on the effects on violent films , games , and other media on society , the United States Senate Commerce committee held a hearing about Hollywood 's marketing of films to youths . The committee focused specifically on horror films . The opening scene of *Scream* featuring the murder of Barrymore 's character was shown to the committee as an example of negative media which may be viewed by children .

= = Legacy = =

Prior to *Scream*'s release the popularity of the horror genre had been considered to be in decline with many films released straight to video while those released in cinemas were sequels to popular and established franchises, such as *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, capable of drawing audiences despite decreasing budgets and diminishing critical reception. The glut of sequels contributed to audience familiarity with the icons of the late 1970s and early 1980s such as Freddy Krueger and Jason Voorhees that they were considered to have lost their ability to instill scares or interest in their audience. *Scream*, utilizing a popular and attractive cast and an innovative script that mocked and embraced the conventions of horror which had become considered clichéd, was credited with changing the status of the genre, becoming both a financial and critical success, and launching the careers of many of its actors. Such was the film's impact that some commentators considered its legacy as the creation of a distinct era of "post-*Scream*" horror films. Following its release many studios, including *Scream*'s own Dimension Films, rushed to capitalize on its unexpected success with the release of films such as *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (1997) and *Urban Legend* (1998) as well as sequels to popular, but diminishing, franchises such as *Halloween H20* and *Bride of Chucky*.

In June 2001, as part of the American Film Institute's (AFI) AFI 100 Years ... series, *Scream* became one of the 400 nominees in the 100 Years ... 100 Thrills category. In 2003, the character Ghostface was nominated in the category 100 Heroes and Villains. In 2005, "Do you like scary movies", as spoken by Roger Jackson, was nominated for AFI's 100 Years? 100 Movie Quotes, a list of the greatest cinematic quotes.

Scream ranks #32 on Entertainment Weekly's list of the "50 Best High School Movies", and the opening scene featuring the death of Barrymore's character ranked #13 on Bravo's 100 Scariest Movie Moments. In 2008, Entertainment Weekly dubbed the film a "New Classic" by ranking it #60 in their list of the "100 Best Films of the Last 13 years". In 2008 Empire ranked the film #482 on their list of "The 500 Greatest Movies of All Time".