

= Escape from New York =

Escape from New York is a 1981 British-American dystopian action film co-written, co-scored, and directed by John Carpenter. The film is set in the then near future 1997 in a crime-ridden United States that has converted Manhattan Island in New York City into a maximum security prison. Ex-soldier Snake Plissken (Kurt Russell) is given 24 hours to find the President of the United States (Donald Pleasence), who has been captured by prisoners after the crash of Air Force One.

Carpenter wrote the film in the mid-1970s as a reaction to the Watergate scandal. After the success of Halloween, he had enough influence to begin production and filmed it mainly in St. Louis, Missouri on an estimated budget of \$6 million. Debra Hill and Larry J. Franco served as the producers. The film was co-written by Nick Castle, who collaborated with Carpenter previously by portraying Michael Myers in Halloween.

Escape from New York was released in the United States on July 10, 1981. The film received positive reviews from critics and was a commercial success, grossing \$25 million at the box office. It was nominated for four Saturn Awards, including Best Science Fiction Film and Best Direction. The film gained a cult following and was followed by a sequel, Escape from L.A.

= = Plot = =

In 1988, following a 400% increase in crime, the United States Government has turned Manhattan into a giant maximum security prison. A 50-foot (15 m) containment wall surrounds the island and routes out of Manhattan have been dismantled or mined, while armed helicopters patrol the rivers. In 1997, while travelling to a peace summit between the United States, China and the Soviet Union, Air Force One is hijacked by a terrorist. The President is given a security bracelet, and has a briefcase (containing an audiotape describing a powerful new bomb) handcuffed to his wrist. He makes it to an escape pod, and lands in Manhattan just before Air Force One crashes, killing everyone else aboard.

Police officers are dispatched to rescue the President. However, Romero, the right-hand man of the Duke of New York, the top crime boss in the prison, warns them that the Duke has taken the President hostage, and that he will be killed if the police mount any further rescue attempts. Police Commissioner Bob Hauk offers a deal to "Snake" Plissken, a former Special Forces soldier convicted of attempting to rob the Federal Reserve in Denver, Colorado: if Snake rescues the President and retrieves the cassette tape, Hauk will arrange a presidential pardon. To ensure his compliance, Hauk has him injected with explosives that will rupture Snake's carotid arteries within 22 hours; if Snake returns with the President and the tape in time, Hauk will neutralize the explosives.

Snake is sent into Manhattan in a stealth glider, landing atop the World Trade Center. He tracks the President's life monitor bracelet to a vaudeville theatre, only to find it on the wrist of an old man. He meets "Cabbie," who takes Snake in his armored taxi cab to Harold "Brain" Hellman, an advisor to the Duke based in the New York Public Library. Brain tells Snake that the Duke plans to unify the gangs in a mass exodus across the heavily guarded Queensboro Bridge, using the President as a human shield and a map Brain has created to avoid the mines. Snake forces Brain and his girlfriend Maggie to lead him to the Duke's compound at Grand Central Station. He finds the President and tries to free him, but is captured by the Duke's men.

While Snake is forced to fight to the death with Slag, a prisoner, Brain and Maggie trick Romero into letting them see the President, killing him and fleeing with the President. As Snake kills Slag, the Duke learns of Brain's treachery and rallies his gang to chase them down. Snake, Brain, Maggie, and the President attempt to use Snake's glider to escape from New York. After a group of crazies destroy it, the group returns to the street and encounters Cabbie, who offers to take them across the bridge. When Cabbie reveals that he has the secret tape (having traded it to Romero earlier for his hat), the President demands it, but Snake keeps it.

With the Duke chasing in another car, the cab is blown in half by a mine and Cabbie is killed. As

they flee on foot , Brain is killed when he steps on another mine . Maggie refuses to leave him , and shoots repeatedly at the Duke ; he runs her over . Snake and the President reach the wall and the guards raise the President on a rope . The Duke kills the guards and attacks Snake , but the President , now armed atop the wall , gleefully shoots the Duke dead . Snake is lifted to safety and the implanted explosives are deactivated with seconds to spare .

As the President prepares for a televised speech to the leaders at the summit meeting , he thanks Snake for saving him . Snake asks how he feels about the people who died saving his life , but the President only offers halfhearted regret . Hawk offers Snake a job , but Snake walks away . The President 's speech commences , and he offers the contents of the cassette ; to his embarrassment , the tape is Cabbie 's cassette of the swing song " Bandstand Boogie " . As Snake walks away , he tears the magnetic tape out of the real cassette .

= = Cast = =

The character " Rehme " was named after producer Robert Rehme , while " Taylor " , " Romero " and " Cronenberg " were named after the directors Don Taylor , George Romero and David Cronenberg respectively .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

Carpenter originally wrote the screenplay for Escape from New York in 1976 , in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal . Carpenter said , " The whole feeling of the nation was one of real cynicism about the President . I wrote the screenplay and no studio wanted to make it " because , according to Carpenter , " it was too violent , too scary , too weird . " He had been inspired by the film Death Wish , which was very popular at the time . He did not agree with this film 's philosophy but liked how it conveyed " the sense of New York as a kind of jungle , and I wanted to make a science fiction film along these lines " .

= = = Casting = = =

AVCO Embassy Pictures , the film 's financial backer , preferred either Charles Bronson or Tommy Lee Jones to play the role of Snake Plissken to Carpenter 's choice of Kurt Russell , who was trying to overcome the " lightweight " screen image conveyed by his roles in several Disney comedies . Carpenter refused to cast Bronson on the grounds that he was too old , and because he worried that he could lose directorial control over the picture with an experienced actor . At the time , Russell described his character as " a mercenary , and his style of fighting is a combination of Bruce Lee , The Exterminator , and Darth Vader , with Eastwood 's vocal @-@ ness . " All that matters to Snake , according to the actor , is " the next 60 seconds . Living for exactly that next minute is all there is . " Russell used a rigorous diet and exercise program in order to develop a lean and muscular build . He also endeavored to stay in character between takes and throughout the shooting , as he welcomed the opportunity to get away from the Disney comedies he had done previously . He did find it necessary to remove the eyepatch between takes , as wearing it constantly seriously affected his depth perception .

= = = Pre @-@ production = = =

Carpenter had just made Dark Star but no one wanted to hire him as a director , so he assumed that he would make it in Hollywood as a screenwriter . The filmmaker went on to do other films with the intention of making Escape later . After the success of Halloween , Avco @-@ Embassy signed him and producer Debra Hill to a two @-@ picture deal . The first film from this contract was The

Fog . Initially , the second film that he was going to make to finish the contract was The Philadelphia Experiment , but because of script @-@ writing problems , Carpenter rejected it in favor of this project . However , Carpenter felt that something was missing and recalls , " This was basically a straight action film . And at one point , I realized it really doesn 't have this kind of crazy humor that people from New York would expect to see . " He brought in Nick Castle , a friend from his film school days at University of Southern California who played " The Shape " in Halloween . Castle invented the Cabbie character and came up with the film 's ending .

The film 's setting proved to be a potential problem for Carpenter , who needed to create a decaying , semi @-@ destroyed version of New York City on only a shoe @-@ string budget . He and the film 's production designer Joe Alves rejected shooting on location in New York City because it would be too hard to make it look like a destroyed city . Carpenter suggested shooting on a movie back lot but Alves nixed that idea " because the texture of a real street is not like a back lot . " They sent Barry Bernardi , their location manager (and associate producer) , " on a sort of all @-@ expense @-@ paid trip across the country looking for the worst city in America , " producer Debra Hill remembers .

Bernardi suggested East St. Louis , Illinois , because it was filled with old buildings " that exist in New York now , and [that] have that seedy run @-@ down quality " that the team was looking for . East St. Louis , sitting across the Mississippi River from the more prosperous St. Louis , Missouri , had entire neighborhoods burned out in 1976 during a massive urban fire . Hill said in an interview , " block after block was burnt @-@ out rubble . In some places there was absolutely nothing , so that you could see three and four blocks away . " As well , Alves found an old bridge to double for the " 69th St. Bridge " . The filmmaker purchased the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge for one dollar from the government and then gave it back to them , for the same amount , once production was completed , " so that they wouldn 't have any liability , " Hill remembers . Locations across the river in St. Louis , Missouri were used , including Union Station and the Fox Theatre , both of which have since been renovated , as well as the building which would eventually become the Schlafly Tap Room microbrewery .

= = = Filming = = =

Carpenter and his crew persuaded the city to shut off the electricity to ten blocks at a time at night . The film was shot from August to November 1980 . It was a tough and demanding shoot for the filmmaker as he recalls . " We 'd finish shooting at about 6 am and I 'd just be going to sleep at 7 when the sun would be coming up . I 'd wake up around 5 or 6 pm , depending on whether or not we had dailies , and by the time I got going , the sun would be setting . So for about two and a half months I never saw daylight , which was really strange . "

The gladiatorial fight to the death scene between Snake and Slag (played by professional wrestler Ox Baker) was filmed in the Grand Hall at St. Louis Union Station . Russell has stated , " That day was a nightmare . All I did was swing a [spiked] bat at that guy and get swung at in return . He threw a trash can in my face about five times ... I could have wound up in pretty bad shape . " In addition to shooting on location in St. Louis , Carpenter shot parts of the film in Los Angeles . Various interior scenes were shot on a sound stage ; the final scenes were shot at the Sepulveda Dam , in Sherman Oaks . New York served as a location , as did Atlanta , in order to utilize their then futuristic @-@ looking rapid @-@ transit system .

When it came to shooting in New York City , Carpenter managed to persuade federal officials to grant access to Liberty Island . " We were the first film company in history allowed to shoot on Liberty Island at the Statue of Liberty at night . They let us have the whole island to ourselves . We were lucky . It wasn 't easy to get that initial permission . They 'd had a bombing three months earlier and were worried about trouble . "

Carpenter was interested in creating two distinct looks for the movie . " One is the police state , high tech , lots of neon , a United States dominated by underground computers . That was easy to shoot compared to the Manhattan Island prison sequences which had few lights , mainly torch lights , like feudal England . "

Certain matte paintings were rendered by James Cameron , who was at the time a special effects

artist with Roger Corman 's New World Pictures . Cameron was also one of the directors of photography on the film .

As Snake pilots the glider into the city , there are three screens on his control panel displaying wireframe animations of the landing target on the World Trade Center and surrounding buildings . What appears on those screens was not computer @-@ generated . Carpenter wanted high @-@ tech computer graphics which were very expensive at the time , even for such a simple animation . To get the animation he wanted , the effects crew filmed the miniature model set of New York City they used for other scenes under black light with reflective tape placed along every edge of the model buildings . Only the tape is visible and appears to be a 3D wireframe animation .

= = Reception = =

Escape from New York grossed \$ 25 @. @ 2 million in American theaters in summer 1981 . The film received generally positive reviews . As of March 2016 , it has a rating of 85 % on Rotten Tomatoes , with the critical consensus " Featuring an atmospherically grimy futuristic metropolis , Escape from New York is a strange , entertaining jumble of thrilling action and oddball weirdness . " Newsweek magazine commented on Carpenter , saying , " [He has a] deeply ingrained B @-@ movie sensibility - which is both his strength and limitation . He does clean work , but settles for too little . He uses Russell well , however . " In Time magazine , Richard Corliss wrote , " John Carpenter is offering this summer 's moviegoers a rare opportunity : to escape from the air @-@ conditioned torpor of ordinary entertainment into the hothouse humidity of their own paranoia . It 's a trip worth taking . " Vincent Canby , in his review for the New York Times , wrote , " [The film] is not to be analyzed too solemnly , though . It 's a toughly told , very tall tale , one of the best escape (and escapist) movies of the season . " However , in his review for the Chicago Reader , Dave Kehr , wrote " it fails to satisfy ? it gives us too little of too much . "

Cyberpunk pioneer William Gibson credits the film as an influence on his novel Neuromancer . " I was intrigued by the exchange in one of the opening scenes where the Warden says to Snake ' You flew the Gullfire over Leningrad , didn 't you ? ' It turns out to be just a throwaway line , but for a moment it worked like the best SF where a casual reference can imply a lot . " Popular videogame director Hideo Kojima has referred to the movie frequently as an influence on his work , in particular the Metal Gear series . Solid Snake is partially influenced by Snake Plissken . In Metal Gear Solid 2 : Sons of Liberty Snake actually uses the alias " Pliskin " to hide his real identity during most of the game . J. J. Abrams , producer of the 2008 film Cloverfield , mentioned that a scene in his film , which shows the head of the Statue of Liberty crashing into a New York street , was inspired by the poster for Escape from New York . Empire magazine ranked Snake Plissken # 71 in their " The 100 Greatest Movie Characters " poll .

American Film Institute lists

AFI 's 100 Years ... 100 Thrills ? Nominated

AFI 's 100 Years ... 100 Heroes and Villains :

S Snake Plissken ? Nominated Hero

AFI 's 10 Top 10 ? Nominated Science Fiction Film

= = Soundtrack = =

= = Home media = =

= = = DVD releases = = =

Escape from New York was released on DVD twice by MGM (USA) , and once by Momentum Pictures (UK) . One MGM release is a barebones edition containing just the theatrical trailer . Another version is the Collector 's Edition , a two @-@ disc set featuring a High Definition

remastered transfer with a 5 @. @ 1 Stereo audio track , two commentaries (one by John Carpenter and Kurt Russell , another by producer Debra Hill and Joe Alves) , a making @- @ of featurette , the first issue of a comic book series titled John Carpenter 's Snake Plissken Chronicles , and the ten @- @ minute Colorado bank robbery deleted opening sequence .

MGM 's special edition of the 1981 film was not released until 2003 because the original negative had disappeared . The workprint containing deleted scenes finally turned up in the Hutchinson , Kansas salt mine film depository . The excised scenes feature Snake Plissken robbing a bank , introducing the character of Plissken and establishing a backstory . Director John Carpenter decided to add the original scenes into the special edition release as an extra only : " After we screened the rough cut , we realized that the movie didn 't really start until Snake got to New York . It wasn 't necessary to show what sent him there . " The film has been released on the UMD format for Sony 's PlayStation Portable .

= = = Blu @- @ ray release = = =

On August 3 , 2010 , MGM Home Entertainment released Escape From New York as a bare @- @ bones Blu @- @ ray . Screem Factory , in association with Shout ! Factory , released the film on a special edition Blu @- @ ray on April 21 , 2015 .

= = = Novelization = = =

In 1981 , Bantam Books published a movie tie @- @ in novelization written by Mike McQuay that adopts a lean , humorous style reminiscent of the film . The novel is significant because it includes scenes that were cut out of the film , such as the Federal Reserve Depository robbery that results in Snake 's incarceration . The novel provides motivation and backstory to Snake and Hawk ? both disillusioned war veterans ? deepening their relationship that was only hinted at it in the film . The novel explains how Snake lost his eye during the Battle for Leningrad in World War III , how Hawk became warden of New York , and Hawk 's quest to find his crazy son who lives somewhere in the prison . The novel fleshes out the world that these characters exist in , at times presenting a future even bleaker than the one depicted in the film . The book explains that the West Coast is a no @- @ man 's land , and the country 's population is gradually being driven crazy by nerve gas as a result of World War III .

= = = Comic Books = = =

Marvel Comics released the one @- @ shot The Adventures of Snake Plissken in January 1997 . The story takes place sometime between Escape from New York and before his famous Cleveland escape mentioned in Escape from L.A. Snake has robbed Atlanta 's Center for Disease Control of some engineered metaviruses and is looking for buyers in Chicago . Finding himself in a deal that 's really a set @- @ up , he makes his getaway and exacts revenge on the buyer for ratting him out to the United States Police Force . In the meantime , a government lab has built a robot called A.T.A.C.S. (Autonomous Tracking And Combat System) that can catch criminals by imprinting their personalities upon its program in order to predict and anticipate a specific criminal 's every move . The robot 's first test subject is America 's public enemy number one , Snake Plissken . After a brief battle , the tide turns when A.T.A.C.S. copies Snake to the point of fully becoming his personality . Now recognizing the government as the enemy , A.T.A.C.S. sides with Snake . Unamused , Snake sucker punches the machine and destroys it . As A.T.A.C.S. shuts down , it can only ask him , " Why ? " Snake just walks off answering , " I don 't need the competition " .

In 2003 , CrossGen published John Carpenter 's Snake Plissken Chronicles , a four @- @ part comic book miniseries . The story takes place a day or so after the events of Escape from New York . Snake has been given a military Humvee after his presidential pardon and makes his way to Atlantic City . Although the director 's cut of Escape from New York shows Snake was caught after a bank job , this story has Snake finishing up a second heist that was pre @- @ planned before his

capture . The job entails stealing the car in which John F. Kennedy was assassinated from a casino before delivering it to a buyer in the Gulf of Mexico . Snake partners with a man named Marrs who ends up double crossing him . Left for dead in a sinking crab cage , Snake escapes and is saved by a passing fisherman named Captain Ron (an in @-@ joke referring to Kurt Russell 's 1992 comedy , Captain Ron) . When Ron denies Snake 's request to use his boat in order to beat Marrs to the robbery , Snake decides to kill him . When Snake ends up saving Ron from the Russian mob who wants money , Ron changes his mind and helps Snake . Once at the casino , Snake comes face @-@ to @-@ face with Marrs and his men , who arrive at the same time , ending in a high @-@ speed shootout . Snake gets away with the car and its actress portraying Jackie Kennedy , leaving Marrs to be caught by the casino owner , who cuts him a deal to bring his car back and live . After some trouble , Snake manages to finally get the car to the buyer 's yacht , using Ron 's boat , and is then attacked by Marrs . Following the firefight , the yacht and car are destroyed , Marrs and Captain Ron are dead , and Snake makes his escape in a helicopter with the 30 million credits owed to him for the job .

In 2014 , BOOM ! Studios began publishing an Escape From New York comic book by writer , Christopher Sebela . The first issue of the series was released on December 3 , 2014 and the story picks up moments after the end of the film .

BOOM ! will release a crossover comics miniseries between Snake and Jack Burton titled Big Trouble in Little China / Escape from New York in October 2016 .

= = = Game = = =

An Escape from New York board game was released in 1981 by TSR , Inc .

= = = Anime = = =

Carpenter was planning an anime spin @-@ off of Escape from New York , with Outlaw Star 's Mitsuru Hongo slated to direct . However , nothing new has emerged since that announcement .

= = Sequel = =

A sequel , Escape from L.A. , was released in 1996 , with Carpenter returning along with Russell , now also acting as producer and co @-@ writer .

= = Remake = =

In 2007 , Scottish actor Gerard Butler was close to signing a deal in which he would play Snake Plissken in a remake of Carpenter 's film . Neal Moritz was to produce and Ken Nolan was to write the screenplay which would combine an original story for Plissken with the story from the 1981 film , although Carpenter hinted that the film might be a prequel .

New Line Cinema (one @-@ time video distributor of the original) acquired the rights to the film from co @-@ rights holder StudioCanal , who will control the European rights , and Carpenter , who will serve as an executive producer and said , " Snake is one of my fondest creations . Kurt Russell did an incredible job , and it would be fun to see someone else try . " Russell has commented on the remake and on the casting of Butler as Plissken , saying , " I will say that when I was told who was going to play Snake Plissken , my initial reaction was ' Oh , man ! ' [Russell winces] . I do think that character was quintessentially one thing . And that is , American . "

Len Wiseman was attached to direct but he dropped out of the project ; rumors then circulated that Brett Ratner would helm the film . As Ratner did not formally commit to the project , the identity of the director became unclear . The studio brought Jonathan Mostow in to rewrite , with an option to direct . In addition , Gerard Butler bowed out of his role , claiming " creative differences " . Allan Loeb wrote a script for the New Line Cinema project . Breck Eisner was then announced as the director of the remake , which was said to have scrapped the idea of a post @-@ apocalyptic New

York like the original , but rather would feature a New York that had been built after the bomb .

In November 2010 , reports cited Jeremy Renner as being in talks to play Snake Plissken . In July 2011 , Deadline Hollywood reported that New Line and Warner Bros. had dropped the option to remake the film , allowing other studios to potentially option it . On March 18 , 2013 , Joel Silver and his studio company Silver Pictures teamed with StudioCanal to reboot the film as a trilogy , starting with an origin story in a fashion similar to the way Rise of the Planet of the Apes restarted that franchise . On February 10 , 2014 , Collider interviewed Silver about the film saying that the film 's script is inspired by the video game Batman : Arkham City . On January 13 , 2015 , 20th Century Fox won the bid for the film rights of the remake with Andrew Rona and Alex Heineman 's The Picture Company will produce . On October 12 , 2015 , Neil Cross was announced to write the film 's script .