

= Crimewave =

Crimewave is a 1986 American comedy film directed by Sam Raimi written by him and the Coen brothers , and starring Louise Lasser , Paul L. Smith , Brion James , Sheree J. Wilson , Edward R. Pressman , Bruce Campbell , and Reed Birney , with Campbell also serving as a producer . Following the commercial success of The Evil Dead (1981) , Raimi and Campbell decided to collaborate on another project . Joel Coen of the Coen brothers served as one of the editors on The Evil Dead , and worked with Raimi on the screenplay . Production was difficult for several members of the crew , and the production studio , Embassy Pictures , refused to allow Raimi to edit the film . Several arguments broke out during the shoot for the film , because of continued interference by the studio .

An unusual slapstick mix of film noir , black comedy and B @-@ movie conventions , the film portrays bizarre situations involving a death row inmate . The film was a box @-@ office flop , and has since fallen into obscurity outside of fans of Campbell and Raimi . Few critics reviewed the film , though the little amount of critical attention it received was mostly negative . Several elements of the film influenced later productions by Raimi , and the failure of Crimewave directly led to the inception of Evil Dead II (1987) . The film has achieved the status of a minor cult film .

= = Plot = =

Victor Ajax has been sentenced to death , sitting in an electric chair . In a flashback , we learn that Victor once was a promising young technician in the employ of Trend @-@ Odegard Security . Mr. Trend , co @-@ owner of the company , has learned of a plan by his partner to sell the company to Renaldo " The Heel " and responds by hiring two exterminators who promise to " kill all sizes " in order to eliminate Odegard and his plan . When Victor , who has been installing security cameras in Trend 's apartment building , seems about to go back to the store , Trend distracts him with a lecture about " the grand design " and sends Victor on a quest to find his dream girl .

The dream girl is found in the form of Nancy , who responds minimally to Vic but is enamored of Renaldo . Victor and several residents of the building , including Mrs. Trend , run afoul of the killers , and a seemingly random series of slapstick murders occur , for all of which Victor is ultimately blamed . Nancy inevitably becomes target and Vic saves her and kills the exterminators after a long comical fight sequence . The flashback ends and Victor is in the electric chair , and awaits his execution while an elaborate race sequence occurs in which Nancy , accompanied by several nuns , drive manically , Nancy at the wheel , to the scene in order to prove his innocence . Before the switch is pulled however , Nancy arrives just in time and clears his name . The movie concludes with their marriage .

= = Cast = =

= = Production = =

= = = Background = = =

By 1983 , long @-@ time friends Campbell and Raimi had collaborated on several projects together . The duo had just completed the production of Within the Woods and The Evil Dead , the latter of which was a box @-@ office and critical hit . Following his involvement in The Evil Dead , Campbell had difficulty establishing a career as an actor . He appeared on the soap opera Generations , and in several local Detroit commercial ads . Meanwhile , Raimi had been collaborating with the Ethan and Joel Coen on a screenplay . Joel Coen had been one of the editors on The Evil Dead , which led to him befriending Raimi . Joel Coen 's experience editing The Evil Dead inspired him to complete his own film , Blood Simple , which was released to critical acclaim . The script would later

develop into *Relentless* , a narrative about " two crazed killers . "

Raimi was not initially optimistic about the talents of the Coen brothers . He recounted that Ethan was " just a statistic accountant at Macy 's at the time . " After reading the *Blood Simple* script , however , Campbell commented that the screenplay was " great " , comparing it to the work of Alfred Hitchcock . It featured " mild @-@ mannered leading men " who " get caught up in a web of fear , murder and mayhem " , elements that often defined the films directed by Hitchcock . Distributor Irvin Shapiro , who was instrumental in the commercial success of *The Evil Dead* , did not like the title of *Relentless* . He suggested putting " X " and " Murder " in the title , believing it would be more enticing to audiences . With Shapiro 's suggestion in mind , Raimi gave the film the tentative title of *The XYZ Murders* .

= = = Filming = = =

Given the commercial success of *The Evil Dead* , studio financial backing for the new project came quickly . Though Raimi and Campbell did not profit from the film , the studio believed in Raimi , initially allowing the director complete creative control on the project ; however , executives later took control of the production . Raimi and Campbell developed the project with Embassy Pictures ' producer Norman Lear , who supposedly had a " Midas touch " , because of the consistent success he had attained from various television productions . He suggested the title *Crimewave* , which was ultimately used .

Raimi and the studio clashed several times during production . The first disagreement between the director and the executives stemmed from the latter 's insistence on casting a " Hollywood " actor in the lead role instead of Raimi 's long @-@ time collaborator and friend Campbell . In his 2002 autobiography *If Chins Could Kill : Confessions of a B Movie Actor* , Campbell commented about how difficult it was working with more established producers ; " jumping into the big time meant dealing with the excruciatingly specific and alternately vague demands of a studio , ... Hollywood executives took an interest in everything . " Campbell was surprised that he had to audition for the lead role , as he did not have to test for *The Evil Dead* . Campbell and his photographer friend Mike Ditz used a 16 mm film camera and shot a scene to show to the producers . Upon viewing it , the producers asserted that " Campbell will not star in this film " . In retaliation , Raimi lengthened a supporting role and gave it to Campbell : the character of Renaldo " The Heel " . This allowed for Campbell to be present through the production .

Raimi budgeted the film at \$ 2 @. @ 5 million , an amount the studio greenlit . But the calculations had not taken union fees and regulations into account , making the proposed budgeting and scheduling unrealistic . In addition , the crew were talked into spending three times the allotted money for one shooting location . The shoot quickly went both over budget and over schedule . At that point , the studio stepped in , with executives demanding cuts in the script , budget restrictions , layoffs , and their own supervision of the project . The studio also insisted on reviewing every batch of dailies , criticizing the decision to use cast and crew members (including Campbell) as extras in several scenes (a Raimi trademark known as " Shemping ") .

Even without Embassy 's interference , however , the production was plagued with difficulties . According to Campbell , lead actress Lasser ? under the influence of cocaine ? fired her make @-@ up artist . She insisted that she apply all her own make @-@ up , despite objections from the cast . She would often show up on set with poorly applied " clown make @-@ up " and messed up hair , oblivious to how she appeared . There were occasions when she outright refused to leave her trailer , to the annoyance of the cast and crew . Production was often affected by " weird " events ; actor Brion James trashed his hotel room in an attempt to " exorcise a ghost from his light fixtures " .

At one point , shooting was to take place at a bridge overlooking the Detroit River , which was frozen at the time . The script , however , called for clear and running water , meaning that the crew had to brave dangerously low temperatures and conditions to clear the ice ; finally they blew up the ice with dynamite . At another time , the crew spent a week filming on a Detroit street after dark , directly under a nursing home , with huge wind machines blowing for long hours . One evening a glass bottle with a note in it crashed to the ground from an upper floor . The note inside read , " The

noise is keeping me awake all night long and I am getting sick . I am dying because of you . " John Cameron , second assistant director on the film , would later remark , " I see Crimewave as a real turning point in a certain way , because if you survived that experience , nothing in the business could ever be as hard again . " Raimi cited the experience as one of the least favorite moments of his career .

= = = Post production = = =

In post @-@ production , Embassy 's self @-@ imposed role in making Crimewave was even greater . Although Raimi , Tapert , and Campbell insisted that they had made the film as partners , the studio refused ? because of the already ballooning costs ? to pay for Campbell to stay in Los Angeles during post @-@ production (although the executives later compromised) . The studio replaced Raimi 's music composer , Joseph LoDuca , with one of its own choosing . It did the same with the editor , removing Raimi 's influence over the film 's final cut .

An argument broke out near the end of the post @-@ production between Campbell and the producers . Campbell argued that he and Raimi had always closely been involved with their own film 's editing , describing the behavior of the producers as " nickel @-@ and @-@ dime @-@ bullshit " . One of the producers replied by calling Campbell an " asshole " , commenting that the crew had gone severely over budget . The difficulty during production left a negative impression on Campbell , who insisted that he wanted to never work with big @-@ budget producers again , insisting that the conduct was " soulless " and " just a business . " Raimi commented negatively about the process too , musing that " it was really wrong . It was such a horrible , horrible , horrible , depressing scene . "

= = Release and reception = =

After all the editing imposed by the studio , Crimewave still became a box @-@ office flop . Campbell reasoned that " cross @-@ genre " films " send marketing people scurrying under a desk " . According to him , the film was hard to market because it featured elements of horror films , comedies , and dramas . To make matters even more confusing , in France and Italy , the film 's title was changed to Death on the Grill and The Two Craziest Killers in the World respectively . In the United States , the film was only released in Kansas and Alaska , to make the film eligible for HBO broadcasting . Upon release , the film " went down in box @-@ office flames " , with Campbell commenting " it wasn 't released . It escaped ! " The " only good " screening came the Seattle International Film Festival , where the movie was promoted as a novelty film .

Along with Raimi and Campbell , film critics were largely dismissive of the film . A writer for Time Out gave a negative review , writing " despite its ambition and a Coen Brothers script credit , Raimi 's second film was a disappointment after his astonishing debut The Evil Dead . " The writer did however compliment some of the set pieces featured in the film , ultimately commenting that only people interested in the early work by Raimi would be interested . Film Junk writer Sean Harley commented that the main appeal of the film is that it was directed and written by notable artists , insisting " based on their impressive filmographies and the cult followings that both have amassed , a collaboration of this magnitude would be a cinematic event like no other . " However , he commented that the film was a disappointment , noting that fans of the films by Raimi could likely enjoy it . He summarized that the film was " not a particularly brilliant movie , and it 's easily one of the weakest projects that any of these great filmmakers have been involved in " , giving it a weak recommendation .

Leonard Maltin awarded the film two and a half stars out of four , describing it a " weird , almost incoherent crime story . " Celluloid Dream 's Simon Hill commented that the writing was a disappointment , musing that it did however feature " glimpses of director Raimi would become " . A scene in a dentist office reminded him of a scene from Spider @-@ Man 2 , a film also directed by Raimi . He commented that " even in his small part Campbell is the most memorable character in the film " , also praising the performance of the two exterminators . Campbell also criticized the film , describing it as a " lesson about abject failure " , writing " no matter how you slice it , the film was a

dog , and everyone involved can pretty much line up and take forty whacks . As filmmakers , we failed to execute a misguided concept and our studio refused us the benefit of any doubt . " The film has achieved the status of a minor cult film . In one of the few positive notices , MTV writer Adam Rosenberg described the film as " criminally underrated " . Rosenberg disagreed with the consensus about the film , labeling it as a " hard @-@ to @-@ find classic " . Kim Newman also called the film underrated , writing that the film " revels " in its slapstick nature , taking influence from everything from horror comics to The Three Stooges .

= = Aftermath = =

The production of the film was a " disaster " according to Campbell , who stated that usually " missteps " like *Crimewave* lead to the end of a director 's career . Other people involved with the film expressed similar disappointment with the project . Fortunately , Raimi had the studio support to make a sequel to *The Evil Dead* , which he initially decided to make out of desperation . His career quickly recovered after *Evil Dead II* was filmed and released in 1987 , and was a box office success . The Coen brothers expressed similar dissatisfaction with the film , and have since directed every one of their screenplays with the exception of the 2012 film *Gambit* .

Raimi and the Coens remained friends , and the duo cast Campbell in some of their films such as *The Hudsucker Proxy* (1994) and *Intolerable Cruelty* (2003) , the former of which was co @-@ written by Raimi . Elements of *Crimewave* were re @-@ used by frequent Raimi collaborator Josh Becker for the movie *Lunatics : A Love Story* , as well as by Raimi himself in *Spider @-@ Man* and its sequels . In 2010 , a *Funny or Die* comedy video featuring actors James Franco and Bill Hader paid tribute to Raimi , and in parody of a scene from *Spider @-@ Man 2* the actors discussed *Crimewave* among Raimi 's other films . *Collider* 's Matt Goldberg stated , " I think this sketch features the first reference to *Crimewave* ever " .

= = Home media = =

Shout ! Factory released *Crimewave* on Blu @-@ ray / DVD Combo Pack on May 14 , 2013 .