



SCALA: SEX, DRUGS AND ROCK AND ROLL CINEMA

The Evil Dead

The Evil Dead

Director: Sam M. Raimi
Production Company: Renaissance Pictures
Executive Producers: Robert Tapert, Bruce Campbell, Sam M. Raimi
Producer: Robert Tapert
Assistant Producer: George Holt
Production Assistant: Don Campbell
Story Consultant: Sheila Roberts
Screenplay: Sam M. Raimi
Director of Photography: Tim Philo
2nd Unit Photography: Joshua M. Becker
Lighting: Tim Philo
Stills Photography: Mike Ditz
Special Photographic Effects: Bart Pierce
Editor: Edna Ruth Paul
Assistant Editor: Joel Coen
Construction Supervisor: Steve 'the Dart' Frankel
Special Make-up Effects: Tom Sullivan
Post Optical: Dynamic Film Lab
Negative Matching: J.G. Films Inc
Music: Joseph LoDuca
Music Editor: Sheb Wooley
Music Engineer: Ed Wolfrum
Music Engineered at: Audio Graphics
Location Sound Recording: John Mason
Re-recording Engineer: Mel Zelniker
Supervising Sound Editor: Joseph R. Masefield
Assistant Sound Editor: Dolores Elliott
Dialogue Editor: Lou Kleinman
Transportation Captain: David H. Goodman
Special Thanks to: Simon Nuchtern, Carol Pierce
Fake Shemps: Philip A. Gillis, Dorothy Tapert, Cheryl Guttridge, Barbara Carey, David Horton, Wendell Thomas, Don Long, Stu Smith, Kurt Rauf, Ted Raimi, Ivan Raimi, Bill Vincent, Mary Beth Tapert, Scott Spiegel, John Cameron, Joanne Kruse, Gwen Cochanski, Debie Jarczewski
Cast:
Bruce Campbell (*Ash*)
Ellen Sandweiss (*Cheryl*)
Betsy Baker (*Linda*)
Hal Delrich (*Scott*)
Sarah York (*Shelly*)
Sam Raimi (*fisherman/voice of evil spirit*) *
Robert Tapert (*local yokel*) *
USA 1982
85 mins
Digital

* Uncredited

The screening on Fri 5 Jan will be introduced by Graham Humphreys, freelance illustrator and designer of the original UK marketing for *The Evil Dead*

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Sam Raimi on 'The Evil Dead'

Before I made the first *Evil Dead*, I had never read an EC comic or H.P. Lovecraft. Although there are very similar themes, especially with Lovecraft: the 'something dark' that lives in the woods, an unseen force similar to the Dunwich Horror. The comic-book style of the EC comics – that is, over-the-top, bloody and absurd – was also a feature of many modern American comics of the 70s, including the DC horror comics which I had read. But my major influences were Stephen King (I'd just read *The Shining* and *Carrie*), some of the horror stories of M.R. James, especially 'Casting the Runes', and the motion picture *Night of the Living Dead*.

In 1980, I was just trying to break into the business. I had no idea how to make a feature film, I'd made a number of films in Super-8 but never one as long as 90 minutes, and never one that people had to pay a few dollars to see. My two partners, Robert Tapert and Bruce Campbell, and myself raised the money independently in Detroit and shot the film in Detroit and Tennessee. We then took it to New York to edit which is where I met Joel Coen. He was working as an assistant editor to Edna Ruth Paul and his brother Ethan was a statistical accountant at Macy's. Joel also cut one or two scenes for the film and Ethan contributed the voice-over for the Necronomicon. At first no American distributor would touch the film, but then the BFI showed it as a festival film and it was picked up by the British press, who were very kind to me. There were some bad reviews as well, but overall I was able to take the positive comments back to the States and work out a distribution deal.

Interview by Farrah Anwar, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, December 1990

A contemporary review

Although the screeching possessees here recall Dario Argento, and their messy, startling fates evoke the dread Lucio Fulci, *The Evil Dead* is more successful than its Italian precursors. Acknowledging that narrative economy is as important as spectacular putrefaction, Sam M. Raimi has turned his mishmash of horror-comic familiars, *Exorcist*-style levitation and possession, and undigested chunks of Lovecraft lore into an enjoyable, catch-all rollercoaster ride through the splatter genre. The film opens with a flourish of omens that clearly signpost horrors to come: the dangerous old bridge that connects the characters to the outside world crumbles as it is crossed; a subjective-camera demon crashes through the woods; a torn poster for *The Hills Have Eyes* decorates the cellar; and endlessly swirling dry-ice fog gives way to a crackling storm which punctuates the archaeologist's tape with ominous rumbles. Raimi continues to pander to genre cognoscenti throughout, with deliberately flat dialogue ('I know now that my wife has become host to a Kandarian demon') and specific borrowings from sources as unlikely as *Orphée* (the rippling mirror) and as obscure as *Quatermass II* (a burst pipe disgorging blood).

Such knowingness might prove irritating if *The Evil Dead* were nothing more than the sum total of its hommages, but Raimi displays a distinct talent for organising his shock effects. The film's EC-style sick humour fully emerges in its reversal of recent genre clichés: the macho Ash is reduced to a display of whimpering collapse in the Jamie Lee Curtis manner, while the womenfolk change from vulnerable victims into giggling witches, as much given to high-pitched, infantile taunts ('We're going to get you!') as actual murderous attacks. After the final display of special effects (which goes as far beyond the similar finale of *The Devil's Rain* as that had surpassed the comparatively tame dissolution of Hammer's *Dracula*), the film provides a headlong, last-minute shock which neatly caps the more graphic arboreal rapes and cannibal gnawings hitherto inflicted on the doomed intruders.

Kim Newman, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, November 1982

Programme notes and credits compiled by Sight and Sound and the BFI Documentation Unit

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