

Biography: Wes Craven

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Wes Craven

Wesley Earl Craven (born August 2, 1939 in Cleveland, Ohio) is an American film director and writer best known as the creator of many horror films, including the *Nightmare on Elm Street* series.

Born to devoutly Baptist parents Paul Craven and Caroline Miller, Wes earned an undergraduate degree in writing and psychology from Wheaton College in Illinois, and a masters degree in Writing Seminars from Johns Hopkins University. Prior to landing his first job in the film industry as a sound editor for a post-production company in New York, Craven briefly taught English at Westminster College and was a humanities professor at Clarkson College. With ex-wife Bonnie Chapin, he is the father of Jonathan and Jessica Craven.

Craven's work shares a common exploration of the nature of reality. *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, for example, dealt with the consequences of dreams in real life. *The Serpent and the Rainbow* portrays a man who can't distinguish between nightmarish visions and reality. *New Nightmare* brushes against (but doesn't quite break) the fourth wall by having actress Heather Langenkamp play herself as she is haunted by the villain of the film she once starred in. At one point in the film, we see on Wes Craven's word processor a script he has written, which includes word-for-word the conversation he just had with Heather. In *Scream*, the characters frequently reference horror films similar to the situation they are in, and at one point Billy Loomis tells his girlfriend that life is just a big movie. This concept was emphasized in the sequels, as copycat stalkers reenact the events of a film that has just been made about the Woodsboro killings.

Completing His *Other* Trilogy

Though there have been 7 different *NOES* films (8 counting *Freddy vs Jason*), only 2 have been directed by Wes himself. Wes has stated several times in

interviews & discussions that he only considers *his* 2 films to be *true accurate* depictions of his creation. For years it has been rumored that Wes would make one more film, essentially completing his *other* trilogy. Speculation as to what kind of NOES film Wes would make next have varied, from a prequel that would take place *before* the events in the 1st film, to a direct sequel to 1994's New Nightmare, to rumors that Wes may even take control and direct the next "Freddy vs....." film.

Selected filmography as director

- *Together* (1971)
- *The Last House on the Left* (1972)
- *The Hills Have Eyes* (1977)
- *Summer Of Fear aka Stranger In Our House* (1978)
- *Deadly Blessing* (1981)
- *Swamp Thing* (1982)
- *A Nightmare On Elm Street* (1984)
- *Deadly Friend* (1986)
- *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (1988)
- *Wes Craven's Shocker* (1989)
- *The People Under the Stairs* (1991)
- *Wes Craven's New Nightmare* (1994)
- *Scream* (1996)
- *Scream 2* (1997)
- *Music of the Heart* (1999)
- *Scream 3* (2000)
- *They* (2002)
- *Cursed* (2005)
- *Red Eye* (2005)