

SCOTT PILGRIM

ARRIVING OVER A DECADE AFTER THE PREVIOUS FILM,
THIS "REQUEL" REINVIGORATED THE FRANCHISE



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“Requel” isn’t a word that was invented by the writers of 2022’s *Scream*, but they certainly helped popularise it. Referenced in the film by movie buff (and Randy’s niece) Mindy Meeks-Martin, as she tells Dewey: “You can’t just reboot a franchise from scratch anymore, the fans won’t stand for it. *Black Christmas*, *Child’s Play*, *Flatliners*... That s**t doesn’t work. But you just can’t do a straight sequel, either. Uh, you gotta build something new, but not too new or the internet goes bug-f***ing nuts. It’s gotta be a part of an ongoing storyline, even if the story shouldn’t have been ongoing in the first place. New main characters, yes, but supported by and related to legacy characters. Not quite a reboot, not quite a sequel. Like the new *Halloween*, *Saw*, *Terminator*, *Jurassic Park*, *Ghostbusters*. F***, even *Star Wars*. It always, always goes back to the original!”

Scream then (Paramount decided against titling it *Scream 5*) wasn’t alone in returning with a gaggle of new characters mixed with a smattering of old-timers. By 2022, ‘requals’ were all the rage and, as 26 years had passed since the first film, those OG *Scream* fans were now of an age to see the latest movie with their children.

Arriving 11 years after *Scream 4*, this would be the first in the franchise not to have Wes Craven at the helm. With the series’ original director having passed away in 2015, the gig went to Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett, two horror aficionados who were just 18 and 14 when the first *Scream* came out. Like JJ Abrams with *Star Wars* and David Gordon Green with *Halloween*, the 2022 film was an example of a franchise being stewarded by filmmakers who had grown up with the series. But was there a danger, as *The Force Awakens* had been criticised for, of providing too much





SCREAMER!

Some things are too iconic to change! Just like in the original *Scream* films, voice actor Roger L Jackson returns to deliver Ghostface's instantly chilling phone-call voice – proving that while killers may come and go, the spine-tingling vocals behind “What’s your favourite scary movie?” remain gloriously the same.



REQUELS RISING: REVIVING FRANCHISES

Arguably the first bona fide ‘requel’ was 2015’s *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, a film that blended first generation *Star Wars* characters – Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, Leia, Chewbacca et al – with new faces, including Rey, Poe Dameron and Finn. That film’s success – \$2 billion! – convinced studios there was mileage in their age-old film franchises being invigorated with a combination of old and new characters. What followed was an avalanche of legacy sequels, including *Halloween* (2018), the *Jurassic World* trilogy (2015-2022) and *Ghostbusters: Afterlife* (2021). And it’s a trend that’s still going strong today, with *Scream* star Jenna Ortega joining the original cast of *Beetlejuice* for its belated 2024 sequel, and *Scream* rival *I Know What You Did Last Summer*’s 2025 return for a follow-up that mingled OG cast members with zoomer-age newcomers. And the requel idea has even migrated to TV, with Netflix’s *Cobra Kai* giving 1984’s *The Karate Kid* a fresh lease of life, and STARZ’s *Ash Vs Evil Dead* bringing Bruce Campbell’s chainsaw-wielding Ash Williams into the modern day.



fan service? As the character of Sam says to Mindy: “Are you telling me that I’m caught in the middle of fan-f***ing-fiction?!”

Actually, the film gets the balance just right. First-time *Scream* scribes James Vanderbilt and Guy Busick knew enough about these films to make the latest movie *about* the rules of the legacy sequel, and in doing so they don’t short-change the newbies. While those stalwarts Neve Campbell, Courteney Cox and David Arquette were all back, it’s the fresh faces that really drive the story here. This was to be a *Scream*, then, that rebooted the franchise for a generation not born when the first movie was made.

But just as *The Force Awakens*, *Halloween* et al harked back to earlier films, so would *Scream*. Aside from ▶





A TRIBUTE TO WES

Scream 5 delivers a heartfelt tribute to the franchise's legendary mastermind, Wes Craven, with clever and touching nods throughout the film – the character Wes Hicks was named in his honour, and the end credits also revealed another tribute, with a character's phone number – 707-105-1939 – being another nod to Wes: 1939 was the year he was born. This tribute appears again in the scene where the character is watching a YouTube video about *Stab 8*. The subscriber count displayed is 821,939. When read as an American-style date – 8/21/1939 or 8/2/1939 depending on interpretation – it references Wes Craven's birth year once more.



SCREAMER!

Matthew Lillard sneaks back into the *Scream* universe with two blink-and-you'll-miss-it voice cameos! First, he shouts "Cool house, Freeman!" during the finale party, then he hilariously voices the over-the-top chrome Ghostface in fake flick *Stab 8*.

the appearances from Campbell, Cox and Arquette, the film would also see the return of Skeet Ulrich as Billy Loomis, who appears (skilfully de-aged) as a hallucination of the film's main character, Sam Carpenter (Melissa Barrera), who we discover is the late killer's illegitimate daughter.

The film opens, like the original, with a phone call. We then witness Jenna Ortega's Tara (half-sister of Sam) attacked by Ghostface, except – unlike Drew Barrymore's ill-fated Casey Becker – this character survives. We're introduced to the new faces, including Jack Quaid's Richie Kirsch and Mikey Madison's Amber Freeman, before we meet any of the old gang. In fact, we don't even see the first legacy character – that's Dewey, by the way – until past the 30-minute mark, and ▶



MAD ABOUT WES

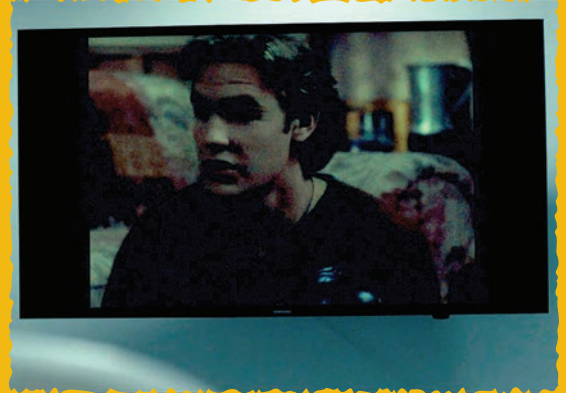
The writers were so keen to pay homage to the late, great Wes Craven that they filled the movie with references to his classic body of work. In the opening sequence, Tara tells the police that Sidney Prescott lived on Elm – a nod to the infamous street where Freddy Krueger went on his rampage.

Later, when Officer Hicks is checking her phone, several names on her contact list reference characters from Craven's films. Nancy T is Nancy Thompson from *A Nightmare On Elm Street* (1, 3, and *New Nightmare*). Tina G refers to Tina Gray from the original film. Leroy is a character from *The People Under The Stairs*, and B Adams references Brandon Adams, who played Fool in that same movie.

At Martha Meeks' house, she has a picture frame on the mantelpiece showing a movie theatre marquee featuring three

films: *A Nightmare On Elm Street*, *The Hills Have Eyes* and *The Last House On The Left* – all Craven classics. Once the film ends and the dedication to Wes flashes up on screen, we hear the sound of a whip-poor-will bird, another tribute to Craven, who was an avid birdwatcher in his spare time. He used the bird's call as "orchestration" in many of his films.

Alfred Hitchcock is also referenced throughout the film. Not only are there posters for *Vertigo* and *Psycho* hanging in the background during the scene where the kids discuss "requels", but *Ghostface* also mentions *Psycho* during the call to Hicks. It cuts to a scene where Wes is taking a shower, opening with a shot almost identical to the infamous shower scene in *Psycho*. Later, in the final scenes, a crazed Amber mimics the iconic Bernard Herrmann shower-scene music while brandishing a knife.



Another *Scream* film, another grisly death at the hands of Ghostface



BEHIND THE SCREAMS!



After the death of Wes Craven, Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett stepped in to direct

STREAM WARS



Courtney Cox and David Arquette returned, but there was no happy ending for Dewey

Sidney doesn't even enter the story until over an hour in, and remains at its peripheries until the final act. More than *Scream 4*, this was a movie that put Gen Z front and centre.

For long-time *Scream* fans, there are plenty of continuity nods. There's the obligatory needle-drop of Nick Cave's classic *Red Right Hand*, while Randy's sister Martha returns, still played by Heather Matarazzo, for the first time since *Scream 3*. There's also that bloody final act that takes place at Stu's house from the original film, now owned by Amber's family, bringing Sidney and Gale full circle to the site of the first massacre.

It eventually transpires that the murderer is, in fact, two killers (another nod to the original movie), specifically Amber and Sam's boyfriend Richie, their plan being to help inspire another *Stab* film. "Hollywood's totally f***ing out of ideas, so we decided we'd give them some new source material to follow," Richie tells Sam, Sidney and Gale, after being unmasked. "You know, bring it back to basics. Because that's how you make a great *Stab* movie – based on actual events!"

As startling as the killers' reveal was, it was nothing compared to the shock fans experienced with the brutal killing of Dewey. David Arquette revealed to *Empire* shortly after the film's release that when he was given the script, he had no idea it would be the character's last hurrah. "They had not given me a heads-up, so I was like: 'Wow, Dewey's got some good stuff to play this time!' And then: 'Oh, that's why!' I had to put it down, I had to walk around and kind of process it. I understood where they were coming from, as far as gutting their audience. It was hard. It's been such an ongoing film series throughout my life, 25 years of my life, so it definitely cut deep."

With David Arquette returning in *Scream 7*, we'll know how final that death really was, but certainly that scene in the hospital corridor is one of the series' most jolting and poignant moments.

Scream opened to positive reviews, with many praising it for freshening up the quarter century-old franchise. And it performed well commercially, grossing \$138m against a \$24m budget, significantly better than *Scream 4*'s \$97m haul. Twenty-six years on from the first film, the *Scream* series had been successfully and imaginatively revived, wowing critics and fans alike. We think Wes Craven (to whom the film is dedicated) would have been proud. ■



SCREAMER!

Surprise! Billy Loomis makes a chilling comeback in *Scream* (2022) – but don't expect him to walk through the front door. Instead, Skeet Ulrich reprises the role as a haunting hallucination seen by his on-screen daughter, Samantha Carpenter. Acting as a creepy conscience and a symbol of her inner chaos, Billy exists purely in her mind.

