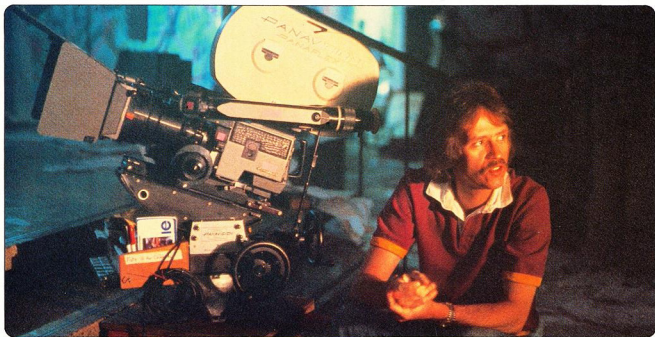


Escape from New York



Carpenter on the set: *Escape* is the thirty-three-year-old director's most ambitious film yet.

FRESH FROM GHOSTLY ENCOUNTERS IN *THE FOG*, DIRECTOR JOHN CARPENTER GIVES US AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE FUTURE—A FUTURE AS HORRIFYING AS *HALLOWEEN* AND AS GRIM AS *ASSAULT ON PRECINCT THIRTEEN*.

New York, 1997: A city long plagued by crime has at last been given over to the criminals. Ringed by waters filled with deadly electricity, its bridges mined and walled, Manhattan has been turned into a vast penitentiary from which there is no escape. Radar installations scan the perimeters; helicopters circle endlessly overhead; the Statue of Liberty is now just another guard tower housing officers in infra-red goggles who blast on sight anyone foolish enough to try to get out.

Locked in a desperate struggle for survival, the prison-city's three million inmates have no contact with the outside world save for monthly food drops into Central Park. Warring street gangs rove the surface, while the world below is occupied by "crazies," the criminally insane, who

live in subways and sewers, swarming up from manholes in rat-like hordes to attack whomever and whenever they can. For diversion the bloodthirsty populace periodically converges on Madison Square Garden to watch gladiatorial contests in which warriors try to kill one another with nail-studded baseball bats.

Into this maelstrom of violence and madness, a plane crashes. It is *Air Force One*, hijacked by criminals, and the President is aboard bearing papers crucial to the survival of the United States. He is taken hostage by the Gypsies—the most powerful gang in the city. The price for his freedom: the immediate release of all convicts.

The man sent in to rescue the President is "Snake" Plissken, himself a master criminal, who gains entry to the

city by secretly landing a glider atop the World Trade Center. To ensure that he doesn't back out of the mission, the government has implanted two explosive devices in his head, set to go off at a prearranged time and which only they can defuse. Snake's attempts to rescue the President, and his adventures in the embattled city, give *Escape from New York* its driving momentum—and suspense that never lets up.

Suspense is, in fact, the hallmark of all John Carpenter's work: from *Dark Star* (1974), with its serenely suicidal computer and comic-yet-menacing alien, to *Assault on Precinct Thirteen* (1976), with its besieged cops and civilians; from the terrified teenagers of *Halloween* (1978) to the isolated townspeople of *The Fog* (1980), prey to malevolent spirits from the past. Carpenter himself has frequently noted that in all these films people find themselves trapped—a theme that reaches its logical culmination in the forthcoming *Escape from New York*, where an entire population has been forcibly cut off from the rest of society.

Budgeted at seven million dollars—Carpenter's biggest yet—the movie is scheduled for release by Avco-Embassy this July. With a screenplay by Carpenter and Nick Castle (who played the killer in *Halloween*), *Escape from New York* has been produced by Larry Franco and Debra Hill, and marks the third collaboration—following *Halloween* and *The Fog*—between Carpenter and producer Hill.

It was the phenomenal success of *Halloween*, which yielded the highest profit-rate of any independent film in history, that made Carpenter and Hill "overnight" sensations in the film business, but Carpenter has also come to national attention as the director of two made-for-TV movies: *Someone Is Watching Me* (co-starring Adrienne Barbeau, now Carpenter's wife) and *Elvis*, Carpenter's first opportunity to work with Kurt Russell, who plays the lead in *Escape*.

Only thirty-three years old, Carpenter has already fulfilled the promise he showed as an award-winning student filmmaker at the University of Southern California. *Escape from New York* should not only cement his reputation as a winner in Hollywood's money sweepstakes, but should also pave the way for creative achievements still to come. **12**



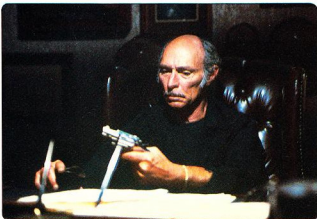
2 Carrying the President to an urgent summit meeting, *Air Force One* is hijacked and crashes amid the squalid criminal society of 1997 Manhattan.



3 Kurt Russell (who played the title role in Carpenter's TV-movie *Elvis*) stars as "Snake" Plissken, a celebrated 1990s criminal recruited by police to rescue the captive President.



1 Donald Pleasence, the British actor who starred in Carpenter's first hit, *Halloween* (and whom readers may also remember from "The Changing of the Guard" on TV's *Twilight Zone*), plays a future President of the United States taken hostage by a criminal gang.



4 Lee Van Cleef, a perennial bad guy in Westerns from *High Noon* to *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (and, incidentally, another *Twilight Zone* alumnus, featured in "The Grave"), here plays Commissioner Hawk, the ruthless police chief who forces Snake to attempt the dangerous rescue mission.



5 Jazz musician and composer Isaac Hayes plays "the Duke," here shown in full regalia. An aristocrat in New York's topsy-turvy criminal society, he leads the city's most powerful gang, the Gypsies.



6 In a radical departure from her role in TV's *Maude*, Adrienne Barbeau—who starred in two previous Carpenter productions, *Someone Is Watching Me* and *The Fog*—portrays Maggie, another convict who joins Snake in his rescue mission. Here she prepares for action amid the stacks of the New York Public Library, now a primitive energy center complete with functioning oil pump that supplies power to the city.



7 Captured by the Duke's gang, Snake is forced to take on the sadistic "Slag" (played by wrestler Ox Baker) in a no-holds-barred combat staged at New York's Madison Square Garden, now a gladiatorial arena where the criminal populace of New York watches fights to the death.



8 Alone in the uncharted criminal world of New York, Snake enlists the aid of a convict-turned-cabbie, played by Ernest Borgnine.



9 Snake persuades a reluctant "Brain" (Harry Dean Stanton, last seen in *Alien* and *The Rose*) to help him gain entrance to the gang's stronghold.



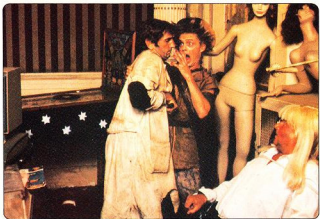
10 Criminals all, the cabbie, Brain, Maggie, and Snake join forces to free the captive President.



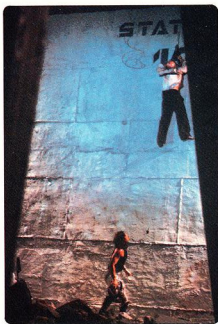
11 Finding himself and Brain suddenly surrounded by the Duke's murderous band of outlaws, Snake attempts to hold them off.



12 Maggie joins Snake and Brain in a daring raid on the Gypsies' stronghold.



13 Inside the stronghold, Brain dispatches one of the President's captors, the Medusa-haired "Romero" (played by Frank Doubleday), while a bound and humiliatedly bewigged President looks on helplessly.



14 As the President is hauled up the sheer wall that blocks the 59th Street Bridge from the mainland, Snake waits nervously for his own chance to escape.



15 With the explosive device in his skull timed to go off in moments, Snake finds his bid for freedom thwarted by the Duke. To find out who wins, you'll have to wait till summer, when *Escape from New York* hits the screen. **17**