THE RAVEN
OF BALTIMORE CITY



A film by James Frommeyer

Starring Eli Sandhaus and Matthew Mills

Synopsis

After a deadly encounter with a purse snatcher, a comic-book-obsessed loner sets out to become a masked superhero on the streets of Baltimore, putting himself on course to discover his inner villain in this darkly funny crime film.

81 minutes English USA Black & white Not yet rated

Written and directed by James Frommeyer



theravenofbaltimorecity.com

Festival and Awards



Montgomery International Film Festival

2026 / World Premiere / Closing Feature

Best Picture	
Best Director	James Frommeyer
Best Screenplay	James Frommeyer
Best Cinematography	James Frommeyer
Best Actor	Eli Sandhaus

World premiere: September 26, 2026

Production Notes



Origin story

James Frommeyer wondered about the kind of person who truly wants to be a superhero. What if someone actually tried it?

“First,” he concluded, “that person is a superhero fanatic. Second, they’re a psychopath. Someone who is more interested in the trappings of being a superhero than in doing something that might help people.”

That question became his debut feature. Initially imagined as a lighter mockumentary, Raven grew darker as Frommeyer’s relationship with superhero movies changed. “But it also had to be funny because the entire notion gets more preposterous the more seriously Gary takes it.”

“I had just moved to Baltimore and what hit me immediately was all the raven iconography everywhere in the city. And Gary isn’t an original or especially creative guy. So of course he’d call himself The Raven. Gary see, Gary do.”

Research led him to a public-domain Raven character from 1940s Ace Comics. The costume, a business suit with a mask and cape, fit Gary’s idea of what a superhero should wear.

The two-person crew

Frommeyer had made short films for years. In fall 2019, he decided to stop postponing a feature and began sending drafts to friends, including Memphis-based visual-effects artist Teague Chrystie.

The two had met through Chrystie’s movie podcast. Chrystie created effects for Frommeyer’s 2011 short A Very Calvin & Hobbes Christmas; Frommeyer later produced Chrystie’s musical Sad Max.

Chrystie relocated to Baltimore for pre-production and filming. Together they formed the regular on-set crew. Frommeyer wrote, directed and photographed the film; Chrystie produced and handled sound, makeup and visual effects.

The look of the film

Self-financed and made as a no-budget production, Raven was designed around a small handheld camera package and minimal lighting.

Frommeyer wrote with the finished image in mind: gritty black-and-white photography, heavy texture and occasional color halation and visual glitches. The Blackmagic Pocket Cinema Camera 6K Pro’s low-light performance helped the crew work quickly throughout Baltimore.

The small scale shaped both the production and the film’s rough, documentary-like appearance.

Production Notes



Casting Gary

Gary needed to be unsettling without becoming a caricature, funny without knowing it, and recognizably human. Frommeyer described him as “an earnestly psychotic Scrappy Doo.”

New York actor Eli Sandhaus stood out early. The casting notice included the entire screenplay so actors would know what they were volunteering for. Sandhaus read it and committed himself to his audition.

As an Orthodox Jew, Sandhaus could not film from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday or during several October holidays. The gym, a major location, was available only on weekend nights. Casting depended on finding a Dan who could make that schedule work.

Matthew Mills could. “That was the green light for Eli,” Frommeyer recalls. “And, in a real way, a green light for the film.” Two days after being offered the role, Sandhaus was in Baltimore filming.

Baltimore joins the production

Principal photography took place over thirty days across six weeks in October and November 2022. Neighbors donated their gym after hours; Frommeyer’s home served as lodging and a location. Much of the crew came from friendships formed years earlier on the IMDb message boards and around Chrystie’s podcast.

A neighborhood film

Business cards handed to curious passersby became a casting tool. Cody Ferguson and Tanner Smith met the crew on the sidewalk and filmed their scene the following night. Another performer was one of Sandhaus’s Uber drivers.

Around the neighborhood, people began calling out “Hey Raven!” Sandhaus stayed in character for a young girl who approached with her mother. Chrystie remembers: “He told her to listen to her mom and eat her vegetables. It made her day.”

Putting it all together

Friends traveled from Indiana, Maine and Los Angeles to help. Joey Pelletier filmed five scenes in one night and later consulted on the edit. Anastaisia Brady answered a casting notice by offering to help and ultimately helped create the costume.

After filming, Frommeyer edited assemblies of more than two hours down to the finished 81-minute film. Gary’s story became a way to examine the individualism underlying superhero culture. “They idealize a malignant individualism,” Frommeyer says.

The Raven of Baltimore City premiered on September 26, 2026, as MIFF’s closing feature, receiving five awards, including Best Picture and Best Actor for Sandhaus.

Cast and Crew

CREW

Written and directed by	James Frommeyer
Produced by	Teague Chrystie, James Frommeyer
Co-produced by	Holden Hill, Han-Joo Kim, Joey Pelletier
Cinematography	James Frommeyer
Wardrobe	Anastaisia Brady
Visual effects	Teague Chrystie

CAST

Eli Sandhaus
Gary / The Raven

Matthew Mills
Dan / The Juicer

Jenny Kuhlthau
Esmerelda

Matt Boykin
Keith / Bagman

Jackie Letkowski
Olivia

Joey Pelletier
Pete

Derek Jensen
Bill

Bohdana Madlova
Nancy

Jeff Lukeski
Dr. Doak

Azure Grimes
Azure

Gabby Silva
Mabel Riot

Cody “MC4L Ferg” Ferguson
Heckler in Car

Tanner Smith
Nice Person in Car

Nicholas Friend
Mugging Witness

Jasmine Cruz
Mugging Witness

Mozella Place
Mrs. Macedo

Cassidee Grunwald
Day Pass Woman #1

Patch
Day Pass Woman #2

Jalen Milton
Officer Tompkins

Jonathan “FlyJah” Akoi
Officer Tokes

Muhammad Umer Abbasi
Officer Stokes

Shaun “Shaunsteez_” Brown
Security Shirt Man

Lola Martini
Emma

Contact



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Screener and high-resolution stills available on request.