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## Slayer raining blood album

Image not available for Color: Sorry, this item is not available in Image not available When they bowed in 2019, Slayer left an almighty legacy. One of the founding fathers of thrash metal, they helped transform it from a wild underground movement into a game-changing force of nature, the impact of which can still be heard today. Their documents, from 1983 Show No Mercy to Repentless in 2015, are among the sacred texts of the metal. But one thing towers above all else. Released on October 7, 1986, Reign In Blood is not only Slayer's greatest album, it's up there with the biggest albums ever made, by any band of any genre: 28 eight minutes and 58 seconds of unbridled power and undiluted intent that has attracted amazement, acclaim and controversy in equal measure. More than anything, Reign In Blood will be what the Slayer will be remembered for decades to come. We never realized how special it was when we were working on it, guitarist Kerry King tells Metal Hammer. We knew it was nice, but we never thought it was what people would talk about for the next 30 years. King, along with singer and bassist Tom Araya, original drummer Dave Lombardo, producer Rick Rubin and many of Slayer's other friends and contemporaries, date back to that historic album. This is the blow-by-blow story of how Reign In Blood changed the world forever... By 1985, Metallica had emerged as the leader of the thrash metal pack. But the Slayer wasn't that far from them. Their first two albums - 1983's Show No Mercy and 1985's Hell Awaits, released by american underground label Metal Blade - showed that they were not content just to exist in the shadow of James Hetfield and Lars Ulrich. Kerry King: I look back at that time just before Reign In Blood, and it was absolutely exciting to be a member of the Slayer. You'd walk down the street and people would know your face and name. It was weird. It was the only time I had a big head. Don Kaye (American metal journalist): Slayer's first two albums and the EP were released on Metal Blade. They were really solid. Everyone was flipping over them. Brian Slagel (owner, Metal Blade): When they arrived at Hell Awaits, you could see how much better they were. Especially Dave - he was a phenomenal drummer, and he really upped his very successful game on Hell Awaits. Tom Araya: Songwise, we were writing material that was really heavy - long but heavy. At the time, that's what everyone was doing. We thought, 'We can do this.' But they were growing all the time. Dave Lombardo: We knew Hell Awaits was good, but we were eager to get to the next thing. Tom Araya: The only thing we knew about the next album was that it would be faster than Hell Awaits. (Credit Image: Iconicpix) The Hell Awaits wasn't over, but the Slayer was already planning their next move. They were on friendly terms with their contemporaries in the thrash scene, but they knew they had in them to deliver something that would leave every other trailing in their wake. Dave Lombardo: We were getting conceited. Cocky. he had already released two albums and had been on tour. Tom Araya: Right at the end of the Hell Awaits period, Jeff [Hanneman, guitarist] and Kerry were constantly putting ideas together, and they showed up with new things. Dave Lombardo: Before, we all sat together and banged the songs out. But Jeff had invested in recording equipment and began recording his full demos with the basic drum model, guitar riffs, some arrangements. And then he'd show us tapes. It was great, because it gave us a clear picture of where he was going. Tom Araya: Jeff had become a fan of a lot of West Coast punks. There was this record store where he went a lot to look for album covers. He thought the colder the cover, the better the band. Then he

would take him in and play all the time. Dave Lombardo: TSOL, lesser threat, Kennedy dead, Circle Jerks... Jeff was discovering new bands all the time. It was definitely a turning point. Tom Araya: The last one on the wagon was Kerry -- it was more than a metal head. At first he didn't understand it. In the end it started like this - if you get hit in the head with something enough, eventually you start to like it. Kerry King: There was a camaraderie between thrash bands at the time. I would have gotten the other guys' records, just to see what they were doing. Dave Lombardo: We were keeping an eye on what they were doing. We listened to other bands and said, 'He's weak, we could do better, we're more brutal than that.' Tom Araya: Everyone else was doing something slow. Kerry and Jeff said they didn't want to make a slow drive, they wanted to do something fast. They didn't realize it was going to be that fast... Don Kaye: I think their goal was to out-heavy and out-speed Metallica. Brian Slagel: On Reign In Blood, I think that was the focal point: 'We want to make the fastest and heaviest record that's ever been done.' It didn't take long for A&R executives, more suspects, to pin down the potential of thrash metal. In 1984, Metallica was picked up by Elektra Records, and the following year it was Slayer's turn to be courted by the big boys. Brian Slagel: Metal Blade was a small label and the band was getting really big. We knew they were going to sign with an important label, just because it made sense at that point. Don Kaye: Metallica had signed for Elektra, but no one really expected the Slayers to have an important deal at the time because they were so heavy. Brian Slagel: We had meetings with Capitol and Warner Brothers. I think at that point pretty much every label was interested in them because metal was a great thing happening then. Metallica was really starting to take off. Tom Araya: That's when we realized there were record companies that were Brian Slagel: Rick Rubin, who was head of Def Jam Records, contacted us. Def Jam was a hip hop label. They would put out Run DMC's records and people like that. But Rick was also a fan of punk and metal. Dave Lombardo: We already had a multi-album deal with Metal Blade. I caught the interest of a major New York label -- Columbia -- that it took. So I told the kids, and they, like, No Dave, we've already signed to Metal Blade, that's too much, we can't get out of the contract. And I said, 'Wait, we should take a look at this and see what they have to say.' Rick Rubin: I first met them at their show at the Ritz in New York. I didn't know anything about them before the show and they wiped me out. Tom Araya: Someone says, 'Hey, I want you to meet Rick Rubin. He's this Def Jam guy.' We're like, 'Def Jam?' Kerry King: Was I a fan of hip hop? I wasn't, no. Tom Araya: It was a bit weird, but we knew he was a fan and that was the reach of it. And that was one of the most positive things ever: here's this guy who just got a lot of money from major record labels, and he wants to work with us and he's a fan. You can't beat that. Brian Slagel: Rick wanted it more than anyone and went on to give the band the search. He said, 'Hey, if you come with me, I'm going to do this and this and this,' and they chose to go with him. (Credit Photograph: Kevin Hodapp/Frank White Picture Agency) In June 1986, Slayer entered Hit City West Studios in Los Angeles with Rubin and engineer Andy Wallace to begin work on the album that would become Reign In Blood. Rubin's vision for the album was to boil everything to the bone, capturing the album live and stripping it of a useless reverb. Dave Lombardo: The studio was just a small place on Pico and La Cienega Boulevard. It wasn't elaborate. Tom Araya: We were a bunch of kids. We didn't have anyone to work with us. We brought our stuff, we created our stuff. It was us and my brother John, who came and put all our equipment and microphone on for us. But this was our first record with someone who was a pro. Dave Lombardo: Andy Wallace was there, he's an amazing engineer. He had a very Zen personality. He was very soft, a very nice guy. It wasn't a party animal or anything. He practically held the fort when Rubin wasn't there. Brian Slagel: There are a couple of songs that were actually almost finished on Hell Awaits. Altar of Sacrifice was one of them. You could kind of see the first realizations of where that record was going. Rick Rubin: What surprised me the most was that Jeff and Kerry both knew which solos were good and which were not, since none of the solos made sense to me at the time. It's like they speak a different musical language from the rest of the world. Dave Lombardo: The sessions started very late -- 10 or 11 -- and went into the early hours of the morning. I honestly don't know why. 'Witches' Hour, maybe. ha ha ha! Midnight at three in the morning was the best time to evoke the most evil. Kerry King: have we been fed by? Nothing, I haven't had a drink yet. It wasn't a party. Dave Lombardo: We were so well tried before we went to the studio. I think I have recorded my in three or four days. There were no computers, no software. It was well tried: get your time down, press records and don't spoil. Tom Araya: Rubin changed our guitar sounds. Other than that, we kept recording until he said, 'I took that.' Kerry King: Someone at one point said, 'You don't need reverberation to be good.' Once we realized that in our head, we said, 'OK, that's pretty tight.' Rick Rubin: It's very close to being a live album, very well recorded in a studio. Slayer didn't play like anyone else, which is why the album sounds different from other metal albums. They were really creating their own kind. (Image by: Kevin Hodapp/Frank White Photo Agency) The 10 tracks that made up Reign In Blood were within Slayer's ambition to be faster and more brutal than any other band. They backtracked on Hell Awaits' satanic shtick in favor of a lyrical approach that was a creepy medical textbook part, a Hieronymus Bosch painting part - particularly on immediately iconic opening track Angel Of Death, which was inspired by infamous Nazi surgeon Dr Josef Mengele. Tom Araya: Do I have any problem singing the lyrics on Angel Of Death? No, I didn't. When Jeff brought the song, we thought, 'Wow, that's really cool - this was the guy who did all those crazy, terrible things.' Dave Lombardo: It was: 'We're brutal. Let's be evil, dark. I thought it was great. Tom Araya: As usual, we always end up finishing a song in the studio while we're in the process of doing it. On that, it was raining blood. That was the song that didn't have any lyrics. Kerry King: I remember finishing the raining blood text in the studio lobby. I think Jeff was doing some of the tracks inside. He had no ideas for the part I was working on, so it was, like, 'Here, let me try. I'm done.' Dave Lombardo: I think my favorite point on the album is Postmortem into Raining Blood. That piece is monstrous. It's epic as it blurs from song to song. Tom Araya: The only thing is we told Dave to speed it up -- 'Hey Dave, come on, speed it up, take it a little bit!' Dave Lombardo: Rubin and the band said, 'Let's push a little bit more... a little more aggressive... Angry. Tom Araya: All 10 songs came in at 28 minutes. A full album, contractually, constitutes at least 45 minutes of music. I asked Rick if it was okay. His only response to this was: 'It's 10 songs, which makes up an album. There are verses and leads and choruses. He didn't have a problem with it, which was really cool. Rick Rubin may not have had a problem with the album, but someone else certainly did. Def Jam's releases were distributed by Columbia Records, whose chairman, Walter dared to Angel Of Death. Walter, who was Jewish, saw the song as anti-Semitic and refused to release the album unless the opening track was pulled. The Slayer refused. Tom Araya: All of a sudden, the record company doesn't want to release the album. the album. they were, like, 'Fuuuuuck...' Kerry King: At that point I didn't know shit about the world. I thought, 'This is the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard.' Dave Lombardo: When Rubin told us Columbia was pulling back, he said, 'Guys, don't worry. I have another company. This is a bit cool, we could turn in a way that might be of benefit to us.' Kerry King: The funny thing is that it's already been paid: 'All you have to do is market, it's going to sell.' The world is a strange place. Dave Lombardo: It turned out geffen was happy to put the record out. Rick Rubin: Geffen was looking forward to being in business with us because of all the success we were having at Def Jam [with hip hop bands]. Dave Lombardo: We just followed Rick and what he wanted to do, and, pretty sure, it worked to our advantage because it created a lot of mystery around the album. People were curious. Don Kaye: I don't really remember the mainstream magazines that covered the Slayer at all. The only coverage they got at Rolling Stone was when Columbia Records refused to release the album due to Angel Of Death. (Credit Image: Iconicpix) The pre-release controversy only served to increase the wait for Reign In Blood, as well as the fact that no new music had leaked on the tape trading circuit in advance. When the album was released in the United States on October 7, 1986, it was like thunder. Don Kaye: I remember some people expressing the opinion that Hell Awaits was a little too progressive. Everyone just wanted pure speed from Slayer, and Hell Awaits got time changes, longer songs. So there was certainly some reserve and curiosity about what they were going to do next. Brian Slagel: I was stunned. It was certainly very different from Hell Awaits. That had slow stuff and heavy stuff, a lot of different dynamics. This was pretty much just beating his head in for 29 minutes. Kerry King: At that point, there was no internet. People would say, 'You have to listen to this band, you have to see this band.' That's how people did things. Slayer started their Reign In Blood tour on Halloween 1986 at the Moore Theater in Seattle. The backing band was Overkill of New Jersey, who had released their debut album, Feel The Fire, a year earlier. Rick Sales (Slayer manager): I had just come off a long tour of Dokken and got a call to go out with Slayer a couple of weeks later on their Reign In Blood tour. I was tired and refused. A friend of mine called me the next day and told me I should reconsider. As tired as I was, I went out and took a copy of Reign In Blood, and I was fascinated. I wanted to be their tour manager so I took the job. Bobby 'Blitz' Ellsworth (overkill singer): Overkill opened for them in that See you in Seattle, and we're so excited. And we went out in front of the Slayer for a shower of wet paper towels, zippo lighters and coins thrown at us. The Slayer audience is a tough audience. It's like, like, stop moving and you're less than a target. Rick Sales: I saw the frenzy of music and audiences -- it was a religious experience. It was the most exciting rock show I'd seen since I was a kid and went to see Iggy And The Stooges and MC5. Slayer had an energy, a kind of punk energy. Bobby 'Blitz' Ellsworth: We played in a place called The Forum in Los Angeles, it was this old building from the 1930s or 1940s. I remember someone falling off the balcony during the Huntress set. It wasn't a boost. It was intentional. It was his way of showing his euphoria. Dave Lombardo: They would clear the place and take a walk through afterwards and there would be pools of blood. It wasn't just a couple of drops here and there. It was like someone had been posing there and bleeding for a while. It was intense. Bobby 'Blitz' Ellsworth: Of course, those concerts were violent. But it wasn't as if the violence was escalating, it was as if someone had just pressed a button. You didn't see the crowd whipping themselves into this frenzy -- the frenzy was instantaneous. Kerry King: After that we did a tour to support WASP. Those guys were older than us at that point. They weren't nice to us. 'You can't have lights, you can't have a smoke machine.' 'What? Are you afraid of us?' Tom Araya: I think it was on the WASP tour that Dave left for the first time. Kerry King: I don't remember why he stopped. I think he was probably just a young, growing misunderstanding. Dave Lombardo: I had been on tour and was coming back with no money to pay my basic bills. And I said, 'Fuck this, man, aren't I going to put all my fucking effort into this if we're signed up for a big label and go out on these extravagant tours and I'm coming home with no money?' It didn't make sense right now. So I decided to split. Tom Araya: We have tony [Scaglione, from the Thrashers of New York Whiplash] for the rest of the WASP tour. Dave Lombardo: I remember Rubin calling me pretty much in days: 'How are you? Are you going back? No, no, man. Let's try to solve something. And then when I finally decided -- 'Yes, let's fix this out' -- Rubin flew down and he took me and we went to rehearsals and reintroduced me to the kids. We swept everything that was under the carpet and carried on. Reign In Blood reached number one on the US Billboard charts, an impressive feat for such an extreme record. It may not have had the same revolutionary commercial impact as Metallica blockbuster Master Of Puppets, but it has taken thrash metal to a new level of uncompromising brutality. More than 30 years later, it stands as an eternal reference point for what metal can and should be. Don Kaye: Reign In Blood didn't feel so much like an evolutionary step as creating a new bar for all that was going to follow. Either you try to match it or you try to do it, or you'll go in other directions. Tom Araya: Why was he successful? I can't answer that. Perhaps it might be that Rick Rubin did and and on a rap label. Maybe it was the controversy. Maybe it was because it was only 28 minutes - everyone else was doing very slow things. I don't know. Rick Sales: They were engaged in their art, it was 24/7 for them. It wasn't, 'How do we become famous and get gold records?' It was strictly, 'We'll make the music we want and if people don't like it, fuck 'em.' Rick Rubin: It's so extreme and sometimes not musical... It's like an assault. I can't think of another album that does what this album does. Don Kaye: My feeling is that other bands knew they couldn't do it and they would just try to make their own variations in intensity and speed. Brian Slagel: That record, even more than Metallica, brought extreme, super-heavy metal to traditional children. It paved the way for the Panthers and many other successful bands. But this was the most extreme record I've ever had a huge commercial success. He paved the way for everyone from Cannibal Corpse to Panther. Tom Araya: My parents always told me I had to get a job, maybe go to school, learn something. In this way, if all this fails, I would not find myself on the street doing nothing. When Reign In Blood came out, they realized we were going somewhere. They were proud. Dave Lombardo: People come to talk to me about Reign In Blood in the most random places. People shout, 'Slayer!' or come and say 'Reign In Blood saved my life.' That's something I hear a lot. Although the music may have been intense and violent, people told me that it helped them navigate the most horrible moments of their lives. This is just special. Special.

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