

WHO KILLED THE ELECTRIC CAR?

Written and Directed By Chris Paine

Produced By Plinyminor & Electric Entertainment

What began as the infrequent need for maintenance on a leased EV1 produced by General Motors (GM), led to a pivotal event that sparked not only a movement, but a movie. In 2003 Chris Paine dropped his EV1 off at a Los Angeles dealership for a tire rotation. A few days later, he was told that his car was never going to be returned. When he pointed out there were still two months left on his lease, he was told, 'too bad'.

Chris began documenting GM's actions with others as their cars were recalled and it began to snowball. GM refused to negotiate any lease extensions or purchases for any of the cars. People with cars they were very fond of because they operated with ease, efficiency and economy — were dumbfounded when their EV1's were hauled away and summarily crushed without any clear explanation. The response from GM was even more confusing. They indicated there was no real consumer interest in the car.

"Who Killed the Electric Car" pays homage to our passion for justice, and to live up to an American ideal of remaining a truly independent nation; by giving up our addiction to foreign oil and the slimy contradictions it has drawn us into. Plug in America co-founder, Linda Nicholes, comments; "Paine's documentary illustrates the darker side of corporate behavior. On a more hopeful note, the movie demonstrates that David can, indeed, take on Goliath and expose corporate malfeasance.

GM successfully cannibalized and crushed all of its own well-engineered, zero-emission vehicles. But thanks to the film and citizen activism, GM's statement that it was not, in fact, crushing EV1 electric vehicles was exposed as a lie. Fortunately, grassroots protests against Ford and Toyota, who apparently did not covet such adverse publicity, resulted in more than 1,000 electric vehicles being saved from the crusher."

There is an old adage: What we resist persists. In the case of the electric car movement that has galvanized in response to the urgent need for an alternative form of transportation, the adage has been revised: Passionate persistence melts the resistance of car interests to change. This is a film that portrays a Machiavellian attempt to suppress true patriotism; to freely express our imagination and ingenuity in the name of equality and evolution for the good.

See your local movie guides for locations and times.

Reviewed by Donna Strong

Return to the [September/October](#) Index page