Composer David Raksin once said that you’re not a real film composer until you’ve had a score tossed out. Yet getting a score tossed out is rarely a commentary on the quality of the score. Such is the case with Jerry Goldsmith’s 1998 score for 2 Days in the Valley. Faced with a film that featured multiple characters and storylines as well as competing tones, Goldsmith keyed in on two characters and wrote a score that was by turns melancholy, silky and suspenseful. His main theme is a mellow, bluesy tune for solo trumpet that recalled his distinctive themes for Chinatown and The Russia House. While Goldsmith scored most of the film as a straight drama and suspense tale, he singled out Danny Aiello’s character for a comic approach, writing an Italian-flavored tune (“Dosmo’s Theme”) for folk accordion and orchestra.

Ultimately, Goldsmith’s score was dropped from the film in favor of a blues/rock score by Anthony Marinelli. Listened to on its own, the music functions as a satisfyingly moody piece of modern noir. Bruce Botnick created this sequence for possible album treatment in 1996, switching the chronology of some tracks and combining others to create a more varied listening experience.

The story for 2 Days in the Valley follows icy cool killer Lee Woods (James Spader) and his Icelandic moll Helga Svelgen (Charlize Theron). They concoct a scheme to get Olympic skier Becky Foxx (Teri Hatcher) insurance money by murdering her philandering husband Roy (Peter Horton). The fall guy in the scheme is down-on-his-luck hit man Dosmo Pizzo (Danny Aiello), a buffoon with a wayward toupee and an inconvenient sense of honor and fair play.