

FIGHT OR STUDENTS RESI

By Sam Cook

American culture has embraced the fleeting feelings of fear with many horror movies as a staple of cinematic experience. Exciting experiences like skydiving or bungee jumping are popular if expensive. Chief among fear thrills are horror movies.

Senior **Phillip Rowland** said "I'm scared of driving between two semis." But a different kind of fear comes from watching a horror movie or going skydiving.

Psychology teacher **Julie Carey** described this phenomenon as the opponent process theory: "Emotions go hand in hand. For example with sky diving there's initial fear and then the exhilarating feeling." The opponent process theory explains that the coupling of fear and excitement leads people to focus on the excitement and forget their fear. The emotions shift and the feelings change to the thrill of sky diving.

Fear is not danger anymore, but instead is enjoyed in controlled environments. Instead of the old fight or flight response to predators, people have moved on. It may seem strange that people are scared while knowing they are perfectly safe, but Carey explained, "Emotion is involuntary but still affected by cognitive." People know they are not really going to die but it affects their perception.

Scary experiences vary person by person. Fear and excitement have be-

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- Phillip Rowland**

come intrinsically connected in horror movies and even rollercoasters. Fear as an emotional high is most often enjoyed by teenagers and young adults.

The older someone is the less likely they are to seek out fear. Adolescents and young adults are naturally more open to experiences than seniors, "As a whole we get less open," said Carey. The excitement value of fear has been employed by the horror genre.

Horror movies vary from psychological horror movies to others that rely on jump scares or gore. Horror movies have a variety of avenues available with disfigured humanoid monsters or phobia inducing clowns or bloody slashers.

Classical horror monsters such as zombies and vampires originated from dark horror pieces.

Senior **Scott Howard** has watched 107 horror movies in the last two and a half months. He said there are "five main genres of horror." Howard defined them as paranormal, slasher, gore, monster, and psychological.

Fear is heavily manipulated by the unknown and movies use paranormal or mysterious ghosts, spirits and haunted houses to build a mysterious atmosphere that build fear.

"The scariest is probably psychological cause it messes with your mind," he said. Howard finds that it's not the jump scares but instead the ideas and thoughts afterwards that make them the scariest.

However, some movies the scariest part is the possibility it could happen in real life. Howard talked about the Saw franchise, "It's just one guy on a mission to teach the world to appreciate life."

These movies build anticipation to heighten fear in the audience. Horror is about build up. A chase is about the tension and anticipation. This may seem strange. Why would people be scared when they know what will happen?

Fear is not simply ignored by a conscious decision or prior understanding. Even haunted houses can still scare people even when they expect to be scared. Junior Cole Stover worked at the haunted house, Nightmare on Edgewood, and laughed saying, "Nearly ev-

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ery group screams." People want to be scared.

Stover would dress up in a black morphsuit and later use black face paint and then would hide in the dark maze officially called Insanity. When guests walked into the dark, fog-filled room they would be unaware of the green lasers used to create a layer they could not see below. Stover would jump out and scare them from under the laser lights.

Phobias are a major component of fear. They can range anywhere from spiders or clowns to heights or closed spaces. These phobias are more common than many other more specific and rarer phobias but they all have similar effects. As such many horror movies use phobias to scare the audience.

Phobias and fears are similar but not the same. A fear of a spider will not significantly impair someone but a phobia may lead them to be physically impaired or significantly change their behavior.

An example Carey gave was that someone afraid of worms may not go outside after it has rained because there are worms on the pavement. Common phobias are generally related to dangerous species as people are more biologically predisposed.

So why are clowns a staple of horror movies and a common fear? Carey theorized that people are used to rec-

ognizing the familiar and the strange, exaggerated features signals "stranger danger".

Clowns have been feared for years according to Smithsonian writer Linda Rodriguez McRobbie and only recently have they become figures aimed at children. Add a real life killer clown and clowns have become the epitome of the horror genre.

Freshman Joseph Bik said that his favorite horror movie is the first from the Chucky franchise, Child's Play. Clowns have been in many popular movies such as It, which topped box office gross numbers.



Movie poster for the Saw reboot, Jigsaw

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R F L I G H T: P O N D T O F E A R

HORROR MOVIES THAT PREY ON FEAR

Art and text by Adam Crozier

CLASSIC

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

Considered the first zombie movie, George A. Romero's masterpiece *Night of the Living Dead* sent shivers down the spine of generations with cannibalistic ghouls and society in chaos.

RETRO

Stephen King's *It* is a dark take on childhood nostalgia. Sure, the notion clowns are far from innocent, energetic entertainers is considered a trope now. But pop culture has the creepiness of Tim Curry to thank in part for this redefintion.

IT

MODERN

GET OUT

Written and directed by Jordan Peele, *Get Out* begins with an optimistic angle that racism is dying, but then reverses course to show bigotry. As a modern mouthpiece, Peele isn't thin skinned as he shows the horrors of racism.

THE EXORCIST

Directed by William Friedkin, William Peter Blatty's *The Exorcist* is straight psychological torture for its audience as well as its fictional characters. Linda Blair's all-star performance steals the show as one possessed. Pea soup, anyone?

The Blair Witch Project had hordes of people flock to release, perhaps regrettably. Its early screenings had persons vomiting as they left theaters. The movie exudes eerie, but the horror came from the empathy moviegoers had for the lost trio, pushing people past mental barriers.

THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT

Expanding on the film from 1990, this movie takes elements from the retro work and book, but wholly offers something intriguing. Regardless, this film managed to become the highest-grossing R-rated film of all time.