

# Nightmare seekers get adrenalin highs at movies

By Pete Schmitz

If you spent this summer going to a lot of movies, then the last three months probably will be remembered as the season of horror.

The latest issues of *Variety* include a list of the 50 top grossing pictures of the year. On that list are several of the fear flicks released this year. These trends indicate people are actively seeking "nightmares."

Scare-seekers are flocking to theaters to satisfy excitement needs with adrenalin highs.

## movie review

Dr. William Reid, a psychiatrist on the staff at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, said some terror films have "stimulation value."

Reid said individuals perceive the same movie differently, thus, "the more the person can associate it with personal things, the more frightening it is."

He said he found many scenes in *Allen* effective because of their similarities to the unconscious thoughts of some people.

REID ADDED the more realistic the situations in movies, the more frightening they become for many viewers.

Capitalizing on an audience's need to be scared, yet safe, the distributors of *Prophecy* announced "our death is about to be born."

This year George Hamilton found popularity in another horror movie with *Love At First Bite*, a spoof of *Dracula* films.

Two of this year's surprise sleepers were *Warriors* and *Halloween*. Both violent low-budget pictures.

Also successful and still going strong is *Dracula*, which, unfortunately, is the best

of the fright flicks that have been around.

This upbeat and lavish remake of the 1930s classic was saved by its star, Frank Langella, who was seedy and sexy enough to captivate the audience.

As Lucy, Kate Nelligan also was good. She brilliantly conveys the character's dissatisfaction with the constraints of Victorian morality and her stuffy, demanding fiancé.

It is easy to sympathize with her desire for the blood justing Count. Sadly, the film was weakened by a screenplay which either ignored or distorted elements of the vampire myths.

**MORE DISAPPOINTING** was the movie *Allen*. Until the characters are confronted by creatures from outer space, they were so inert that it was hard to care about their survival.

The lifelessness of the crew members, along with a few other elements, could have been developed into an interesting theme. However, nothing of interest emerges in the script, since the director seems preoccupied only with shocking the viewers.

The monsters used in the film for fright value resembled harmless rejects from the *Muppet Show*.

Worse yet for entertainment was the *Amityville Horror* with its trite lines, rigid acting and predictable tricks to unnerve onlookers.

After observing the audience, it appeared the movie had nothing to offer except amusement at the expense of those who made the film. The caption on the poster, "For God's Sake Get Out," may have been intended for those who bought tickets and entered the theater.

Generally, the terror films have garnered poor reviews from critics. But this has not stopped American audiences (who in the Vietnam era seemed so peace starved) from paying \$3 to \$4 to see blood drained out of babies, women strangled and men sliced up like tomatoes.



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