"Boo" A Short Film on Jump Scares

Tatum McGovern

Chapman University, tmcgovern@chapman.edu

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Introduction
Jump scares have been a technique used in horror movies for decades. Preparing for a jump scare will ultimately make the situation worse as you are more likely to be caught off guard from the setting, music, lighting, etc. In an article by Christian Grillon, a psychopshysiologist, he did a study where he makes the subjects anxious and then startles them, “the startle reflex can be increased by 100 to 300 percent,” (Guarino, Inverse.com) My film focuses on cinematic techniques and psychological fears to create a successful jump scare.

Research
Prior to creating my film I had to research exactly what a jump scare entailed. To make a successful jump scare I need to understand the psychological fears of the viewer and the patterns in which to design the scare. A good horror film has an underlying atmosphere, a moody visual undertone that creates a sense of dread, wonder and mystique and leaves us with snapshots of unforgettable imagery, not just strictly jump scares. According to Calvo from Filmmaker Magazine "you can not focus on just shock factor, as it desensitizes us. But focus more on understanding our collective fears and weaving them into our stories so we can exploit those fears with established cinematic techniques."

Methodology
I investigated and researched how to strategically implement a jump scare in my film through the directors perspective and the psychological perspective. I found that a successful scare requires strategic camera angles, setting, lighting, and sophisticated editing. During my film I used the first person point of view angle, the worms eye viewpoint, a wide view point, and many more. Using multiple angles shows the setting and gives more context. For the setting I mainly used a dark and low lit room to create an eerie feeling. As for editing, the music and quietness of the film with the emphasis on little sounds and noises throughout, leads up to the final scare. According to Renee from No Film School "The backbone of a good jump scare is punctuation -- a loud and sudden bang, a flash of light, an element that becomes the focus of the shot through a cut or zoom."

Results
Here is a screenshot from a scene where an eerie sound was heard upstairs.

Conclusion
Jump scares are an effective technique used in horror films if executed correctly. Highlighting that an event or situation can pop up out of nowhere and scare us is very relevant today. We may think we know when the scare is coming and even if the audience believes the scare is about to occur, it will hopefully still be effective. I took my research, film techniques, and editing skills to a new level during this project.

Select Sources
Calvo, A.D. “So You Want to Make a Horror Film? On Jump Scares and Other Basics of Fright.” Filmmaker Magazine.
Renée. “Basics Tips and Concepts to Keep in Mind as You Make Your Horror Film.” No Film School, 4 Nov. 2014.