

SPECIAL ISSUE: The Business of Scare

CableFAX Daily™

Wednesday — October 23, 2013

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 24 / No. SPECIAL

ADVERTISEMENT

IF CONTENT IS KING HORROR RULES

 **\$3.7 BILLION**
worldwide box office to date ¹

 **94 MILLION**
TV fans ²

 **\$550 MILLION**
TV ad revenue from 34 genre shows ³

If you're ready to tap into a **MULTIBILLION**
dollar business, contact the network that
knows what subscribers want.

**FEAR
NET**

For more info contact Mike Severino
310.255.3627 / Mike_Severino@FEARnet.com

1- Source: www.boxofficemojo.com (horror, thriller, and suspense titles, 1/1/2013 – 10/14/2013)*

2- Source: Nielsen NPower, 12/26/11-3/31/13, average reach by quarter (15-minute qualifier), persons 2+, genre programs (excludes breakouts and specials) on broadcast and cable (666 Park Avenue, American Horror Story, Arrow, Bates Motel, Being Human, Cuff, Dexter, Face Off, Falling Skies, The Following, Fringe, Grimm, Haven, Lost Girl, The Neighbors, Red Widow, Supernatural, Teen Wolf, True Blood, Vampire Diaries, Walking Dead), Live+7, combined schedule.

3- Nielsen AdViews, 7/1/12 – 6/30/13*

CableFAX Daily™

Wednesday — October 23, 2013

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 24 / No. SPECIAL

Scaring Up Ratings: Horror Crawls Out from Under the Bed

Not long ago, cable could strike fear into the hearts of consumers simply by sending the monthly bill. Today, cable nets are scaring the public in a different way, and consumers seem to love it.

With the critical and ratings successes of shows like **AMC's** "The Walking Dead," cable's top-rated series last year; **A&E's** "Bates Motel;" **FX's** "American Horror Story" (AHS), which led all series with 17 Emmy nominations; **Showtime's** recently-completed "Dexter;" and **HBO's** "True Blood," cable programmers now realize that it's good business to scare the tar out of viewers. An added bonus is that as a rule horror skews young and can be cheaper to produce than other genres. This and more have led many to conclude that horror, traditionally aimed at a niche of blood-thirsty enthusiasts, has moved into the mainstream.

This development has brought a new acceptance to horror.

A sign of the new climate is the fact that more nets are joining the costume party. Earlier this month, **Lifetime** bowed "Witches of East End," a series based on a *Melissa de la Cruz* novel and starring *Julia Ormond*. Just this weekend **Destination America** enlarged the horror category with "When Ghosts Attack," talking to people who've been smacked around by spirits.

In this monster-friendly atmosphere, dark programming isn't just for Halloween anymore. Beside the shows noted above, those who fancy a good scare year-round and 24-7 can tune in to a pair of dedicated horror nets: **Chiller**, which features a coven of scary films on Saturday nights; and **FEARnet**, providing the usual scary movies, but also serving up foreign-language horror films, black comedies and even Saturday-morning spooky cartoons, suitable for monsters-in-training.

Extending the Horror

You don't need to believe in ghosts to realize horror is growing in cable and on movie screens. The evidence is stronger than a vampire's breath. Convinced that ratings king The Walking Dead has 'legs,' AMC earlier this year confirmed it's working on a sequel, although AMC GM *Charlie Collier* won't reveal too much. "From the beginning of The Walking Dead



SOFT SIDE, HARD NUMBERS: AMC chief *Charlie Collier* acknowledges *The Walking Dead* titillates horror fans but emphasizes the series has grown because viewers are interested in its characters, such as Rick (Andrew Lincoln, left). The season 4 premiere (Oct 13) was the series' top-rated ep ever, pulling in 16mln viewers, including 10.4mln 18-49s.

EXPEDITION FEAR

MOVIES FROM GREAT DIRECTORS AROUND THE GLOBE!

- Guillermo del Toro (MEXICO)
- Kinji Fukasaku (JAPAN)
- Tom Six (NETHERLANDS)
- Stefan Ruzowitzky (AUSTRIA)
- Christopher Smith (ENGLAND)

FRIDAYS
10 P ET / 7 P PT

CABLEFAX DAILY (ISSN 1069-6644) is published daily by Access Intelligence, LLC ● www.cablefax.com ● 301.354.2101 ● Editor-in-Chief: Amy Maclean, 301.354.1760, amaclean@accessintel.com ● Exec Editor: Michael Grebb, 323.380.6263, mgrebb@accessintel.com ● Editor: Joyce Wang, 301.354.1828, jwang@accessintel.com ● Community Editor: Kaylee Hultgren, 212.621.4200, khultgren@accessintel.com ● Advisor: Seth Arenstein ● Assoc Publisher: Amy Abbey, 301.354.1629, aabbey@accessintel.com ● Sales Mgr: Susan Kim, 301.354.2010, skim@accessintel.com ● Dir of Market Dev: Laurie Hofmann, 301.354.1796, lhofmann@accessintel.com ● Prod: Jo Fato, jfato@accessintel.com ● Diane Schwartz, SVP Media Comms Group ● Scott Gentry, Dir of Bus Dev, sgentry@accessintel.com ● Group Subs: Amy Russell, 301.354.1599, arussell@accessintel.com ● Sub Questions, Client Services: 301.354.2101, clientservices@accessintel.com
Access Intelligence, LLC, 4 Choke Cherry Road, 2nd Floor, Rockville, MD 20850

we've had people ask us what is happening in other parts of the world during this zombie apocalypse," he says. "Now we're all going to find out." Rumors abound that FX will double down on scare by augmenting AHS with a serialized version of the *Bret Easton Ellis* thriller "American Psycho," about an investment banker who redefines the term 'killer profits.' After ending *Dexter* late last month, Showtime is set to be transfused in 2014 with "Penny Dreadful," starring *Josh Hartnett*, *Eva Green* and *Billie Piper*. Described as a psychosexual horror series, Penny will explore the origins of Frankenstein, Dracula and other literary monsters.

Of course some executives interpret things differently. "I'm not sure horror is going mainstream... I think the mainstream has gone to horror," says FEARnet chief *Peter Block*. "Viewers," he says, "want something different... and with the proliferation of networks, executives have to dig deeper, mining areas they weren't necessarily looking at before... once [there were a few successes with horror], networks realized how acceptable it is to the public."

Searching for something different was exactly what A&E svp *Tana Nugent Jamieson* was doing several years ago. "We wanted to make a change [in our programming] so I asked an agent to bring me 10 scripts and ideas that he thought would be the last things A&E would do," she says. The unfinished *Bates Motel* script that the agent delivered "had a unique voice and an edge to it... we wanted to go darker and more serialized, and [Bates] just made so much sense in terms of the evolution of where we were going." Additional evidence that the climate for horror has changed: "If it had been five years earlier, I think it would have been a hard one for us to bite off on," Jamieson says. Praised by critics in its freshman year, *Bates* is A&E's youngest-skewing scripted show. The series averaged 2.7mln total viewers, with 1.5mln 18-49s.

True to horror's ability to include many types of story elements, *Bates*, *Dead* and *AHS* are more than just scary. *Bates* showrunners *Carlton Cuse* and *Kerry Ehrin* evolved the "Psycho" backstory series into a character study of a boy and his mother, "although that boy goes very wrong, as we know," Jamieson says. The same reverence for character is seen in *The Walking Dead*, AMC's *Collier* argues. "It's a show about character, leadership and survival... set against the backdrop of a zombie apocalypse," he says. "There definitely are elements that appeal to genre fans, but the audience has grown... because of what the show brings in addition to that." *Collier* cites the foreword to a comic book by *Robert Kirkman* that inspired the series. It reads, in part, "This book is more about watching Rick survive than it is about watching zombies



SHOWERED WITH PRAISE: Despite bucolic scenes, A&E's *Bates Motel* sits firmly in the horror genre. It's also the net's youngest-skewing series and has earned rave reviews for *Vera Farmiga* and *Freddie Highmore*.

FEAR NET FEAR NET BER
31 DAYS OF TREATS
Trick'r Treat
HALLOWEEN MARATHON
STARTING 10/31 @ 6AM ET
ONLY ON **FEAR NET**

pop around the corner and scare you.'

FX's original programming chief *Nick Grad* also downplays horror when discussing AHS. "We didn't [do American Horror Story] because we thought, 'Oh, if we do horror, people will come,'" he says. "We're in the business of doing shows that are about character and point of view, not genre."

Still, elements of horror are important to the tone of *Dead*, AHS and *Bates*. "We wanted to be true to ["Psycho," the Alfred Hitchcock film that inspired *Bates Motel*]," Jamieson says. "We didn't want to do a G-rated version of it," she adds. Regarding the gorier aspects of *Dead*, Collier says "there are certain elements that are obviously necessary for the story..." He quickly adds, "of course we also have included advisories to make sure viewers have more than the information they need to make viewing decisions..." While network execs admit horror's blood and violence could scare away viewers, Grad didn't share the same concerns for AHS. "If you're squeamish, you're not watching FX series in the first place," he says.

Broadcasters Get Their Blood On

Another sign that horror has moved to the mainstream: Even stodgy broadcasters are dipping their toes into the slime in search of audiences. Need we remind you of the success **CBS** had with "Under the Dome," the adaptation of a novel by horror master *Stephen King*? The series averaged 15mln viewers during an otherwise slow summer. And **NBC**, whose entertainment unit is run by former Showtime exec *Bob Greenblatt*, is set to debut a sexy "Dracula" later this week, with *Jonathan Rhys Meyers* as the chief bloodsucker. In addition, the peacock network has renewed horror's most famous foodie, *Hannibal Lecter*, for a second season of "Hannibal." Interestingly, Hannibal will bite into 2014 with a cable-like 13 eps. In addition, broadcast and cable are said to be vying for a TV version of "The Exorcist."

Horror Moves to the A-List

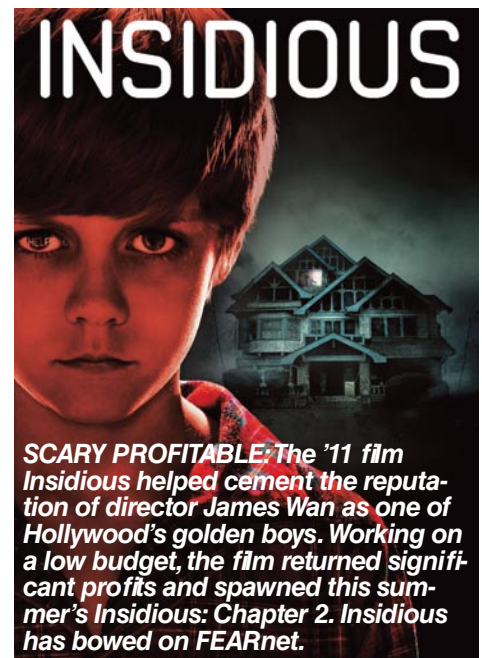
A boost to horror's move to the mainstream has come courtesy of the big screen, long the sole purview of truly scary content. Several factors have placed horror more prominently on Hollywood's radar. First is the appearance of A-list talent in horror films, including *Nicole Kidman* in "Stoker," released in March, and *Julianne Moore*, who stars in a remake of the classic "Carrie," which opened last weekend.

In addition, mainline Hollywood has become more accepting of ghosts, werewolves and other hideous creatures because they were profitable this summer. There have been "more top-grossing horror films [in 2013]... than ever," *The Hollywood Reporter* declared recently. During a weak summer season, the theatrical shining star was paranormal thriller "The Conjuring." Produced for less than \$20mln, the film grossed \$300mln worldwide. Several other horror flicks with similar low budgets, including "Insidious: Chapter 2," have eclipsed the \$85mln mark this year, THR said. In terms of low budgets, horror has an advantage over other genres. "You don't need big stars to sell the concept... [Horror] relies more on mood, lighting and scares," says FEARnet's Block. "That said," he adds, "people were willing to see [The Conjuring and Insidious: Chapter 2]... because they were well executed."

FEARnet has a library full of horror movies, but it is delving into originals and other surprises, including a weekend programming block featuring cartoons with a horror bent. "When we had a chance to do our first original piece I think everyone was expecting it to be a horror anthology show or a remake of 'The X Files,'" Block says of "Holliston," which debuted last year. "I wanted to do a 3-camera sitcom with a laugh track simply to show the breadth [of the genre]... Sometimes what makes a scare work is the comic relief just before it."

Cable Enters the Fray

While the genre is far from new, television wasn't always as receptive to horror as it is today. While broadcast had occasional success with fright, such as "The Twilight Zone" (1959-64) and the pioneering "Alfred Hitchcock Presents" (1955-65), horror before modern-day cable was largely a theatrical experience for several reasons. Most important, films could show more violence than TV. But "cable has been willing to push the envelope" on violence, equaling "anything you see in the theaters today," Block says. Still, just six years ago Hollywood felt HBO was gambling when it launched *True Blood*; ditto Showtime's launch of *Dexter* two years earlier, in 2006. Both succeeded, with *Blood* sucking in 5.5mln viewers in season four, while the Sept. 22 series finale of the sanguinary *Dexter* was the highest-rated show and the largest viewed original episode in Showtime history (2.8mln viewers at 9pm, 3.3mln viewers in repeated viewings later in the evening). As we said, at the moment, horror pays. — *Seth Arenstein*



SCARY PROFITABLE: The '11 film *Insidious* helped cement the reputation of director James Wan as one of Hollywood's golden boys. Working on a low budget, the film returned significant profits and spawned this summer's *Insidious: Chapter 2*. *Insidious* has bowed on FEARnet.