

Analysis, Reflection and Marketing Strategy

“The Lost Children” By Jean Patterson

Introduction

In this essay I will be showcasing the research I have undertaken in order to know where the film I wrote “The Lost Children”, would fit into the varying short horror media platforms that currently exist and how I will distribute it. “The Lost Children” is a short horror focussing on two filmmakers who travel to RoseHill Quarry to find out the truth about the ghost stories. “Forty years ago, three children walked into the woods and never returned, now some say that they simply got lost and died of starvation, but a lot of people believe it has something to do with the ghost of a woman who was murdered here back in the 1930’s. And we are here to find out which is true.”

I will also be analysing the paranormal film that has influenced my short horror film and how it has helped me to know how to use market research in the future.

Blair Witch Project

“The Lost Children” was a concept that was centered around the idea of found footage and one of the most influential works was from the 1999 Blair Witch. After watching this film I was inspired to use the same style that they had used with all hand-held camera footage, the idea of going to a place where people had disappeared and the idea of not actually showing the “Ghost” or “Witch”.

“The movie is like a celebration of rock-bottom production values--of how it doesn't take bells and whistles to scare us. It's presented in the form of a documentary. We learn from the opening titles that in 1994 three young filmmakers went into a wooded area in search of a legendary witch: "A year later, their footage was found." The film's style and even its production strategy enhance the illusion that it's a real documentary.” 1.1

The Blair Witch Project ushered in a new era of viral film marketing, they marketed the film as a “True Story”, pretending that these events had actually happened. Even to the point of putting up missing posters for the actors, this changed the entire feel of the film and made the audience even more spooked as they believed it was all real and they believed it so much that the audience actually sent condolence cards to their family’s.

The marketing team for “Blair Witch” created such a hype for the film that by the time it was released it was the most talked about film that year. Six months

MISSING



Heather Donahue
Age: 22 Height: 5'4" Weight: 127lb
Eyes: hazel Hair: brown



Joshua Leonard
Age: 23 Height: 5'10" Weight: 162lb
Eyes: blue Hair: blonde



Michael Williams
Age: 24 Height: 5'8" Weight: 149lb
Eyes: brown Hair: brown

before it was released into festivals they created a website that that gave the audience information about the film, the characters and throughout the build up to the film they would add more details such as pictures, interviews, fake news stories and basically just build up this great mystery that everyone wanted to solve or to know what happened. This made sure that people went to see the film and this I think engaged the audience into believing that they could have an impact on the story too, they would see all these different clues and be adding them together and working them out for themselves and I think that is the key to marketing films like this, you have to get the audience involved and make them have a vested interest in what's happening.

I would use this type of marketing to market "The Lost Children", but obviously after such a big success as the Blair Witch, it's almost impossible to create a hype like that again. But it can be done in different ways, using snapchat and instagram, I've seen countless snapchat and instagram stories that are about a series I love and it will drop hints and little clues as to what will happen for example in the next episode or even showing the cast behind the scenes and the big difference with these platforms is that the stories only last for 24 hours, so as soon as people know there is something about it online they will search and find it so they don't miss out on any clues or clips.

Similar to this use of online marketing is the boom in youtube channels dedicated to horror that have emerged over the last decade.

Crypt TV

Crypt TV is a YouTube channel that has over 2.95M followers and was created six years ago that is dedicated to bringing people who love scary stories together. They collaborate with storytellers from all around the world to bring the next generation of monsters, ghosts and scary stories to us.

They upload new films every monday, wednesday and friday, giving everyone a chance to watch something they like and they also use teaser trailers to get the hype going for each film. This channel would be perfect to use to showcase "The Lost Children" as it fits with their theme of the horror genre, the only difference being they focus more on the monsters and actually seeing them whereas with mine you don't see the "Monster", only a doll that represents the lost children.

Alter

Alter is a new horror brand that focuses on the human condition using warped and uncanny perspectives. They produce and release feature films, short films and series, giving a new generation of filmmakers and horror audiences a new place to distribute and watch films. Similar to Crypt TV, they release new films every week on their youtube channel.

I believe this would also be a good platform to distribute "The Lost Children", as they have a big audience with 780K subscribers and as they focus more on the human condition in their horror's I feel that it would fit better than Crypt TV as they focus on the monster, whereas my film focuses on the human reaction to things they can't see, causing their fear, sadness, pain and horror to shine through.

Demographic

After researching the demographic for horror films in general, I found that statistically 42% of the horror audience is women and 58% being men and also found that the horror genre tends to attract younger audiences, predominantly under 25s.

Having found this out, I knew who my audience for “The Lost Children”, would be and how I would market my film to target this audience.

“The Lost Children” Market Strategy

Using the information I have learnt from the research I have undertaken I came up with the market strategy for the film. As I said earlier I will be using an idea similar to the “Blair Witch”, making a website and portraying my film as a true story, which is a lot harder to do these days as everyone has access to the internet and can search for answers.

So I will be setting up a website with some details of the story, setting up a instagram and snapchat where for a few months before I will be “leaking” clues, crime scene pictures, police reports and audio clips. Using this to hype the audience up about the film and to grab people’s attention, mostly using the story option on both so the audience only has 24 hours to find it and view it before it disappears, once the film has been out for a month then I will release all the clips, audio and clues onto the websites and other platforms.

I will also be using “Paranormal Wales”, my university's new paranormal web series to distribute my film, this will also get my film out into the university’s community as it will be broadcast on every UWTSD Campus.

Reference

1.1 Blair Witch Project review - Robert Ebert

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-blair-witch-project-1999>