

QLH-S3E10M: 80s Horror

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SPEAKERS

Jessi Chartier, Jen Myers

J Jessi Chartier 00:04

Welcome to Quiet Little Horrors. Here we talk about the films that creep under your skin and take up residence in the dark. Let's talk about horror movies from the 1980s.

J Jen Myers 00:22

We talk about movies. So we're going to talk about parts of movies that may be spoilers. If that doesn't bother you, you can keep on listening. Or you can hit the pause button and go watch the films that we're talking about before you continue here. Consider yourself warned.

J Jessi Chartier 00:38

So we don't have a synopsis for this one. But the general theme of this episode, this mini, I should say, is us talking about horror movies from the 80s. As a almost like a genre horror movies became really popular, and almost mainstream from the late 70s, all the way into the 80s. And the 80s was really kind of the the birth, if you will of the modern horror movie. And obviously, there are many sub genres and semi fractions from there. But we wanted to talk about the 1980s in general, because it's just it's a great, it's a great genre and a great era of horror films. So, Jen, like, talk to me a little bit about your experience with the 1980s Horror movement. I know that in one of our previous episodes, we talked a little bit about how horror movies were, they approached us differently and found us different. Like for me, it was a collective community where I loved being able to like watch movies with people and laugh at them or be scared together. It was like this, like community based thing. And for me, that happened in the 80s. So that's how I come to the 80s horror genres is through, honestly, nostalgia and just growing up with it. But what about you? How did you kind of come to terms with what's going on in the 80s? And what does it mean to you?

J Jen Myers 01:58

Yeah, no, I have a very different experience, which I'm kind of bummed out about, though. You have like a you feel like you have the good one. And we talked about like on your on the last episode, do you have like the perfect origin story for horror movies? So yeah, I didn't really have that there wasn't anybody else around that was into that. And I think that I, I was never like, forbidden from watching horror movies. But it definitely was a genre that was kind of looked down on there's a lot of kind of, like genres that I kind of understood that were, you know, for lack of a better term considered trashy, and I mean, within my immediate like, familial circle, right. And I obviously do not think this at all, or if I do, I think about in a good way. But yeah, so there are things that I that I just knew that I didn't I wasn't really supposed to engage with. And I didn't have the resources or frankly, when I was very young, the rebelliousness to engage with them. Anyway, I was also like, very much isolated in rural Ohio. And we didn't have things like internet and stuff like that. So I kind of came into horror in general, not through movies, but through books, because those were easier for me to kind of explore things with. And then I really didn't kind of circle back around the horror movies until I was all grown up. And then I guess it was kind of nice, in a way, because when there's like a whole realm for me to explore, and I can and these these days, I have access to pretty much everything I would want. So, and I think I mentioned on the podcast before. So that's basically what I've been doing the past few years is just stuffing myself with horror films, because now I'm kind of like, Oh, I like these, and I can watch them. So I've just been kind of burning through everything that I possibly can. And the 80s are an interesting time because I feel like when you look at it retrospectively, there's like the big hitters, right? There's like the slashers, and which, you know, all that stuff I hadn't had I hadn't seen for. Well, yeah, until very recently, I think almost everything I hadn't really sat down and watch, even like Halloween or Nightmare on Elm Street or things like that, until within the past few years. So you can start there. But I think what's most interesting to me is like you mentioned, there's like this explosion. But what that also does, and probably the direct to video market plays into this too. It also created this space for a lot of weird movies. So it wasn't just like the mainstream hitters, which are good too. And a lot of ways. You had the popularity of them, and they're like already on the fringes, and then they have their own fringes. And what was happening on those far flung fringes is really wild. And that's what I think is most interesting to me right now where I am in this point in time where I've gone through most of the classics, like the classics, but I'm really fascinated by some of the weird things that kind of like popped up around them and that there's still room to kind of explore there.

J

Jessi Chartier 04:58

Yeah, I think you hit on a really good point. are aware for if I'm going to talk about the business for a hot second, now, full disclosure, I'm not in the business. I'm not familiar with it as well as I used to be. But I think that it's worthwhile reminding everyone and talking about the fact that it is a business. And so like, what happened, I think in the 80s and late 70s, something happened in the late 70s, where producers and studios were like, hey, these could be blockbuster films like they're not the arthouse films they are, they are a return on investment is very high. So like Nightmare on Elm Street and Halloween, like all of those movies were very financially successful in, in the, in the business. And so because of that, I mean, it's just like any other industry, when you have big hitters, you're gonna have more investors who are interested in chasing some of those similar threads, because the market and the the interest from the market is now growing. So like you go where the market tells you, right, so that's where a lot of those big blockbuster blockbusters came to be. And because of that surge, that also opened up a lot of financial ability for people to play, like you were talking about. Films used to be on the the horror films used to be on like the super fringes, and now they were more mainstream, and

that just that just opened up doors financially for filmmakers to kind of tinker and play even on the indie side, because there was more likelihood of a big hitter. Because I mean, every at the end of the day, people need to be paid. So I think that it gave opportunity for people to just try new things and and play in that genre. And then those the the true art houses were still able to do the art houses, but it became like a cultural phenomenon where people could talk about it, and you were no longer it wasn't as stigmatized to watch and enjoy and have a fan of the horror films. I mean, it's even to a point where we have with so Jen and I are in Chicago, and there's a coffeehouse in Chicago that is dedicated to 1980s horror films. And it's just like, why, why are we so fascinated with it? And I think it's just because there was the surge, of suddenly making something that was faux pas, okay. And because of that, it opened up even more areas for us to explore where now all of a sudden, like queer horror started to be a thing. And body horror started to become a thing, like people could explore things that were, I don't want to say more sensational, because that's not the case. But it just gave, it gave breadth and freedom to people to be like, you know, what, there are even other avenues that we, as humans are uncomfortable with, and we should explore them because that's, in my opinion, what horror films really do is it allows us to explore the places that we're uncomfortable exploring, right? And so, I love I love the fact that in from a cultural standpoint, and from an industry standpoint, it just kind of paved the way and gave give us opportunity to play with these things. And I agree with you not you know, my I saw Nightmare on Elm Street when I was a kid. And then of course, I was terrified to go to sleep and then but I started to like, as I grew older, horror film started to like, follow along with me, like when I was in when I was in high school and early like, kind of just sexually discovering myself, like I fell in love with Bram Stoker's Dracula, you know, like Francis Ford Coppola version of it. And like that Gothic horror, and it just kind of like, no matter where I was in life, there was a genre for me within the within that larger genre that I could explore. And it was, that was just, it was just beautiful. Okay, so the 80s Horror, though 80s work. So we both watched or are coming to the table to discuss an 80 film, an 80s horror film, to just kind of explore it and talk about it and what it means to us and why this particular film. And then in our bigger episode that you all will hear later on, we're going to be talking about a specific horror film that is called near dark from the 80s. And I'm really excited about that. But what Okay, so let's talk about our horror films. Jen, what did you come to the table to talk about?

J Jen Myers 09:15

All right, well, I will jump in. And I wanted to talk about The Hunger. Have you seen The Hunger?

J Jessi Chartier 09:23

I have not, but I'm not on the top of my list.

J Jen Myers 09:26

Yes, well, it should be. And, you know, we shouldn't also make a mention here that when we're recording this in October of 2022, the Criterion Channel currently has a 80s horror collection of films. And so I feel like that collection really encompasses or rather, encapsulates what I was

talking about earlier. These kind of like, fringe horror, so you know, this isn't necessarily a collection of slashers it's got, you know, I mean, some things are kind of close to that or near or that, but this has got some of the weird, slightly weirder things in there. So,

J Jessi Chartier 10:05

I mean anything with David Bowie, and Susan Sarandon is like, Sign me up.

J Jen Myers 10:11

Well, yeah, *The Hunger* is definitely it's one of those films too, that if there's any kind of a definition of cult film, this is one of them because it was a huge financial disaster when it came out, because nobody got it. And that's why that's what I'm saying. I'm saying nobody got it, nobody understood this. But then it really got picked up by people who, you know, like good things, and realize, oh, this is a great movie. And it's definitely one of those things where it's, this is not a film that leans heavily on narrative, the whole film, I mean, it does have a storyline and but it's, it's kind of a vibe, it can save you are into this vibe, it's just gonna be one of those things. I feel like you are 100% in love with this movie, are you just like maybe not on your frequency, you know, and that's cool. It is 100% on my frequency. So I really like it. So let's run down a little bit of what you get in this. It opens also with a performance by Bauhaus. So if anybody's into that singing Bela Lugosi is dead, which is, you know, also one of my favorite bands. So when I wasn't watching horror movies, like I said, I was reading books that I was watching or listening to dark music, so I was like, huge into goth music. I was a huge fan of Bauhaus and had like, posters on my wall and stuff like that, but wasn't watching horror movies. Isn't that wild? Anyway, so *The Hunger* starts out with this just really great, stylish couple, who are played by David Bowie, and Catherine Deneuve. I'm really bad at pronouncing French names. I apologize to Catherine. And we learned that they are actually very well, Catherine is the vampire. David Bowie is also a vampire. But she She's like the the primary one. That makes sense. So she chooses her. Her, I guess he doesn't actually feed. So he is her her lover that she confers is a certain one that you'd say as a could be eternal life onto special humans so they can stay with her as her as her companions. Then he does, he does feed but it is she's kind of the, you know, she's she's the girl, she's the one. And then suddenly, a couple 100 years down the road for Mr. Bowie and I'm just going to use the actor's names because come on these, these two actors are so iconic, it doesn't even matter what the character's names are. He starts to rapidly age like, like all just like, it all catches up with him. And then he learns that it's not really eternal youth or eternal life that he that she was giving to her, to him. It that it's some point, this is going to happen. And so he goes to this, like, it's just like a doctor's clinic or a research facility Actually, it's more something more like that. To see if somebody who could who has been studying aging can help him but it's like so accelerated at this point that not only can no one help them that the there's a woman there or research Doctor Who sees them and as you know, kind of horrified seeing him leave and how like awful this is. And so she I think she She tracks him down. And so I don't want to get too deep into this. I know we say no spoilers, but since like other you know, you literally haven't seen this I'm not good. And when this is a mini anyway, but you have a situation where he's on his way out, and the young doctor who was played by Susan Sarandon is in. And so then he gets drawn into Catherine's web, and she has a new lover in there. So this is like, stylish 80s You know, goth music, vampires, very explicit lesbian sex scenes. That's one of the things this movie is famous for. It's just got like all these really great cultural elements coming together that hadn't really

been put together, but belong and you know, these type of horror themes, right? Like this is a very kind of classic theme for vampire stories and you've got all these things around eternal youth and life and what you would sacrifice in order to be with somebody or you know, what somebody needs to what it's like to be the vampire and what you have to do to keep people with you. A nice little thing about this not to be too squirrely, but I think you learned this fairly early on. So David Bowie does not actually die despite his rapid aging, but they are trapped in that and so she puts him up into the attic with the the coffins of all her other former lovers who are in the same state.

J Jessi Chartier 15:06

So they're just all crazy people in the air. Yes.

J Jen Myers 15:09

And then that's when she moves on to Susan Sarandon as her next lover. And that's it. So you know, there's so there's some really, I mean, that's not in the movie, I'll leave the rest of it there. But those that's kind of the main thing we've got going on. And, but like I said, the, the narrative is not as important as the themes. So you're really when you watch this, you are interested in the characters you're interested in, you know, what kind of feelings and perspectives they're living out, no pun intended. And then, again, just this whole vibe, this movie is so stylish. It's, it's so much about atmosphere, and, and atmosphere like these people create, which is really interesting. It's not just like boring people in a really interesting place. It's essentially fascinating people who kind of create this atmosphere, and it's so much fun to watch

J Jessi Chartier 16:03

it I'm looking at two things that it struck me is that one than the narrative reminds me a lot of Daughters of Darkness. Yes, but I'm looking at like images of it just to get like a little bit of background as you talk about it. And it looks like an 80s music video.

J Jen Myers 16:21

Yes. Well, I mean, it it literally kind of opens as an 80s movie music video like, it's there when Bauhaus is playing at a nightclub, like it's intercut with some of the of the some footage of the characters, but it's also not like, they're in the background. Like there are times when the band is like the lead singer Peter Murphy is literally front and center. And that's all you see in the film. So yeah, it's so your that's an excellent point is that a lot of this has the feeling of a, a very long, very artistic, very cool music video.

J Jessi Chartier 16:55

That sounds like an amazing empire. With vampires, not and lesbian sex. It's got everything you could want.

J Jen Myers 17:02

Exactly. I don't know what else anybody wants here.

J Jessi Chartier 17:06

That's amazing that that sounds like a very good film. And I need to definitely own it. What was your favorite part in the film?

J Jen Myers 17:12

You know, it is really hard to choose a favorite part because like I said, this, it's not so much a story that you feel like, Oh, I like that scene or this scene necessarily. It's, you really do kind of take it in as a whole. But I will say I really genuinely do like the opening scene. Well, I guess sequence is really more of a better word there. And like I said, I am a really big Bauhaus fan. But I really do like how it uses the music and the band's performance to introduce, like everything you need to know about the film and about the characters, and you see the characters moving through the world. And it just really kind of brings it all together. Really well. I love the opening of the film, it's so much fun to watch.

J Jessi Chartier 17:57

Awesome. I'm gonna have to add that to my list. All right. It's already at the top. Perfect.

J Jen Myers 18:04

All right, how about you? For me?

J Jessi Chartier 18:06

Well, so I decided that I wanted to watch some one of the ones that was on. So the Criterion Collection has an 80s horror film list. And I was like, You know what, I'm gonna go find something that I really want to watch. And so I decided to watch. Dario Argento is *Inferno*. Because I love *Suspiria*. And *Suspiria* is in the seven days, and I had forgotten that *Suspiria* was the kickoff of a three movie series, right? That were all around the three mothers was what they're referred to as and *Suspiria* was the first one. So as I was watching *Inferno*, and all of these same themes, and storylines keep coming up. I mean, it's shot exactly the same as the superior like, I think they even use the same sets, but there's like, the blue and red lighting that you see so heavily, is just everywhere in this movie. So it's clearly a Dario Argento film, like it is just like, you can't, you can't mistake it from the very, very beginning, even some of the same shots from *Suspiria*, like a woman who's running through the rain and then sitting in a taxicab. It's like, that's the opening scene like, okay, but from a so the story line is very, it's almost like it sets the stage. So the story line is about a woman who finds a book about the three mothers,

various spurious, like the mother of tears, the mother of size, and then the mother of darkness. And the mother of size is the storyline that you find in *Suspiria*. And you discover, I mean, it just basically explains everything you learned in *Suspiria* that the mothers are living in different houses around the world and that they, they bring, they're just kind of like harbingers of deaths, and this particular movie focuses on the mother of darkness. And it was, it was okay. Like, I won't lie. It wasn't really all I like I expected a lot more from a plotline, I think it was trying to be a little too. I think it was trying to be something that it wasn't. And it didn't lead enough into what it was. So appstore if you haven't seen it, the, the there's a woman in New York, and a woman in Rome. And the woman in New York finds a book that talks about the women and she ends up dying. But then you end up it takes a really long time for her to die, by the way, like, there's a lot of artistic shots. And there's a lot of scenes where it's like, why is this going on? Like it can be it can be done, it didn't move as fast as *Suspiria* did. And then when you get to Rome, same thing, like she discovered there's a woman who discovers about the three mothers and it didn't have as much of a plotline, as *Suspiria* did, when it came to like why the mother in that particular house was doing the things that she was doing. So like *Suspiria* was there to try and survive like that was her whole shtick was I'm going to survive I have my coven like we're gonna take over the world, like there was just a little bit of that. And in here, the mother was was killing people, but there didn't the she was almost like killing people that found out about her. So she was but she was not confined to a specific city, like people were dying in New York's people were dying in Rome. And then at the end, like, I know, we're not supposed to have too many spoilers, but like, at the end, I don't. I'm not. Maybe she died. Like,

J Jen Myers 21:44

I have watched this movie. And I literally could not. I cannot tell you almost anything that happens into it. And I liked it. I do. But ya know,

J Jessi Chartier 21:52

I just I'm just saying that to underscore your point, that it is ambiguous at best. Yeah, it's not his I feel like it's not his best work. I won't lie. And yeah, the narrative was, I think if no one else had stylized a film like this the way that he did, I could I could get more into it. But it was just kind of like, Oh, it's a *Suspiria*. But in New York and Rome. Yeah. With lots of a plot. So I don't know now. So then, of course, now I want to watch the third one, which is the mother of tears, which is ...

J Jen Myers 22:27

Tenebrae? I actually have not seen that one. I haven't either.

J Jessi Chartier 22:37

Just look it up. Looks really good at you. *Argento*. Oh, yeah. And *Tenebrae*. *Tenebrae*. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. And so now I gotta like, watch that. But I don't know. It was just kind of like, you know,

J Jen Myers 22:53

I don't know. Yeah, I get I get that I actually remember, liking this one a lot. Even though like I just said, I could not tell you what actually happened in it. I think that this is all this is like one of the clear. And I'm not a huge I think we've talked about this before, like giallo is not our, I think our either one of our favorite genres. And so I've seen quite a few, I'm not an expert on this, I've seen quite a few Argento films. Yeah, I'm not an expert on this, I will say that I really liked *Inferno*, because I do feel like it's one of the purest examples of what he does. You know, like, if you just like, throw any sort of care about narrative to the wind, and you're just like, I'm just going to watch these images. And just like appreciate these images. I think that this is the one where you're gonna get more the most on your return, and the most return on that particular type of investment. Right? Because it because it is visually super stylish. Like I've said a couple times where I don't really know. And so and if you care about that, you're not gonna have a good time with this. And I'm not saying that you should just know necessarily decide not to care, because, you know, that's, that that's a factor that goes into a movie is understanding what's going on or caring about what's going on. Right. But yeah, I think for I think when I watched it, I just was like, Okay, these are just some cool images that are being thrown at me, and I'm just gonna roll with it. And I just, like took it in on that level. But yeah, if you try to try to take it on another level, I do think it gets more complicated. Is there any? Because it is it is so visual, or was there any particular scene or moment that you really did like or really stuck out to you?

J Jessi Chartier 24:39

Yeah, I think. Yeah, I do. I mean, there were a lot of the same scenes, or it was I was drawn to a lot of the same similarities of what I liked about *Suspiria*. Like any kind of shots that had bright colors or beautiful sound, like I was definitely drawn to, but the one that I think that I remember the most clearly is that they're the In the New York House, there is a flooded basement. And a woman ends up dropping her keys into it. And so she has to she I don't know why she chooses this because it's New York, and why would you ever decide to do this, but whatever I'm going with it, she decides to dive into the water, which is crystal clear, of course, because it's a movie. And it's, you know, not full of rats or anything. But she dives into it and discovers it's an underground room. And that she, there's like all the history of the mother there. And but again, it's not explained in the story like, and then she finds dead bodies in there. So it's not, you don't really who that still have their eyes, which doesn't actually like the eyes of the first or whatever. But it was really cool. So what I liked about it, though, was they did spend a lot of time having her look around the room underwater, and the sound was really cool. And it was just beautifully shot. And there was enough tension and enough suspense, that it kept me engaged. So that's what I remember.

J Jen Myers 26:06

Yeah, no, I think that's a great example. That's probably my favorite, too. It's it's really, really nicely done from a visual standpoint. So but yeah, I think like I said, we've admitted before, that this is not really an area that an area of film that I think we're drawn to more than others, so No, and

J Jessi Chartier 26:26

I think what I did learn about it, when I walked away is how much I really liked *Suspria* as a contained movie, like, I don't mean, I'm not a fan of like the whole genre, but I really liked that particular movie. And I think that that's okay, like, I think so many people, there's always always the all you have to be pigeonholed into. No, there's none of that you people can like feel like, yeah, it is a little bit odd to

J Jen Myers 26:53

feel like of all film *Suspria* is a film that we need to explain or give a backstory to, you know, like, I enjoy kind of the larger mythology around it. But like, if ever there is a type of film that that doesn't need, you know, explanation, I feel like *Suspria* is a really good example of that. Is there any other movies and the criteria and channels 80s Horror lists that you haven't seen that you're planning on?

J Jessi Chartier 27:19

Yes. 100% I really want to see *Thirst* is in there. No, wait, that's on Shudder. That's in Shudder

J Jen Myers 27:26

somewhere. But that's worth watching. I actually think that's 80s But yeah, it's

J Jessi Chartier 27:31

not quite correct. You know what, let me actually look it up. Yes, I do. I have a list. Hold on. I've been there. What about you?

J Jen Myers 27:41

Yes, I let me see. So a lot of these I had seen there definitely. And I had some that I just recently saw that I was really surprised by I just saw *The Hidden* for the first time. And that was super fun. So let me see what is the other there's no,

J Jessi Chartier 28:00

I did watch *Dead and Buried*, I liked that I did to that was that one

J Jen Myers 28:07

I'm really glad more people are gonna get to see it.

J Jessi Chartier 28:09

Yeah, me too. I really want to watch Cat People. Because I've heard so much about Cat People. The Slumber Party Massacre is on the list of women who did a nice horror film. So I want to really, really watch that one. Near Dark is obviously one we're gonna watch. And Tetsuo the Iron Man,

J Jen Myers 28:28

yes, that's also on my list. I have not seen that. And also The Keep, which is a Michael Mann film that has been on my list for a while and I just haven't got to it. Which from what I understand is a little uneven, but also sounds pretty weird. And that's what I want out of a movie. So yeah,

J Jessi Chartier 28:45

exactly, exactly. I mean, there's just so many good movies from the 80s that kind of like, you know, take their time and give us a lot, a lot to talk about. Excellent, awesome. Well, the one we're going to watch next week is near dark. So if you're listening to this and you want to watch the movie before you listen to the episode, we will be watching at near dark, so get ready for a great 1987 film. And I believe that was Kathryn Bigelow is yes. Yeah. So if you really liked and she did hurt locker too, right? I believe so. Yeah. Yeah, I think that she and she won an Oscar for that too. But no, no. Oh,

J Jen Myers 29:31

I don't remember which one she she did win a Oscar. I don't remember which one for

J Jessi Chartier 29:35

I don't remember either. I don't remember either. But yeah, she's a phenomenal she also did Point Break

J Jen Myers 29:41

I loved Point Break. Yeah. She also co direct I think the first one she co directed which I'm gonna throw in here because you know, we have an audience of weirdos presumably. I say with love. She co directed a film called The Loveless look this up. Sorry, I went on this track without even Yes, The Loveless. If you want to go down that route, I highly recommend it. I actually think it is interesting to kind of pair with Near Dark, because it has a little bit of a, I don't know, I feel like a little bit of a retro sensibility, and also kind of like outsider characters. It also The Loveless is also I think it was with the first starring role of William Defoe. He's really great in it. So yeah, thrown that out there.

J Jessi Chartier 30:30

Yeah, I guess I didn't realize how much Kathryn Bigelow did. She has earned her way? Yeah, she did Blue Steel, which I didn't realize like She's a phenomenal action adventure around her. I really like a lot of her stuff. So I am very interested in seeing Near Dark, because she does do really she does a really nice job of weaving narrative and getting you hooked in to action adventure, which I think is really hard to do. Because so many people just want to like disengage from the movies when their action. They should have a really nice job of like making sure you actually care about people.

J Jen Myers 31:06

Yeah, so Good point.

J Jessi Chartier 31:08

So I think I'm, I'm really I'm really looking forward to Near Dark. All right. Well, if people want to find more out about us, Jen, where do they go?

J Jen Myers 31:18

We have a website at quietlittlehorror.com and we are on Twitter at [quiethorror](https://twitter.com/quiethorror) and on Instagram at [quietlittlehorror](https://www.instagram.com/quietlittlehorror). And if you want to talk to us and say things to us like movies that we could watch in the future, you can email us at Hello at [quietlittlehorror.com](mailto:Hello@quietlittlehorror.com)

J Jessi Chartier 31:40

And until then, good listeners have a lovely time. We will see you next time when we talk about near dark. Bye bye