

Halloween: The Grandfather of Slasher Horror Movie

By Adam Robb



What happens when the Boogeyman is real? What happens when the Halloween air becomes thick with despair and terror as you are stalked in the night? Legendary horror movie director, John Carpenter, tackles one of the most celebrated holidays in American culture, Halloween. The film chronicles the events after a sadistic serial killer escapes prison on Halloween night. With a heavy, dreadful atmosphere, Carpenter creates one of the best slasher films known to mankind.

The film was written and directed by John Carpenter, a legendary director who brought terrifying horror movies with practical effects, and was co-written by the late Debra Hill. Not intimidated by a limited estimated budget of \$325,000, Carpenter created one of the most influential horror films and gave us our most recognizable horror icon, Michael Myers. It's almost impossible not to recognize Myer's ghostly white, expressionless mask and his trusty kitchen knife. Carpenter's movie launched into a global sensation grossing \$47,160,000 and launching an abundance of sequels.

The film begins with a chilling vision of Michael Myers (Will Sanders) at the age of six killing his sister. The movie then jumps 15 years to the present, where Michael (Tony Moran) escapes from a psych ward. Michael's escape then results in him hunting down the people of Haddonfield. Michael sets his sights on young babysitter Laurie Strode (Jamie Lee Curtis) who is watching one of her young neighbors. As the night grows longer Laurie tries to outrun the masked killer and get help from Michael's psychiatrist Dr. Loomis (Donald Pleasence).

One of this film's biggest strengths is the building of an atmosphere. Carpenter excelled in this category. The problem with most horror movies in the present day is that they don't let

scenes play out for too long. Most horror films rely on a sudden image to appear on screen or a loud noise to serve as the horror element. Carpenter goes against this trope by allowing for the unknown and the dark to scare the viewers. Many of his scenes are kept long and drawn out so as a viewer you wonder where Michael is going to pop up next.

The music in the film is also a strong feature. Not only did Carpenter direct and produce this film, but he also provided the score to the film. His score is filled with largely synthy sounds and electronic music that creates a contrast. This allows for a heightened tone of anxiety that the characters feel throughout the film. Without the fantastic music in the background, this movie could have suffered greatly.

Carpenter also knows how to craft a horrifying villain. Before this movie, most villains in horror had some kind of weakness. For Dracula, it is wooden stakes, for Frankenstein, it's fire and for the Wolfman, it's the changing of the moon. But Carpenter allows Michael to become almost invincible to any attack on his body. He was stabbed, tripped, and shot, but that only slows him down. It's a terrifying image. Michael is scary because he is unstoppable. Nothing will stop him from killing whenever and whomever he wants.

As the Halloween season approaches, it is a great time to revisit this masterclass of horror. If you enjoy the mystery, whodunnit horror movies of the '80s, then this grandfather of the modern slasher is for you. Also, don't forget to check on the newest installment of the franchise *Halloween Kills* out now in theaters.