

IT'S GONNA BE A SCREAM

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by Meerah Powell



REQUIEM FOR A DREAM (2000)

Just because Darren Aronofsky's 2000 film, based on a novel by Hubert Selby Jr., isn't explicitly a horror film, doesn't mean that it's not totally terrifying. The film focuses on Brooklynites Harry Goldfarb, his mother Sara, girlfriend Marion and best friend Tyrone. Throughout *Requiem*, the characters become more and more entrenched in their obsessions and addictions; for Harry and Tyrone, it's the dream of becoming big-time drug dealers, which eventually turns into a spiraling abuse of heroin — which Marion gets caught up in. For Sara, it's the obsession of wanting to lose weight and be on a TV game show, which eventually turns into an addiction to amphetamines to aid her weight loss. As the characters become more and more entrenched in their obsessions, and distant from their dreams, they give into the most cynical selfishness — sacrificing loved-ones in favor of personal gain. Although more of a psychological drama than a horror movie, I've always regretted re-watching this one late at night.



GREEN ROOM (2015)

If a tree falls in a forest and no one's around to hear it, does it make a sound? Scratch that; if a touring punk band gets caught up in a murderous rampage at a neo-Nazi venue, surrounded by a vast Oregon forest, how the hell do they get out of that situation? That's a little more

exciting. Filmed in Oregon, most of *Green Room*'s scenes are entrenched in the lush forestry of the Pacific Northwest — adding to the isolation the film relies on. *Green Room* is exciting, gritty and fast-paced: amplified by brilliant acting by Anton Yelchin and other standouts Imogen Poots and Alia Shawkat. The most terrifying thing about this movie is how realistic it is. As someone who grew up going to punk shows in the Pacific Northwest, *Green Room*'s use of setting is extremely authentic. The dark, dingy venue that Yelchin and company performs in looks not unlike any number of music spaces I've been in, and that's the most frightening part.



BLACK MIRROR (2011-PRESENT)

As a millennial, but also, just as anyone alive and active in this day and age, technology is a big part of my life. I rely on my phone and my computer much more than I'd like to admit. And *Black Mirror* hits on that reliance hard. The anthology series, so far three seasons long, acts as *The Twilight Zone* set in modern time — our reality, but twisted, just slightly, in an uncomfortable and, at times, unwatchable way. Unlike *The Twilight Zone* and other similar horror anthologies, though, *Black Mirror* doesn't offer a hopeful moral to the story. Sometimes episodes just end with the nihilistic conclusion that the downfall of humanity as we know it is inevitable. One of my favorite episodes is "Fifteen Million Merits," from the first season, which I think is a perfect example of that.

MOTHER (2017)

Do I regret putting two Darren Aronofsky films on this list? Not at all. For someone who doesn't say he's specifically a horror director, Aronofsky sure knows how to horrify. But more than that, he shows that he's the master of psychological horror in his newest release, *Mother*. Starring Jennifer Lawrence, Javier Bardem, Ed Harris and Michelle Pfeiffer, the movie's plot doesn't matter, and I mean that literally. Aronofsky stated he meant the film to



be an allegory for the Book of Genesis — a story equal parts creation and destruction, cyclical in nature — but the film is so pliable that it could be an allegory for anything — female suffering, global warming, you name it. *Mother* portrays such a chaotic anxiety that reveals humanity's own enemy is always, and will always be, itself.

GET OUT (2017)

As a person of color who lives in Eugene, Oregon — Jordan Peele's *Get Out* hits close to home and tops my list. The film stars Daniel Kaluuya (of that *Black Mirror* episode I referenced earlier) as Chris, a black man, and Allison Williams (from the HBO series *Girls*) as Rose, his white girlfriend. The couple are about to visit Rose's parents for the first time, something Chris is nervous about, since Rose says she's never had a black boyfriend before. But, Rose calms him saying her family would've voted for Obama a third time if they could. The film's first half is laced in micro-aggressions from Rose's seemingly well meaning, liberal parents — little comments about



Chris' race that, although offensive, still seem harmless. But, the film's second half reveals that Chris' discomfort in being the only black person in a white setting isn't necessarily unfounded. No movie has accurately depicted the constantly throbbing anxiety and discomfort of race relations in "liberal America" better. ■