

imagination on how the murderer carved up his victim. And the more horrid the thought—the more macabre the idea—the better the audience likes

it, especially the adult audience.

While children are honestly and outspokenly cruel, adults have learned to control their emotions, if not their

imagination. This lets them vicariously enjoy what they see on the screen—because they are in no way responsible for what is happening.

But how wonderful the feeling of relief is when the problem is solved! It makes everything that's happened before twice as rewarding. However, if you don't come to the inevitable end, if you let the audience hang in midair, they get angry. They were very upset with me for one of my first pictures, when I showed a small boy carrying a time bomb across London. I cut to the boy's feet, to the bomb, had him ride a bus through the streets of the city, cut back to the bomb, showed him playing with a cat, then the bomb—whipping up excitement as the explosion time approached. The audience could anticipate the inevitable pail of water in which the bomb was to be dropped at the last moment.

Only I didn't give it to them.

I let the child carry the bomb three minutes beyond the time it was set, then let it go off, blowing him and everything around him to bits.

After the premiere, one of the leading critics nearly hit me in the face. "How dare you do this to us?" she cried out. The other critics were not much more kind.

From then on I've always tried to work out the climax to everyone's satisfaction—and relief.

Fortunately, for the success of my type of pictures, fear itself is a basic, obvious, ordinary, and very enjoyable characteristic.

Take a group of people riding a roller coaster. Their terror-filled screams as they are whisked up and down and around the steep railways are very real, although they'd scream differently if the coaster would actually jump the tracks and go over the side.

A person rooting for his favorite baseball team yells because he wants to see it win—and because he's afraid they might lose!

Yet from a director's point of view, there is a subtle line where he must stop depicting fear. The audience wants to be entertained, and they love to be scared—but they don't want to be antagonized.

In making a picture it is very important to remember that the audience realizes that what they see is not permanent, not actually happening to them, and thus they can enjoy it even though the real thing revolts them.

Being "typed," as I am, has certain disadvantages in both my private and professional life. I once made a film with Ingrid Bergman which caused one critic to protest that he had to wait 105 minutes for the first thrill. There was no thrill intended in the picture.

Likewise, I've long been considered a horrid creature by people who don't know me. Particularly women. Once, when the wife of a producer met me at a party, she confessed that she had no idea I was such a nice, inoffensive person. And, confidentially, I'm not so sure this was a compliment if I am to believe my own theory—that people enjoy nothing more than the horrid, macabre, fearful kind of a thrill I try to give them in my pictures.



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