

the return of the living dead

The Return of the Living Dead is a cult classic that has left an indelible mark on the horror genre since its release in 1985. Directed by Dan O'Bannon, this film not only redefined zombie cinema but also introduced unique elements that distinguished it from its predecessors. With its blend of horror and humor, groundbreaking special effects, and memorable characters, The Return of the Living Dead has secured its place in the annals of horror history. In this article, we will explore the film's origins, its plot, themes, cultural impact, and the legacy it has left behind.

The Origins of the Film

The Return of the Living Dead was inspired by the works of George A. Romero, particularly his iconic film Night of the Living Dead. However, the screenplay for The Return of the Living Dead was penned by O'Bannon and his co-writer, Rudy Ricci, who sought to create a more comedic and satirical take on the zombie genre.

The Source Material

1. Influence of Romero: While Romero's films established the rules of zombie lore, O'Bannon and Ricci aimed to subvert these conventions.
2. Additional Inspirations: The film draws on various cultural references, including the punk rock movement of the 1980s, which plays a significant role in the film's aesthetic and tone.

The Development Process

- Production: The film was produced by a collaboration between several companies, including Hemdale Film Corporation and Orion Pictures.
- Casting: The casting of the film was crucial, as it brought together a diverse group of actors who would help to establish the film's unique tone.

The Plot Overview

The Return of the Living Dead follows the story of two employees, Freddy and Frank, at a medical supply warehouse that becomes ground zero for a zombie outbreak. After an accident involving a canister of the toxic gas Trioxin, the dead rise from their graves, leading to chaos and horror.

Main Characters

1. Freddy (Thom Mathews): A young and naive employee who finds himself in over his head.
2. Frank (James Karen): An experienced worker who knows more than he initially lets on.
3. Trash (Linnea Quigley): A punk rock girl whose memorable performance and iconic nudity became a highlight of the film.
4. Bert (Clu Gulager): The warehouse manager who tries to take control of the situation.
5. The Zombies: Unlike traditional zombies, these creatures can think and communicate, adding a new layer of horror.

Key Plot Points

- The Accident: The accidental release of Trioxin gas leads to the reanimation of corpses in the nearby cemetery.
- Zombie Characteristics: The film introduces a unique twist: the zombies crave brains, which they believe alleviate the pain of being dead.
- The Panic: As the zombies swarm the warehouse and surrounding areas, the characters must find a way to survive.

Thematic Elements

The Return of the Living Dead explores several themes that resonate with audiences, both at the time of its release and today.