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Recommended Citation

University of Dayton, "Hitchcock Movies and Write-Ins Dominate Film Historian's Vote for AFI's 100 Scariest Films" (2001). *News Releases*. 10393.

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June 8, 2001
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NEWS RELEASE

HITCHCOCK MOVIES AND WRITE-INS DOMINATE FILM HISTORIAN'S VOTE FOR AFI'S 100 SCARIEST FILMS

DAYTON, Ohio — It's not violence or scary moments that define a film as thrilling, says Tony Macklin, a film historian. "It's the movies that delve into the dark recesses, that reach into the cellars of the mind and stay there forever that offer the most chilling experience," he says.

"I'm not a fan of thrills for thrill's sake," he adds. "But many of the greatest movies have heart-pounding moments that define them."

Macklin, who taught film and English classes at the University of Dayton for 38 years before retiring in 2000, was asked by the American Film Institute to be a juror in its latest ranking, naming the 100 scariest American films. A television special revealing the results will be aired from 8 to 11 p.m. Tuesday, June 12, on CBS with host Harrison Ford.

His top two picks reflect his awe of Alfred Hitchcock. He names *Psycho* as his choice for scariest, followed by *The Birds* for second place.

"Hitchcock is a master of manipulation of the audience," says Macklin, who interviewed the director in the 1970s. "Steven Spielberg is also a manipulator — *Jaws* is a terrific film and made my top 10 list — but often you can see him pulling the strings. With Hitch, you never see the machinations. He's the all-time master."

Macklin, who founded and edited the academic journal *Film Heritage* from 1965 to 1978 and collected the interviews for his book *Voices from the Set: The Film Heritage Interviews* (2000, Scarecrow Press), admits he's an odd choice to be making the picks.

"I've never been scared in a movie," he says, "and part of the reason is that I close my eyes. If you pull out a blade or a razor or a knife, I'm gone. That's when I just shut my eyes. I love *The Wild Bunch*, but it must have taken three or four times seeing the film before I actually saw the Mexican's throat being cut."

Rounding out Macklin's top five picks are *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Blow Out* ("Brian DePalma's best film, with a great, startling, ironic conclusion") and *Alien* ("stomach-churning").

"*Bonnie and Clyde* was a moment that was germane in my life," Macklin says. "I left the

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theater in silence, the film had so moved me. The evocative power of that ballet sequence of violence — that editing by Dede Allen is spell-binding, absolutely perfect. It was the most shattering ending I ever experienced in a theater.”

Although the AFI provided a list of 400 films nominated for top honors, the remaining four films on Macklin’s list were all write-ins:

- *Cape Fear* (1991) — “A Scorsese thriller. Enough said.”
- *The Godfather II* — “The best Godfather.”
- *The Birth of a Nation* — “D.W. Griffith has suffered the outrages of political correctness.”
- *The Beguiled* — “Clint Eastwood’s most underrated film. Director Don Siegel and Clint in top form. And Eastwood dies. In fact, he’s murdered. How’s that for heart-stopping?”

A total of 1,800 jurors have selected the winners to be unveiled June 12. Leaders from the creative community, including film artists such as directors, screenwriters, actors, editors, cinematographers, visual effects artists, stunt men and women and make-up artists, as well as critics and historians were asked to rank their choices for “AFI’s 100 Years ... 100 Thrills.”

Harrison Ford was a good choice to host the countdown, Macklin says. “He is like the stylish individual who’s vulnerable to circumstances that he has to deal with, and generally the audience can relate. He has a common quality.”

The Harrison Ford films that strike Macklin as eligible for the list? *Air Force One*, *Clear and Present Danger* and *The Fugitive*.

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For media interviews, contact **Tony Macklin** in Las Vegas at (702) 254-0287 or via e-mail at tmacklv@hotmail.com.