13 UNDERAPPRECIATED HORROR DIRECTORS

Contributed by

Syfy Wire Staff

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Directors like John Carpenter, Wes Craven and Tobe Hooper get a lot of deserved credit in the genre film arena. After all, they have each been behind the creation of one or more outstanding franchises and were all at the helm of many films that have inspired generations of horror fans and filmmakers alike.

Unfortunately, many talented filmmakers who are currently working in or have made significant contributions to the horror genre in years past go overlooked for one reason or another. Because we believe that everyone deserves credit for their hard work, we are taking this opportunity to showcase 13 genre film directors who deserve more love!

Every day this month we're bringing Top 13 lists tied to the world of horror. **You can follow them all here.**

Larry Cohen

As the director of *It's Alive, The Stuff*, and several other horror films, one would think that Larry Cohen would be getting constant recognition for his significant contributions to the genre but unfortunately, it seems that he is often overlooked or forgotten when the conversation turns to great horror directors. When I mention his name (even to fellow horror fans) I usually have to explain who he is and what he has directed.

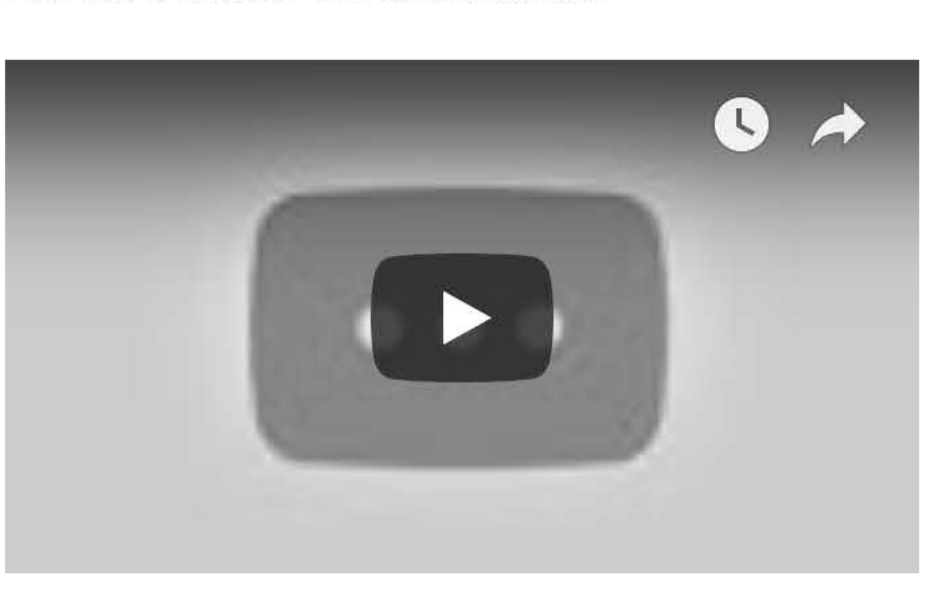
Here's a trailer for *The Stuff*

The Stuff trailer (1985)

Christopher Smith

Christopher Smith is responsible for a trio of noteworthy horror titles but even still, he does not seem to be on the radar of the average horror fan. Smith directed *Creep* (2004), *Severance*, and *Triangle*. All three are excellent and very diverse films. He is willing to take risks and has been at the helm of several important horror pictures. He definitely deserves greater recognition for his contributions to the world of genre film.

Here's a trailer for *Severance:*



David Schmoeller

I cannot express how much I appreciate David Schmoeller. His 1979 film *Tourist Trap* is one of the most delightfully bizarre slasher pictures ever made but it has never really been given the recognition it deserves. Films that came out either right before or right after it's theatrical release have long overshadowed it. Schmoeller also directed the first installment in the *Puppet Master* franchise but Charles Band is often given the credit for that series. Though he may not always get the credit he so richly deserves, Schmoeller is amongst the most noteworthy genre film directors of our time.

Here is the trailer for *Tourist Trap*:

Tourist Trap (1979) Trailer

Fred Walton

I am always surprised to learn that more people don't know Fred Walton's name. He was at the helm of *When a Stranger Calls, When a Stranger Calls Back*, and the slasher classic *April Fool's Day.* It's anybody's guess why he hasn't become more of a household name amongst horror fans. He certainly has an impressive resume and he is clearly talented. No matter the reason for Walton's lack of recognition amongst horror enthusiasts, he deserves accolades for his various contributions.

Here is the trailer for *April Fool's Day*:

April Fool's Day (1986) - Trail...

Lucky McKee

Lucky McKee has a very loyal fan base but there are still large sects of our community that don't know who he is or that know him as, 'that guy that directed *May*'. The frustrating thing about that is that McKee is one of the most talented horror filmmakers of our age and a modern master of horror. In addition to *May*, McKee was also at the helm of *The Woman, All Cheerleaders Die*, and the *Masters of Horror* episode 'Sick Girl'. If you aren't familiar with him or his various contributions to the genre, you have your work cut out for you.

Here is the trailer for *May:*

May - Trailer

Dave Parker

I can't say enough about Dave Parker's work. I am really hoping that the next couple of years prove fruitful for him, as he is very talented and very deserving of recognition. Parker directed *The Hills Run Red* but Warner Brothers put it out as a straight to video release and thus it didn't really find an audience other than by what it garnered via word of mouth. This is a tragedy because Hills is one of the sharpest and most frightening slasher films in recent memory. Parker also directed a segment of the upcoming horror anthology *Tales of Halloween*.

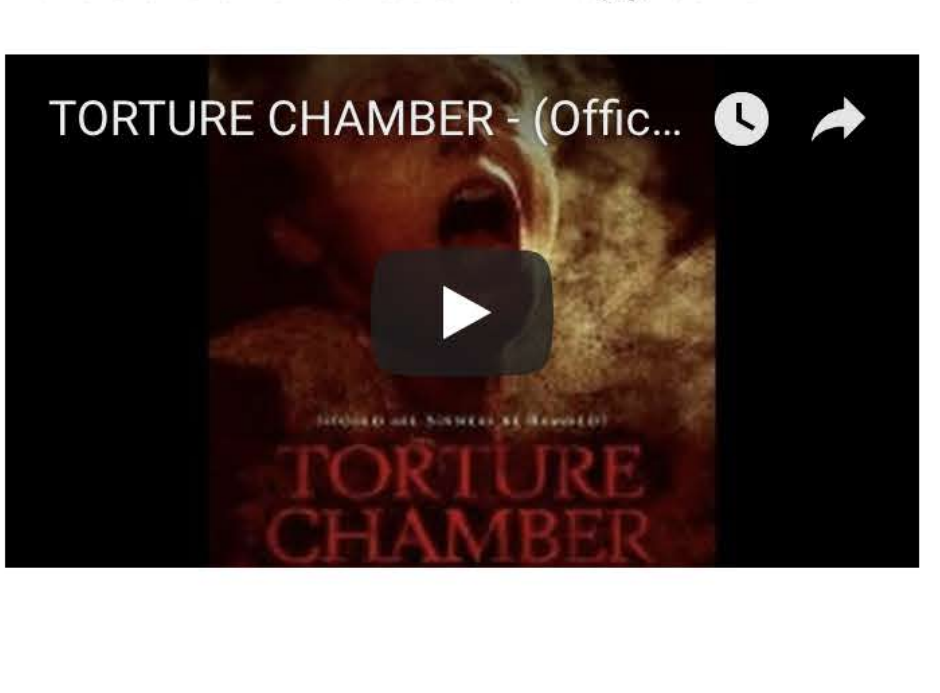
Here's a trailer for *The Hills Run Red:*

The Hills Run Red (2009) Of...

Dante Tomaselli

Director Dante Tomaselli has helmed an assortment of shocking, frightening, visceral, and surreal horror pictures over the past 16 years. He has also released a series of digital albums that are great listening for the Halloween season or for any occasion. But in spite of directing brilliant films like *Torture Chamber* and *Satan's Playground* he still doesn't always register with the average horror fan. His work speaks for itself and if you aren't familiar with it, you should most certainly seek out any of his creations.

Here's a trailer for *Satan's Playground:*



Steve Miner

It's baffling to me that Steve Miner doesn't have a larger fan base. He has directed not one but two *Friday the 13th* films (Part II and Part III) and also helmed *Halloween: H20*. Miner directed one of the best installments in the *Friday the 13th* franchise (Part II) but both he and that film remain criminally underappreciated. As of late, he has directed a substantial number of episodes of different series for the Freeform network. But I sincerely hope he returns to the horror genre for at least one more film.

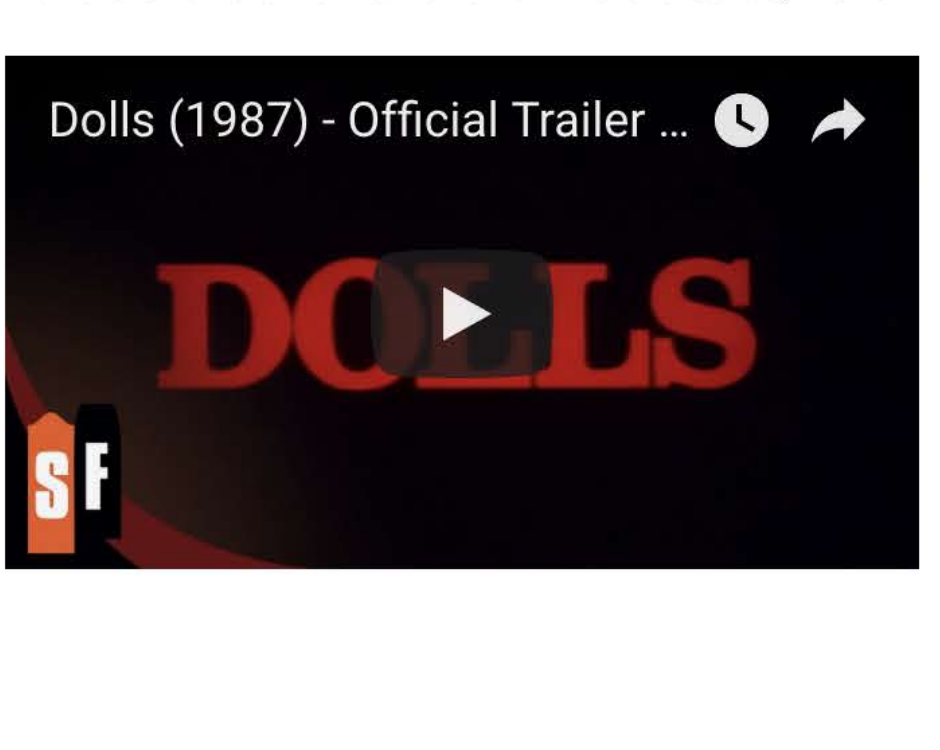
Here is the trailer for *Friday the 13th Part 2:*

Friday the 13th - Part II - Trai...

Stuart Gordon

Stuart Gordon is not really an unknown filmmaker. I will admit that most horror fans do know him by name. But at the same time, he seems to take a back seat to the masters of horror that have made more successful films with wide theatrical releases via major studios. Gordon has done a lot of straight to video titles and has worked extensively with Full Moon but that does not make his contributions and less noteworthy or his films any less enjoyable. Gordon deserves a great deal more credit than that which he seems to receive.

Here's the trailer to one of his classics, *Dolls*:



Steven C. Miller

I consider Steven C. Miller to be among the modern masters of horror. He helmed *Silent Night, The Aggression Scale*, and *Under the Bed*. He is most certainly an up-and-comer to watch and already has an impressive catalogue of films under his belt!

Here is the trailer for *Under the Bed:*

Under the Bed TRAILER (201...
TRAILER
HD

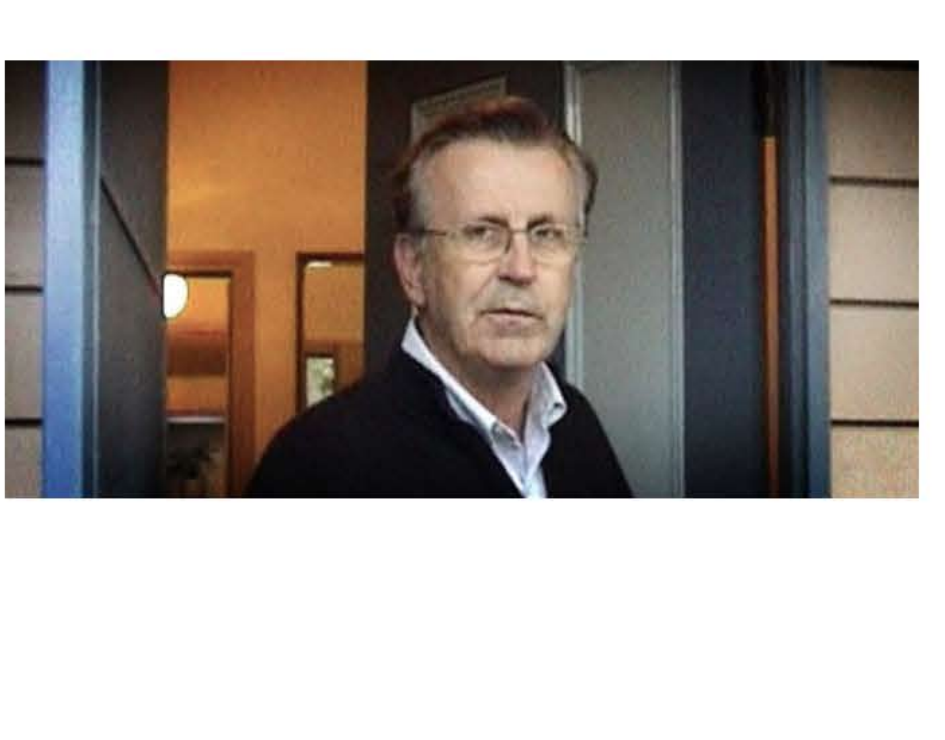
Marcus Nispel

I think that people often write off Marcus Nispel as a remake director and since horror fans have strong opinions about remakes, he is often discounted as somehow less than. But if you take a look at his body of work, Nispel was at the helm of two of the most noteworthy remakes of the past fifteen years (*Friday the 13th* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*) and his newest original film *Exeter* is a highly enjoyable and will surely build a loyal following in the coming years.

Here is the trailer for *Exeter:*

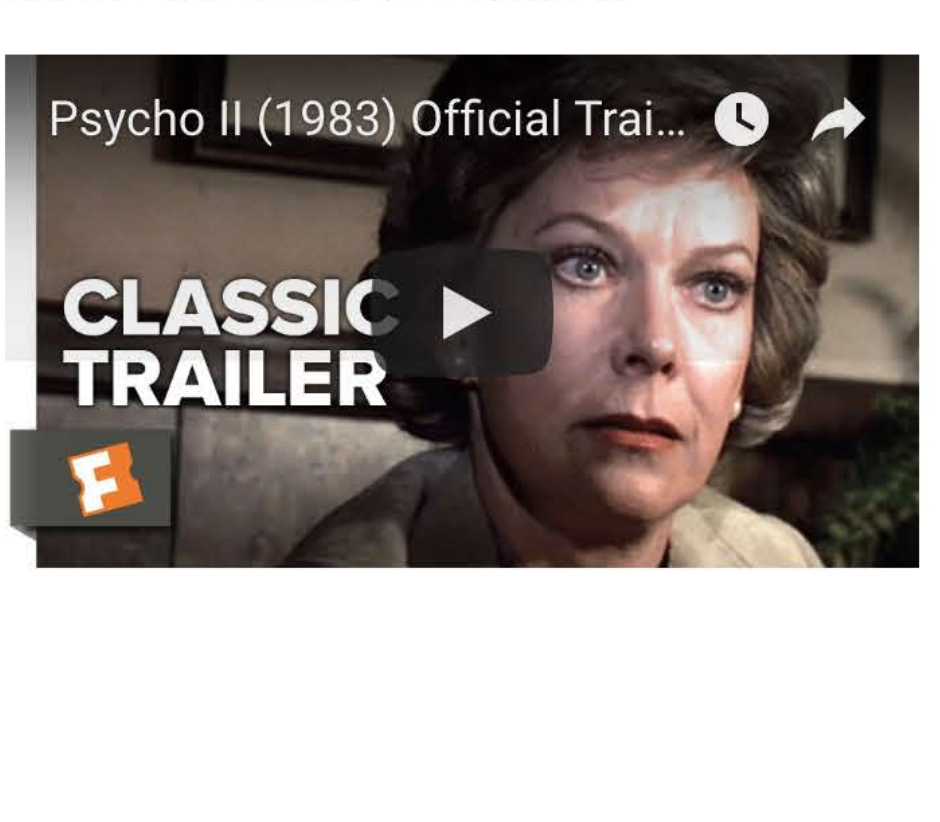
EXETER Trailer [2015] Horror
HD
Trailer

Richard Franklin



It's terribly disconcerting to me that frequent Tom Holland collaborator Richard Franklin didn't have a larger audience during his lifetime. He was at the helm of the excellent *Psycho II*; he directed the Hitchcockian suspense film *Road Games*; and also helmed the children's fantasy film *Cloak and Dagger*. In addition, he directed the recently remade 1978 horror film . Some of his films are hit and miss but as a whole, he had way more hits than misses and deserves credit for that.

Here is the trailer for *Psycho II:*



Kevin Tenney

Kevin Tenney is responsible for the birth of two popular supernatural 1980s horror films (*Witchboard* and *Night of the Demons*). But in spite of his various contributions to the genre, he still seems to go largely underappreciated. His track record beyond the '80s has been a little spotty but he has directed two cult classic horror features, which is more than I can say for myself.

Here is the trailer for *Witchboard*:

Witchboard (1986) - Official ...
WITCHBOARD
SCREAM FACTORY
TRAILER

Any directors we missed that you feel are underappreciated? Tell us below.