

# Aliens are only in the movies — or are they?

I was listening to the news recently and heard that the movie, "Alien versus Predator," marketed simply as "AVP" by the difficult-to-sit-still crowd, grossed \$38 million the first week it debuted. That news blurb made me wonder why so many of us, myself included, are so enthralled by monsters, aliens, dinosaurs and other beasts, that we just can't seem to get enough of them.

Now, I concede that we can probably blame some of AVP's margin on the horrible competition that we have to choose from on a Friday night out at the movies, but even if you add up all the teenage road trip movies, romances too sugary to be true and shoot 'em up crime fighters, whether it be a cat, spider or something they call Hellboy, it still wouldn't come close to AVP's triumphant first week at the box office.

Do you suppose Mary Shelley at the tender age of 19 ever thought about what she was doing to American culture when she turned out her mind-blowing novel, "Frankenstein?" Although many of us haven't read the book, I know most of you have seen Boris Karloff as the monster to beat all monsters and that you can easily recall what a wonderful job he did of scaring us. He didn't need a machete, mask, extra powers, half-naked woman by his side or any other Hollywood props to sell movies — he simply walked, seldom talked and left a lasting memory of what a monster should look like.

Bram Stoker was another author that I can thank for many sleepless nights with his sinister 1897 novel, "Dracula," and the movie that followed starring Bella Lugosi. Many actors followed Bella, but let's face it — Bella played it to perfection, concentrating more on the horror of the moment and less on becoming a Hollywood sex symbol.

My youngest son, who is now 22, was an avid collector of more recent horror movies from a young age. He was always interested in special effects and had every Jason movie ever made and every Alien installment delivered to the silver screen. Chuckie, the evil doll, seemed to be his favorite until they decided to marry Chuckie to some floozy looking female doll who was equally nasty. Sadly, Chuckie lost his punch when he started obeying the female bossing him around.

We used to have mother/son day where I would pop some popcorn or get out the Goobers and Raisinettes, and we'd sit and have a scary movie



**As I  
see it**

**Peg  
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marathon, usually on a rainy afternoon. We'd start with the very first Jason movie (are there six or seven of them now?) and of course I'd grill my son on "who's that," "why's he doing that" or "how's he able to catch

up to her" when the knife-swinging Jason suddenly appeared on a rain-soaked, dark street. But my son didn't mind my continuous questions — this was our time to bond — and he actually enjoyed explaining all the thin plots of the movies as I shielded my eyes from the never-do-wells.

"Slasher" films don't really frighten me, mostly because I hide my eyes when the creepy music lets me know that something is about to happen, but these days it's what's not on the screen that can be terrifying. For instance, have any of you seen "The Sixth Sense?" There were several times when goose pimples ran up and down my arms and hardly any red blood was spilled during the entire movie.

"Signs" was a terrific movie about aliens and occasionally I'll catch a re-run of the X-Files on late-night television to ease me off to sleep. For those of you who remember seeing the 1950s black and white film, "Invasion of the Body Snatchers," I know you'll agree that for a long time afterward, when someone acted a little differently from what he or she usually did or said, you thought somewhere there had to be a pod waiting for you to fall asleep.

Well, I don't know the answer of why we adore being scared out of our wits, but I'm pretty sure that there are aliens living among us. Why? Recently, I had to drive to Greensboro to catch a flight. Leaving the house at 6 a.m., I turned on the car radio and hit my favorite station, but instead of Celine or Elton, country music began blaring.

Now I must admit that I just don't care for country music and I realize that many of you are probably deciding that you'll never read my column again because of it. But aside from Johnny Cash and Wynonna, it just doesn't strike a cord with me, so I quickly hit another radio station. Again, country music was playing — in fact, all of my pre-set stations

were playing country songs, so there I was, cruising along on I-40 playing with the scan button and cursing under my breath.

I figured my husband had played a joke on me and confronted him when I returned home. "What are you talking about?" he asked and I realized he had nothing to do with it. So, with nothing else to go on and no one else to blame, I figure it must have been the little green men from Mars that crept into my car the night before my trip and somehow figured out how to set my six radio stations. And, apparently, all you country music fans out there, they all love country music.

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