

The Gallows will make your skin crawl

 By [Daniel Derksen](#)

3 Aug 2015

Fear The Gallows, it is the scariest film in years. With the tag line 'Every school has its spirit' the concept is brilliant, showing what happens when four high school friends are trapped inside a school's auditorium where a student died 10 years before in a freak accident during Beatrice High's production of the play The Gallows.

With the tag line 'Every school has its spirit' the concept is brilliant, showing what happens when four high school friends are trapped inside a school's auditorium where a student died 10 years before in a freak accident during Beatrice High's production of the play The Gallows. Revenge has never been sweeter and more frightening, particularly with the film shot in found-footage style.

You will find yourself extremely on edge when watching the film. Yes, you will constantly look around you to see if everything is still okay, and, yes, you will stop breathing as you become part of the action.



Found-footage films

The success of found-footage films like the Paranormal saga is whether or not the film can sustain the suspense; with The Gallows the filmmakers manage to keep you in suspense without wavering for a second.

The Gallows was written, directed and produced by Chris Lofing and Travis Cluff and shot entirely outside of the Hollywood system, and found its way to the big screen thanks to the filmmakers use of a much smaller one-the computer-and their own ingenuity.

Lofing states: "Travis came up with the initial concept and we developed it from there until we had a rough script. Then we shot a promo trailer, mainly just so we could see how it worked, if it looked scary to us."

"We also used it in order to raise funds, so we could shoot the rest of the movie," Cluff quips.

While the filmmakers continued into production, they put the trailer online. It was spotted by producer Dean Schnider of Film 360, the production arm of Management 360. 360 shared it with well-known genre production company Blumhouse, founded by veteran producer Jason Blum.

Blum offers: "The Gallows is really the first movie we've done since Paranormal Activity that has the same DNA-that home-made 'I can do that' look, which, to be honest, few people really can do. We must see about 1000 attempts a year, but The Gallows, was unique in that not only did they do it themselves, but it worked."



True horror fan

Of the two, Lofing confesses to being the true horror fan. "I've always used those movies as creative inspiration. Travis came at it from a more business-minded perspective. He immediately saw the advantages of doing something with a small budget, and horror is fairly easy to do that way."

Cluff confirms: "We were operating with no budget, basically, so we had to find a way to do it. That's when Chris came up with the idea to make it in the found-footage style, which allowed us to do what we wanted in terms of story and production."

Lofing and Cluff met when Lofing, then just 19, went to Fresno, California, to shoot a short film-his school thesis, actually-and Cluff joined the production as a stunt performer. When Cluff later attended the short's premiere in L.A., he was impressed with the final result and approached Lofing about working together again. The pair formed their own company, Tremendum Pictures, and The Gallows is their first professional collaboration.

To help induce a real sense of fear in their cast members that would translate into their performances, Cluff and Lofing cast actors out of Los Angeles who knew nothing of the Fresno, California, locations where they'd be shooting, many of which are said to be haunted, and to keep things feeling even more genuine for the cast, the filmmakers used the lead actors' first names as character names.

It could happen to you, too

Perhaps nothing plays on an audience's own phobias better than making them feel trapped in the kind of place they might frequent every day, all the while hunted by some unknown, unseen force. "It could happen to you, too," or so the filmmakers seem to be saying while, one by one, the characters on screen face an untimely demise in a variety of horrific manners.

When we first started this movie," Lofing says, "Travis and I weren't sure how we were going to divide up our responsibilities-maybe I'd direct more, and he'd produce more. But we really collaborated equally on everything. The turning point, I think, was when we went to Jason Blum's office and on his wall, right when you walk in, is a sign that reads The Directors. There are pictures of James Wan, who did Insidious and The Conjuring, and Damien Chazelle who did Whiplash, along with several other directors. And we just looked at the wall and looked at each other and we knew we both had to be up there."

"Together, Chris and Travis have created an authentic scary movie experience that audiences will love," Blum states. "I know from experience that people love being scared, in all different ways-riding a roller-coaster, sitting in a dark movie theatre-whatever gets your adrenaline going and makes you feel alive. I think that The Gallows is that exceptional movie that doesn't feel like anything else - and is really terrifying."

Blum admires their resourcefulness. "What makes a scary movie scary is when the characters' lives are threatened. But when your life is threatened, the last thing you do is hold onto a camera. Chris and Travis were able to make it feel organic. The camera is justified all the way through the movie, which makes it resonate in a cool way."

Be daring and see The Gallows. Chances are you might not endure the tension and want to leave the cinema, but don't, fear has never been so entertaining.

ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Derksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za

- Get ready for some great escapism in cinemas this April - 3 Apr 2024
- What to expect at the cinema this March - 27 Feb 2024
- Oscar fever brews: Here's what's at the cinemas this February - 29 Jan 2024
- Top 10 films of 2023 - 28 Dec 2023
- What to expect on your screens in January 2024 - 21 Dec 2023

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>