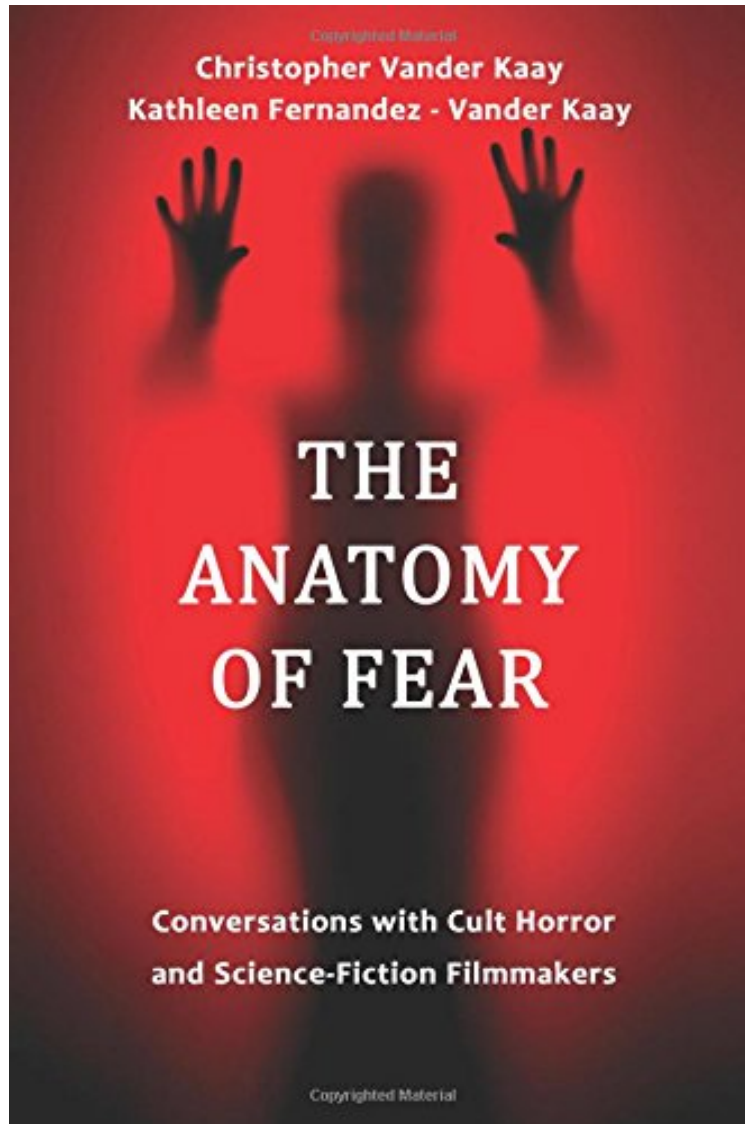


The Anatomy of Fear: Conversations with Cult Horror and Science-Fiction Filmmakers

Chris Vander Kaay, Kathleen Fernandez-Vander Kaay
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#1596379 in Books 2014-08-28Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x .60 x 6.00l, #File Name: 1935254979264 pages | File size: 54.Mb

Chris Vander Kaay, Kathleen Fernandez-Vander Kaay : The Anatomy of Fear: Conversations with Cult Horror and Science-Fiction Filmmakers before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Anatomy of Fear: Conversations with Cult Horror and Science-Fiction Filmmakers:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Revitalized my appreciation of the horror genreBy CustomerA great read! The insightful and probing questions posed by the authors help to reveal some interesting insights into the

thoughts, ideas, humor and passions of those involved in making our favorite horror films live. After reading *The Anatomy of Fear* I was inspired to re-watch some great old horror classics I haven't seen in years, with renewed appreciation. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Solid ReadBy CustomerThe interviews herein are full of nuggets of wisdom from some of the horror industry's most beloved writers/directors. I saved oodles of quotes for reference in my own horror writing. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Terrific insight into horrorBy Don Buehler

The Anatomy of Fear I met Kathleen and Chris Vander Kaay at the UCF Book Fair in April 2015. They were to review their book *The Anatomy of Fear* as one of the sessions. Their session was the one which convinced me to go (my first book fair.) Although I enjoyed the other authors I met (especially S.C. Gwynne - author of *Rebel Yell* a bio of Stonewall Jackson) Chris and Kathleen were the stars of the fair. Early in their discussion, I discovered they were people like me - who loved horror films - who had immersed themselves in the genre. Immediately, I was impressed with how seriously they took the genre - and the depth to which they had thought about these films. It was clear that I would enjoy their book. This book is the compilation of interviews that Chris and Kathleen had with a variety of lesser known screenwriters and filmmakers. The interviews/discussions are interesting and shed considerable light on the topic (see below) and the challenges of film making - especially on a tight budget. I have read a number of books about the horror genre and films in particular, with better known filmmakers (Romero, Hooper, Craven, etc.), but none had the insights into the genre that *Anatomy of Fear* had. Maybe had Kathleen and Chris interviewed these top names, I would have learned more. Here are some examples of the insightful comments made in the interviews:

Larry Fessenden (*Habit*, *No Telling*, *I Sell the Dead*): (in response to a comment about why people go to horror movies - especially mindless ones) I just find it immensely tiring when people say they just want to go for entertainment. I feel we should re-examine what we mean by entertainment. Do you mean a series of mindless images that ultimately have no sticking power? Is that truly entertainment? . . . We should be entertained by having our minds taken on an unexpected journey. We just assume its entertaining to watch dreck. Thats when you start to feel a little outside society, if it isnt entertaining to you. I just feel condescended to; I feel the weigh of corporatism nudging into my mind. (pg. 35)

In the discussion with Stephen Chiodo (*Killer Klowns from Outer Space*): Yes, youd think a smiling clown would make everyone happy. But I can see little things that create discomfort. First, as you mentioned, their faces are painted. Thats as close as we get to having a masked person walk around in public and still be socially acceptable. At the same time, fake smiles are painted on their faces. You have no idea what theyre thinking because theyre in disguise. In a way its haunting. pg. 43 (I have a number of friends who are terrified of clowns - maybe a result of Stephen Kings *It*.)

Finally a quote from the introduction to the chapter on Monsters: The measure of a great monster is not how much we fear it, but how much were drawn to it. pg. 57

Anatomy of Fear is full of insights and ideas like this. Throughout the book there is an exploration of 36 movies - only 1/2 of which I had even seen. Yet I learned a lot about the topic being explored even though I had not seen some of the movies being discussed. That is because this book is more about the ideas associated with the horror movies, than just a replay of the movies themselves. The interviews are separated by topic. Some examples of the topics explored include: Formative film Memories; Real-Life Fears; Not of the World; Science and Technology Gone Wrong; Found Footage; and Nightmares on the Set. Each of the filmmakers interviews addressed these issues. Kathleen and Chris extracted the most interesting interviews on the topic and present them together in the same chapter - so the reader ends up with an in-depth view of that topic through the eyes of a number of filmmakers. This is a great structure for a book of this sort. The insightfulness of the interviewer (Chris or Kathleen) is apparent throughout the book. In many cases the interviewer makes a comment or asks a question in a way that challenges the filmmaker to see his own work in a different light. In a number of instances, the filmmaker thanks them for the comment just made. Evidence that the general viewing audience (and that would be me) probably never saw that point in the film. Another interesting line of thought throughout the interviews is the conflict between the creative process and the corporate for-profit world. Filmmakers are very creative people who have a idea of what they want to get across in their film and the best way to convey it. Film studios are also interested in that, but in many cases the method and the message are secondary to the need to make money. What was apparent was that as filmmakers become more celebrated (and therefore can make bigger pictures) they have greater problems with corporate interference in the creative process. What I found especially interesting was the influence that marketing has on the film. In some instances movie titles, topics and especially endings are changed for marketability. A few of the filmmakers basically say they were proud of the film they made, except certain scenes or endings where they lost creative control - which they felt caused the movie to fail. (except maybe at the box office!) An additional bonus for those who purchase the book is an on-line resource of interview material (approximately 100 pages) which did not make it into the book. I have read much of it it is equal to the book. In conclusion, *The Anatomy of Fear* is an important contribution to the horror genre. Chris and Kathleen Vander Kaay have an ability to get to the next level in a film and present it in a way which is coherent and stimulating. I am anxiously waiting for their next book which deals with the various sub-genres in horror. The only down side of *Anatomy* is now my list of Must See movies has been greatly expanded. If you want to read more about or purchase the book, go to: <http://www.theanatomyoffear.com>. All the best Don B

During in-depth conversations with 21 horror and science-fiction film writers and directors, filmmakers Chris and Kathleen Vander Kaay find answers to this question, along with the inside story on the inspiration, creation, and behind-the-scenes experiences of box office blockbusters. Horror movies have a shady reputation because of their flaws and eccentricities. Horror wants us to laugh when we're uncomfortable, keep looking when we want to turn away, and live with a total lack of happy endings. Perhaps that's why we respect these films as a subculture. And because no one expects horror films to toe the line, they get to flirt with madness and imperfection while making the most interesting, controversial observations. That's why this book exists. Part of the subject matter in horror films is blunt and graphic and doesn't need further illumination. Other parts are brave, transgressive, explorative, and restless. While exploring these themes with 21 artists, the Vander Kaays uncover a surprisingly honest appraisal of the human psyche.

Anatomy of Fear is essential reading for every horror movie buff. It has the inside scoop from the brainy auteurs behind the best cult flicks from the last forty years. Most importantly it asks, What are we afraid of, and why? --Sarah Langan, three-time Bram Stoker Award-winning horror novelist A fascinating and compelling look at the creative process of the filmmakers who are pioneering the horror genre into new and uncharted territory. --Wade Major, Film Critic KPCC-FM (NPR) and producer/host, IGN DigiGods Far from presenting a dry and academic study of horror cinema, The Anatomy of Fear instead comes across like an ongoing conversation with all the horror and thriller writers and directors you would most love to meet. It is fascinating to read the back-and-forth, to follow the journey of thought between interviewers and interviewees both, to watch as ideas are explored and teased out (often revealing, in the process, the true inspirations for certain movies, as well as alternate scenes that were never filmed, or different directions that classic films could have gone), to see the filmmakers pause and linger on some aspect of terror they might never before have noticed, even in their own work. The breadth of this collection of interviews, too, is impressive, certain to satisfy fans of Alien and Killer Klowns From Outer Space alike, Fright Night and Stake Land, The Blair Witch Project and the Explorers, Hitchcock and Craven, Robert Englund and Bela Lugosi... Most important, this is a book that will make you feel part of the conversation, that will beg you to participate and ask your own questions. --Nathan Holic, author of The Things I Don't See (Main Street Rag Publishing)