

Horror Filmmakers Trade Morality for Greed

Just weeks after one of the most horrible school shootings in American history—what will go down in the books as the **Newtown massacre**—Texas Chainsaw 3D is raking in the big bucks at the box office. The horror flick posted \$23 million during open weekend. That's more than both *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* and *Les Misérables*.

To say that the horror filmmaking industry has poor timing is an understatement. Wheeler Winston Dixon, author of *A History of Horror* and professor of film studies at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, made a bold declaration that I strongly agree with. He told Reuters: "I think the very act of releasing this film right now is almost immoral."

If *Chainsaw* was the only violent film debuting in the weeks after the **Newtown massacre**, that would be bad enough. But *Gangster Squad* opens on Friday. And *Django Unchained* is still showing. *A Haunted House* and *Storage 24*, two more ultra-violent films, will soon debut on the Silver Screen.

How can filmmakers be so insensitive to the tragedies at **Sandy Hook Elementary** and the **Colorado massacre** during the debut of *The Dark Knight* that left 12 people dead and 70 injured? Why the "almost immoral" behavior?

The answer is simple: Follow the money trail.

Lawrence Raffel, vice president of digital content at FEARnet, a cable service specializing in horror, told Reuters: "The history of horror films has been trying to produce them on the cheap, and trying to produce a larger return."

That strategy seems to pay off. Reuters reports that Friday the 13th has taken in \$380.6 million in box office receipts

over 12 movies. That's an average of \$31.7 million per release, according to Box Office Mojo. The *Saw* franchise, which chronicles a creative serial killer, grossed \$415.8 million over seven films for an average of about \$59 million per movie. Meanwhile, the *Chainsaw* franchise has grossed \$164.8 million over six movies, an average of \$27.5 million each.

The love of money is a root of evil, including much of the violence we see in society today. Money may not have motivated the massacres we've witnessed in recent months but money is motivating filmmakers to be "almost immoral" by releasing these movies in rapid fire succession while the nation is still healing from yet another tragedy.

Arnold Schwarzenegger may not think violence in films is linked to tragic events like the **Connecticut school shooting**. But then again he's made a healthy living starring in violent movies. Here's the bottom line: You reap what you sow. If you sow violent images into the minds of today's youth, how can you expect not to reap violent thoughts, words and actions?

If we want to stop reaping tragedy, we can begin by putting an end to sowing "almost immoral" entertainment. Granted, that alone won't solve all our problems, but we can work to cut off the low-hanging (poisonous) fruit refusing to sow into the root of the evil: the filmmaker's lust for money.

Jennifer LeClaire is news editor at Charisma. She is also the author of several books, including *Did the Spirit of God Say That?* You can email Jennifer at [@](mailto:jleclaire@charisma.com) or visit her website [here](http://www.jenniferleclaire.com). You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow her on Twitter.