Why is female anger scary?

By ADRIHANNA COLLINS
Staff Writer

Everyone has most likely seen those female rage edits on TikTok consisting of movie clips of women screaming into the camera. There's something so cathartic about listening to a guttural scream when one feels on the verge of a crash-out.

Most of the movies in these clips, however, feature women in horror movies. This begs the question: why is women's anger scary?

Over the past few years, we have seen a renaissance of women within the horror genre. Stars like actress Mia Goth and actress Samara Weaving are seeing great success as the new scream queens.

However, these roles are no longer the helpless victim or final girl, but instead the perpetrators of the violence: a role that has typically only been portrayed by men.

For instance, the poster child of feminine rage herself: "Pearl." Pearl Douglas is the titular character in the second installment of the "X" trilogy. The movie centers on a young woman who dreams of leaving her rural Texas farm town and becoming a star.

The movie went viral on TikTok with clips cut together of her screaming relatable phrases, such as "Why are you leaving if I didn't do anything wrong? I don't understand! I thought you liked me" or "Please, I'm a star."

Even though many find her relatable, it's not wrong to say that she's a little depraved. By the end of the movie, she has killed her parents, her best friend and her lover. The movie itself serves as a prequel explaining the background of the antagonist from the first film "X."

Another older example is Carrie White from the film "Carrie." The movie revolves around a teen girl named Carrie who goes on a murderous rampage after years of torment and abuse from high school bullies and an overbearing religious mother.

The story of White has enraptured audiences for years. There have been three movie adaptations based on the original 1974 novel by author Stephen King and an Amazon Prime series that was released earlier this month.

Both "Pearl" and "Carrie" follow the same basic premise. They are two women with deep desires to change and leave their hometowns. Then, they are ultimately pushed to the brink by others' abuses and commit mass murder.

And there are countless other examples, including Cassie Thomas from "Promising Young Woman," Amy Dunne from "Gone Girl" and Beatrix Kiddo from "Kill Bill."

Murderous, vengeful women even go back to ancient times. The Greek play "Medea" by Greek tragedian Euripides describes a woman who exacts revenge on her husband after he leaves her by killing him and their two sons.

So why is the female villain so captivating?

Many scholars cite the anger itself. The archetypal female roles of wife, maid, mistress, whore or mother don't typically allow for the deep complexity and emotions that female audiences look for.

Historically, women in film have been collateral damage of men's actions. When something bad happens to a woman, it serves as the motivation for the men surrounding them. The men get to be angry about what happened, while the woman must play the role of a helpless victim.

This is what makes the angry female scary. The angry woman not only reacts, but she reacts with vengeance and blood.

"Rage Becomes Her: The Power of Women's Anger" author Soraya Chemaly discussed the recent interest in female killers with Refinery 29, saying, "What we're seeing with this explosion among women is not just an interest in violence, per se, but an interest in violence as retribution and violence that doesn't just mimic the tropes of masculine violence."

There is something distinctly gendered about feminine rage; maybe it's just the disheveled makeup and lopsided bows as the women scream red-faced. Or maybe it's simply because it's a female in a male-dominated trope, so the subversion feels more gendered. But it could also be because their anger is pent up and repressed. Men in movies express their anger instantly, while for both Douglas and White it took years of abuse for them to express their true rage.

Either way, the anger, though destructive and bloody, feels satisfying and relatable.

"Savage Appetites: Four True Stories of Women, Crime, and Obsession" author Rachel Monroe describes how female killers on screen help viewers channel and understand their own anger in an interview with Refinery 29.

"There are so many taboos against women expressing anger and outrage, and so I think these stories are a way of talking about those things. It's harder for me to talk about my anger about,



ILLUSTRATION BY AVA STANGO

say, being passed over at work, but I can talk about this woman who stabbed her husband to death as a kind of proxy for accessing my own rage, which is unacceptable in some ways," she said.

Horror movies for years have served to discuss deeper societal issues. Movies like "Sinners" and "Get Out" discuss racism, while "Parasite" and "The Platform" discuss class disparity. This allows people to explore real-world anxieties and systemic oppression through tangible monsters and allegories.

Female rage movies serve as a way for women to articulate their own anger within themselves. Today, women's anger is expected to be internalized and repressed to not look hysterical, but sometimes all a woman wants is to be hysterical.

As the famous saying goes, "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned," and we all know too many scorned women.

Has 'Digger' dug itself into a hole?

By MICHAEL MERRICK
Contributing Writer

Actor Tom Cruise's latest film "Digger," directed by Alejandro Gonzales Inarittu, officially released in theaters Friday, October 2, in the United States. Cruise is known in Hollywood for the reputation he's built; however, According to Variety "Digger" has "lost Warner Brothers $245 million" and "will wind up as one of the biggest flops, not just of the year, but potentially of all time." A possible reason for this may be the film's somewhat misleading trailers that keep a core aspect of the film a secret.

The main plot, according to the trailers, revolves around Digger Rockwell, a massive oil tycoon and one of the world's most powerful men. Digger's oil company is responsible for a methane gas leak, which, according to one of his scientists, Dr. Ganesh (actor Riz Ahmed), has resulted in part of an ice glacier "the size of Maryland" dislodging. Ganesh calls the glacier "Judy." He also reveals that it is on a collision course with Greenland, putting millions of lives in jeopardy.

This leads Rockwell to join forces with the president (actor John Goodman) and his team to try to stop the glacier from reaching Europe. However, this is a very surface-level overview of the film. About a half hour in, it is revealed that the events playing out aren't actually real, and that it is, in fact, a rehearsal for a stage play titled "Fossil Fools."

We learn this when a tree falls in the background, followed by the stage lights turning on, revealing the background to be a miniature set. We also learn that the actor who plays Rockwell is Curtis Markson, a well-known actor who doesn't like the way Rockwell is portrayed in the show, believing that he is written to be too over the top. The events of the play, as well as Rockwell and the other characters, are based on real events and real people within the film's world.

During moments where Curtis is alone backstage, he is approached by a producer named Kenny, who praises Curtis for his accuracy to the real Digger, despite the "actor"s differing opinion.

What makes Kenny significant is that later in the film, we learn that he is actually the nephew of the real Digger Rockwell, Kenny Rockwell, and that he is the owner of the rights to the "Fossil Fools" play.

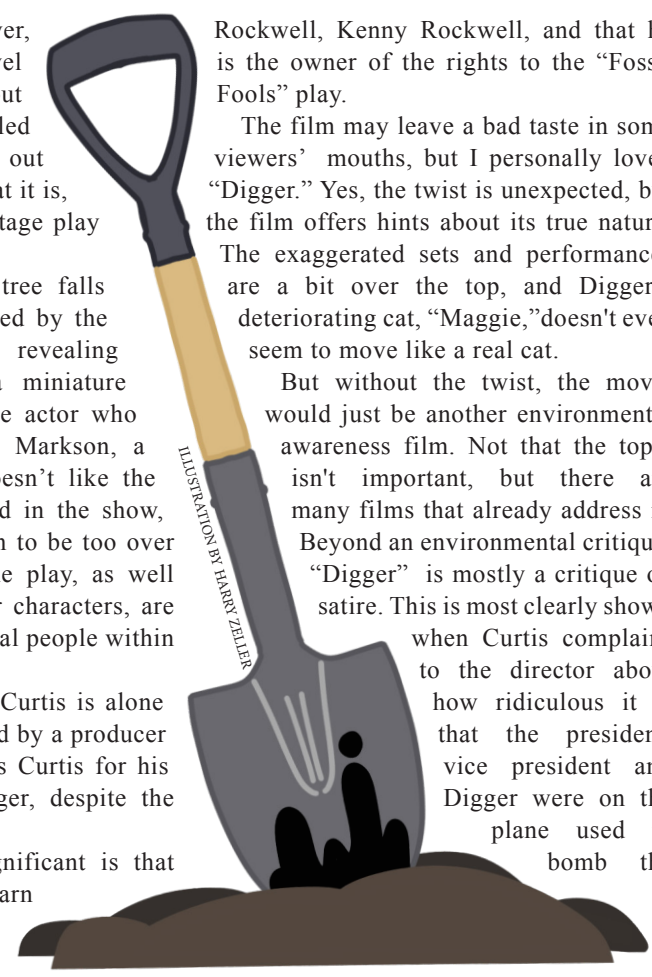

ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY ZELLER

The film may leave a bad taste in some viewers' mouths, but I personally loved "Digger." Yes, the twist is unexpected, but the film offers hints about its true nature. The exaggerated sets and performances are a bit over the top, and Digger's deteriorating cat, "Maggie,"doesn't even seem to move like a real cat.

But without the twist, the movie would just be another environmental awareness film. Not that the topic isn't important, but there are many films that already address it. Beyond an environmental critique, "Digger" is mostly a critique on satire. This is most clearly shown when Curtis complains to the director about how ridiculous it is that the president, vice president and Digger were on the plane used to bomb the glacier, under the president's orders. Curtis argues that the play and characters should be treated with a level of gravitas that the production lacked. The director, however, argues that the exaggeration is important to emphasize the sins of the men who destroyed the world.

This point also ties back to Kenny, who, as a child, watched "Fossil Fools" and witnessed how everyone cheered when his uncle died in the show. After this, Kenny came to the conclusion that this reaction was important for people to vent their frustrations at the world. In terms of performances, Cruise as Digger was truly spectacular; he effortlessly goes from the over-the-top, in-universe performance as Rockwell to the real, critical actor in Curtis Markson.

His standout scene comes from the European summit, where he argues that the people who criticize him depend on him for necessities such as energy and gas.

Ahmed was also incredible as Dr. Ganesh, with his best scene also coming from the summit, where he blames Rockwell entirely for the environmental crisis. Actor John Goodman was also great as the president. I truly believe that Digger is a fantastic, brilliant piece of cinema that won't please everyone, but will please many.