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DEAD MEDIA: CONTEMPORARY HORROR AND THE ANALOGUE

A BAFTSS HORROR STUDIES SIG SYMPOSIUM

JANUARY 13 2024

Organisers

- Shellie McMurdo, University of Hertfordshire, s.mcmurdo2@herts.ac.uk
- Laura Mee, University of Hertfordshire, l.mee2@herts.ac.uk

Co-convenors of the BAFTSS Horror Studies SIG

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A Zoom link will be sent to all registered participants in advance of the event.

Symposium Etiquette
- Please keep cameras and mics switched off unless you are presenting, part of a panel Q&A, or asking a question during a Q&A.
- Please be aware that the event will be recorded — guests will not appear in videos unless they speak or their camera is on.
- Feel free to use the meeting chat for comments and discussion during panels (not for questions – see point below), but please be respectful of the presenters and their material.
- We ask that you reserve questions until the panel chair invites them—at this point you may either type them in the chat or raise your hand (this function can be found by clicking the 'Reactions' button). This makes things easier for our chairs.
- We respectfully request that presenters plan their papers to fit within their allotted time (15 minutes), and stick to this on the day—chairs will ask speakers to wrap up if they run over, and may need to mute speakers who continue to talk after this time. Substantially overrunning presentations disrupt the smooth running of the event and are unfair to other speakers.
- If presenters plan to use clips in their presentations, we strongly recommend that clips are hosted online and a link provided in the chat rather than screenshared to avoid technical issues (sound, lagging, etc.) and to avoid potential issues with copyright recording.
- This symposium is a welcoming and inclusive event for all, and we ask that all attendees are mindful of others in their interactions and responses. Any concerns should be raised with the organisers.

9am—9.10am - Welcome & Introduction

9.10am—10.20am - Streaming Screams: Online Analogue
- Stella Gaynor, Liverpool John Moores University: "It's a shitty piece of plastic that doesn't even record!" Communicating with the dead on YouTube with *Glam & Gore*
- Lindsay Nelson, Meiji University: Waking the dead: *Fake Documentary Q* and nostalgia for dead media
- Matteo Polato, Manchester Metropolitan University: A one-way route to Lavendertown: Glitch, noise and haunting in *Pokémon*'s urban legends

10.30am—11.40am - Ghostly Glitches: Games and Analogue
- Frances Hallam, University of Surrey: Unknowing in the ocean: Body-technology interfaces in underwater exploration horror games
- Kane Geary O'Keeffe, University College Cork: Frequencies and flesh: Framing postmodern cyclicality through analogue technologies in Rose Engine's *Signalis* (2022)
- Stephen Curtis, University of Central Lancashire: A past that never was - The uncanny VHS aesthetics of Puppet Combo Games

12.00pm—1.30pm - Abject Objects: Film, Television and Analogue 1
- Brontë Schiltz, Manchester Metropolitan University: "I don't think I want to watch the ending": Televisual gothic in *Inside No. 9*
- Saayan Chattopadhyay, Baruipur College: The haunting of analogue: Indian popular horror films and analogue media as narrative device
- Rich Scott, Falmouth University: The old ways - The resurgence of analogue filmmaking practice amongst contemporary film folk
- Shellie McMurdo, University of Hertfordshire: Love letters written in blood: The renaissance of practical effects

1.30pm—2.30pm - LUNCH

2.30pm—3.40pm - Nightmare Noises: Audio and Analogue
- Louise Pitcher, Curtin University: Tape recorders, audio horror, and the knowledge that someone is always listening in *The Magnus Archives* podcast
- Kit Bauserman, College of William and Mary: The "Click:" Tape recorders and deferred meaning in analog podcast horror
- James Rendell, University of South Wales: Picking up the needle drops: Horror fans' transmedial vinyl mockups and paratextual poaching

3.50pm—5.20pm - Tracking (T)errors: Film, Television and Analogue 2
- Robert Mclaughlin, Arden University: B-Movie madness
- Steph Graves, Vanderbilt University: You record it, I'm going to enjoy it': The horror of home recording technology in *WNUF Halloween Special* and *VHYes*
- Lynn Kozak, McGill University: Dead media, live flows
- Laura Mee, University of Hertfordshire: Re-viewing *The Ring*: Restoration, adaptation and the ghost of VHS

5.20pm—5.30pm - Closing Remarks

Panels, Abstracts, and Speaker Biographies
Listed in running order

Panel One - Streaming Screams: Online Analogue

"It's a shitty piece of plastic that doesn't even record!" Communicating with the dead on YouTube with *Glam & Gore*

On October 31st, 2019, YouTube channel *Glam & Gore* uploaded the final episode in a series of Halloween Ghost Hunting Specials. A channel usually dedicated to SFX makeup artistry, Mykie – Glam & Gore – spent the month staying in hotels which were supposedly haunted. These episodes merge old and new media, analogue and digital devices, as Mykie uses an EMF reader and in this episode recorded in the Lizzie Borden house, a Spirit Box to connect with the dead.

This paper will explore how the dead can only 'speak' to Mykie through the Spirit Box, yet the audio, or voices of the dead, have to be interpreted through modern digital media technologies. Mykie and her friends turn to recordings and playbacks, and close analysis of visual representations of audio waveforms, to confirm what the Spirit Box said. In this *Glam & Gore* series, the analogue and digital media devices and capabilities are mutually dependent on each other to be understood. This paper will unpack how old media – AM radio waves, and new media, YouTube conventions and algorithms - interact in a collision of modern technology, cheap plastic gadgets from Amazon, ghost hunting principles, and Mykie's supposed scepticism, to perhaps unlock the mystery of an unsolved 130-year-old double homicide.

Biography:
Dr Stella Marie Gaynor is Senior Lecturer in Media Culture and Communication at Liverpool John Moores University. She is the author of *Rethinking Horror in the New Economies of Television* (2022), and has published works exploring the global spread of *The Walking Dead*, satire in *Black Summer*, and faith and zombie narratives. Her current project, Murder Media, has works published exploring nostalgia for the captured killer in *Conversations with a Killer: the Ted Bundy Tapes*, inverting true crime narratives via the female perspectives, in *Falling for a Killer*, and *Murder, Mystery and MakeUp*, and a forthcoming article on true crime podcasts and their associated social media.

Waking the dead: *Fake Documentary Q* and nostalgia for dead media

While Japan is often viewed by outsiders as a sort of technological wonderland, its day-to-day reality is more grounded in the analog. Businesses still use fax machines regularly, company websites often resemble those created in the 1990s, and in 2018 the country's minister for cybersecurity shocked the public when he admitted that he had never used a

computer in his professional life. In the past ten years, Japan has also seen a boom in "Showa era nostalgia," with cafes and arcades devoted to obsolete gadgets and media technologies.

It is no surprise, then, that the videos on the popular Japanese YouTube channel *Fake Documentary Q*, a collection of found footage horror videos, frequently feature objects like VHS cassettes, VHS camcorders, and answering machine cassettes. These objects immediately ground the videos in a particular time and place, and their particular sound effects—tape hiss, beeps, static—invoke intense feelings of nostalgia. At the same time, *Fake Documentary Q* is mixing "dead media" with the latest technology, using the YouTube platform and inexpensive video filters to create the appearance of something shot on a VHS camcorder or Super 8 camera. This paper will examine *Fake Documentary Q* and the paradox of "waking the dead" by using the latest new media technology to recreate a dead media aesthetic.

Biography:

Lindsay Nelson is an associate professor in the department of political science and economics at Meiji University. Her research focuses on Japanese cinema and popular culture, especially Japanese horror films. Her work has been published in *Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema*, *East Asian Journal of Popular Culture*, and *Japanese Studies*. Her first book, *Circulating Fear: Japanese Horror, Fractured Realities, and New Media*, was published by Lexington Books in 2021.

A one-way route to Lavendertown: Glitch, noise and haunting in *Pokémon*'s urban legends

The paper analyses the role of software glitches and spurious hardware interactions in the emergence of urban legends around *Pokémon* videogames, framing such processes within the relationships between hacking culture and occulture during the nineties. The immensely popular first *Pokémon* games – released for Nintendo GameBoy in 1996 – are at the centre of some of the longest-lasting paranormal urban legends online. Creepypastas such as 'Lavendertown Syndrome', 'Misfortune.gb' or 'Buried Alive' trace a history of cursed cartridges, mysterious hidden content and psychical effects, casting a dark shadow on a game designed for children and completely extraneous from any horror connotations. While such urban legends seem to originate from the classical hauntological trope of the overturning of childhood nostalgia into the horrific, the paper argues that the material dimension of the game's source code and the (often involuntary) spurious interactions that it can provoke, played a crucial role in corrupting *Pokémon*'s collective imagery.

The game, in fact, is infamously notorious for its glitches, discovered and studied to this day by the hacking community. Through precise (thus unintended) sequences of in-game interactions – called Arbitrary Code Executions – it is possible to reach the so-called glitch cities, spurious hacked environments inhabited by the ghostly residues of cut content and assets, whose apparition is often accompanied by distorted noises and scrambled visuals. Beyond mere error, the glitch becomes an almost ritualistic procedure to access a forbidden

liminal space, in between the low-level code and the playable gameworld, where its basic rules are subverted, and the game develops an almost autonomous agency whose influence on the urban legends will be traced in the present paper. The glitch re-programs the game as much as the collective imaginary about the game, and hacking becomes a myth-making practice, hyperstitionally spreading stories that still haunt today's discourse around *Pokémon*.

Biography:
Matteo Polato is a researcher, curator and sound artist. He is currently PhD candidate at Manchester Metropolitan University, researching on the roles of sound, vibration and resonance-based processes in contemporary occulture and paranormal practices. His background is in media studies, sound studies and sonic arts. Among his research interest is the connections between gaming culture and online occulture. Recently, he co-founded the DⱯRK – Dark Arts Research Kollective at MMU School Of Arts, a group of academics and artists which explore the creative, communal and boundary-breaking potential of occultural practices.

Panel Two - Ghostly Glitches: Games and Analogue

Unknowing in the ocean: Body-technology interfaces in underwater exploration horror games

In lo-fi horror games of underwater exploration (*Iron Lung, Water Womb World, CorpseOcean, Discover the Ocean, Frontier Diver*), the players aim to discover, uncover, and record deep-sea worlds. The horror is evoked as this task is mediated through the limited scope of analogue technological interfaces. Through diegetic audiovisual and navigational distortions caused dually by technology and water, these games subvert the authority of 'seeing', navigating and mapping in exploration games, in which nature is imagined as both a scopophilic spectacle and extractive resource. Instead, lo-fi interfaces reflect the unintelligibility of the ocean and its agential, monstrous inhabitants. Here, I argue that lo-fi and analogue interfaces in undersea horror video games enable a challenge to anthropocentric worldviews, through materialising both the fallibility and symbiosis of human-ocean apparatuses. In doing so, these games evoke an ecophobic terror of the 'unknowable' undersea world. Analogue horror also presents the abject desire for possibilities of nonhuman embodiment. As the analogue interface technologies become markers of the player-character's own body— eyes, ears, lungs, womb— these games blur lines between the body, technology and water, thus reflecting the cyborgic and material prosthesis of the human in tentacular nonhuman worlds.

Biography:
Frances Hallam (they/them) is a fourth-year PhD researcher at The University of Surrey. Their thesis, entitled *Tentacular Bodies, Times, Matters: Posthuman entanglements and oceanic imaginaries in 21st century SF*, explores intersections of ocean ecocriticism, queer ecologies and feminist new materialism in contemporary science fiction. They have two

upcoming chapters in *Animals and Science Fiction* by Palgrave, and the *Edinburgh Companion to Science Fiction and the Medical Humanities*.

Frequencies and flesh: Framing postmodern cyclicality through analogue technologies in Rose Engine's *Signalis* (2022)

Signalis is a 2022 survival horror video game made by German developer Rose Engine. The game takes place in a dystopian future society in which our central character, an artificial human 'replika' seeks to locate her missing human partner within a degrading mining facility on a distant planet.

 Signalis plays as an updated homage to classic 90's survival horror video games such as *Resident Evil* and *Silent Hill.* However its backward gaze to decades past goes deeper than this. The game's world utilises analogue technologies in its setting such as floppy disks, CRT televisions, and most importantly analogue radio signals as a formal gameplay and storytelling mechanic.

 This use of analog radio signals as a gameplay mechanic forms the backbone of my paper. The events of *Signalis* are revealed to take place entirely within a surreal world generated by a constant looping radio signal, a signal which compels the central character through a continuous time loop in an eternally failing effort to rescue her partner, who is the source of this signal and reality. With each passing loop within the game's world, the setting continues to degrade and fall apart until it 'loses all meaning' as acknowledged by the game's antagonist. I believe the game uses this looping radio signal framing device along with other analogue technologies in conjunction with a litany of intertextual references spanning from classic anime to Robert W. Chambers *The King in Yellow* in order to comment on a cyclicality in which continuous intertextuality within postmodern texts eventually serve to render these texts meaningless with no singular identity of their own. *Signalis*'s unique use of analogue technologies as both gameplay, story and theme make the game into a deep postmodern text which thoughtfully avoids the pitfalls of the very texts upon which it comments.

Biography:
My name is Kane Geary O' Keeffe. I am a 23 year old researcher based in Cork, Ireland. I am currently poised to begin my PhD program in film at University College Cork this coming January , titled 'Framing Diegetic Screen Technologies in Contemporary Horror Cinema'. I am seeking to get involved in this symposium as the topics at hand fall very squarely within my PhD research. I am also looking to put my best foot forward in developing my research and presentation skills while I start to situate myself within academic discourses surrounding contemporary horror.

A past that never was - The uncanny VHS aesthetics of Puppet Combo Games

Gaming as a medium and artform is defined by a forward focused approach to technological development, with new and more powerful computer equipment pushing demand for more detailed graphics and ever more complex gaming worlds. Away from the big budget 'AAA' titles, however, there is a dizzying amount of variety and artistic vision at play. Independent developers make a virtue of technical limitations and smaller budgets to create distinctive aesthetic choices that stand out in contrast to their high-fidelity peers.

The connections between our modern concept of horror and the VHS period in home entertainment are often conceptualised in terms of the 'video nasty' – a pejorative term coined by tabloid newspaper reports sensationalising the perceived effects of watching horror. The reality was often far removed from this media portrayal but such an approach offers an interesting lens through which to consider the various games by the developer Puppet Combo. These games use a distinctively grainy and glitchy VHS-inspired aesthetic to create an ahistorical idea of 1980s gaming that never actually existed.

The crude, angular, polygonal aesthetic employed within Puppet Combo titles is unsettling as they exist in a liminal space between abstract and realistic. Unlike the vague pixels of actual 1980s horror games like the Atari version of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, the result is a style that evokes the past while never being possible with the technology of that period. As a result, I argue that such VHS horror games exist in a long tradition of gothic and horror remediations that purport to be historical texts but are instead clearly suffused with a creatively exploitative take on the past.

Biography:
Dr Stephen Curtis is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Central Lancashire. Currently writing a book on Early Modern Horror, he has also published and presented on various aspects of horror media and literature and is always keen to explore the role of horror across time periods and media.

Panel Three: Abject Objects: Film, Television and Analogue 1

"I don't think I want to watch the ending": Televisual gothic in *Inside No. 9*

From analogue aesthetics to a preoccupation with on-screen death, horror-comedy anthology *Inside No. 9*, by *The League of Gentlemen*'s Reece Shearsmith and Steve Pemberton, repeatedly uses dated technology to horrific ends.

In 2016 episode "The Devil of Christmas", two men speak jovially over a schlocky 1970s programme about an English family holidaying in Austria. They draw attention to the programme's shortcomings – booms dipping into shot, continuity errors and a dinner scene in which nobody eats. But at the episode's conclusion, the audience is met with a horrifying revelation: this is not a classic Christmas ghost story, but a snuff film; the voiceover not commentary, but a police interview.

In 2022, director Peter Strickland described his short *Blank Narcissus*, a tragic love story, as the first example of mock DVD commentary, describing the form as "an antiquated supplement to home entertainment with the dominance of streaming". In fact, the form

dates to Rob Brydon's comedy *Director's Commentary* (2004). But in the DVD commentary for *Inside No. 9* episode "Séance Time", released the year before "The Devil of Christmas", Shearsmith becomes increasingly irate with Pemberton, and the commentary culminates with Pemberton ostensibly accidentally murdering him. Notably, then, *Inside No. 9* produced the first two instances of mock commentary horror – both centering the reception of television programming via physical media.

This paper reads *Inside No. 9* as exemplary of the Televisual Gothic – television horror about the potential horrors of television – and explores the programme's horrific engagement with the material history of its medium.

Biography:
Brontë Schiltz is a PhD candidate at Manchester Metropolitan University. Her work has appeared in *SFRA Review*, *The Sibyl*, *Fantastika Journal*, *Aeternum Journal*, *SIC Journal* and *Revenant Journal*, as well as *Vision, Contestation and Deception: Interrogating Gender and the Supernatural in Victorian Shorter Fiction* (2021), *Penny Dreadfuls and the Gothic: Investigations of Pernicious Tales of Terror* (2023), *The Gothique: Myriad Manifestations – A Study of the Various Forms of the Gothic* (2023), and *Nigel Kneale and Horror* (2024). She has also spoken on podcasts *Victorian Legacies*, *The Ghost Story Book Club* and *BERGCAST* and given two lectures with Romancing the Gothic.

The haunting of analogue: Indian popular horror films and analogue media as narrative device

This study, focusing on the context of popular Indian horror films, investigates how analogue media serve as conduits of terror and storytelling tools within the framework of horror and supernatural narratives. Drawing upon two films, *13B* (2009) and *Click* (2010), this paper seeks to demonstrate how analogue media like a television set or a camera become conduits through which the past, unresolved traumas, and malevolent forces manifest themselves. Through a critical analysis of these films, this paper argues that analogue media in Indian popular horror films can be posited within the changing socio-political and technological realms. These media not only serve as tools for delivering scares but also as vehicles for exploring complex relationships between popular Indian horror films and the globally popular horror fiction genre. This paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the interplay between technology, culture, and cinematic fear while also underlining how specific media forms may act as conduits of terror in the context of neoliberal India. By offering a critical intervention into the study of Indian horror cinema and analogue media as a narrative device, this article opens up new avenues for exploration within the broader context of international analogue horror and its enduring impact on global film cultures.

Biography:
Saayan Chattopadhyay, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication at Baruipur College, affiliated with the University of Calcutta, India. After a stint as a journalist, he is currently engaged in interdisciplinary research involving identity

politics, gender and digital media in India. He has published articles in *Journalism Practice*, *Media Asia*, *South Asia Research*, *trippleC*, Studies in *South Asian Film and Media*, and *Journal of Boyhood Studies*. He has also contributed chapters in books on media, gender and technology published by Oxford University Press, Palgrave Macmillan, Springer, Routledge, Lexington Books, and Sussex Academic Press, among others. His research interests include neoliberal media, critical masculinities studies, and techno-culture in developing countries.

The old ways - The resurgence of analogue filmmaking practice amongst contemporary film folk

Within the context of the Folk Horror genre, the term "the old ways" has traditionally denoted archaic, often supernatural practices that serve as foundational elements of the genre. However, in the contemporary resurgence of folk horror, "the old ways" takes on a new dimension as an increasing number of filmmakers such as Mark Jenkin, Dean Puckett, and Craig Williams, choose to embrace the use of 8, 16, and 35mm film formats over the readily accessible, cost-effective, and user-friendly digital technology of the modern era. This seemingly retrogressive approach to film production raises compelling questions about the emerging cinematic practice.

This paper explores the implications of this resurgence in celluloid filmmaking within the folk horror revival. It delves into whether this choice represents an exercise in aesthetic nostalgia, a deliberate yearning to disconnect from the trappings of the age of "content", or if, perhaps most intriguingly, the unique qualities of celluloid filmmaking and photographic development themselves serve as a form of ritualistic practice, representing a higher form of communion with the ethereal plane.

By examining the intersection of traditional folk horror themes and the use of traditional film technology, this research sheds light on the evolving dynamics of genre film production and its cultural significance in an increasingly digital world.

Biography:
Rich Scott is a lecturer in Film & Broadcasting at Ayrshire College in Scotland. Currently, he is pursuing his MA in Film and Television at Falmouth University, with a research focus on otherly pastoralism, landscape, and analogue film practice. His most recent publication is the video essay titled *You're Making Me Mangery*, an examination of masculinity in crisis within The Incredible Hulk television series. He resides in the historic village of Alloway with his fiancée, dog and cat.

Love letters written in blood: The renaissance of practical effects

The practical special effects artistry of creatives such as Rob Bottin, Tom Savini and Rick Baker fell out of favour somewhat in the late 1990s and 2000s, as filmmakers embraced digital technology and its seemingly endless possibilities. However, in the past decade, the

puppetry, make-up effects, and gore of texts such as *Evil Dead* (2013), *The Void* (2016), and the *Terrifier* series (2016 -) recall and centralise the tactile quality of the 1980s heyday of practical effects.

Reviews by both critics and viewers often note these texts' "love letter" status to horror films of the 1980s, and this is framed primarily through their use of gore and other explicit imagery. This newfound reverence has allowed a new generation of special effects artists, such as Dan Martin, Damien Leone, and Ashley K. Thomas to thrive and engage with horror fans and audiences and they have themselves noted their debt to their 1980s counterparts, acknowledging the influence of their craft.

This paper will argue that the use of practical effects evokes a longing for a horror decade past and its attendant material qualities, while uncovering how this also represents an intriguing intersection between process and practice. This paper will demonstrate that films such as those noted above are part of a broader analogue approach within the contemporary genre, where the accoutrements of previous eras are recovered and made central once more. Overarchingly, I will present these texts as "love letters" to past horror eras: ones that reinsert materiality as part of their appeal to genre fans, and as part of a process of homage.

Biography:
Dr Shellie McMurdo is a Lecturer in Film and Television at the University of Hertfordshire. She is one of the co-founders/co-convenors of the BAFTSS Horror Studies Special Interest Group, a co-editor of *the Hidden Horror Histories* book series (Liverpool University Press), and the author of *Blood on the Lens: Trauma and Anxiety in American Found Footage Horror Cinema* (Edinburgh University Press, 2022) *and Devil's Advocates: Pet Sematary* (Liverpool University Press, 2023). She has also published and presented work on various other aspects of horror screen media such as post-peak torture horror, the true crime fandom, and Blumhouse productions. She is currently working on a research project with Dr. Laura Mee on analogue formats in contemporary horror, and embarking on a solo project around practical effects in the horror genre.

Panel Four - Nightmare Noises: Audio and Analogue

Tape recorders, audio horror, and the knowledge that someone is always listening in *The Magnus Archives* podcast

The Magnus Archives (2016-2021) is a horror podcast where cassette recorders become conduits of terror as the only medium that will allow the protagonist to record his own and others' experiences with the supernatural. Tape recorders are a non-diagetic justification for the series' audio-only podcast format, but are also entwined with the horrors experienced by the characters as the tapes enact the will of a supernatural entity invested in observing their fears.

The Magnus Archive, an institution focused on researching the supernatural, exists as a liminal space between the supernatural experiences they document and the real world blissfully unaware of supernatural entities. Tape recorders become a symbol of the archive as well as the fear of being observed, as they slowly grow to turn themselves on against the will of the protagonist Jon Sims as the story develops beyond the controlled narrative of the personal statements he is archiving.

The tapes work as a validation of the supernatural, unlike other digital recording methods that refuse to function when a supernatural threat is real. However, they also provide a method of narrative control; the tapes limit the audience's knowledge of the world in order to foster the belief that suffering is inescapable and the supernatural elements will inevitably end in tragedy.

The tape recorders are an intrinsic part of the narrative of *The Magnus Archives*, with the conceit of the obsolete technology being central to the podcast's narrative and medium.

Biography:

Louise Pitcher is an academic currently researching the monstrous, zombie myth, and genre fiction. She is interested in how texts are crafted to challenge or conform to expectations and how this influences genre, narrative parallels, and the relationship between text and audience. She recently published an article with *Limina Journal* "Charlotte's Choice: Representing Charlotte's Marriage and Agency in *Pride and Prejudice* Adaptations" looking at, in part, Charlotte's zombification in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*.

The "Click:" Tape recorders and deferred meaning in analog podcast horror

The Sheridan Tapes (2020-present) and *Jar of Rebuke* (2020-present) are two audio dramas whose narratives showcase the intersection of horror and analog recording technologies. In the former, Detective Sam Bailey reviews the eponymous Sheridan Tapes left behind by missing horror author Anna Sheridan in an attempt to locate her, later taking on her habit of recording himself with a handheld recorder. In the latter, Dr. Jared Hel of the Enclosure uses a recorder in a series of audio journals while attempting to regain his memory.

While effects common to analog horror, such as static and glitches, occur in these and other podcasts to induce fear, I argue that the "click" of the tape recorders in audio horror also produces fear through curation and stoppage. I use *The Sheridan Tapes* to showcase how an unknown entity curates and plays the tapes back to the listener, leaving the characters' future fates uncertain and creating a potentially unreliable curator. Using *Jar of Rebuke*, I highlight how the tapes abruptly conclude during climactic moments, generating suspense. The efficacy of these techniques is made evident in deferrals that withhold meaning from the listener, sometimes temporarily, in a manner mimicking Derrida's différance, creating haunting absences unique from other analog effects. Building on studies like Line Henriksen's exploration of différance and deferral in Smile.jpg, I showcase linguistic concepts like différance and hauntology's relevance to analog horror by

employing previous analyses alongside selected podcast moments to illustrate and theorize the "click's" haunting and horrific potential.

Biography:
Kit Bauserman is a doctoral student in American Studies at the College of William & Mary. Their research focuses on monsters, narrative, and sound within gothic and horror podcasting.

Picking up the needle drops: Horror fans' transmedial vinyl mockups and paratextural poaching

While transmedia studies have predominantly focused on textual extensions whose location within convergence cultures has centred on digital media's interaction with traditional media (Freeman and Gambarato 2019), Jenkin's famous crossmedia dictum 'where new and old media collide' (2006) gives little room for retro analogue media's significance within contemporary horror fans' material worlds (Rendell 2023a). Challenging this shortcoming, this paper examines the importance of horror media soundtracks for fans (Rendell 2023b), and how albums released on vinyl offer both textual and tactile modes of transmedia (Rodgers 2019). Moreover, the auratic features of this analogue media – packaging size, album artwork, composers' author-functionality, extra-textual features, vinyl design and colourations, and limited releases – not only support cult fans' collecting sensibilities (Sexton 2015; Halfyard 2016), but also, as this paper demonstrates, galvanise fan-made transformative works. With source material from horror film, television, and video games, the paper analyses how genre fans design their own vinyl mockups – often of soundtracks that have not been released in physical form – and circulate these artworks online. The paper argues that fans draw on the source's materials' official paratextual marketing material to inform the textural qualities of their vinyl mockups. In doing so, the paper offers the original concept of paratextual poaching whereby fans ensure aesthetic congruity between their fan art and championed horror media text, which is then applied to vinyl's various packaging features that heightens the mockups' cult verisimilitude.

Biography:
Dr James Rendell is a lecturer of creative industries at the University of South Wales. His recent monograph *Transmedia Terrors in Post-TV Horror* was published by Amsterdam University Press and his research has been published in range of journals and edited collections, including: *Transformative Works and Cultures*, *East Asian Journal of Popular Culture*, *Participations*, *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, *Convergence*, *Global TV Horror*, and *The Soundtrack*. He is currently co-editing an edited collection on horror audiences with Dr Kate Egan.

Panel Five - Tracking (T)errors: Film, Television and Analogue 2

B-Movie madness

While the *Young Ones* never actually got to see the video nasty they bought ('*Have we got a video*?' '*Yes Neil we have got a bloody video*'), a lot of other people did, and like (P)Ric, Neale and the rest of the team from Scumbag College the choice of video they picked to watch would not have been of the wholesome family friendly variety,

While the so-called video nasties of the early 80s have provided a veritable goldmine of research and social commentary with the 'banned' list being analysed and has forever been immortalised by fans and critics alike for their content of extremity and grotesque covers. While the 'classics; that *Driller Killer, Evil Dead* et al lined the walls (and were subsequently banned) from the cigarette and paraffin heater smelling video shops there were also less notorious b-movie titles from the likes of as Medusa, Astra, Scorpio and Interlight which while not as shocking or horrific as the video nasties were certainly entertaining, From space horror homages by Roger Corman to budget b-movie world of Charles and Richard Band these movies produced thrills, horror and titillation for an entire generation of video viewers.

As well as having a dedicated fan-base these films which included the likes of Space-Hunter, *Forbidden World*, *Inseminoid*, *Xtro*, *MetalStorm* and *Dungeonmaster* were a heady mix of horror, science fiction, post-apocalyptic nihilism, and a DIY attitude. Thankfully this low budget ethos genre of yesteryear still exists and more filmmakers are purposely producing new content that pays homage to these budget restrictive horror and genre films of the mid-1980s. As such this talk intents to analyse and critique the current resurgence of analogue/VHS b-movies using examples such as *TurboKid* (2015, dir. Simard, F.), *PsychoGorman* (2020, dir Kostanski, S.) and *Skinamarink* (2023, dir. Ball, K.) which all provide examples of financial and critically successful original contemporary horror/genre filmmaking but on a shoestring budget.

The work will also explore other less successful but equally entertaining low-budget films such as *Mildew from the Planet Xonader* (2015, dir De Santi, G) and *Antrum* (2019, dir Amito, D) and query why there is still a fascination by film-makers to use practical affects and analogue (or digital processes to give he impression of analogue) techniques to replicate both the aesthetic, ethos and production values of these b-movies.

Biography:
Rob Mclaughlin is an independent scholar whose interests lie in in Hauntology and the disquiet of the early 1980s. He has written papers on the horror in children's television and film as well as the horror found in *Doctor Who*. He has also had a book published through Liverpool University Press based on Stephen Spielberg and Tobe Hoopers *Poltergeist*.

'You record it, I'm going to enjoy it': The horror of home recording technology in *WNUF Halloween Special* and *VHYes*

Our contemporary enthusiasm for antiquated technology—which one might rightly describe as a *fetish* at this point—appears widely across media, but the exploration of outmoded mechanisms of media has been particularly fecund in recent horror. This is especially

evident in two particular horror films from the last decade: 2013's *WNUF Halloween Special* and 2019's *VHYes*, both of which make use of the VHS aesthetic. Neither film achieved wide commercial success, but they both enjoy cult status amongst found footage and modern analogue horror enthusiasts.

Although differing in format, both films foreground the analogue apparatus as storytelling device, and in doing so they place the viewer in a subject position that is filtered through the nostalgia of VHS technology. *WNUF Halloween Special* is told through what seems to be a VHS recording of a 1987 television broadcast that includes commercials, with a mysterious "viewer" controlling the channel; the story in *VHYes* is told through handheld camcorder technology, as two kids investigate a haunted house while taping over a wedding video. This shared use of both the aesthetic and the affordances that VHS introduced to the domestic sphere emphasizes the then-novelty of being able to record or produce video recordings on a personal scale, while also interrogating the implications of this as a watershed moment in our contemporary relationship/ entanglement with obsessively documenting and archiving our lives. This presentation will explore this relationship between horror moving into the domestic personal space, the horror implied within the subject as producer, and the specificity of the "haunted" potential of physical media.

Biography:
Stephanie A. Graves (Vanderbilt University) researches the many intersections of rhetoric and media, gender and sexuality, and horror. She has published on such varied works as *Hannibal, Get Out, Justified,* and *Supernatural,* and her most recent work is the collection *Netflix's Chilling Adventures of Sabrina; Hell's Under New Management* (Lexington, 2023), co-edited with Cori Mathis and Melissa Tyndall.

Dead media, live flows

In 2021's *Broadcast Signal Intrusion,* a video archivist named James (Harry Shum Jr.), working in 1999 Chicago, discovers a broadcast signal intrusion on local news from 1987. James starts to track down other intrusions, the grief over his missing wife fueling a paranoid-obsessive quest to connect the intrusions and find their perpetrator. While his investigation centres on VHS and Betamax recordings of the intrusions, there is, throughout, a nostalgia for the flows of local television, from the first intrusion into live broadcast news, the second into syndicated sci-fi, and the third into a cable-access local arts performance: a pattern of "narrowcasting", the film insists, that gets ever more idiosyncratic in its forays into local television. James's obsession disturbs his routines that the film's first half hour establishes: a parallel emerges in television flow's key markers of time and place becoming destabilised, not only by the eerie signal intrusions, but also by recording and fragmentation. When James finally catches the perpetrator, forcing him to recreate another intrusion, the man complains, "I'm missing my favourite show tonight. Can you guess what it is? You probably already know what it is. I bet it's your favourite show too." This paper argues that part of the nostalgic grief that haunts the film (and which I, a child of 80s and 90s Chicago,

keenly feel), is for a shared television ecology, one that not only structured our days, but also defined who we were and where we were from.

Biography:
Lynn Kozak is an associate professor at McGill University and part of the Québec-based horror-research team [CORERISC](). Recent publications include works on television forms, as well as works on shows including *Lucifer, Hannibal, The Exorcist, Stranger Things,* and *Evil*.

Re-viewing *The Ring*: Restoration, adaptation and the ghost of VHS

In March 2019, Arrow Films released a new, digitally restored Blu-Ray collection of the *Ring* series—*Ring* (Hideo Nakata 1998), *Ring 2* (Hideo Nakata, 1999), *Ring 0: Birthday* (Norio Tsuruta 2000), and 'lost' sequel *Spiral* (George Iida 1998). The release was preceded by a limited run of theatrical screenings of *Ring*, promoting a new high definition restoration from the original negative produced in collaboration with director of photography Junichiro Hayashi. For most of its UK audience, this was the first opportunity to see the film on the big screen, and a vastly different experience to their original viewings on home video at the turn of the millennium.

      Ring initiated a wave of J-horror popularity in the UK in the late 1990s, prompted by Tartan Video's 'Asia Extreme' home video label (Shin, 2008). The series became a major cult hit on video, before finding a truly global audience in the mid-2000s on DVD (Wada-Marciano 2007). Remakes *The Ring* (Gore Verbinski, 2002) and *The Ring Virus* (Kim Dong-bin, 1999) and other sequels and reboots further contributed to *Ring*'s horror canonisation.

    This paper analyses the ways in which the *Ring* series has evolved through retelling, serialisation and re-release. It also explores the implications of technological development in relation to both textual and contextual factors. To what extent can we consider restoration a further form of adaptation, particularly when digital transfer impacts the overall aesthetic of a film which once relied on the lower quality of VHS as part of its viewing culture? And how does a horror series about a cursed videotape remain relevant when the death of that media format is only underlined by the story's retelling on new digital formats?

Biography:
Dr Laura Mee is a Senior Lecturer in Film and Television at the University of Hertfordshire, co-convenor of BAFTSS Horror Studies SIG and co-editor of the *Hidden Horror Histories* series (Liverpool University Press). Her research focuses on horror cinema, adaptation, and seriality. She is the author of *Reanimated: The Contemporary American Horror Film Remake* (Edinburgh University Press, 2022) and Devil's Advocates: *The Shining* (Auteur, 2017), and has published on horror remakes, *Room 237* and cinephilia, *The Conjuring* franchise, and *American Psycho* and gender.