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And I Must Scream: Exploring the Distortion Of Humanity in Analog Horror

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Abstract:

In the dark alleyways of YouTube, lies a subgenre of horror that is inherently democratized, accessible, and takes the basics of traditional tropes and turns them on their head. Analog Horror, born out of the subgenre of Found Footage, combines short-form videos, beginner level graphic design, and unnerving rhetoric to tell stories that cross sci-fi, murder, or even religious horror in a way that the film industry is unable to accomplish. This paper examines four different Analog Horror series and their unique qualities that make them stand out in the horror genre.

Introduction

As the television light flickers in the darkness, the static drones on, and the fear is palpable in the air. The faces you see aren't quite right, their eyes too dark, their smile too wide, but by now it's too late. You've fallen under their trance. This is perhaps the most basic, solid interpretation of Analog Horror. Analog Horror is loosely defined as a web original subgenre that descended from the Found Footage genre. Many series set their videos throughout the 1960s to the 1990s, and the VHS-Esque recording falls right in line with the setting. Along with the low-quality videos, the constant glitching of graphics and audio, and eerie small-town aesthetics, Analog Horror also ties in cryptic and fatalistic messages, disturbing body horror, and at times, sacrilegious ideals. By examining the use of distorted graphics and audio, the uncanny valley, and rhetoric; this paper will discuss *Local58*, *Gemini Home Entertainment*, *The Walten Files*, and *The Mandela Catalogue*, and their common goal of corrupting humanity, in body and soul.

The Beginnings:

Analog Horror as a genre is relatively young, and it is clearly a child, or perhaps a spawn of the Found Footage genre. While the film *Cannibal Holocaust*—an Italian exploitation film about a lost documentary crew in the Amazon— is cited as the first film to use the Found Footage stylization, *The Blair Witch Project* popularized the genre in the wider horror sphere. Since *Blair Witch*, there have been other commercially successful franchises based on the aesthetic of found footage. Yet, Found Footage relies on and obeys the rules of feature films. Analog Horror series would unlikely be classified as feature films, closer to shorts, or even television, as many series have defined themselves with seasons of episodes. But pushing it even further, most Analog Horror series have episodes that only last from 2-10 mins long, keeping the watcher enthralled and on edge.

Lastly, one of the main aspects of Analog Horror comes in the form of community engagement. Right under the video, in fact. Analog Horror is an inherently easy genre of film to breach. Many creators are young, having seen a series, and were inspired to make their own mythos. When these series gain popularity, it's not hard to find the comments full of theories, of analysis, of contemplation (Wendigoon, 2021). Analog Horror series hold their cards close to their metaphorical chest. Clues are littered, but there is always an opportunity to analyze and interpret these stories (Nexpo, 2020). With dedicated audiences just a scroll away from the video, Analog Horror has created a tight-knit community of viewers committed to piecing together the puzzle, to figuring out the monster, to wait and see if the world survives.

Don't Look At The Moon:

Local58, the proverbial first Analog Horror, was created by Kris Straub in 2017, with the video entitled "You Are On The Fastest Available Route". While not the most terrifying or even forthcoming, this first video is dashcam footage, and the main story

comes from the GPS voice rerouting and directing the driver toward an unknown threat. About halfway through, the GPS begins to direct the driver to stranger locations, to turn off their headlights, and to drive past the Do Not Enter sign. It becomes clear by the unearthly screeching, and the sudden, almost imperceptible shot of the alien in the woods, that the GPS was conspiring against us the whole time. Then, as the driver frantically tears through the backroads, we hear the GPS begin to count down the feet the monster is closing in. And soon enough, the camera goes sideways, and we hear the crunch of metal and glass, and it's enough to know this protagonist is dead.

"You Are On The Fastest Available Route" stands out from the rest of *Local58* in the format. By and all, *Local58*, after its first video, sticks to an aesthetic of a local television station broadcasting random content at 3 am. While the videos change their medium— i.e., a children's cartoon, a weather broadcast, a late-night sleeping aid— it all inherently makes sense within the context of television programming. But dashcam footage, not meant to be broadcasted anywhere, certainly sticks out of the pattern. However, the strange style of *Local58*'s first video, along with its typical aesthetic thereafter perhaps created an unintended guide for the rest of Analog Horror, as many other series incorporate dashcam/personal footage into their strange programming. It should also be noted that *Local58* created another trope: the alien/unknown monster villain. With *Local58*, we have some version of a spindly alien species from the moon. For an unknown reason—which is a large part of the excitement—the aliens want to kill us.

"Contingency" follows next, and it hits the terrifying baseline set for the rest of all Analog Horror. This entry is a government PSA, meant for the Cold War, which details the grimmest scenario ever: the citizens of the United States are instructed to kill themselves to prevent the Soviet Union from conquering the country. The information is presented with a distorted version of America the Beautiful moaning on, as the text instructs parents to take care of their children first, otherwise, police will complete the action regardless (*Local58*, 2017). The horror within the realm of *Local58* is that the aliens, as seen in the first video, are trying to drive humans to eradicate themselves so the aliens can take over. "Contingency" is only the first effort, one where the aliens use our own nationalism, pride, and fear against us, no doubt killing a few in the process. But when this PSA doesn't completely wipe out humanity, *Local58* continues to have strange programming at the hands of the aliens.

After another set of ominous messages strewn throughout glitching emergency alert announcements and cartoons, *Local58* posts "Real Sleep". This video, which masquerades as a helpful, nighttime sleeping aid, like a broadcasted meditation hour, quickly starts to brainwash the viewer. With messaging like: "Dreams are just screaming with pictures", "We are our own Gods", and "The primitive mind deserves its nightmares"; it becomes clear that the aliens have begun to control another facet of humanity. "Real Sleep", within the lore of the channel, functions as another example of the aliens hijacking the programming, creating a video that flashes text and unidentifiable faces to alienate (no pun intended) the citizens watching said video. With no sleep and a lack of human emotions, the aliens are driving humanity towards a vicious life, where we are violent, maniacal, unfeeling, and sleep deprived (Nexpo, 2020). They are amping up the violence and the isolation, once again, so they don't have to get their hands dirty.

Across *Local58*, we find the bare bones of the rest of the genre. An almost unperceivable unknown, intent on causing chaos and wreaking havoc on the general population. We also get our formula: short videos, containing storylines that filter into the larger conspiracy at hand. And we get the founding aesthetic. *Local58* utilizes unnerving rhetoric, both in voiceovers and on-screen text that creates a horrific sense of foreboding, of coming danger, one that you can't seem to turn away from. These aliens can weaponize our own fears, but also our own curiosity, and create a realm where humans become puppets and slaves to the programming. While *Local58* has gone rather quiet in recent months, it's without a doubt that the themes and ideas first discovered in this series influenced every single Analog Horror series to come, with many still holding it as the one to beat.

Fake People:

Remy Abode broke into the Analog Horror scene with "World's Weirdest Animals", the first of the ongoing series known as *Gemini Home Entertainment*. Starting in 2019, this series clearly takes some influence from *Local58*. Coming from the creator himself, *Gemini* was created to take the myths of Skinwalkers or the Wendigo and push them closer to biology than spirituality. The viral, (Kok 2022) *Gemini* expands on the genre by taking the analog aesthetic toward more intentional VHS creation. Where *Local58* feels throughout the series as if the tv station was constantly being hacked, the words being twisted, and the aliens controlling the signals; *Gemini Home Entertainment* feels intentional. Each video was created with an informational purpose and said videos are not ignorant of their content. These videos represent humanity trying to function and understand its surroundings. This is a clear delineation of whose story it is.

Comparatively, *Gemini Home Entertainment* recenters the apocalyptic, doomsday-prepped identity of our society, rather than an omnipresent and inescapable entity that is shown in *Local58*. Do not mistake *Gemini's* threats as escapable, however.

In the first episode of *Gemini's* 16 main videos, "World's Weirdest Animals" introduces us to our first aspect of the end of the world: Woodwalkers. Woodwalkers are described as excellent hunters, they prefer to nest in large family homes, and they will steal your voice. In the shortest explanation, Woodwalkers are another form of body snatchers. They seem to first appear as a horrific, sprawling mass of claw-like legs, but they can steal bodies, creating what we are told are "fake people". But woodwalkers are not the main threat, though they very well could be. Woodwalkers seem to be soldiers for a greater, mutating power that isn't just on Earth but is spreading through the entire galaxy.

A few episodes later, *Gemini* posts the informational "Our Solar System". Working through the planets, we receive some alternate information. For example: "Earth is *one of* the only planets in our solar system capable of supporting life," or, "[Neptune has] a large storm in the planet, called the 'great dark spot.' It is the lens. Neptune has been mutated." After Neptune, we are greeted with a new planet, labeled simply as The Iris. The Iris is "laughing at us", before we watch Neptune possibly explode/flare/reach out to the rest of the system, spreading The Iris' control further. (*Gemini Home Entertainment*, 2020). It will make its way to Earth. Technically, it already did.

Before The Iris can be discussed in greater detail, there is one more aspect to the apocalypse at hand. A virus called Deep Root Disease. The video, aptly named “Deep Root Disease” explains the way one can develop the virus. The roots must search for bones to take hold. Once roots attach to bones, the virus spreads quickly, taking over the host, growing new appendages, and fundamentally reorganizing their structure into a Woodwalker. The diagnosis comes in three simple questions: Can they recall their mother’s name? Have they stopped dreaming? Have they felt new bones? (Gemini Home Entertainment, 2020) A video separate from the main timeline, “SHIFTING TENDONS” focuses on a sufferer of Deep Root Disease. Barry Johnson is being held in quarantine as the virus slowly corrupts his body, turning him into a mass of roots and spires. Johnson has become unrecognizable. Yet his mangled face remains, his jaw frozen in an open scream, and presumably, The Iris manipulates his vocal cords to speak to his captors. Not only has The Iris managed to control our bodily actions, but it has also begun to communicate with Earth through an “Artificial Intelligence” Computer. Simply known as The Client by Regnad Computing, The Iris has sent cryptic messages, such as “The hungry eye is welcomed” or “The Vessel floats into the maw”. Convinced this omniscient planet is the angel of advancement, Regnad Computing continues its conversations with The Iris, furthering its connection to our world (Gemini Home Entertainment, 2020). It remains to be seen how exactly The Iris, Deep Root, and Woodwalkers are all tied together, but nevertheless, *Gemini Home Entertainment* has laid the foundations for multiple perspectives on the end of the world.

To its core, *Gemini* has created another apocalyptic story, one that parrots certain tropes from the zombie, body snatchers, and intergalactic threat elements of horror. Rather than shying away from these tropes, Abode and *Gemini* take them and push them further into the strange, biological, and scientific realm. This emphasis on the biology of this world is highlighted in the format of the videos. Where other Analog Horror series truly rely on the idea of *found* footage, or perhaps more archived footage, *Gemini’s* content is not a coincidence or a hijacking. The core of these videos is that they are informational. They are meant to function as old VHS tapes from a library, made to play during elementary school or corporate training. This sets *Gemini* apart from the rest. The rhetoric used is not to brainwash the viewer or convince them to kill themselves. The words and phrases presented portray the fact that humans *know* that something is wrong. However, through different corporations producing these videos, we see exactly *how* humans are coping with the end of the world. Between the video marketing bunkers that protect from a Woodwalker Storm to Regnad Computing actively communicating with The Iris, this series does not create a black-and-white society. Rather, it reflects the true colors of our humanity, prophesying the corporate entities’ intent on profits, the dismissal of the end, and how quickly our world can fall. In reality, there is very little hope in the world of *Gemini Home Entertainment*, even if they are content on telling—or selling—it to you. The world is succumbing to forces from mythology, from biology, and from space. *Gemini* is cornered on every side, and they still continue to produce content in the wake of the end. As some have pointed out, *Gemini’s* slogan of “We’re not going anywhere”, feels like a defiant cry from humanity against the evil forces. We create and survive, even while the world is ending.

The Rabbit Is Starving:

Billed as the most intricate and disturbing anti-drunk driving PSA ever, *The Walten Files* was created by Martin Walls on April 26, 2020. Taking a strong influence from the indie horror darling, *Five Nights at Freddy's (FNAF)*, this series is a take on animatronic horror, family dysfunctions, and the dangers of driving drunk, and it's animated. First and foremost, animation is a rare feature of Analog Horror. While viewers can find animated graphics or text thrown up across the screen, we rarely find the entire series to be a terrifying cartoon. However, let's not forget that there *is* precedent for an animated episode, all the way back with *Local58*. Their take on an old Disney cartoon is still relevant to the series as a whole, and perhaps this inclusion inspired Walls to take it a step further and lean into his own strengths as an animator. With that, Walls' style is not at all close to the seminal video in *Local58*. It's a style that seems intentionally rough around the edges, almost amateur in its simplicity, but terrifying when cranked all the way to 100.

The Walten Files also bring another new aspect to the table. As previously discussed, Analog Horror tends to focus on short videos, within a longer series. But Walls has made a different choice for his footage. While there are still segments (labels like Video _ of 3, and so forth), Walls has only uploaded three canon videos, ranging from 10 minutes to an hour long. This creates an interesting departure from the typical style already defined. Where past Analog Horror stories have less plot, but a decent amount of lore and stakes, *The Walten Files* truly functions as a limited series, with a weaving and convoluted story of two families.

Our story begins in the first episode, titled "Company Introductory Tape". The shortest episode in the series brings us classic Analog Horror, complete with a strange training tape, dash cam footage, and glitches. We're introduced to our main set of animatronics: Bonny, Banny, Boozoo the Clown, and Sha the Sheep. A staple of the other, strange subgenre spawned from *FNAF*, is the terrifyingly crafted animals that are barely concealed as murderous robots and paranormal caskets. Walls perfectly creates an atmosphere of the uncanny with his art style, which at times looks like he took a piece of charcoal to the figure and is trying to hide its features beneath a mound of ash, and others it's so distinctly etched out in blood, it looks like someone threw a red gel lens over a bear trap. Regardless of art, Walls has also managed to master the horror of time. Usually, one can count on the dread and fear of the unknown as its main source. But another factor is the waiting game. Instead of quick flashes of bloody creatures, slashing knives, or mouths full of teeth, Analog Horror *forces* you to look. It forces you to become uncomfortable with the words glaring at you, at the eyes staring back, and the smiles growing wider. This is a primary aspect of what makes *The Walten Files* an intimidating watch.

In the first episode, we are greeted with a number of these scares. Starting off strong, the founders of Bon's Burgers, Jack Walten and Felix Kraken are pictured in a strange mashup of too-small heads and smiles almost stretching off of their faces. A perfect picture for these happy friends and business partners. Barely a moment later, we are forced to watch a missing poster of Jack Walten scream in distorted, unintelligible terror, as the features of his face glitch and draw in darkness from his surroundings (Martin Walls, 2020). It goes on impossibly long, and it's unsettling as it is

informative. Later, we also get to see the murderous robots in action, as a security guard is mangled within an inch of his life, but he doesn't die. Instead, he stares into his own video camera, rendered in horrific geometric shapes, with his jaw hanging so low it goes past the frame of the video. He stares, without eyes, as the phrases "I can't feel anything" and "he thought I was her" appear below him (Martin Walls, 2020).

The second episode "Relocate Project" has the video starts with another cryptic employee training tape. Yet, as they all do, this clip takes a sharp turn into weird as the mechanical robot known as Bunny begins to merge with a stretched-out face. Then what looks like an old point-and-click video game starring Bunny boots up. The animatronic runs through doors, repeatedly looking for a way out of the room she's in, but it's impossible. It's a seemingly Sisyphean task for the poor robot, as she runs and runs and runs. It's almost degrading to watch (what is to be the symbolic image of another murder victim) run in circles, starving to death. That's no exaggeration. The video makes no mistake of telling us that the rabbit is starving.

In the last episode published, "BunnyFarm", which operates as perhaps the first ever Let's Play of a video game, the episode takes us through an even glitchier 64-bit video game related to the Bon's Burgers franchise (Nexpo, 2021). Because even with multiple missing persons related to a singular restaurant, they still manage to fund an entire video game. Regardless, we follow the orphaned daughter of Jack Walten, Sophie, in a bout of medicated amnesia, as she tests BunnyFarm. It's intrinsically difficult to fully describe the level of distortion present in this installment other than gruesome. It's truly one to be watched and experienced, rather than regurgitated in this way. But it matters little how the glitches make their presence on the screen but in the sheer number and force of them. Not even two seconds in, the viewer is assaulted with flashing graphics, in a sense recounting the horrific life of Sophie Walten, one she has forgotten. (There's also a parody of Local58 thrown in, simply, Local57.) Next, after a bit of gameplay, comes what is essentially a plot-motivated glitch, where the woman trapped in the bunny animatronic actually receives a name and a face. Of course, that doesn't last long, as her headshot flashes on the screen, and in the best description one could muster, her eyes melt away in pixels. Then her face fades slowly between a regular headshot, one of eyes wider than bullet holes, and finally, her own face mangled and manipulated on top of the animatronic. (Take note that throughout this whole sequence there is a soundtrack that is indescribable, or perhaps evading words. Once again, this series weaves aspects that are better seen than read, and this is another.) Lastly, at least in the case of this ill-fated employee, the screen reveals a black and white photo, blown to the extremes, with her lifeless body displayed like a forgotten marionette. The text that fades in reads "I am still alive. But I can't move. And I'm having trouble breathing. And my stomach feels weird" (Martin Walls, 2021). And that's it. No reaction from Sophie. It's silent as the viewer has to pause and read the blurry text. It's silent.

The Walten Files is a treasure trove of disturbing renderings of terror, perfected by Martin Walls' flat, detailed art style, along with his ability to craft faces and features in distorted textures. While there is far more of a plot than the past two series mentioned above, *The Walten Files*' primary ability in horror is the length and the dread it infects the viewer with. In the last section of "BunnyFarm", images flash past of Jack's face violently sketched in crayon, Felix Kraken's horrified expression, and the aftermath of a

drunk driving accident: the catalyst for this whole series. But these flashes aren't one-off jumpscare, rather they repeat over and over, while Felix screams in fear and pain in the background. Walls has managed to create the visceral feeling of panic, of guilt, and the physical sensation of pain through his use of art and audio. With only three episodes, *The Walten Files* tells a convoluted, but a well-thought-out story of a broken family, while looping in murder, animatronics, and orphans.

Uh Oh! Bad Decision, Mark:

The Mandela Catalogue opens on June 9, 2021, with a video entitled "Overthron". Alex Kister, the young creator lists in the description of the video that he "does not intend to offend or oppose any Christian beliefs." While a whole genuine statement, *The Mandela Catalogue* takes the archangels and Jesus himself and distorts them into body snatchers and symbols of the end. "Overthron", while published out of order of the main series, tells this story succinctly, taking footage from "The Beginner's Bible" and creating thoughtful and disturbing edits to the animated figures of Jesus and Gabriel. With black squares essentially redacting the faces and images of these holy figures, it's even more unnerving when said characters seem to speak backward, in a whisper, or even in binary code (as transcribed in the closed captions). It's clear from the beginning of *The Mandela Catalogue* that we are not facing some kind of intergalactic threat or even a zombie apocalypse. No, this series takes a new turn within Analog Horror, and sets its sights on corrupting Abrahamic religion, and giving new meaning to "Be Not Afraid".

This entry to the genre continues in a similar fashion to *The Walten Files*, where Kister uploads a series of volumes, containing about three separate videos that all relate to each other. However, Kister also sticks to the regular formula, interspersed with shorter videos that seem to add more background worldbuilding compared to the plot-based volumes. He also mixes in a bit more found footage than in the previous series, with dashcam, security cameras, and even GPS footage (Alex Kister, 2021). Also, *Mandela Catalogue* has a decent amount of voice acting from some close friends of Kister. It's not unreasonable to say that early videos are a bit amateur, but as the series progresses, Kister was able to bring in professional voice actors to truly sell his story in a more believable way (Wendigoon, 2022).

After "Overthron", we start off with "The Mandela Catalogue Vol. 1", which introduces the audience to the modern-day threat of "Alternates" and how society, specifically police detectives, are trying to riddle through their motives. This series, along with religious imagery, functions with the uncanny valley as its main source of terror, as Alternates are described as being anywhere from slightly off from humans, to having body parts that are completely unnatural and impossible. Along with the horror contained in their figures, Alternates are practically unbeatable, as they "utilize psychological warfare" against their victims, breaking them down until they kill themselves (Kister, 2021). We then jump to a police phone recording of two teens: Mark Heathcliff and Cesar Torres. This recording provides us with the first Alternate attack of the series, where Cesar (presumably already an Alternate) lures Mark to his house, allowing another Alternate to attach himself to Mark. Horrifyingly, Kister provides us with the first-hand experience of an Alternate stalking, where Mark locks himself in his own

room. He's being tormented by leering voices and phrases that are pushing him closer to the edge. Finally, we hear the sound of a gunshot, and the unsettling line "Uh oh! Bad decision mark!" appears on the screen. Mark's head is redacted, in the same way, Gabriel's was, as we realize Mark didn't kill the Alternate, but himself.

It's implied through the rest of the series that this death was typical of the world Mark lives in. That Alternates have to get rid of their doppelgänger before they can actually take their place, and they can't physically reach you, so they get you to kill yourself. But an interesting aspect of the Alternate's lore is that they can reach you through broadcast programming, like radio and television (Kister, 2021). We receive a multitude of evidence for this throughout the series. In a separate murder account, the alternate (known as an intruder) was able to frighten a newborn baby through a TV, allowing the Intruder to steal the child (through the TV) and cause unknown grief toward the mother. In a horrific scene, the police are documenting the crime, when presumably the Intruder takes the hanged body of the mother and "tampers" with it (whatever that entails), but the body is censored entirely (Kister, 2021). Another piece of evidence of the Alternate's ability to manipulate the "signals" found in television comes from a clip from the United States Department of Temporal Phenomenon, in which they note that "If you or a loved one has been affected by the result of exposure to analog television or mirrors, contact your local authorities immediately. Financial compensation will not be available" (Kister, 2021). Not only is this a helpful addition to the lore, but also a horrific example of how capitalism still fails us in death.

As the series continues, Kister continues to build out the histories of a few different characters, and how they seem to be almost "chosen ones" in this horrible play of religious terror. As for the spiritual elements of *The Mandela Catalogue*, they're just as prevalent as the uncanny valley aspects of this series. The video entitled "Metaphysical Awareness Disorder", which is cheekily known as MAD, explains a recent phenomenon with a death rate of 97%. According to this video, one of the main ways to avoid developing MAD is to avoid practicing Christianity, Judaism, or Islam, and to stay away from philosophical beliefs. We see this in practice in "The Mandela Catalogue Vol. 333", as the police uncover more evidence of Mark's death. In his journal, Mark begs to God help him, that he has no choice anymore. "Who have I been praying to all this time?" begins to repeat over and over as the ink seems to bleed into itself, as Mark wrote on and on, asking his singular question. It's a terrifying revelation for this teenager, who is faced with his imminent death.

The Mandela Catalogue has created an atmosphere of unease where the Alternates have taken over from the "beginning". The leading theory around this series is that Alternates are actually demons or demon-esque, and that "Overthroned" was the story of Lucifer overtaking both God and Christ, and deceiving all the characters in the Bible to worship the wrong one (Wendigoon, 2021). This is reinforced by religion being the main source of MAD, and perhaps the unfortunate downfall of the deeply religious Mark Heathcliff. By bringing in religion and the spiritual aspect of our society, and merging it with a similar vibe of *Local 58*, Alex Kister has made a sort of mangled story full of both sacrilegious and technological questions, and what effect they have on the world. There's a sense of loss in the world of *The Mandela Catalogue*. Some of the police training videos tell first responders to hang up on Alternate attacks, to stop talking, or lie that help is on the way (Kister, 2021). There have been 3,426 missing

children in Mandela County (Kister, 2021). And all the information given is to keep away from victims, to try and defend yourself. There's seemingly no known way to truly stop any of these Alternates, and it gives this series a sense of a horrible documentary. A documentary where the viewer can't help, it's all in the past, but there's a pull to try and stop these deaths. But it's impossible. Even in death, they will take your face, your life, and distort it in their villainous image.

Conclusions:

Across the four series, this paper has examined the current history of the internet subgenre Analog Horror. Through *Local58* the very beginnings of the genre emerged. The emergence of a short web series that utilizes a fake local television station to tell the ongoing story of aliens invading was only the start of these tropes. As mentioned, *Local58* was able to set a relative baseline for the rest of the genre to beat, as it has an interesting, but still unknowable plot weaving through the videos. It also, perhaps unintentionally, created a foundation for the types of videos and mediums we see. *Local58* had cartoons, weather services, old government PSAs and meditation videos. While the genre, as this paper has examined, has skewed more towards perhaps "archived" footage (police recordings, training videos, QVC ads, etc.), there is still a foundation from *Local58* which all series build off.

With the other three series, *Gemini Home Entertainment*, *The Walten Files*, and *The Mandela Catalogue*; we see how the tropes and unspoken rules of the new subgenre can be improved upon and also turned on their head. With *Gemini*, a similar alien threat is recontextualized within a doomsday perspective in society. The series has typical horror tropes— body snatchers, or zombie-like diseases— that are also recast in a naturalistic sense. The world of *Gemini* is told inherently through capitalistic pursuits: promotional ads and corporate video pitches. Even facing the end of life, itself, stories will be shared, and profits will be made. *The Walten Files* physically surprises fans of Analog Horror in its animated style, where the themes of murder and the paranormal are depicted in such a visual style it stands out as a true work of art amongst other series in this genre. While this series borrows heavily from the conventions of earlier horror works like *Five Nights At Freddy's*, it manages to create a succinct and haunting story of two families. Finally, with *The Mandela Catalogue*, this series has become one of the most popular Analog Horror series to date, and it has brought in a fresh aspect—in the realm of religion and spirituality—and created a powerhouse of a series. By mixing technology and demons together, *Mandela* has compounded the technological horror of *Local58*, the body snatcher element of *Gemini*, and even the betrayal and familial elements of *The Walten Files* to create something greater.

Another brilliant aspect of the genre of Analog horror is the democratized nature of its storytelling. YouTube, as a platform allows anyone with a Google account to post to the site. This style of content creation and distribution has made stories widely available to communities around the world. Each creator of these series took the leap to post their first video to YouTube, not knowing if their stories would reach anyone, let alone over a million views, as such is the case for a creator like Kister. The ability to post stories and videos for free, while also having the distribution become a free

mechanism, is a game changer for media and storytelling. No longer do writers have to rely on networking and finicky executives. Animators don't have to slave away in the bellows of a warehouse. These creators have access to new ways of telling, promoting, and sharing their ideas, without relying on the ever-changing opinions of legacy media like television and film. With these barriers out of the way, only time will tell for how film genres expand in the wake of platforms like YouTube.

Analog Horror is a forever updating genre, and as of writing, some series are planning new episodes that may change the lore or plot of any given series. This genre is special because of its stories, but also the promotion and community around them. Fans will come up with new theories, other creators work to solve the mysteries, and new series will spawn from comments under these works. As this genre continues to grow and progress, these works will remain as some of the great, taking their place in the internet hall of fame of Analog Horror.

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