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# Do you like scary movies?

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NORTH horror boffin Johnny Walker has come up with list of films we should be watching this Halloween - and has explained why they make us scared.

Dr Johnny Walker - a lecturer in media at Newcastle's [Northumbria University](#) - has written a book explaining the 'undying' appeal of horror movies from flesh-eating zombies to homicidal maniacs wreaking havoc along hotel corridors.

His Contemporary British Horror Cinema: Industry, Genre & Society also looks at how this low-budget film genre is able to stand the test of time and even re-invent itself in the face of new technologies and a growing number of big budget blockbusters.

Hammer Horror films haunted our big screens from the mid-1950s. But by the 1960s, masked actors with bolts through their necks and vampires wearing frilly shirts began to lose their fright appeal, according to Dr Walker.

"People were responding better to horror films that were grounded with reality," he said. "There's only so

much you can do with scary monsters. Films like Psycho, Night of the Living Dead and Texas Chainsaw Massacre were all shot in a style that wasn't fantastical. These more true-to-life films became the forerunners of The Blair Witch Project, which went on to literalise the horror documentary form."

The global success of this American fright flick along with Japan's The Ring - released a year earlier in 1998 - revived the production of horror films in Britain as directors began to take note of these cheap-to-make but highly profitable pictures.

"The film 28 Days Later paved the way for a British horror film revival in 2002," said Dr Walker. "No one could have anticipated the popularity of

that film here and over in America.

Despite Dr Walker's assurances that horror films are successful with little-known actors, he accepts that Britain's all-time highest grossing horror movie The Woman in Black - released in 2012 - profited from casting Daniel Radcliffe in the starring role. "It's a ghost story that's widely appealing," he said. "It cuts across the age groups and it's got Harry Potter in it."

## Here's Johnny...Walker's his top picks

### 1. Phantasm (1979)

DR Walker says: "It's out of step with the other horror films of that period. It's not a film that typically gets talked about. When people talk about 1970s horror films they talk about The Exorcist but this film is so unusual and so unlike anything else."

### 2. 28 Days Later (2002)

"It's a really effective film in spite of being made with limited resources. It introduced the idea of running zombies into the mainstream."

### 3. Switch Blade Romance (2003)

This is a more extreme version of Scream! It's a slasher film that's very self-aware. It has twist ending so common-place nowadays but certainly took me by surprise when I first saw it."

### 4. A Nightmare on Elm Street (1984)

"This was a film that I was never allowed to watch growing up and then I watched it one day at a friend's house and it changed my life! The idea of being on the run from something when you go to sleep is something that is so terrifying it's probably one of the most original horror films ever made."

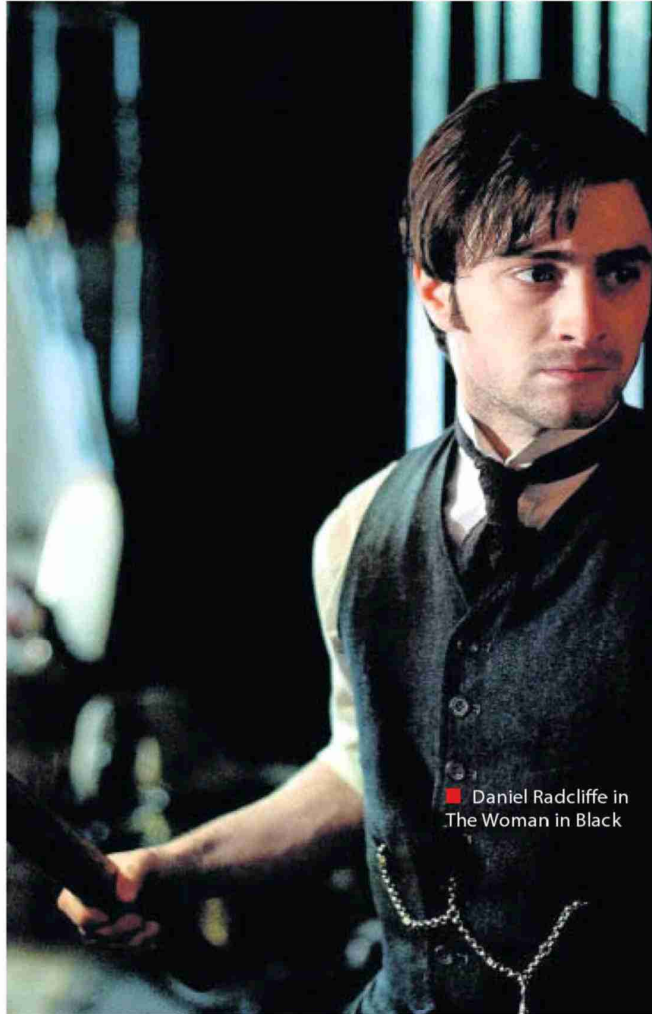
### 5. It (1990)

"When I was younger I used to go to the video shop and look up to the horror shelf and what stood out was Tim Currie's face as Pennywise the clown from It. It's frightening because it's about the monsters that children fear. Children have wild imaginations. What's friendly? A clown. What's terrifying? A clown. It's a really interesting paradox."



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