November, 2012

November, 2012 Fear essay When we grow up we learn to fear such things as drugs, alcohol and strangers. These fears are taught to us by our parents trying to help us grow to be safe, healthy individuals. While learning to avoid these dangers, we also experience hardships and traumas that teach us to be afraid of whatever it is we went through. But one of the most influential cause of fears is that which we witness in movies, shows and in the news. This is because we see these highly exaggerated scenes, which only teach us the worst case scenarios. This causes our brain to react by permanently marking that experience as something that we would never want to go through, something fearful. In other words, although people have noticed that past experiences and learned fears are huge causes of fear, a careful examination suggests that the media plays an extreme role in the cause of fear in human behaviors. In the 1970s, Steven Spielberg created the movie " Jaws", with a blood thirsty shark as the main character. Although sharks were already a widely feared animal, this movie made shark-phobia one of the most common fears of people. Actual shark attacks at beaches became more publicized in the news and it was not uncommon to hear people referencing to the movie while at the beach. Although there is a small chance of being attacked by sharks, the fear that " Jaws" created also increased the amount of deaths of sharks. People began to act upon their fear and hunt the sharks to insure to them their safety. " Jaws" created a fear to people by taking something that most were already nervous of and highlighting it, making it a real fear for them. When I was in 6th grade my favorite T. V. show, Ghost Whisperer, had a special 3 episode line up that would end the season. I was so excited, so I went to my friends house and we got all ready to watch it.

The episode had Melinda, the main character, meet with more ghosts than usual and even be able to witness how some of them had died. At one point in the show, it showed a bridge in London collapsing and killing everyone on it. The bridge they were on reminded me of the George Washington and the Verrazano bridges my family drives over to visit family on Long Island. This made me very nervous to be on those bridges causing me to create an illogical fear of bridges in general. Because of this T. V. episode I now get paranoid when on a bridge and fear that it will collapse under me. The realistic factor of my fear of bridges also comes from the news. At the ripe age of 10, the very same year as the T. V. episode, I was exposed to a real life circumstance while watching the news when an interstate bridge collapsed in Minneapolis leaving 60 people injured and 9 dead. This only ripened my anxiety about a bridge collapsing under me, taking something I was scared of from a T. V. show to something real, something that can still happen even with modern day technology. Ever since these happenstances, whenever going over a bridge, my eyes weld up and if there is a GPS (which there usually is) I watch it like a hawk counting how long it will take us to get off, while holding myself back from looking out my window at the water into which I could potentially fall to my death. Many people, mostly adults, say that the fears that you teach kids, and the situations they put themselves in are the most influential fears, but they are wrong. The biggest fears learned by people are the ones they see in the media. These are the exaggerated fears that are meant to target what humans are most scared of. The media knows that if they take something that many people fear, the public will give its attention to this subject. Causing the public to turn to the news and

papers to give them more information on said fears, making a more lasting impact on media influenced fears in our culture. They target things such as death; death by an amazingly large creature or falling into an ocean to your death. Media plays with human emotion to get more attention. Fear is one of the strongest human emotions that can be influenced by any life experience. Although it is believed that fear is a direct result of teachings and experiences, I have found that fear originates from scenes in the media that are targeted to scare humans. This causes us to create illogical fears holding us back from living to the extent.