

What makes jaws scary



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Lay back and imagine, you are on a beach; the sun currents lightly burn your skin. You are in captivating and enchanting surrounding like laughter from young and old. You go into the calming blue ocean, in the thought that you are going to have a pleasant and moderate swim. But could there be a huge blood-hungry shark in the water? Could it have heard the vibrations of your movement and is now coming to consume you? This was indeed what happened in the film 'Jaws'.

In this essay, I will be examining the suspense techniques used in the film and the intended effect upon the audience - what makes Jaws scary?

The unique film Jaws was made in the year 1975 and directed by Steven Spielberg, who was only twenty seven at the time. The film is based upon Peter Benchley's No1 bestseller and he also wrote the screenplay. Jaws broke all box office records to become the biggest box office hit of its time. It grossed an amazing sum of \$260. 000. 000.

The two scenes I am going to focus on from the film are the opening scene where Chrissie is attacked and the following scene where Alex is attacked.

Jaws is set in the small town of Amity Island on the coast of Florida. Firstly, I am going to analyze what happens in the opening scene of the play. At the start of the scene there is a young people's party on the beach. The director uses panoramic shot of the shark then uses a panning shot of the young people at the party. He uses these techniques to create tense and suspense, makes us think about who is going to be attacked; who is the victim of this inevitable horror?

Another technique used at the start of the party on the beach is laughter and soft music to relax us, but nevertheless we hear sound of waves in the background to remind us of the shark. Suddenly a woman leaves her boyfriend on the beach and goes swimming. We are shown a shot of her swimming in the moonlight. The kind of shot used is a Long Shot. The director uses this to show the darkness surrounding her, this makes us makes us nervous and expectant of something horrible to happen. There is darkness in the background throughout the scene because it creates a sense of mystery.

As the shark starts to move in for the kill, the music used changes from soft music to the shark's signature tune. This is done so as to increase the tense of the moment. When the shark attacks, the girl is shown in a P. O. V shot from below. The shark then carries the girl in its mouth. This is made to look like a kid having some harmless fun. The intended effect upon the audience is to make it seem a bit less horrible. In the background we hear Jaws signature tune which is increasing tremendously. This is done to increase the tense further.

In the middle of the attack the shark suddenly stops, and the girl clings to the buoy as a nerve-racking silence takes over the scene. This creates a feeling of suspense - what is going to happen next? Soon the shark attacks again and finishes her off in a rather quick and painless manner.

At the end of the scene we are given a panoramic shot of the beach. All we hear is the sound of waves, and young people talking. I think that the director does this because he wants to end the scene the way he started it,

suggesting nothing has happened. This has the effect of making us feel more relaxed.

I think that this opening scene is particularly good in building suspense because he uses different types of techniques such as awkward silences and blindness.

I now plan to the suspense techniques that Steven Spielberg uses in the scene where a little boy called Alex is seized by the shark.

At the start of the scene the camera moves between shots of Chief Brody and the beach. This is done to show us the beach from Brody's eyes (P. O. V shot), and then show his reaction of what is seen. Furthermore we see a black dog playing with its master. The colour black is used to symbolise funeral and death. This tells the audience that the dog could be the victim to the massive messenger of death. A pet dog is used because people will be more likely to have sympathy for a cute Labrador rather than a Pitbull etc.

When we see Alex for the first time he asks his mother if he can swim in the water for longer. In response his mother lets him swim an extra five minutes. This makes us think that he is going to be the next victim. Alex is shown with a yellow lilo, which is used to represent light, life, joy etc.

We are then shown two good examples of false alarm. The first of these is when we see the shape of the shark in the water, which is actually the hat of a man. Spielberg uses the camera to increase the tension by showing us Chief Brody looking at the ocean. He also has the man coming out of the water in a very slow manner.

The other example is when a young lady gets lifted up from the water from below, screaming, with her legs astride. This makes us think that the girl is being attacked by the shark. However, we find the girl is being lifted by her boyfriend.

After a set of false alarms, we start to sense some false comfort, but this quickly turns into fear as we are shown the dogs stick floating in the water with the dog nowhere in sight.

Immediately after this we see the shark's eye-view of the boy's legs from below, and the music changes to jaws signature tune, the effect of this is that we know that the boy is, Alex, is going to be attacked.

The director, Steven Spielberg, personifies the shark cleverly. The director makes the shark deliberately go past all the people in the water and directly go to the poor little boy - this makes the shark look evil... a human quality.

After the attack, the camera is used to show the chaos and fear from the people at the beach. This is intended to make us sense the fear the people on the beach are experiencing. The music also changes from Jaws music to series of chaotic sounds. This is done to increase the panic of the sound.

We are then shown the boy's mother on her own on the beach as the other people create a distance from the water, with their children held tightly. Only Alex's mother is missing her child. The kind of shot used here is a long shot. The all music and sound stop so as to make us focus on the mother.

Finally, we are shown the punctured lilo being washed up on the shore. It is covered in the boy's blood, which suggests that the life and light has been destroyed by darkness and death.

I now hope that your imagination has been satisfied with loads of images from the creative but scary film Jaws. In this essay, I have tried to look in dept the techniques used to make this film spectacularly unique film of its time. Spielberg has made Jaws a wonderfully scary film by taking the suspense techniques to the next step - he uses camera shots and sound to build up suspense e. g. Jaws signature tune.

I would recommend this film to people of all ages including my own because this film is one of few films that have taken suspense techniques to the next level.

So, next time you go to the beach, will you only be concerned about swimming and pleasure? Or will you be concerned about deadly horrors that might lie beneath the beauty of the water, in the depths of the ocean? The only advice I can give is to watch the film and treat it only as a film, for it is not real. Otherwise, we might risk never going into the waters again!