

## Why the public's limited understanding of science makes horror movies so terrifying

In a memorable scene from the 1931 horror classic [Frankenstein](#), Dr. Frankenstein stands over his sentient monster, a beast he created from the body parts of exhumed corpses. ... Suddenly, Frankenstein's creature, previously lifeless on the gurney, moves its long, bony fingers, then raises an arm. "It's alive! It's alive! It's alive!" shrieks the doctor.

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Whether these classic monsters sprung from a swamp, Egyptian sarcophagus or, like Frankenstein, a bag of body parts cobbled together for an experiment gone awry, they were all rooted in the public's fascination with ... science. Though the monsters' look was the creative handiwork of Universal's team of costume designers, makeup artists and set designers, the public's scientific understanding (however limited it might have been) of amphibians, mummies, and anatomy fed into the horror.

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Ultimately, the science behind Hollywood's iconic monsters made the films of this golden age of horror even more terrifying. Intellectually, moviegoers knew that the creatures they watched on the big screen weren't real. But scientific underpinnings, whether the accurate depiction of an amphibian that actually roamed the world millions of years ago or the resuscitation techniques that could bring someone, or something, back to life, triggered an unsettling anxiety and forced people to consider: *Could this really happen?*

**Read full, original post:** [The Science Behind Hollywood's Movie Monsters](#)