

How Analog Horror Creeped It's Way to the Top of the Industry

[B-ROLL footage plays of an old CRT television illuminating a dark room. Black and white static fills the screen, creating a wispy hum that can lightly be heard.]

[Fionn]: “Do you remember the first time you were afraid? Picture it: you were young—probably a small child; maybe you were alone, maybe you were in the dark, whatever was happening: it flipped a switch inside of you. For the first time... you felt fear.”

[The screen of the television flashes off, leaving the frame in complete darkness]

[Fionn]: “Analog Horror is a subgenre of horror rooted in nostalgia. Media that falls under this category typically tries to emulate the aesthetic of 80’s and 90’s VHS footage, among other antiquated forms of technology.

[Graphics appear on screen, showing older box-set televisions, VHS tapes, etc.]

[Fionn]: “The genre is incredibly prominent on YouTube, which serves as an effective medium for its very static presentation. The bulk of “footage” is shown in the format of old-school public service announcements, infomercial tapes, and home videos.”

[B-Roll of footage from “The Backrooms” plays in the background]

[Fionn]: “Videos like ‘The Backrooms’ by Kane have seen explosive popularity, gaining millions of views over a short span. This sort of publicity—especially for a web-series—was basically unheard of in the horror genre.”

[The footage moves up out of frame, fading to a dark screen, and then slowly fading back to the original brightly-lit CRT]

[Fionn]: “So, how did this corner of internet-horror culminate, and how did it garner so much attention? To get the full picture, we have to go back nearly ten years, during the height of the Halloween season.”

[The background footage fades out once again, shifting to old, grainy B-Roll of a news station, the logo for “Local 58” fades into the middle of the frame.]

[Fionn]: “In 2015, on October 31st, a channel appeared on YouTube under the name, ‘LOCAL 58 TV.’ With the channel’s creation, two videos were uploaded: ‘You Are On The Fastest Available Route,’ and ‘Contingency.’”

[At the mention of each video name, their respective thumbnails are shown on-screen]

[Fionn]: “The first video serves as a cold open for the series, setting the tone for its horror-oriented elements. The second video however, establishes a pattern for what would become the general format of each subsequent entry.”

[Footage from “Contingency” plays in the background, accompanied by low, chilling music]

[Fionn]: “Contingency sets the scene for the channel as a whole, so now’s a good time to get into what the series is actually about. Local58 is an anthology of different videos that “hide” their horror, under the guise of local news bumpers. These bumpers maintain the familiar aesthetic of older television technology, injected with unsettling imagery, to create a haunting juxtaposition that constantly keeps the viewer on edge...”

[Eerie ambient music fades out; “Local58” theme music fades in, as the YouTube channel fades into frame]

[Fionn]: “With the introduction of this unique, haunting saga, the horror-landscape was forever changed. Local58 had envisioned a new horror, full of old horrors. And in its wake, numerous others would take its lead...”

[as the speech ends, the footage fades from Local58 into the “Mandela Catalogues”]

[Fionn]: “One of the biggest examples of the domino effect that Local58 created is Alex Kister’s ‘Mandela Catalogues.’ This series added onto the foundations that Local58 built in a couple of unique ways. For one, it put a lot more emphasis on the use of digitized text-to-speech voices.”

[Fade-in audio clip of the text-to-speech voice from the “Mandela Catalogues”]

[Fionn]: “Although it might seem like a small facet of the production, these chilling technological voices served as perfect narrators for horror, designed around the analog. The way that the Mandela Catalogues twisted and warped human speech into something so disturbingly robotic, set the status quo for other analog horror series across the internet; every analog horror video worth its merit featured the text-to-

speech after Alex Kister's series rose in popularity. And from his success, another independent creator became inspired..."

[The screen goes black and in bold, white letters "THE BACKROOMS" appears on-screen]

[Fionn]: "Three years ago, Kane Parsons (More commonly referred to by his online alias, 'Kane Pixels'), uploaded a video to his YouTube channel titled, "The Backrooms (Found Footage)". Most of you watching are most likely already familiar with it, its 65-million views would attest to that, at least."

[A graphic of the video pops up on frame—including the thumbnail, title, and view count]

[Fionn]: "If you haven't seen it yet, make sure to get out from under that rock and check it out, after you wrap up this video. To briefly touch on the work itself, it completely changed the genre as a whole, in its chilling, existential-dread inducing combination of both liminal and analog horror."

[B-Roll footage of "The Backrooms" plays in the background as the film studio A24 logo appears]

[Fionn]: "It garnered so much worldwide attention and praise, that its creator Kane Pixels has since been picked up by A24 to adapt the short horror-film into a feature-length movie. That's right: analog horror is making its way onto the big-screen."

[The footage fades to black, and the CRT from earlier lights up the screen on final time]

[Fionn]: "Analog horror was once niche; relatively small and constrained to horror web-series. But now, due to its unilateral rise in popularity—it's made its way into the mainstream. It's really interesting to think about how it all started with a couple of videos posted back in 2015—even more interesting to think about

where the subgenre might be in another ten-years ' time. Wherever it ends up going, we can thank Local58 for setting it all into motion, all those years ago...”

[The CRT's light dims, and the hum of the static quiets with it. As the video ends, the quiet “Local58” theme can be heard in the background.]