

Movie: The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (1974, 2003)

Synopsis

The Texas Chain Saw Massacre is a film produced by Toby Hooper that follows a group of friends who fall victim to a family of cannibals while driving through the barren back roads of Texas. The film is credited with originating several elements common in the Pre-Michael Myers slasher genre such as the characterization of the killer as a hulking faceless figure. As such, *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* was inducted into the Horror Hall of Fame in 1990. At Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, a triple feature of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Psycho*, and *The Silence of the Lambs* is required viewing given that Ed Gein inspired the creation of all 3 films.

How it relates to the field of psychiatry

Edward Theodore Gein was born on August 27, 1906, to Augusta and George Gein in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Despite being a cold and domineering woman, Augusta was all that Ed had following the deaths of his father and older brother, Henry. Unfortunately, on December 29th, 1945, Augusta died. Ed Gein's life fell apart after he "lost his only friend and one true love" (Deviant [book] by Harold Schechter). Ed remained in the house after his mother's death and developed a morose interest in taxidermy. On November 17, 1957, police in Plainfield, Wisconsin arrived at the Gein farmhouse. The more they looked through the farmhouse, the more human trophies they found, including a suit made entirely of human skin. The serial murders of Ed Gein inspired several movies including *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, making the film a graphic depiction of Antisocial Personality Disorder.

Gunnar Hansen was selected for the role of Leatherface who he regarded as being afflicted with Intellectual Developmental Disorder (IDD). To research and develop Leatherface's mannerisms, Hansen visited a special needs school and watched how the students moved and spoke. Another faceless (goalie-masked) killer, Jason Voorhees (posted on February, Friday the 13th), was also scripted as having IDD. Not unlike individuals with Eating & Feeding Disorders, these 2 characters have significant difficulty describing how they feel, and therefore must rely on non-verbal means to communicate their emotions and unconscious conflicts. *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* poses an interesting play on words; while depicting a character that communicates non-verbally like an individual with an eating and feeding disorder, Leatherface is part of a family of cannibals.

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