

WHAT DO *TOY STORY*, *STAR WARS*, *INDIANA JONES*, AND *BATMAN* HAVE IN COMMON?

[WILHELM SCREAM SFX]

WELCOME TO REALLY LACY FILMMAKING. I'M CALLAHAN LACY. MY PODCAST IS ALL ABOUT MOVIE CLICHES AND TROPES. I WILL BE GOING OVER THE HISTORY OF THE TOPIC AND TALKING ABOUT MY PERSONAL FAVORITE USES OF THE CLICHE OR TROPE.

THIS EPISODE I WILL BE GOING OVER THE WILHELM SCREAM AS YOU HEARD IN THE INTRO TO THIS EPISODE. THE WILHELM SCREAM IS A SOUND EFFECT THAT HAS BEEN USED IN HUNDREDS OF MOVIES AND TELEVISION SHOWS. AS OF JULY 2015, THE WILHELM SCREAM HAD BEEN USED IN 413 MOVIES AND TV SHOWS. WHAT A LOT OF PEOPLE DON'T KNOW IS WHEN WAS THE SCREAM CREATED.

THE WILHELM SCREAM WAS CREATED IN A 1951 WESTERN *DISTANT DRUMS*. THE SCENE IN THE MOVIE SEES A SOLDIER WALKING THROUGH THE FLORIDA EVERGLADES, AND HE IS DRAGGED UNDER AND KILLED BY AN ALLIGATOR. THE SOLDIER LETS OUT THE FIRST KNOWN USAGE OF THE ICONIC SCREAM.

[PLAY CLIP FROM DISTANT DRUMS]

MOST PEOPLE THINK THE WILHELM SCREAM ORIGINATED FROM A 1953 MOVIE CALLED *THE CHARGE AT FEATHER RIVER*. THIS MOVIE IS HOW THE WILHELM SCREAM GOT ITS NAME. PRIVATE WILHELM IS AT THE BACK OF THIS PARTY AND HIS COMMANDER IS TELLING HIM TO HURRY UP. HE SAYS, “YEAH. I’LL JUST FILL UP MY PIPE” AND SUDDENLY AN INDIAN APPEARS AND SHOOTS PRIVATE WILHELM IN THE LEG WITH AN ARROW. THE SAME SCREAM FROM *DISTANT DRUMS* IS USED HERE. THE SOUND DESIGNER FOUND THE SCREAM IN AN ARCHIVE OF SOUND EFFECTS UNDER THE NAME “MAN KILLED BY ALLIGATOR” AFTER THE FILM HE RENAMED THE FILE “WILHELM SCREAM” AND THE WILHELM SCREAM WAS BORN.

ONE MYSTERY THAT HASN’T BEEN SOLVED IS WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SCREAM. PEOPLE ARE ABOUT 99% SURE WHO CREATED THE ICONIC SCREAM, SHEB WOOLEY. WOOLEY IS MOST KNOWN FOR HIS 1958 SONG “THE PURPLE PEOPLE EATER”

[PLAY CLIP OF SONG]

WOOLEY APPARENTLY LOVED TO DO VOICE WORK AND CREATING SOUND EFFECTS. STEVE LEE, A SOUND DESIGNER AND CREATOR OF THE HOLLYWOOD SOUND MUSEUM ACTUALLY GOT THE AUDIO FROM THE RECORDING SESSION OF *DISTANT DRUMS*. THE ANONYMOUS RECORDER DID THE SCREAM THREE TIMES

UNTIL WE GOT THE SOUND. WOOLEY WAS AT THE RECORDING THAT DAY, SO THAT'S WHERE THE THEORY COMES FROM.

THE WILHELM SCREAM GOT VERY POPULAR BECAUSE OF ONE MAN. BEN BURTT. WHEN HE WAS IN COLLEGE WITH RICHARD ANDERSON, WHO BOTH WON OSCARS FOR SOUND DESIGN FOR 1981 CLASSIC, *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*, IN WHICH THE WILHELM SCREAM IS USED. AT USC, BURTT AND ANDERSON LOVED WESTERNS AND HAD FIGURED OUT THE SCREAM AND SNUCK THE SCREAM INTO THEIR FILMS IN FILM SCHOOL AND WHEN THEY WENT PRO.

BEN BURTT THOUGH IS MOST FAMOUS FOR DOING SOUND DESIGN FOR THE *STAR WARS* SAGA. HE STARTED USING THE WILHELM SCREAM AS HIS SIGNATURE ON HIS FILMS. IN *STAR WARS: EPISODE I-VII* THE SCREAM IS USED. AFTER *STAR WARS: EPISODE VII: THE FORCE AWAKENS* IN 2015, LUCASFILM RELEASED A STATEMENT THAT THEY WON'T BE USING THE EFFECT ANYMORE IN THEIR FILMS. ONE OF THE MOST ICONIC USAGES OF THE SCREAM IN *STAR WARS* IS IN *EPISODE IV: A NEW HOPE*, WHEN LUKE SKYWALKER SHOOTS A STORM TROOPER OFF OF A LEDGE ON THE DEATH STAR.

[POTENTIALLY PLAY CLIP?]

SOME OF THE MOST ICONIC USES OF THE WILHELM SCREAM THROUGHOUT MOVIE HISTORY INCLUDE *TOY STORY*, WHEN BUZZ LIGHTYEAR GETS KNOCKED OUT OF A WINDOW BY A LAMP, *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*, WHEN A NAZI GETS THROWN FROM A TRUCK ONTO A FOLLOWING CAR, THE 1992 MICHAEL KEATON *BATMAN RETURNS*, WHEN BATMAN THROWS A GOON OFFSCREEN, QUENTIN TARANTINO'S FIRST FILM *RESEVOIR DOGS*, AND RECENTLY *AVENGERS; INFINITY WAR* WHEN IRON MAN BLOWS A HOLE IN A SPACESHIP.

THE WILHELM SCREAM IS EVEN IN SOME VIDEO GAMES. IN LEGO STAR WARS FROM 2005, DURING THE LEVEL "BATTLE OVER CORUSCANT" YOU UTTER A WILHELM WHENEVER YOUR SHIP EXPLODES. OTHERWISE IT IS USED VARIOUSLY AS DEATH NOISES.

MR. PETERSON, THE IB FILM TEACHER AT CARMEL HIGH SCHOOL HAS AGREED TO BE THE EXPERT FOR THIS PODCAST. LET'S HEAR WHAT HE HAS TO SAY ABOUT THE ICONIC SCREAM.

[INTERVIEW SEGMENT W/ MR. PETERSON]

THANK YOU MR. PETERSON FOR THE INSIGHT. AND THAT WRAPS UP THE FIRST EPISODE OF REALLY LACY FILMMAKING. I'M CALLAHAN LACY. Hope you enjoyed!

[END OF EPISODE]

SOURCES:

TWENTY THOUSAND HERTZ PODCAST EP. 16 “THE WILHELM SCREAM”

<https://mentalfloss.com/article/60236/where-did-wilhelm-scream-come-and-why-do-so-many-filmmakers-use-it>

<https://allthatsinteresting.com/wilhelm-scream>

<https://youtu.be/cdbYsoEasio>

<https://youtu.be/EvmgHyPeAXI>