



# Killer Tapes and Shattered Screens: Video Spectatorship From VHS to File Sharing

*Caetlin Benson-Allott*

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Since the mid-1980s, US audiences have watched the majority of movies they see on a video platform, be it VHS, DVD, Blu-ray, Video On Demand, or streaming media. Annual video revenues have exceeded box office returns for over twenty-five years. In short, video has become the structuring discourse of US movie culture. *Killer Tapes and Shattered Screens* examines how prerecorded video reframes the premises and promises of motion picture spectatorship. But instead of offering a history of video technology or reception, Caetlin Benson-Allott analyzes how the movies themselves understand and represent the symbiosis of platform and spectator. Through case studies and close readings that blend industry history with apparatus theory, psychoanalysis with platform studies, and production history with postmodern philosophy, *Killer Tapes and Shattered Screens* unearths a genealogy of post-cinematic spectatorship in horror movies, thrillers, and other exploitation genres. From *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) through *Paranormal Activity* (2009), these movies pursue their spectator from one platform to another, adapting to suit new exhibition norms and cultural concerns in the evolution of the video subject.

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