

PERCEPTO!

The Birth of Haptic Cinema

An Interactive Qualifying Project

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by

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Abstract

This project examines the history of *The Tingler* (1959), the first motion picture to incorporate haptic (tactile) sensations. It surveys the career of its director, William Castle, a legendary Hollywood huckster famous for his use of gimmicks to attract audiences to his low-budget horror films. Our particular focus is Percepto!, the simple but effective gimmick created for *The Tingler* to deliver physical “shocks” to viewers. The operation, deployment and promotion of Percepto! are explored in detail, based on recently-discovered documents provided to exhibitors by Columbia Pictures, the film’s distributor. We conclude with a proposal for a method of recreating Percepto! for contemporary audiences using Web technologies and smartphones.

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1. Introduction

When William Castle, also known as the “King of Gimmicks,” directed and produced *The Tingler* in 1959, created the first motion picture to ever utilize haptic (tactile) sensations. With his creative drive and passion for creating new interactive ways patrons could enjoy his work, it comes to no surprise that he would stumble upon more “firsts” in cinema history: Some examples being the transsexual theme of *Homicidal* in 1961, “Bullet Time” with *Zotz!* in 1962, and even holding the first movie to mention the psychedelic drug LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) by name in *The Tingler*. From a young age, Castle was exposed and adapted to the film world. His experience would eventually lead him to mastering techniques such as marketing his own name.

Gimmicks and B-movies may have been around before Castle’s first movie in 1943, however, Castle was the first to capitalize on both fields. His early gimmicks consisted of an insurance policy that could be claimed if a friend or loved one died of fright and a surprise appearance from a skeleton on a pulley system. The uniqueness of these first gimmicks brought Castle success and began the building of his inevitable fanclub. Castle, after forming a contract with Columbia Pictures, was given more resources to direct his films. *The Tingler* in 1959 had a scene that used vibration motors (which were wired to random chairs in a theater) to simulate a monster attacking viewers seated at select chairs. The immersive gimmick was the first instance of haptic sensation in film, meaning no other film had tactile perception prior to *The Tingler*.

Some other movies followed his gimmicks, like *Earthquake*, for creating haptic cinema experiences. As decades pass, new technologies emerge. We hope to give a rebirth to one of his gimmicks for the new coming audiences who are suited to the technology of today.

2. William Castle



Figure 1. William Castle, director of *The Tingler*. Source: [URL](#).

William Schloss Jr. was born in New York City on April 24th, 1914. (Figure 1). From an early age, he seems to have craved attention. His daughter Terry (Figure 2) recalls that young William would perform strange physical contortions, such as putting his legs behind his neck, to earn applause (Schwarz 2008).

At the age of 11, Schloss was orphaned, which eventually led him to Americanize his surname from German to its English meaning, "Castle." Soon afterward, he dropped out of school (CMM, 2013).



Figure 2. William Castle's daughter, Terry Castle. Source: Screen capture from Schwarz (2008).

2.1. Early Career

Castle's fascination for theater began with a 1927 production of John L. Balderston's play *Dracula*. After attending multiple performances, Castle met with lead actor Bela Lugosi, sneaking his way backstage. Castle began his career in the New York theater scene by convincing the producers of *An American Tragedy* that he was the nephew of Samuel Goldwyn, co-founder of MGM. He did whatever was needed for shows, serving variously as a stagehand, set builder and actor (CMM, 2013). He apparently enjoyed his lifestyle as part of a theatrical family.

Castle began to seek a larger role in theater. He got hold of Orson Welles's telephone number and leased his Stony Creek Puppet House in Connecticut at a rate of \$500 a week (Figure 3).



Figure 3. A 2012 photo of the Stony Creek Puppet House. Source: [URL](#).

Castle hired a German actress and dancer, Ellen Schwanneke, to star in his first production. Actors' Equity, an American labor union which regulates rulings for live theatrical performances, objected to this casting decision. They had a rule which required that the leading role of a play had to be portrayed by an individual with the same national origin as the character. To circumvent them, Castle wrote and translated a play in 48 hours titled *Das ist Nicht für Kinder* (*This is Not for Children*), and claimed it was a "lost German play." Though the claim was a complete lie, Actors' Equity bought into the trick and allowed the play to go on (CMM, 2013).

Girl Who Said No To Hitler

NEW YORK, Saturday: Tears streamed down the face of pretty brunette Ellen Schwanneke, Berlin-born actress.

As the girl who snubbed Hitler, she took the oath of allegiance as a U.S. citizen with 291 other aliens before Judge Henry Goddard in the Naturalisation Court.

Ellen, when only 15, achieved fame in the German film, "Maedchen in Uniform."

Hitler sent her a golden-embossed invitation to attend a command performance at Munich. But Ellen fled to Vienna, next to Switzerland, finally to America.

Said Ellen: "I hate Hitler and all he represents. I am proud of being the black sheep of the family." (Her mother still lives in Germany.) "One lives only once, and one has to live the way one wants to live."

Figure 4. Newspaper article referencing the political drama William Castle concocted to publicize his star, Ellen Schwanneke. Source: [URL](#).

Later, Nazi officials invited Schwanneke to perform in Munich, an offer which she declined. Castle used her decision as an opportunity for publicity. He started billing Schwanneke as the "Girl Who Said No To Hitler" (Figure 4), claiming (falsely) that he had personally sent a telegram to Hitler informing him of her refusal to return to Germany. He secretly vandalized his own theater with swastikas, then complained that Nazi sympathizers were trying to stop his play. This sensational fabrication led to major media coverage and box office success (CMM, 2013).

2.2. The Move to Hollywood

William Castle went to Hollywood. While waiting at a bar to meet Harry Cohn, Columbia Pictures' co-founder and president, he made the acquaintance of director George Stevens. Stevens was amused by Castle's enthusiasm, and offered Castle a job as dialogue director for Stevens's upcoming production *Penny Serenade*. Castle allegedly took the job without knowing the purpose of a "dialogue director," which he interpreted as a requirement to keep actors on-script. During shooting, Castle interrupted a scene because one of the actors did not follow the script exactly as written. The unneeded interruption upset director George Stevens; luckily, the actor took the blame for Castle's interjection.

Cohn also appreciated Castle's outgoing personality, and hired him to work as dialogue director for *Music in My Heart* (1940), and eventually promoted him to director.

Castle's directorial debut, *The Chance of a Lifetime* (1943), was not well received. *Hollywood Reporter* declared Castle "unfit to handle a motion picture" (CMM, 2013). Nevertheless, he quickly earned the nickname "Earl of Deferral" for his ability to make features quickly on a limited budget (Schwartz, 2008). As associate producer for Orson Welles' *Lady from Shanghai* (1947), Castle had a chance to observe a master self-promoter at work, noting his trademark Churchill cigars and prominent name placement on publicity materials, traits he would eventually emulate himself. By the time his contract with Columbia expired in 1956, Castle had directed over 40 feature films, including two in 3D (CCM, 2013).

Castle and fellow director Alfred Hitchcock were fascinated by the American release of *Les Diaboliques* (1955), a French gaslighting thriller that eventually inspired both of them to make films similar to it. While working on the television program *Men of Annapolis* in 1957, Castle teamed up with screenwriter Robb White to create Susina Associates, the production company that went on to make the series of low-budget horror films which made Castle a Hollywood legend.



Figure 5. William Castle with some of his many fans. Source: [URL](#).

2.3. Legacy

All of the B-grade horror films Castle churned out between 1958 and 1965 were billed as “A William Castle Production.” The creative, tongue-in-cheek techniques he devised to promote them led to his being crowned the “King of Gimmicks.” Though the movies were generally dismissed by film critics, his business model was highly successful. Castle’s fan club (Figure 5) boasted an enrollment of 250,000 members (Voss, 2014).



Figure 6. Poster for Castle's production of *Rosemary's Baby*. Source: [URL](#).

Working in the shadow of Paramount's influential A-movie director, Alfred Hitchcock, led Castle to seek more ambitious projects. He mortgaged his house to purchase the rights to American novelist Ira Levin's *Rosemary's Baby* (1967). After cutting a deal with Paramount Pictures, Castle was taken off of the role as director against his wishes. The young Polish-French film director, Roman Polański, was assigned as director, with Castle acting as the film's producer, together with a cameo role in the movie (Figure 6). *Rosemary's Baby* proved to be Castle's greatest critical and commercial success.

After *Rosemary's Baby*, Castle suffered from a kidney failure. His final films were a return to his B-movie roots. He died of a heart attack on May 31, 1977, and is buried in Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California.

Throughout his life and even after his death, William Castle's work influenced numerous people, including Alfred Hitchcock, whose *Psycho* (1960) was made after noticing Castle's success with horror movies. Other notable Hollywood filmmakers such as Joe Dante, John Waters and Robert Zemeckis were also inspired by Castle's passion, with Waters claiming that "His [Castle's] films made me want to make films" (Schwarz 2008).



Figure 7. Poster for Ron Dante's *Matinee*. Source: [URL](#).

Dante's Cold War comedy *Matinee* (1993) is an undisguised homage to William Castle. 1950s Hollywood huckster Lawrence Woolsey, portrayed by John Goodman, is obviously based on Castle (Figure 7), and the film is loaded with not-very-subtle references to Castle's movies and gimmicks.



Figure 8. Logo of Dark Castle Entertainment. Source: [URL](#).

Zemeckis co-founded the American film production company *Dark Castle Entertainment* in 1999 to revisit William Castle's works (Figure 8). With the help of Terry Castle, Dark Castle produced remakes of *House on Haunted Hill* (1999) and *THIR13EN Ghosts* (2001) together with the sequel *Return to House on Haunted Hill* (2007). Other Dark Castle releases included a remake of the '50s horror classic *House of Wax* (2005).

3. Early Gimmick Films



Figure 8. A newspaper ad highlighting *Macabre's* "Death By Fright" insurance. Source: [URL](#).

3.1. *Macabre* (1958)

Macabre was Castle's response to *Les Diaboliques*, and the first of his "gimmick" films (Figure 8). It features characters being scared to death, buried alive, and threatened by medical professionals. Its budget is inconsistently reported, with estimates ranging from \$80,000 to \$150,000. However, the majority of sources believe the budget was under \$90,000. Regardless, the film was highly profitable, earning \$3.5M at the box office.

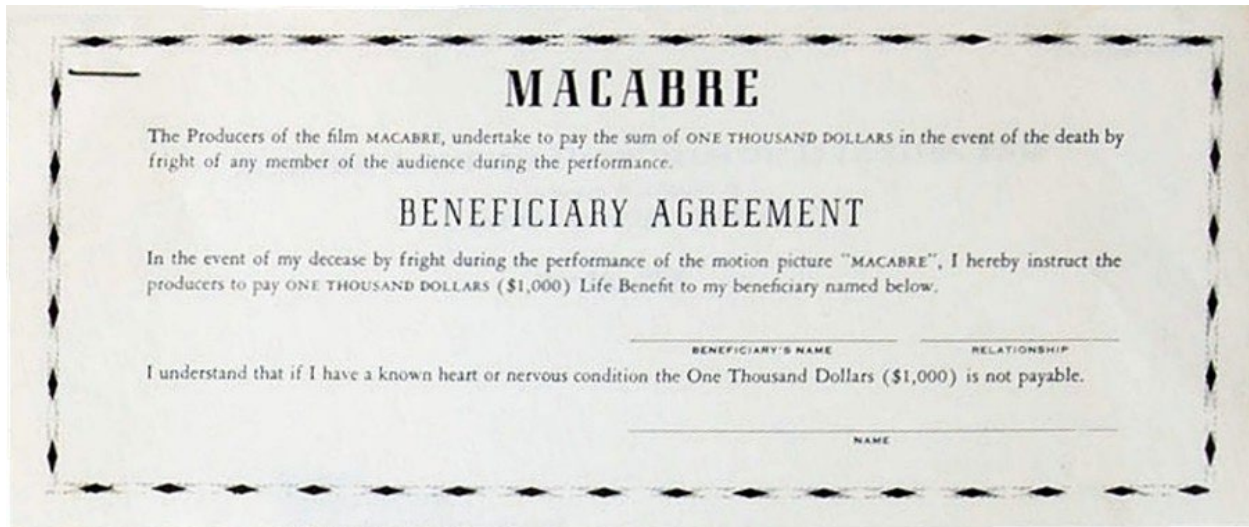


Figure 9. The “Death by Fright” insurance policy offered to viewers of *Macabre* (1958). Source: [URL](#).


Castle’s gimmick for *Macabre* was to distribute a certificate for a \$1,000 life insurance policy, underwritten by Lloyd’s of London, to all viewers (Figure 9). If anyone died of fright while watching *Macabre*, the certificate could be redeemed by a stated beneficiary. Castle also stationed ambulances and nurses outside first-run theaters for dramatic effect. Schwartz (2008) claims that the nurses were real, but Merrit believes that Castle hired “bogus nurses to stand in lobbies” (1999).

Castle, with his passion for watching (and being watched) by audiences, toured multiple cities to publicize his movie, a practice he called “barnstorming.” He personally emerged from a coffin at the film’s premiere. These promotional tours were highly successful. Patrons lined up with friends for a chance to meet Castle and claim the \$1,000 insurance payout if somebody died of fright. Nobody ever did.



Figure 11. *Emergo!*, an inflatable skeleton pulled along a wire at screenings of *House on Haunted Hill*. Source: [URL](#).

House on Haunted Hill's gimmick, "Emergo," promised ghosts and skeletons that "leave the screen and wander throughout the audience, roam around and go back to the screen." New York Times film critic Howard Thompson, whose review denounced *House on Haunted Hill* as a "load of junk," described the actual experience:

 bore also introduces 'the amazing new wonder, Emergo.' What is it? Not much of anything. As a skeleton entered the proceedings yesterday (the remains of poor Carol Ohmart), the house lights of the R.K.O. Fifty-eighth Street Theatre dimmed and a luminescent counterpart appeared suspended next to the screen. With a whistling of wires, and considerable audience snickering, it slid straight forward to the balcony, blankly eyed the first-row customers, and slid back. Here was one performer who obviously couldn't wait to meet the public and instantly regretted it (1959).

Though film critics were unamused by either the film or its gimmick, *House on Haunted Hill* was quite popular with younger audience members, some of whom reportedly attempted to knock the skeleton off its wire by throwing objects at it (Figure 11).

4. *The Tingler* (1959)



Figure 13. A lobby card for *The Tingler* highlighting Percepto! Source: [URL](#).

After the success of *House on Haunted Hill*, Columbia Pictures offered to finance Castle's films for a few years. This was a major windfall for Castle, as he could now afford to spend up to 20 days shooting a film. His next production took full advantage of this luxury.

The Tingler (1959) not only cemented Castle's reputation as a schlockmeister, but also marked the introduction of haptics into cinema, defined by Merriam-Webster as the "use of electronically or mechanically generated movement that a user experiences through the sense of touch as part of an interface." Figures 13 (above) and 19 (below) illustrate how Castle's haptic gimmick, "Percepto!", was publicized.

The cast of *The Tingler* features:

Characters	Played by
Dr. Warren Chapin	Vincent Price
Isabel Stevens Chapin	Patricia Cutts
Oliver Higgins	Philip Coolidge
Martha Higgins	Judith Evelyn
Dave Morris	Darryl Hickman
Lucy Stevens	Pamela Lincoln



Figure 14. The Tingler prop was controlled by a set of strings, one of which appears above the center “abdomen” to simulate a heart beating. Source: Screen capture.

The protagonist is a pathologist named Warren Chapin (Price), who discovers that the tingling of the spine during moments of intense fear is caused by a crustacean-like parasite called a “tingler.” This horrific creature can grow large enough to kill its host unless it is weakened by screaming (Figure 14).

In his autobiography, *Step Right Up! I'm Gonna Scare the Pants Off America* (1976), Castle describes his conversation with an artist assigned to create the Tingler prop:

“WHAT’S a ‘Tingler’ look like?”

“Sort of like a lobster, but flat, and instead of claws it has long, slimy feelers. That’s what I think a ‘Tingler’ looks like.”



Figure 15. “It’s not a drug. It’s an acid!” Source: [URL](#).

To test his theory, Chapin consults a book titled *Fright Effects Induced by Injection of Lysergic Acid LSD25*, and subsequently injects himself with LSD in order to induce a frightening hallucination in himself (Figure 15). This is the first mention of LSD, or portrayal of its use, in a Hollywood movie. The drug was still legal at the time.

Oliver Higgins, who runs a silent movie theater below Chapin's office, consults with Chapin about the health of his wife, Martha, who is deaf and mute. During a visit to Higgins' house, Chapin accidentally cuts his hand, which causes Martha to faint at the sight.



Figure 16. The deaf and mute Martha, moments before dying of fright. Source: [URL](#).

Later in the movie, a series of bizarre, horrifying visions causes Martha to die of shock. Unlike the rest of *The Tangler*, which is in black and white, one shot in this sequence – a hand rising from a bathtub filled with blood – is presented in partial color (Figure 16). Eventually it is revealed that Higgins staged the horrors to murder his wife by fright.



Figure 17. The tingler gets friendly with a moviegoer. Source: Source: Screen capture.

During Martha's autopsy, Chapin removes the tingler from her spine. It soon breaks free of its cage and wanders downstairs to the Higgins' movie theater, where it throws the audience into a momentary panic by latching onto the leg of an unsuspecting young woman (Figure 17), who enthusiastically screams it out of sight.

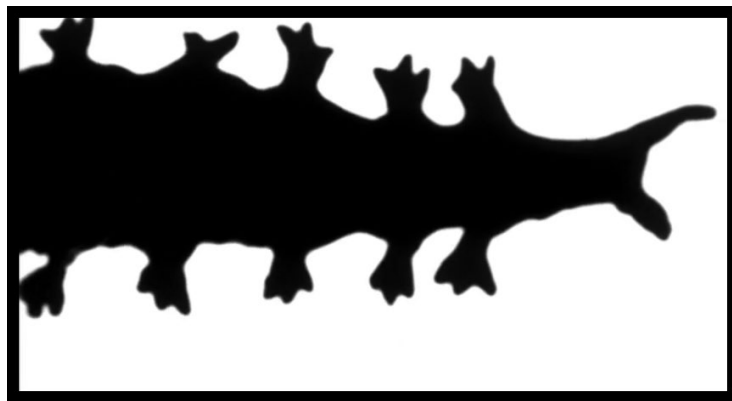


Figure 18. "The tingler is loose in this theater!" Source: Screen capture.

Chapin and Higgins search frantically for the creature, which has somehow made its way into the projection room. Suddenly, the audience watching *The Tingler* becomes the audience watching the movie in *The Tingler*. The film in the projector breaks, and the shadow of the tingler appears in the empty beam, crawling across the theater screen (Figure 18). Chaos ensues until Chapin and Higgins capture the tingler and secure it in a film canister.

BRING YOUR DATE AND WATCH HER TINGLE!

Amazing **NEW TERROR** Device Makes You A Living Participant in the **FLESH-CRAWLING ACTION!**

PERCEPTO!

SEE - The screen's first **BLOOD BATH IN COLOR!**

COLUMBIA PICTURES presents

The Tingler

starring **VINCENT PRICE**
JUDITH EVELYN • **DARRYL HICKMAN** • **PATRICIA CUTTS**

Written by **ROBB WHITE** • Produced and Directed by **WILLIAM CASTLE**
 A WILLIAM CASTLE PRODUCTION

GUARANTEED
 The Tingler will break loose in the theatre while you are in the audience. As you enter the theatre you will receive instructions... how to guard yourself against attack by **THE TINGLER!**

Starts TODAY!
 IN 19 CITY-WIDE THEATRES!

2nd FEATURE At All Theatres
JUKE BOX RHYTHM
 with **JO MORROW - JACK HONES**
ERIKAN OBERLEY and **GERTRUDE HESSEL**
 who take the stage for the movies
 ROBERT COLE • THE TINGLER
 with **WILLIAM CASTLE** • **WILLIAM CASTLE**
 COLUMBIA PICTURES • COLUMBIA PICTURES

HILLSTREET 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111 Open All Night	WESTCHESTER LOYOLA 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111	VAN NUTE FOX 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111	GLENDALE GLYNDALE 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111	CULVER CITY CULVER 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111	EL MONTE EL MONTE 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111	EL MONTE STARLITE 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111	BURBANK SAN VAL 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111	VAN NUYS SEPOLVEDA 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111
WESTMINSTER PARK 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111	PHOENIX CRONIN 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111	BURBANK CORNELL 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111	EAST L.A. NEW BOULEVARD 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111	PELL SANDERS GAGE 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111	IRVING NOVELLA RIV 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111	HOLLYWOOD CECILIA 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111	ENCINO VERMONT 1010 W. 11th St. SA. 8-1111	

SEE THE TINGLER AT MOST THEATRES • CALL THEATRE FOR SHOW TIMES

Figure 19. A newspaper advertisement for *The Tingler*. Source: [URL](#).

At the end of the movie, Chapin reinserts the tingler to Martha's body. Later, when Higgins is alone with the body of Martha, the door closes and the body of Martha rises and scares Higgins. Higgins is so terrified that he cannot scream. The movie ends with Chapin's voice: "Ladies and gentlemen, just a word of warning. If any of you are not convinced that you have a tingler of your own, the next time you are frightened in the dark ... don't scream."

5. Percepto!

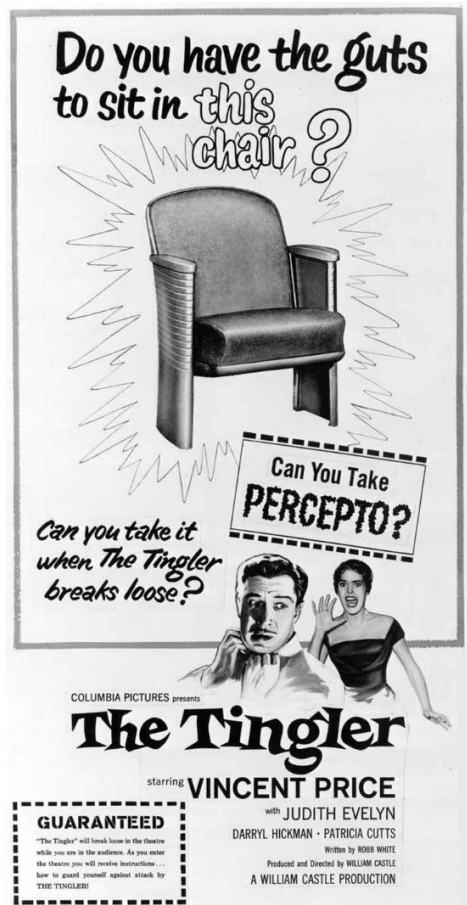


Figure 19. A poster for *The Tingler*. Source: [URL](#).

5.1. Conception

In his autobiography, Castle claims that the idea for *Percepto!* came to him when he tried to replace a lightbulb in a bedroom lamp.

“Shit!” I yelled. “I got a helluva shock. Something’s wrong with the wire.”
Suddenly I had my gimmick for *The Tingler*. I shook Ellen [his wife] excitedly.

“Wake up, wake up!”

“What’s it now?” she mumbled.

“I’m going to buzz the asses of everyone in America by installing little motors under the seats of every theatre in the country.” (1976)

Castle (1976) recalls that the name *Percepto!* did not come from himself, but from Dona Holloway, Harry Cohn's executive secretary and Castle's associate producer, and that it was a 'herculean task' to ask Columbia Pictures for the installation of *Percepto!*, which demanded special-effect teams to install electrical equipment in theaters across the United States.

5.2. Theater installation

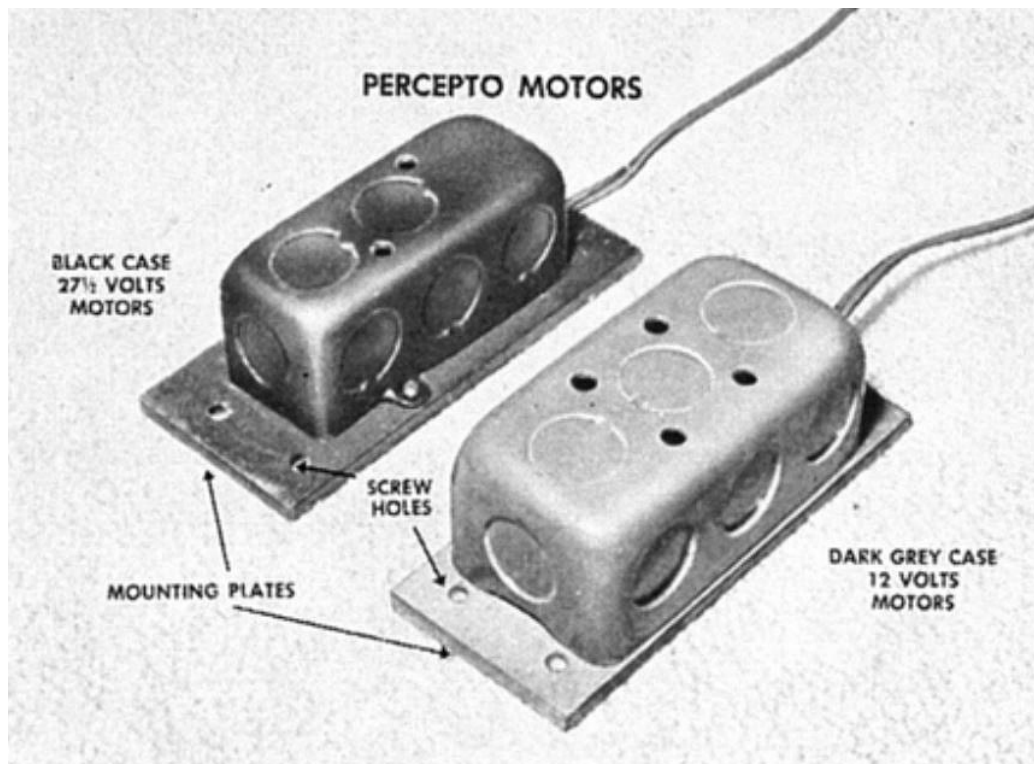


Figure 20. The two types of vibration motors used for *Percepto!* Source: Appendix A.

Warren (2016) identifies the *Percepto!* hardware as “small war-surplus motors, designed as airplane wing de-icers” (Figure 20).

According to the *Percepto!* manual distributed to cinemas by Columbia Pictures (Appendix A), one hundred battery-powered vibrators were provided to each theater screening *The Tingler*, controlled by an automatic “recycling timer” that sequentially fired groups of twenty vibrators over the course of several seconds. A pushbutton in the projection room was used to activate the timer sequence.

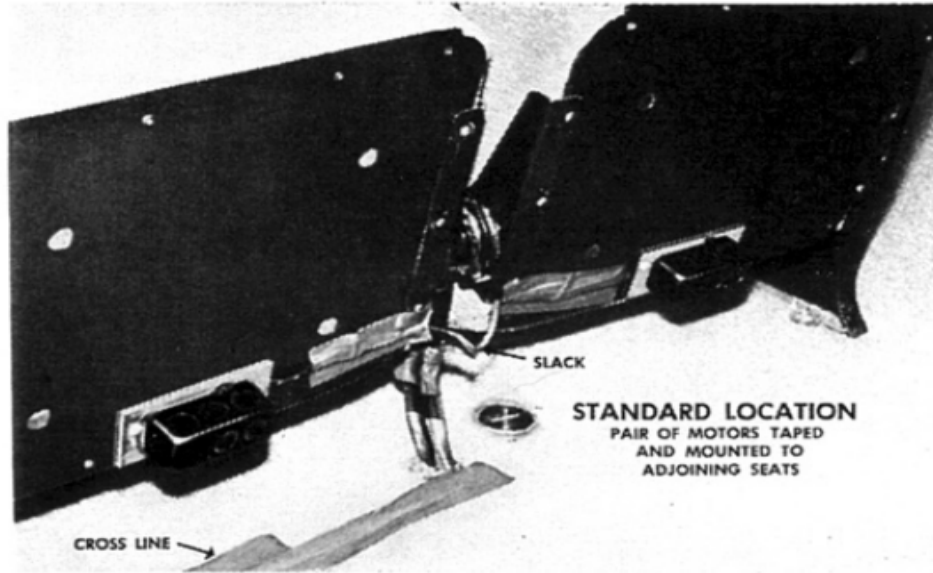


Figure 21. Placement of *Percepto!* motors under theater seats. Source: Appendix A.

As shown in Figure 21, the *Percepto!* motors were mounted with screws against the bottom half of fold-up theater seats, with tape used to secure the wiring. Figure 22 shows the location of the *Percepto!* hardware and wiring in a typical theater installation.

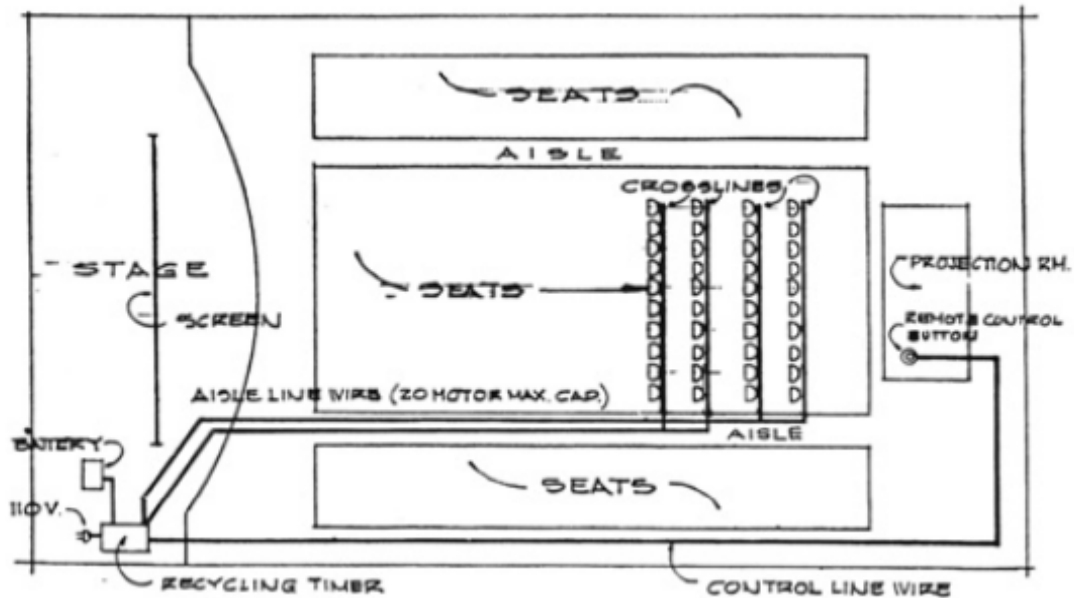


Figure 22. Suggested theater installation for *Percepto!* Source: Appendix A.

Castle's autobiography (1976) describes how he and Dona Holloway personally installed the vibrators in Boston's Pilgrim Theater the night before the premiere of *The Tingler*. This dubious claim is not confirmed by any other source.

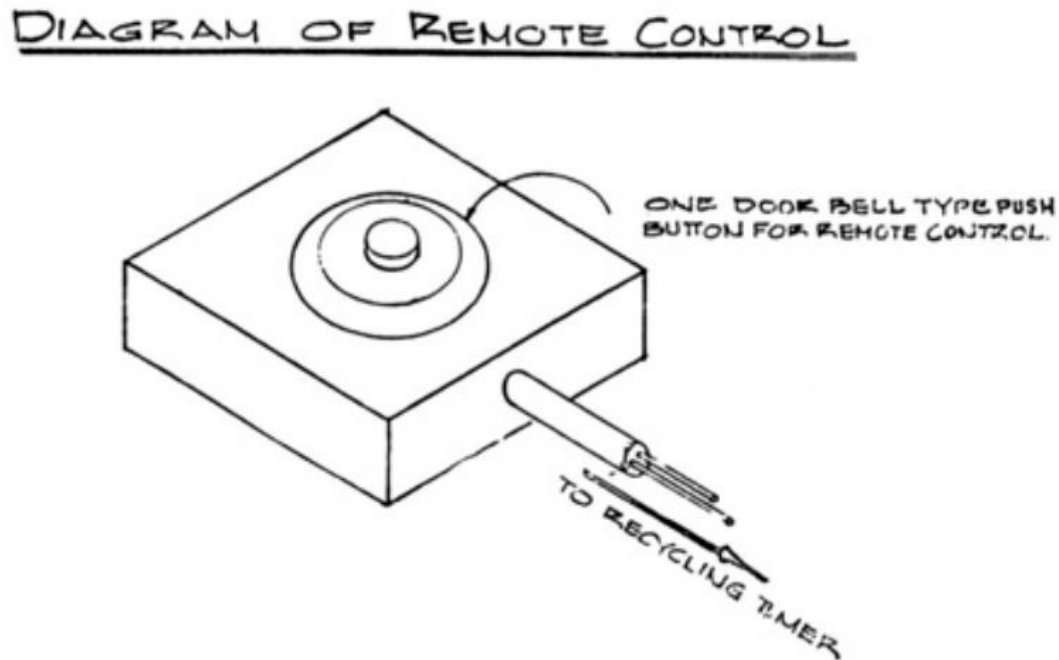


Figure 23. Remote pushbutton used to activate Percepto! Source: Appendix A.

5.3. Usage of Percepto! motors

There were two moments in *The Tingler* when *Percepto!* was activated. The first was when the tingler leaves the white screen on the projection, as shown in Figure 18 above. At this point, a voice on the soundtrack yells, "The tingler is loose in this theater! Scream! Scream for your lives!" This was the projectionist's cue to press the button to trigger the timer, twice, with nine seconds between each press. The second cue was when Martha unexpectedly rises from under the bed sheet at the end of the movie. The projectionist was instructed to continuously press the timer button every nine seconds.

5.4. Other theater effects



Figure 24. Dr. Chapin operating the house lights in the movie theater. Source: Screen capture.

5.4.1. House lighting

The Percepto! Manual also provides cues for how the theater’s house lights should be turned on and off during the movie. As shown in Figure 24, the first light cue is when Dr. Chapin (Vincent Price) pulls down the lever operating the house lights in the movie theater. Afterwards, the movie will be a blank black screen. For this cue, the house lights must be turned on for the duration of the blank screen.

As the script finishes with, “There is no cause for alarm,” the second cue is activated and the house lights must be turned off to ‘resume’ the movie.

5.4.2. Surround sound



Figure 25. Boston theater manager Abner Pinanski, right, and projectionist discuss the cues for activating surround sound speakers. Source: Appendix B.

In the late 1950s, many first-run American city theaters were equipped to show 35mm and/or 70mm movies with magnetic stereo soundtracks. Such theaters had an array of “surround” speakers installed around the walls of the auditorium. According to the *Percepto!* manual, all reels of the film except for reel 5A contained only the standard monaural optical soundtrack. Reel 5A contained a combination optical/magnetic soundtrack that would drive the surround speakers in a suitably equipped theater automatically. Other than remembering to thread that reel of film over the magnetic sound reader, no projectionist action was required.

Theaters without surround speakers were given instructions for procuring and installing them if desired. The same cues used to control the house lights were used to switch the surround speakers on and off.



Figure 26. William Castle instructing an actress how to faint. Source: Appendix B.

5.4.3. Fainting woman

The moment when the house lights were raised was a good opportunity to have a woman in the audience – a paid actress, planted in a prominent location up front – scream and “faint,” and get carried away by “medics” (who just happened to be standing by) on a stretcher. The *Percepto!* manual insists on the importance of this theatrical touch, but it was probably executed only at well-heeled theaters, and only for the opening weekend.

5.5. Deployment

AIR CONDITIONED
PILGRIM
FORMERLY WASH ST OLYMPIA

Starts Tuesday!

**DO YOU HAVE THE GUTS
TO SIT IN
THIS CHAIR?**

**CAN YOU
TAKE**

PERCEPTO

**CAN YOU
TAKE IT WHEN
THE TINGLER BREAKS LOOSE?**

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FILM HISTORY
the audience actually plays a part through the
startling use of a new terror technique...
PERCEPTO! In this astounding shock-story, you
will feel physical reactions and real live sen-
sations projected by the actors on the screen!

COLUMBIA PICTURES
presents

The Tingler
starring
VINCENT PRICE
with JUDITH EVELYN • DARRYL HICKMAN • PATRICIA CUTTS
Written by ROBB WHILE • Produced and Directed by WILLIAM CASTLE

A WILLIAM CASTLE PRODUCTION

**BRING YOUR DATE
AND
WATCH HER TINGLE**

Exclusive engagement due
to expensive installation
cost of "Percepto" will not
be shown in other theaters
in this area!

GUARANTEED
The Tingler will break
loose in the theatre while
you are in the audience. As
you enter the theatre you
will receive instructions
how to guard yourself
against attack by **THE
TINGLER!**

Plus 2nd Hit • JON HALL • 'FORBIDDEN FRUIT' • color

Figure 27. An advertisement for *The Tingler* for the Boston's Pilgrim theater.
Source: *The Boston Globe* (30 August, 1959).

According to the *Tingler* Press Kit, *The Tingler* and the Percepto! equipment first premiered at the Broadway Capitol in Detroit, immediately followed by test openings at the Hippodrome in Baltimore and the Pilgrim Theater in Boston (Figure 27). These engagements grossed over \$70,000 (more than \$600,000 in [2020 dollars](#)) in the first week.

'Tingler' Sellout at Pilgrim As Kids Come A-Screaming

"THE TINGLER" by Robb White.
Produced and directed by William
Castle. Columbia release. The cast:
Dr. William Chapin.....Vincent Price
Mrs. Higgins.....Judith Evelyn
David Morris.....Darryl Hickman
Isabel Chapin.....Patricia Cutts
Lucy Stevens.....Pamela Lincoln
Ollie Higgins.....Philip Coolidge

By MARJORY ADAMS

"I shan't sleep a wink to-night—I'll have bad dreams," gleefully prophesied the youngster on my right to his small pals. The gray-haired woman pushing 90 on my left, who clutched a big bag of lunch to her bosom, sat in happy silence, never twitching a muscle, through the hubub at the Pilgrim Theater. Big Bill Castle, coat-less and grinning, stood at the back of the house counting the rapidly diminishing number of vacant seats. The producer of "The Tingler" received final word of public approbation from the head usher, shortly after 10 yesterday morning.

"There's not a seat in the house" he said. "You'll have to stop selling tickets at the box office."

Everyone had come to see what this terrible tingler was

all about. "Gee," yelled the adolescents, "a lady has fainted." Lights went on in the theater.

Down the aisle came two ushers with a stretcher. An alleged patron was taken out under a sheet. Then the film was displayed again. Cynically, I suggest this same "lady" will faint at every performance from now on.

Well, here's what the film is

Figure 28. *The Tingler* review by Marjory Adams.
Source: *The Boston Globe* (2 September, 1959).

Advertisements, such as the one shown in Figure 27 above, appeared a week before release. The critical response was generally positive, as shown in Figure 28.

There is an anecdote about Percepto! being tested on an unsuspecting audience watching a regular screening of *A Nun's Story*. There are at least two versions of this story. Castle's autobiography (1976) contains his version:

"A week before *The Tingler* opened in Boston, *The Nun's Story*, starring Audrey Hepburn, was playing. During a matinee filled with women, the bored projectionist decided to test the 'Tingler' equipment. He pushed the switch during a scene where Hepburn and the nuns were praying. The proper Bostonian ladies got the shock of their lives."

The second version is from Castle's partner and screenwriter Robb White, who remembered the Percepto! test taking place in California, and that it was accidental.

"We didn't want to buy thousands of vibrators without knowing whether or not they would work out so we scouted around until we found a theater in the Valley that was running *The Nun's Story* [which] was going to close on a Sunday night, and *The Tingler* was going to open on Monday. We got in a huge crew of people to spend the day attaching the vibrators to the seats. But that night, just at the tragic moment of *The Nun's Story*, somebody touched the master switch and the seats began vibrating in wave after wave" (McGee, 2018).

6. Later gimmick films



Figure 29. A newspaper advertisement for *13 Ghosts* emphasizing the *Illusion-O* gimmick's "Ghost Viewer." Source: [URL](#).

6.1. *13 Ghosts* (1960)

13 Ghosts (1960) is a supernatural horror film directed and produced by William Castle with Robb White as the film writer. As the name suggests, the film is about 12 ghosts haunting a house with the intent of finding someone to become the 13th ghost. One of the ghosts, Dr. Plato Zorba, was the original owner of the house before he willed it to his nephew Cyrus. Cyrus and his family search for Dr. Zorba's hidden fortune that he left behind. The family is brought to a halt upon discovering the ghosts and Dr. Zorba's ghost bestows the family with a special pair of ghost goggles; a necessity for removing visualization of the ghosts. At this moment in *13 Ghosts*, patrons are instructed to make use of Castle's next gimmick, *Illusion-O* (Figure 29).



Figure 30. *Illusion-O* in action! Patrons were instructed to use the ghostly viewers at a specific time in the movie. Source: [URL](#).

Illusion-O was the interaction between two cellophane lenses (which were given out to patrons prior to the film's screening) and the ghosts of *13 Ghosts*. The movie was in black and white for most of the scenes but when a haunting presence was nearby, the screen would be overtaken with a prominent blue hue. The ghosts were visible in a faint translucent red by default. *Illusion-O*'s cellophane lenses were necessary to either get a clear image of the ghosts or remove them entirely. *Illusion-O* utilized a red "Ghost Viewer" and a blue "Ghost Remover" (Figure 32) to allow patrons to decide whether they were brave enough to watch the ghosts or not.



Figure 32. A Ghost Viewer given to patrons prior to the showing of *13 Ghosts*. Source: [URL](#).

William Castle further states in a teaser trailer that those who “believe in ghosts” should watch through the red “Ghost Viewer” and those that “do not believe in ghosts” should look through the blue “Ghost Remover.”

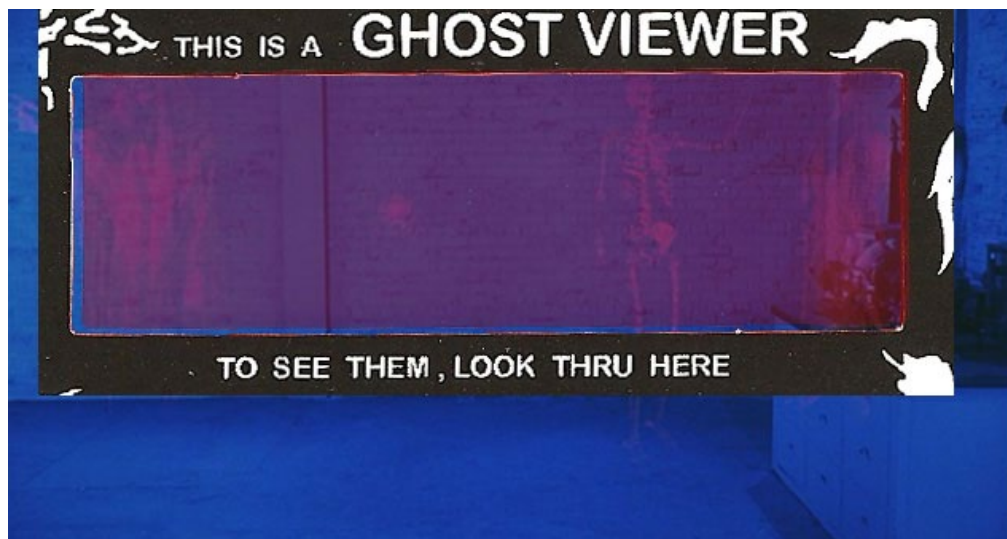


Figure 33. A frame from *13 Ghosts* (1960) showcasing the prominent blue hue and the effect of the red “Ghost Viewer” cellophane. Source: [URL](#).



Figure 34. A frame from *13 Ghosts* showing the effects of the blue “Ghost Remover” cellophane. Source: [URL](#).

Castle thought up the idea for *Illusion-O* after looking through a contraption which altered his ability to see, according to Terry. Castle tried to coax viewers to watch the movie to test their bravery with emphasis on the “Ghost Viewer” gadget. Though patrons paid to watch the supernatural horror film, patrons usually used both cellophane lenses to see the difference (Figure 35).



Figure 35. How patrons would watch *13 Ghosts* (1960). Most people constantly swapped between the two to note the differences. Source: [URL](#).

Critics were not happy with the *Illusion-O* gimmick, such as *New York Times*'s Howard Thompson asking why Castle "didn't simply have some cartoonists draw 'em [the ghosts] on in full view." Thompson voices that he'd rather Castle remove the gimmick entirely and closes the review stating *13 Ghosts* "looked fairly well scrubbed." Another review by the American media company *Variety* states that the idea for *Illusion-O* "is sound and exploitable, but the execution doesn't fully come off" because the ghosts weren't able to create significant tension during their scenes; rendering the "Ghost Viewer" to be less exciting. The general consensus from these critics was that the ghosts that haunted the house weren't driving factors to the plot, which could be disappointing for some. Though *Illusion-O* was a cheap gimmick, it still proved to be effective. The "Ghost Viewer" was intended to be a fun way for the film to be interactive for patrons and was treated as such. Due to the success of the film, *13 Ghosts* eventually earned itself a remake in 2001, 41 years later.

6.2. *Homicidal* (1961)

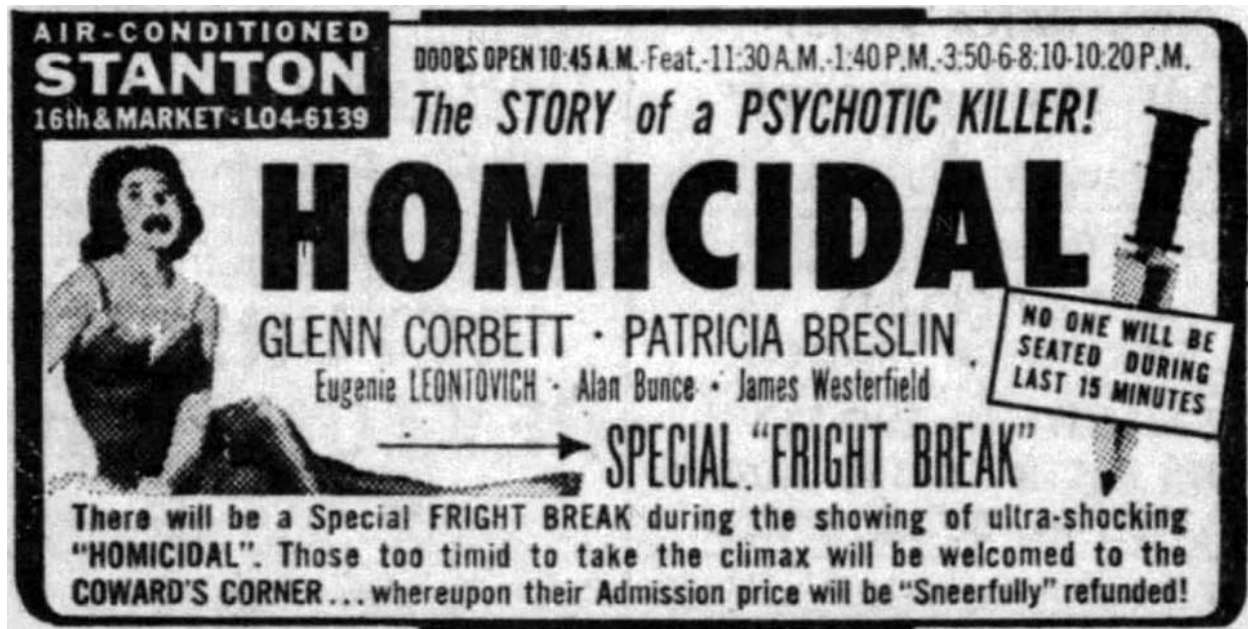


Figure 37. An ad for *Homicidal* in the *Philadelphia Daily News* on July 31st, 1961. The advertisement highlights how the theater doors will remain closed for the last 15 minutes along with the “Coward’s Corner” refund during “Fright Break.” Source: [URL](#).

Alfred Hitchcock, a highly acclaimed A-list English film director and producer, released the B-movie *Psycho* in 1960. Hitchcock gained the idea to create a B-movie horror film after witnessing Castle’s string of successful B-movies. Hitchcock copied Castle’s idea of using promotions to sell *Psycho* during the craze for Castle’s gimmicks; inevitably securing *Psycho*’s success. William Castle was said to be somewhat jealous over the reception of Hitchcock’s movie and began to create another movie with Robb White; the last movie the two would collaborate on. The movie, *Homicidal* (1961), was made but due to similar themes between *Homicidal* and *Psycho* some horror film fans believed Hitchcock and Castle were copying from each other. *Homicidal* is a gruesome horror-thriller film which follows a woman, Emily, who savagely murders multiple people throughout the film. The movie’s plot revolves around family expectation, mental illness, and murder ending with an unexpected plot twist. Castle wittingly created the gimmicks and promotions for *Homicidal* to build suspense in patrons.

Castle utilized the gimmick “Fright Break” and his word on the level of suspense *Homicidal*’s plot contained to boost popularity. The success of “Fright Break” heavily depended

on the success of the film's plot twist. To protect the suspense of the film, Castle broadcasted a content patron's reaction to *Homicidal* and closed with the statement, "Ladies and gentlemen please do not reveal the ending of *Homicidal* to your friends because if you do, they will kill you, and if they don't—I will." Castle wanted to protect the ending to his movie to prevent patrons from taking advantage of the "Fright Break." The film was advertised to have a money-back guarantee if the viewer was too frightened to handle the movie's most suspenseful scene. Each patron was given a ticket upon entry which cowards could redeem at the box office when the "Fright Break" countdown timer appeared on the screen (Figure 38). Castle firmly believed that not a soul would redeem their ticket for a refund to which Columbia Pictures claimed Castle to be a madman.

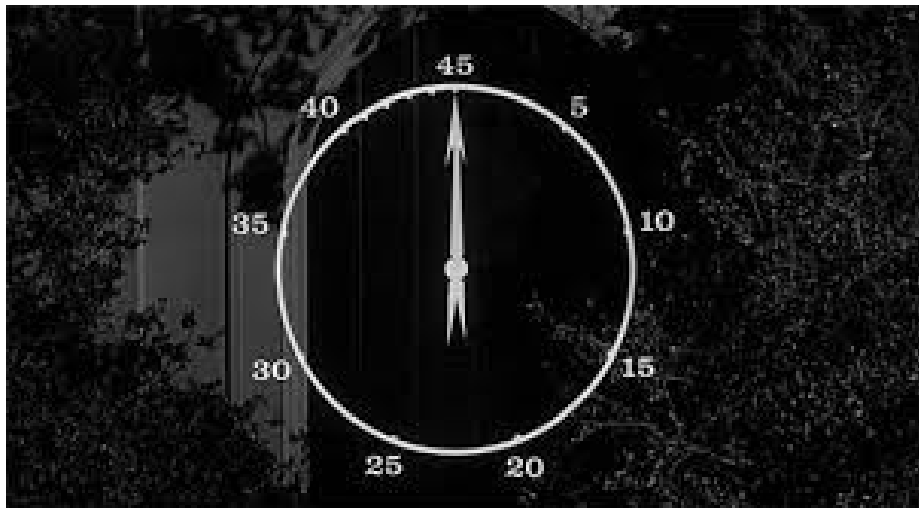


Figure 38. Patrons are greeted by William Castle's voice stating "This is the Fright Break." Those too cowardly to handle the suspense may leave the film in shame for a full refund. Source: [URL](#)

The first viewing of *Homicidal* was said to have no attempted refunds. According to Terry, Castle called in the executives from Columbia Pictures to witness the second viewing and the gimmick's success. To Castle's surprise, "the whole audience went" further stating how he could not fathom why they'd leave. The manager claimed that the patrons that left the second viewing of *Homicidal* were originally from the first viewing: The audience took advantage of Castle's oversight. Castle then began to revamp the gimmick with a "Coward's Corner" (Figure 39). The tickets were to be different colors for each showing and a process was needed to

prevent the same mistake from occurring twice (Figure 40). Castle, upset over being swindled, went full force in humiliating anyone who would attempt to request a refund. As stated by American filmmaker and William Castle fan John Waters:

He [Castle] went to unheard-of lengths to humiliate the adventurous ticket buyer who had the nerve to ask for his money back. William Castle simply went nuts. He came up with “Coward’s Corner,” a yellow cardboard booth, manned by a bewildered theater employee in the lobby. When the Fright Break was announced, and you found that you couldn’t take it anymore, you had to leave your seat and, in front of the entire audience, follow yellow footsteps up the aisle, bathed in a yellow light. Before you reached Coward’s Corner, you crossed yellow lines with the stenciled message: “Cowards Keep Walking.” You passed a nurse (in a yellow uniform? . . . I wonder), who would offer a blood-pressure test. All the while a recording was blaring, “Watch the chicken! Watch him shiver in Coward’s Corner!” As the audience howled, you had to go through one final indignity—at Coward’s Corner you were forced to sign a yellow card stating, “I am a bona fide coward.” Very, very few were masochistic enough to endure this. The one percent refund dribbled away to a zero percent, and I’m sure that in many cities a plant had to be paid to go through this torture. No wonder theater owners balked at booking a William Castle film. It was all just too damn complicated ([para. 18-19](#)).

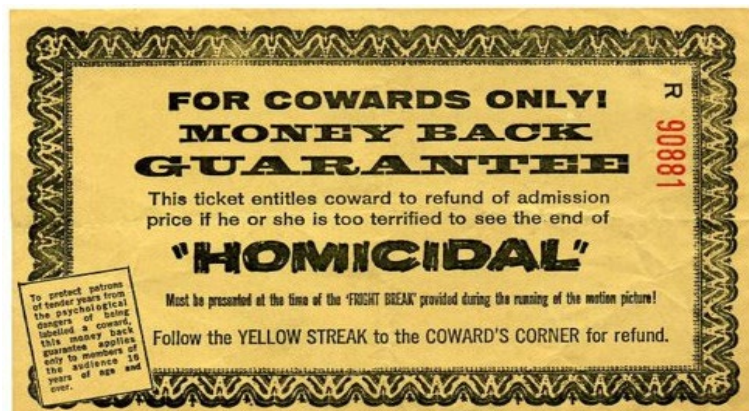


Figure 40. The remade colored “Fright Break” ticket to prevent patrons from exploiting the refund policy. Source: [URL](#).

Garnering a refund required so much humiliation that the refund never had to be given again. With Castle taking extra measures of humiliating cowards as well as claiming the lives of those who spoil the movie would be at stake, it’s quite clear that Castle did not want to be swindled again.



Figure 39. William Castle asking two patrons about the ending of *Homicidal* (1961) in front of the "Coward's Corner." Source: [URL](#).

Homicidal, though it was seen as an imitation of Hitchcock's *Psycho*, was quite successful and made it onto a list of 1962's top ten films. Most film critics were dismissive of the film such as *The New York Times*'s Eugene Archer who states, "William Castle, the producer-director, announces a 'fright break,'... If the reprieve had come before the opening of this dismal imitation of 'Psycho' and Mickey Spillane, it would have been an even better idea." However, some critics such as a *Time Magazine* reviewer valued *Homicidal* over *Psycho*. The surprise to *Homicidal*'s plot twist comes from its usage of a crossdresser as a murder which led to extra publicity. At this point in time, the use of transsexual themes was unique to the film industry. *Homicidal* was quite a successful film that many Castle fans proclaim it to be his "best film". The film, *Homicidal*, is one of Castle's best works to which John Waters and the author, Michael Weldon, claim it to be an "incredible experience."

6.3. *Mr. Sardonicus* (1961)

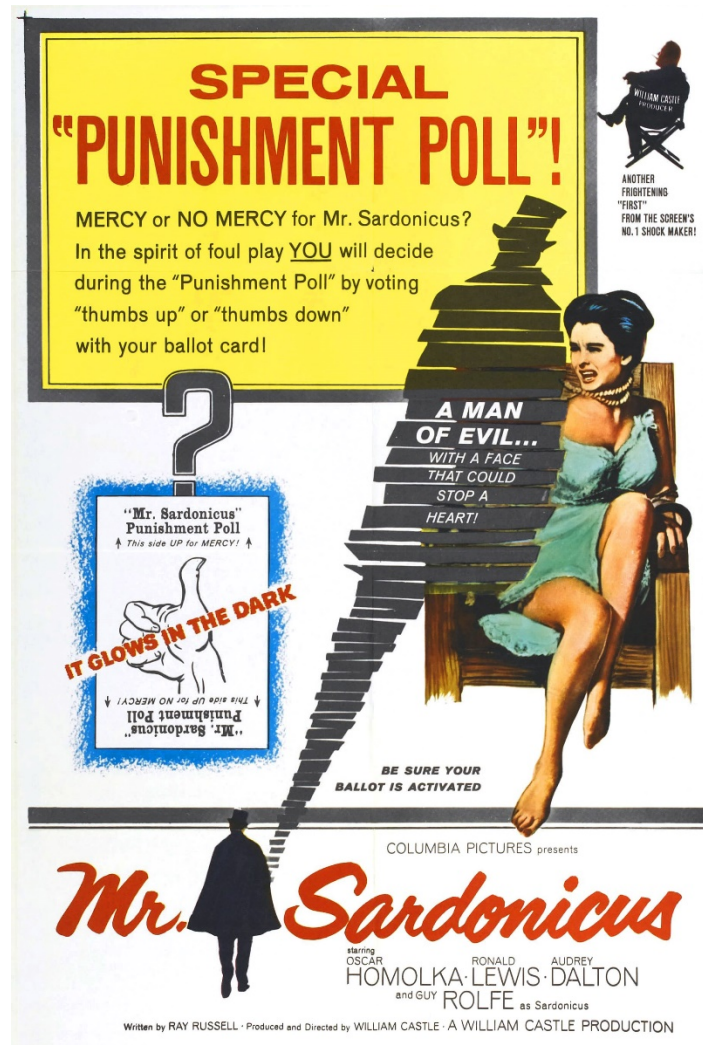


Figure 41. A poster for *Mr. Sardonicus* showcasing the Punishment Poll. Source: [URL](#).

Mr. Sardonicus (1961) was a film that took a more immersive approach for its viewers. William Castle claimed that there would be a punishment poll which would determine the ending of the movie. The ending being whether the main character, Mr. Sardonicus, would live or die. *Mr. Sardonicus* was about a man whose face transformed into a permanently horrifying grin while tomb raiding his father's grave. Throughout the film, Sardonicus's malevolence is constantly showcased even against his own servant who is missing an eye because of Sardonicus himself. Sardonicus shares his tragic backstory of how his seeing father's skull "grinning" traumatized him; causing the transformation. Sardonicus's wife, Elenka, commits

suicide from the gruesome sight. In an attempt to fix his face, Sardonicus enlists a passerby doctor to run experiments to find a cure. After the experiment fails, Sardonicus threatens to mutilate his new wife's face to match his own to which the doctor attempts a new experiment. The doctor injects distilled water into Sardonicus's face as a placebo which "cures" his grin while leaving his jaw sealed shut for recovery. Before the doctor leaves, Sardonicus's servant is told that Sardonicus's affliction was psychosomatic and once Sardonicus hears word, he will be cured. The ending on whether Sardonicus is cured or starves to death is based on whether Sardonicus's servant reveals or hides the truth of his ailment. This decision was to be decided by the "Punishment Poll" that begins shortly after the servant gains the information to choose between a life-ending lie or a life-saving truth (Figure 43).

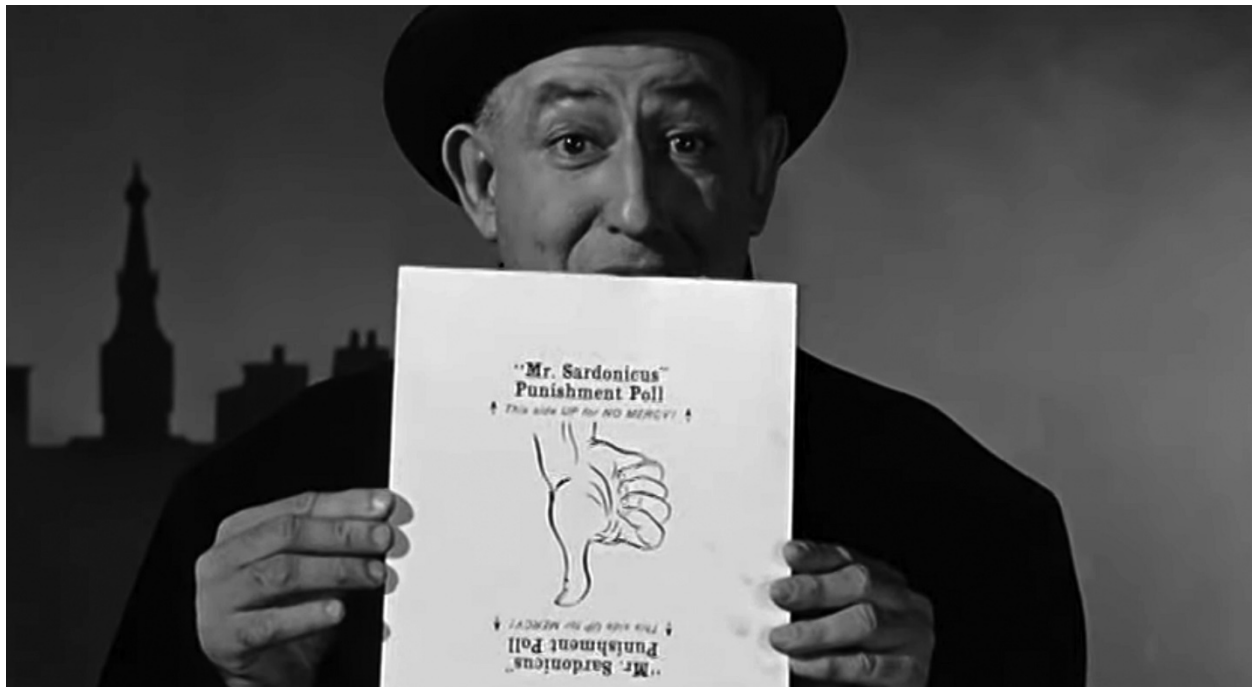


Figure 43. William Castle explaining how to use the Punishment Poll card to vote for whether Mr. Sardonicus would be punished or pardoned. Source: [URL](#)

Patrons were given a glow-in-the-dark "Punishment Poll" card detailing a hand with a thumb sticking out (Figure 44). The glow-in-the-dark card was powered by an "Activator Booth" which charged the phosphorescent thumb with a lightbulb.

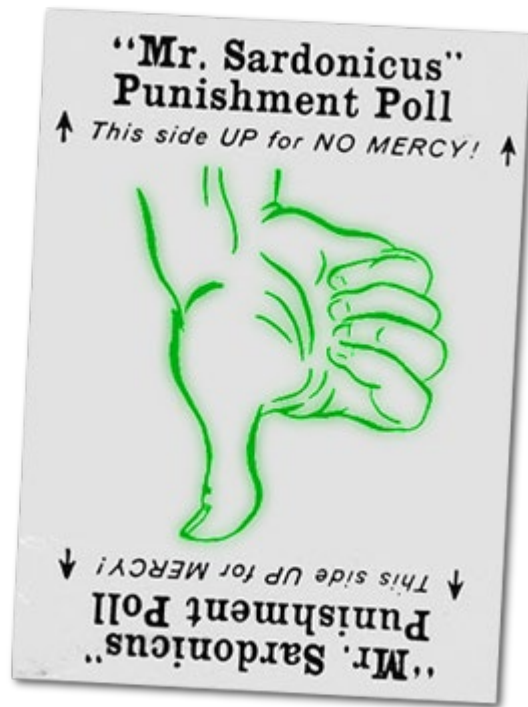


Figure 44. The glow-in-the-dark Punishment Poll card given to patrons for *Mr. Sardonicus*. Source: [URL](#).

The vote was “tallied” by counting the thumb ups from the thumb downs for whether Mr. Sardonicus would be able to eat and live or starve to death respectively (Figure 45). However, it should be noted that the “Punishment Poll” cards would lose their glow long before the poll would take place. For the drive-in showings, viewers had to flash their lights to vote for punishing Mr. Sardonicus.

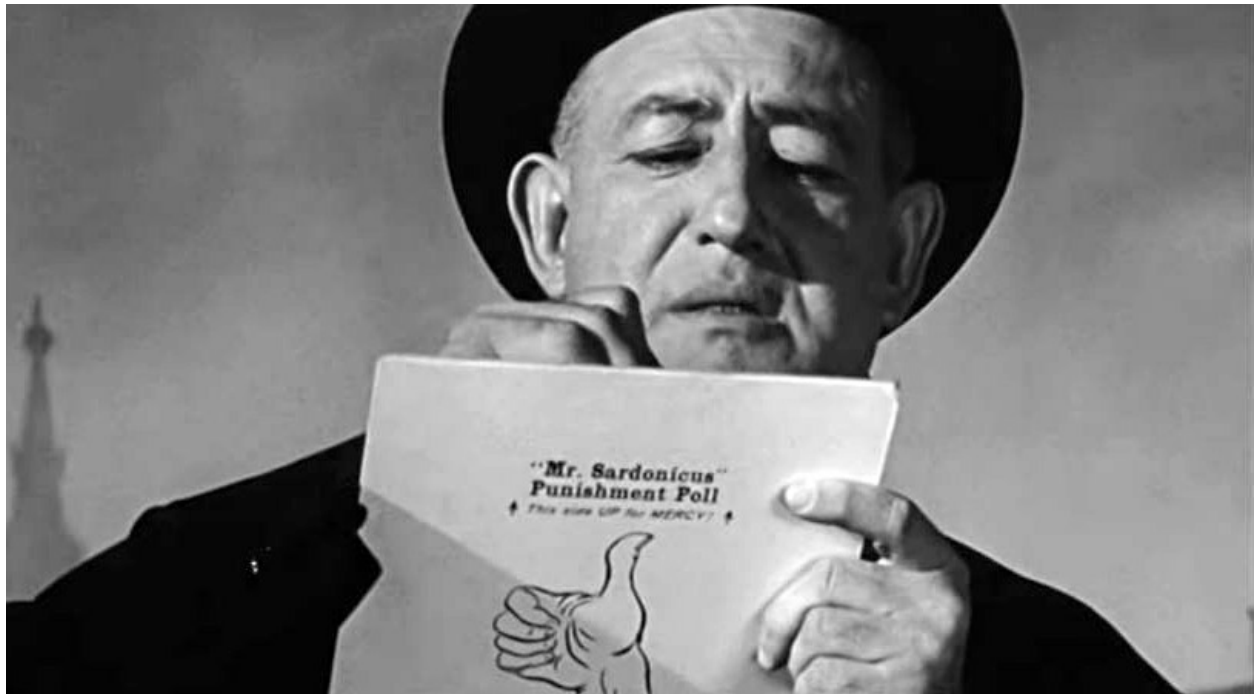


Figure 45. William Castle, in video, acts as if he is tabulating votes to determine the proper ending. Note: There is only evidence of one ending existing, so voting was inconsequential. Source: [JRE](#)

The usual gimmick that Castle utilized with his films was seemingly created not for the audience, but for the production and distribution company, Columbia Pictures. American writer Ray Russel was hired to write the screenplay for his original short story *Sardonicus* in 1961. Columbia Pictures was against the disheartening original ending of punishing Mr. Sardonicus. Instead of rewriting the script, Castle devised a plan to create two endings and allow the audience to decide between Columbia Pictures's ending or Castle's. Though Castle has claimed multiple times that there were two endings to the movie, there has been no evidence which points to a forgiving ending having been made. *Mr. Sardonicus*'s voting system was most likely a trick Castle created to immerse patrons along with disregarding Columbia Pictures's remark in one fell swoop.

Mr. Sardonicus was one of Castle's favorite films to produce. The film with a repulsive theme and a brutal karmatic ending, there's no surprise that Castle appreciated the story. Film critics were mostly unhappy with the film. Howard Thompson of *The New York Times* states "[Castle] is not Edgar Allan Poe. Anybody naive enough to attend [the show]... will find painful proof in, respectively, 'Five Golden Hours' and 'Mr. Sardonicus.'" Fans and investors of Castle believed that Castle's name was marketed well enough to begin promoting movies without gimmicks. Similar to his other gimmicks, some theaters played the movie without the "Punishment Poll" cards. However, the patrons who were given glow-in-the-dark poll cards, though the glow had already dissipated, would raise their cards to vote because of their immersion in the film.

6.4. *Zotz!* (1962)



Figure 46. A poster for *Zotz!* Source: [URL](#).



Figure 47. An advertisement for the film *Zotz!* (1962) appearing in the *Daily News* on October 7th, 1962. The advertisement promotes the film with a “free magic ‘Zotz’ coin to all!” Source: [URL](#).

Around the making of *Zotz!* (1962), William Castle was requested to drop the gimmicks for his movies. Castle, holding onto his love of gimmicks, began to lessen the intensity of his gimmicks without getting rid of them altogether. *Zotz!* is a movie about a man who obtained an amulet created by an ancient civilization’s god. The amulet resembles a coin with an inscription on one side (Figure 48). The amulet has the ability to cause pain in a living being, cause time to slow, or instantly kill any living creature by saying the magical word, “Zotz!” The power that the amulet possesses leads the government and Communist agents to try and take the amulet from the protagonist, Jonathan Jones. The film is heavily based on the age of nuclear weapons: The original story, written by the World War II veteran Walter Karig, was influenced by the bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.



Figure 48. The magical Amulet which was retrieved from a Greek temple. It has the power to embed pain into others, slow time, or even kill.

Source: [URL](#).

With Castle's waning support for his gimmicks by his distributor, Columbia Pictures, Castle's gimmicks were becoming more like promotional trinkets instead of the usual immersion. The movie's promotional feature was to hand out a "magic" full-size plastic replica of the amulet which was fully identical (Figure 49). Another promotional feature, as Castle states in his autobiography, was the magic word "Zotz!" Castle tried to get kids into saying "Zotz!" and to do so he printed the name on car bumper stickers and "Zotz buttons."



Figure 49. Plastic replica coin of the magical amulet from *Zotz!* (1962). The otherside of the coin was never shown in *Zotz!*, as such, the rear is blank. Source: [URL](#).

Though critics such as Bosley Crowther of *The New York Times* claimed the *Zotz!* To be a “foolish tale”, Castle was excited to see thousands of kids “Zotzing” each other. The film was allegedly inspired by the Disney film *The Absent-Minded Professor* (1961) which in turn was ironic because Disney called Castle to sell *Zotz!* at a large profit. Castle declined the offer leading him to wonder if declining Disney from furthering his work with a bigger budget was the correct choice. Not only did *Zotz!* leave an impression of Disney, the film was another one of Castle’s films to create history. *Zotz!* was the first movie to bring “bullet time” into the film world (Figure 50). This is 19 years before the believed “first instance” of “bullet time” in the action film *Kill and Kill Again* (1981) and 37 years before *The Matrix* which popularized the effect.



Figure 50 . The catchphrase “Zotz!” is said to slow time in order to dodge a bullet.
This was the first instance of “Bullet Time” in a movie. Source: [URL](#)

6.5. Strait-Jacket (1964)



Figure 51. The poster for the film *Strait-Jacket* (1964). The primary selling point is the star actress Joan Crawford portraying an axe-wielding murderer. Source: [URL](#).

After having been told to cease with his gimmicks, William Castle hired the American film and television actress, Joan Crawford, to star in the movie *Strait-Jacket* (1964). Crawford was also tasked to visit specific theaters. The reason Castle had advertised Crawford so heavily was primarily because of the unique role she played in *Strait-Jacket*. Crawford was one of Hollywood's more well-known movie stars and was one of the higher-paid women in the United States. Her role in movies was usually to portray a wealthy damsel in distress, a young woman who would reach love and success, or rarely as a woman tormented in a horror movie. Crawford's name was so prevalent that her fans would be eager to watch movies that she starred in, similar to that of Castle's and Vincent Price's fans.

The spin with Crawford in *Strait-Jacket*, and major selling point, was that she was portrayed as a clinically insane woman who decapitated her husband with an axe for cheating (Figure 52). After 20 years in a psychiatric hospital, Lucy Harbin (Crawford) is discharged. Upon her release from the hospital, a chain of murders occur which causes characters to blame Lucy's mental instability.



Figure 52. Joan Crawford moments before decapitating her husband for cheating. Source: [URL](#).

The movie ends with the plot twist that Lucy's daughter Carol disguised herself and attempted to blame Lucy for the murders. Before the movie's screening, Castle printed cardboard axes to be handed out as a promotional item to viewers (Figure 53 & Figure 54). As Castle's axe props were created on a whim, the props were not advertised throughout the media.



Figure 53 & Figure 54. *Strait-Jacket's* (1954) cardboard promo axes which Castle created and handed out as a last minute promotional choice. Source: [URL](#).

Film critics, specifically *New York Herald Tribune's* Judith Crist in this instance, believed that Joan Crawford was too highbrow to be acting under Robert Bloch's script, the writer of *Strait-Jacket*. *New York Times's* Bosley Crowther says that Crawford "has picked some lemons, some very sour lemons, in her day, but nigh the worst of the lot is 'Strait-Jacket'... The story is utterly invalid, psychologically and dramatically, and William Castle's direction and production are on the cheapest, sleaziest side." Though film critics were unamused with *Strait-Jacket*, Castle found a positive review by the American journalist Dorothy Kilgallen and made the best of it. Castle turned Kilgallen's praising of *Strait-Jacket* into a piece of advertisement for the film (Figure 55). Kilgallen goes as far to claim that *Strait-Jacket* made Hitchcock's *Psycho* "seem like a Walt Disney fairy tale". *Strait-Jacket* became another one of Castle's many successful movies.



Figure 55. A review by Dorothy Kilgallen which praised *Strait-Jacket* (1964). Willaim Castle took the comment and turned it into an advertisement for the film. Source: [URL](#).

6.6. *I Saw What You Did* (1965)



Figure 56. The poster for the film *I Saw What You Did* (1965) which pictures the main prank calling theme and as well as a silhouette of uxoricide. Source: [URL](#).

I Saw What You Did (1965) is a film about two teenage girls who prank call a murderer after he had just committed uxoricide. The teenagers would call random numbers and tell whoever answered "I saw what you did, and I know who you are" (Figure 57). The murderer began to track the teens to remove any witnesses.



Figure 57. The recurring prank call phrase which the mischievous teens, Libby and Kit, indiscriminately repeated to any prankee. Source: [URL](#).

William Castle hired Joan Crawford once again and planned for another relevant promotion. The original promotion for the movie was to have a phone number be advertised in newspapers. When dialed, a female would say that she saw what you did and set up a date at your local theater for a time *I Saw What You Did* was being shown. The promotion led to phone lines becoming jammed, upsetting telephone companies such as the Bell Telephone Company. Castle was then forbidden from advertising through phone calls and switched to the new “Shock Section” promotion. The “Shock Section” featured seat belts that were usually positioned in the back row of select theaters. The seats were advertised to be seat belts to prevent people from being scared out of their seats and the truly brave could lock themselves in for the full movie’s duration.

Film critics generally gave positive reviews for *I Saw What You Did*. Howard Thompson praises Castle saying “The youngsters, Andi Garrett, Sarah Lane and a perky little toddler named Sharyl Locke, are altogether delightful. Mr. Castle has staged a fine, freezing showing with Miss Garrett, little Sharyl and the stalking Mr. Ireland.” *Variety* in 1965 said that *I Saw What You Did* is “a well-produced, well-acted entry in the suspense-terror field.... Top billing for Miss Crawford is justified only by making allowances for drawing power of her name.” It seems that

the plot of having the teenagers be hunted by a murderer only complimented the great actors and actresses that played in *I Saw What You Did*.

6.7. *Bug* (1975)



Figure 58. A poster for the film *Bug*. Source: [URL](#).

The movie *Bug* (1975), was based on Thomas Page's novel *The Hephaestus Plague* (1973). Though Castle did not direct the movie, Castle wrote the film's story along with Page. The film was about a group of mutant cockroaches that can create fire by rubbing their cerci together. One roach is bred with a modern roach to create intelligent flying super roaches.

Castle had the film's publicists that would insure the large cockroach, Hercules. Hercules was then insured by a broker in southern California for the month Castle and Hercules were on tour. The policy was that the one million dollars would be paid if two conditions were met. The first condition being that Hercules died a natural death excluding "any unnatural or violent demise...being squashed under an unfriendly heel, or perishing from food poisoning, expiring on a plane because of altitude, etc." The second condition would be an autopsy by an entomologist to determine cause of death.

There was a second gimmick that Castle was going to use. Castle was planning on rigging random seats, in a similar fashion to *The Tingler's* buzzers, with miniature windshield wipers. The wipers were intended to simulate a bug crawling upon the legs of patrons. The idea was quickly scrapped from the possibility that patrons would leave after thinking something was really crawling up their leg. *Bug* was referenced in the *Playground Daily News* when David Dugas wanted to bring attention to the mistreatment of animals in movies. Dugas was upset over a scene where the incendiary cockroaches "attack and set fire to a cat." The "mistreatment" turned out to be a false alarm as the cat's burns were simulated as well as the roaches being mechanical.

Bug was a profitable movie which received little praise, however, the movie was met with an unfortunate fate. *Bug* was released three days prior to the release of *Jaws* (1975) which grossed about 150 times the amount *Bug* earned. Jack Mitchell compares the two films with a claim that "the only difference is the hype." He further explains that *Jaws* and *Bug* are the "Pavlov dog school of filmmaking" where *Bug* has a cheaper advertising budget than *Jaws* with both films suffering from similar trends. *Bug* would go on to be Castle's last film.

7. Recreating Percepto!

To replicate the Percepto! Gimmick through phone vibration API.

We imagine a host and a client application where the host end-user may be able to start a lobby and allow clients to connect to the host through either method:



Figure 59. QR code for the URL of the English Wikipedia Mobile main page

- QR Code



Figure 60. Jackbox Quiplash game lobby code. These room codes are generated and can be used to form multiplayer experiences.

- Text Code
- Temporary access address links such as short links, google drive access links, etc.

The host may use either a phone or desktop/laptop computer to access the host application. The host application may be accessed through a web application online or by a phone application. The end client user may only use a phone application as desktop and laptop devices may not have vibration capabilities.

Once enough clients are connected to the host, the host may present the video to the client by another media (through a projector screen or monitor). When a horror scene is active, the host may manually send out a digital signal through the host application that will then be received by the clients' application. The host may choose to randomly select one client at a time. The selected client's application will then produce either a buzzing sound or a ensue vibrations within the client's phone's capabilities. The selected client must temporarily deescalate the vibration or buzzing sound by producing loud noises or shaking the phone (to stimulate the phone's builtin accelerometers, if it allows). An example flow chart is shown in Figure 61.

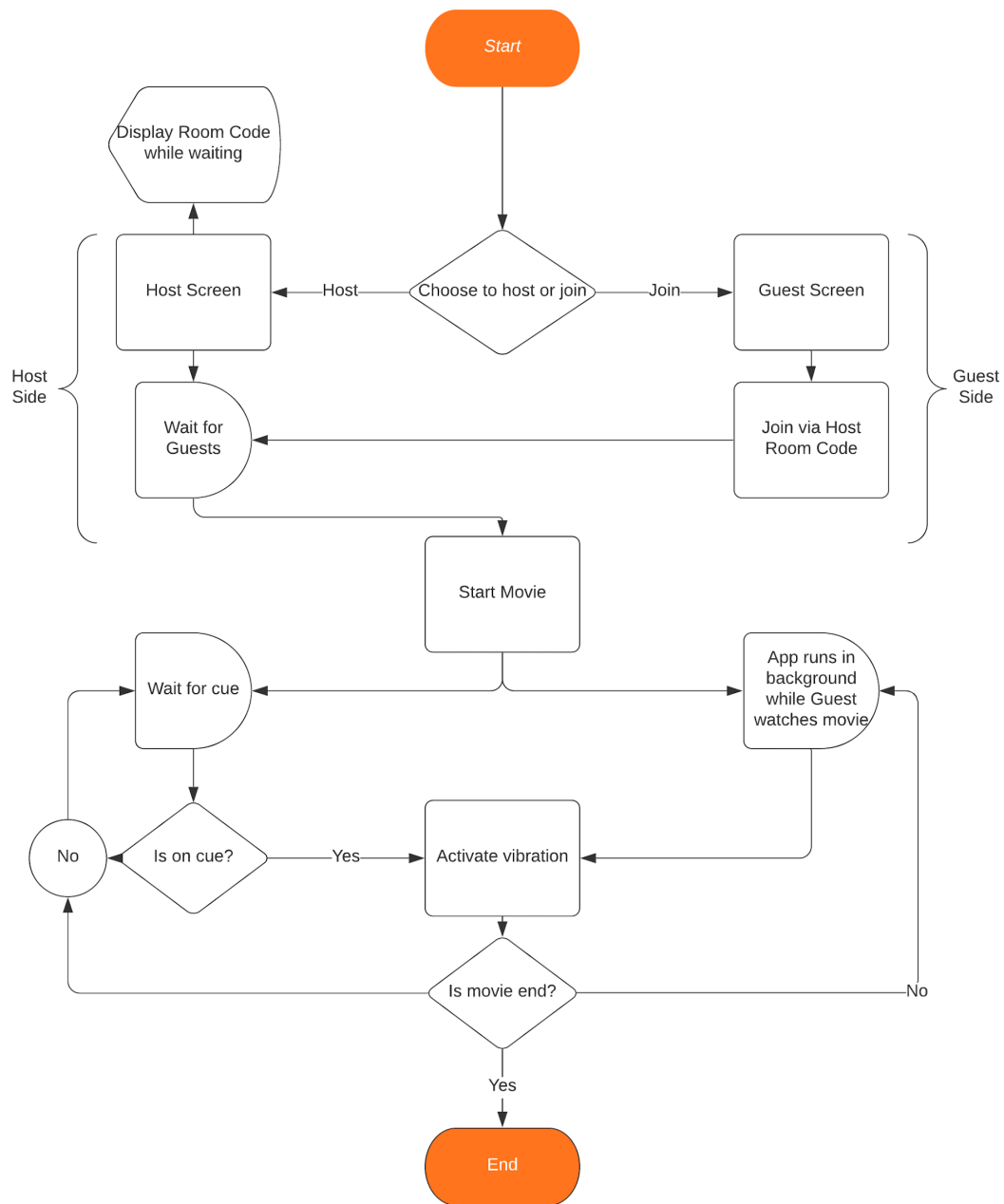


Figure 61. A mockup simple flowchart for the proposed Percepto! App.
Made in [Lucidchart](https://www.lucidchart.com/).

7.1. Requirements for the Percepto! App

We might need to create the application on iOS and Android as according to statCounter; (as of March 2020) those two are the most popular mobile operating systems. Developing phone applications for two different operating systems may seem difficult, so using a cross-platform framework that can output applications for both iOS and Android can be the best option in terms of scope. Many companies use cross-platform frameworks when building applications because:

It supports the WORA (Write Once, Run Anywhere) mantra: slogan by Sun Microsystems to [explain the cross-platform benefits of Java.](#)

We wanted the application to be cross-platform-- the host being able to host from a website or application, while the user may use a phone application. Most phone browsers allow vibrations through a Vibration API, leaving the phone during the movie can be taxing on the phone.

7.2. Cross-platform brainstorming

There are many options when deciding for a cross-platform framework. Here is a list of available frameworks to use:

- Flutter
- ReactNative
- PhoneGap
- Ionic
- Xamarin

Most of these frameworks use Javascript, a widely used scripting language. Future developers looking to create an application similar to this idea may choose between Javascript or another language, but for this topic for the Percepto! application, we choose Javascript for the time being.

7.3. Development issues

When developing for iOS, Xcode is needed for app development. Unfortunately, this application is available exclusively for MacOs. There are alternatives for this-- a straightforward approach is to own an Apple desktop device. Another option is to install MacOS through a virtual machine or to partition a hard drive or solid state drive for MacOS.

7.4. Application mockup

We have made prototypes for the web application. The framework for collaborating on the prototype is called Figma. The link to the [Figma prototype can be found here](#).

On the main page of the web application, the user will be confronted by the title of the application, followed by an introduction and two buttons that will redirect to either a host screen or a viewer screen. The application should be responsive to the display orientation of the screen. Below are figures of the two orientations.

Main Screen

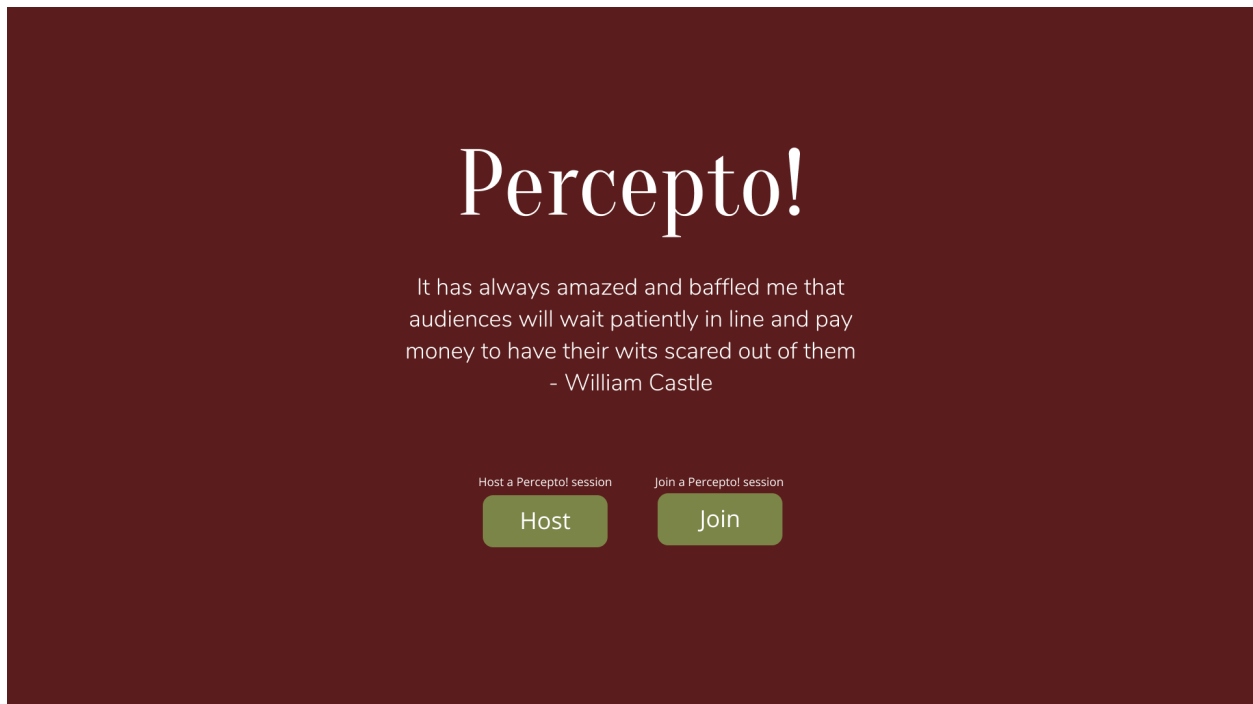


Figure 62. A sketchup for the main screen of a Percepto! web application.

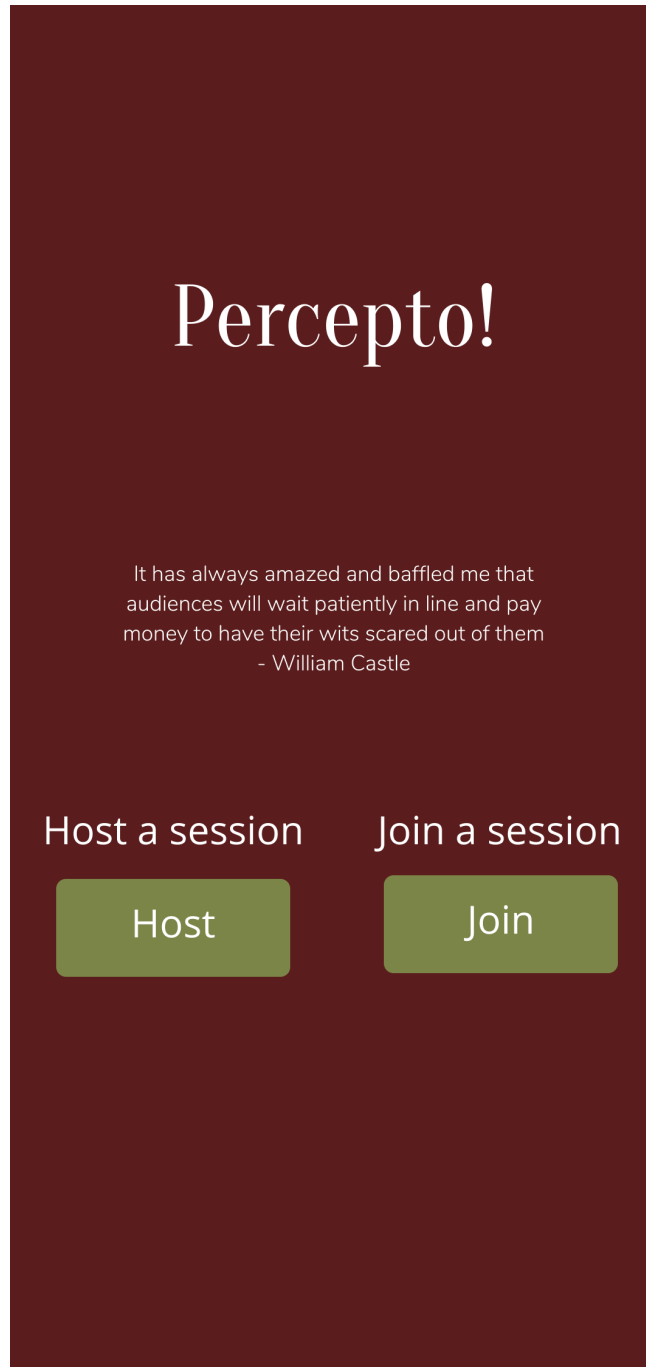


Figure 63. A sketchup for the main screen of a Percepto! mobile application.

Host Screen

After choosing the former of the two options, the user will be able to create a websocket within the Percepto! server and allow other users to connect as a viewer. The host

user may disband the connection to their clients and return to the main screen of the app; or may click or tap the 'lightning bolt' buttons to generate a 'buzz' to one of the viewers.

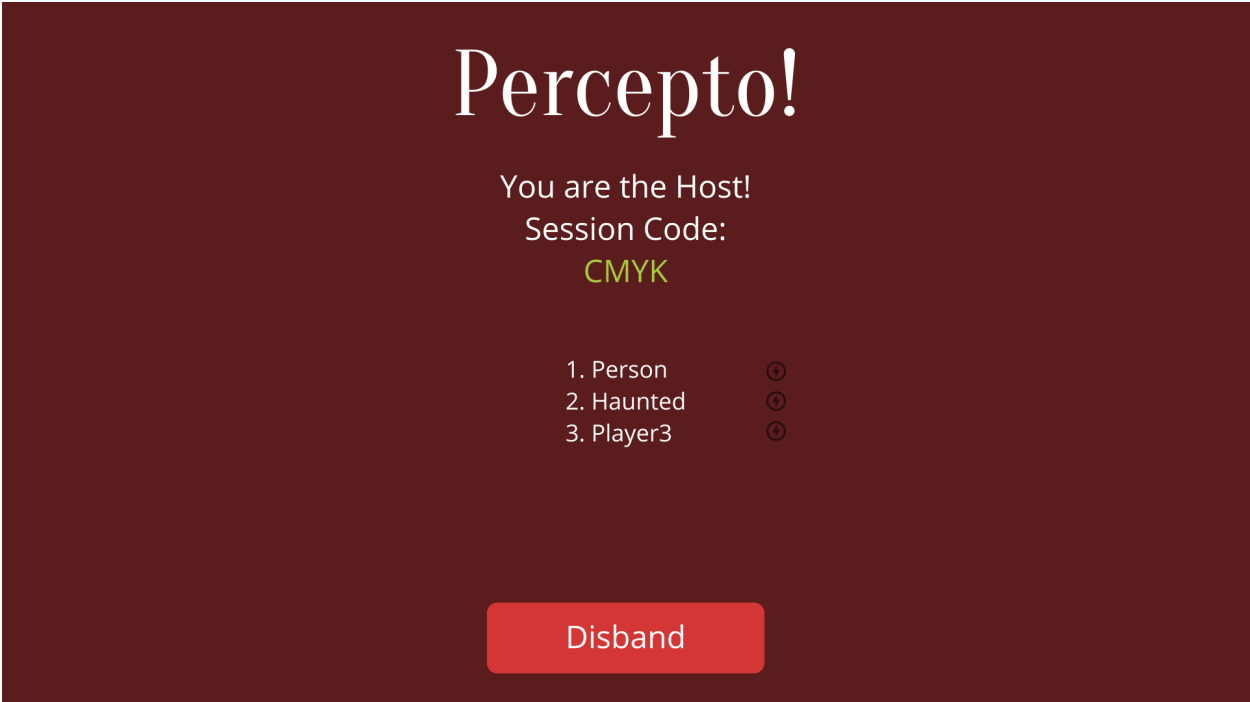


Figure 64. A sketchup for the host screen of a Percepto! desktop application.

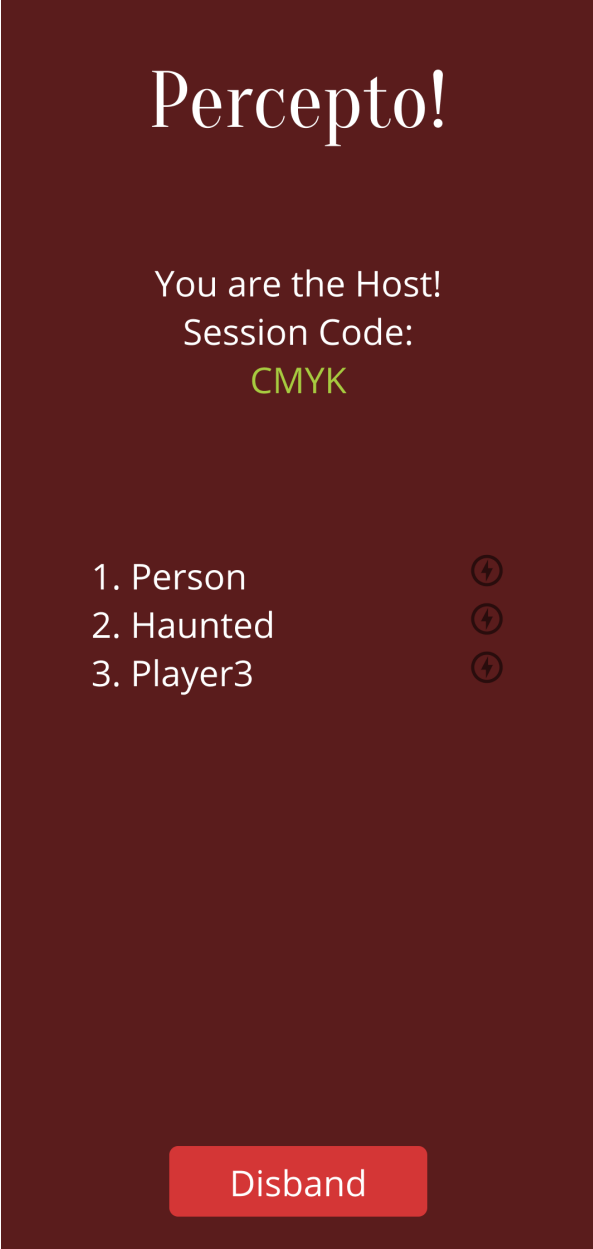


Figure 65. A sketchup for the host-side of the mobile application. The host is given a unique randomly generated room key that will be needed to join the host's session.

Viewer Screen

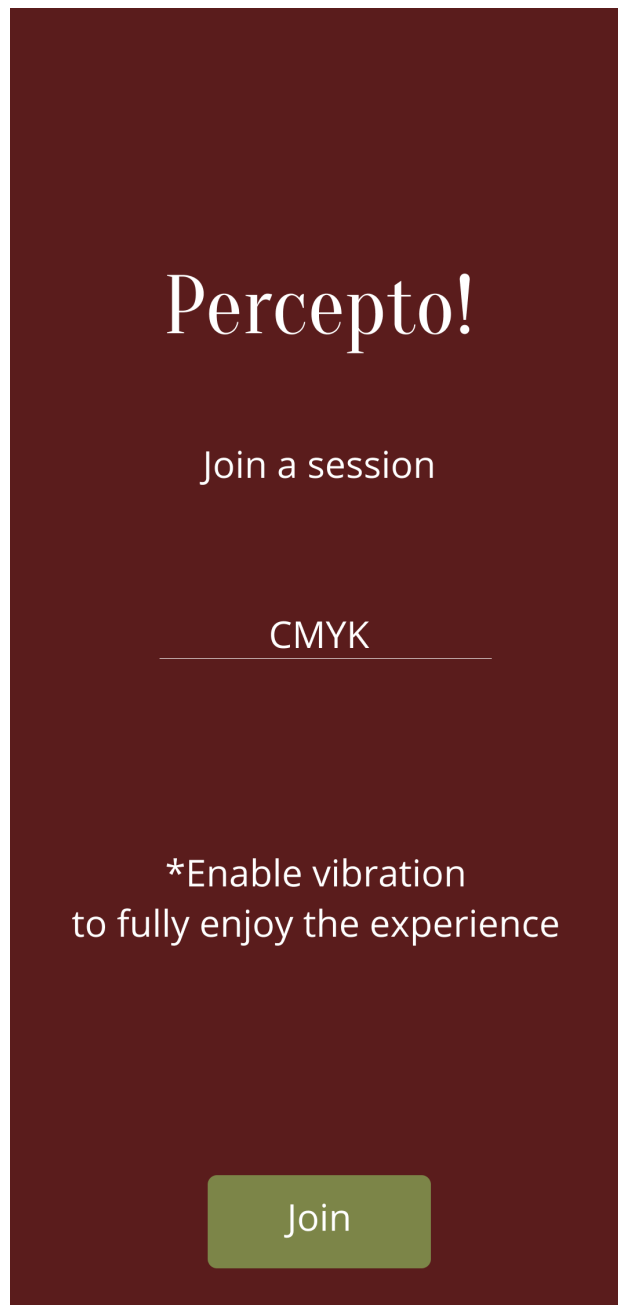


Figure 66. A sketchup for the viewer-side of the application. Viewers must enter the valid room key and press 'Join' in order to join a room.

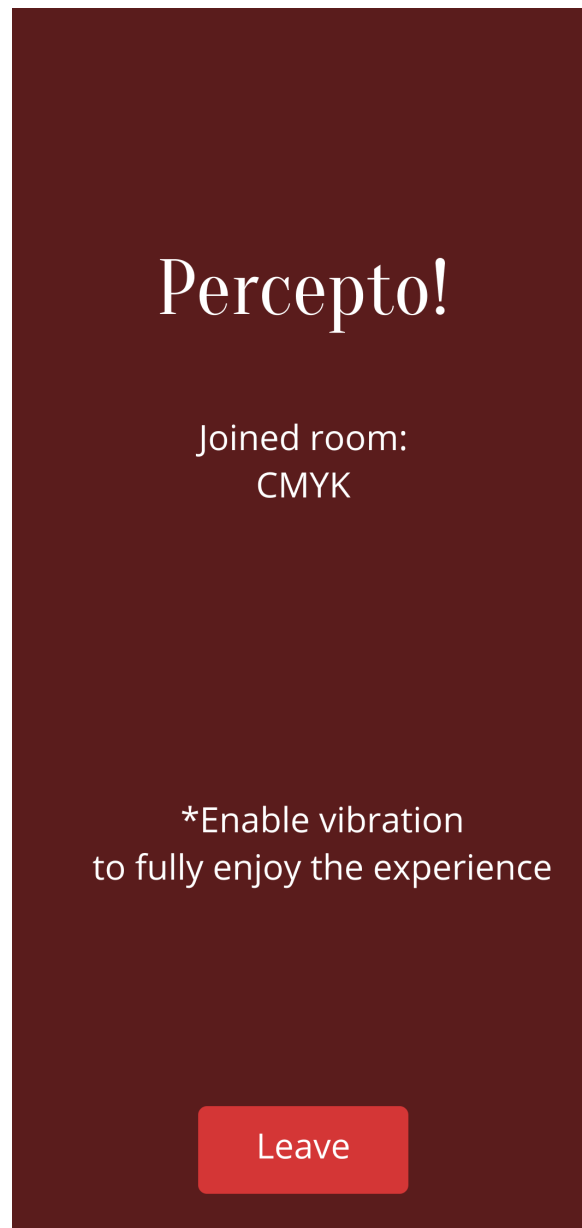


Figure 67. A sketchup of being within a session. The viewer may experience William Castle's "shock" gimmick, *Percepto!*, while watching *The Tingler* or any other movie of the host's choosing. Note: The phone screens can remain off and still receive vibrations till the viewer manually exits via the 'Leave' button or loses connection to the server.

8. Conclusion

From the early years of his life, William Castle found his ambition was to be one of the greatest showmen. He did the best he could for the audience, and invested in his ideas for the applause. Though he may have not been the first to utilize gimmicks in film, Castle was definitely the first to capitalize on it. Castle did start the history of haptics in the media. Some entertainment venues such as IMAX or Dolby Cinema featured 4D Cinema that, like many of Castle's works, combined special effects (such as in Figure 67) along with the film to enhance the viewer's experience.



Figure 68. Smoke machines installed inside the seats and in front of the projection screen create a mist while the seats, controlled automatically, can also move at a fixed angle.

Source: [URL](#).

We look to recreate Percepto! by incorporating the current web technology of smartphones and mobile web browsers to deliver a similar experience. In this project, we set out to create prototype designs to put forth this idea in future projects such as a Major Qualifying Project (MQP). We hope to bring this idea to reality as in the future for a MPQ.

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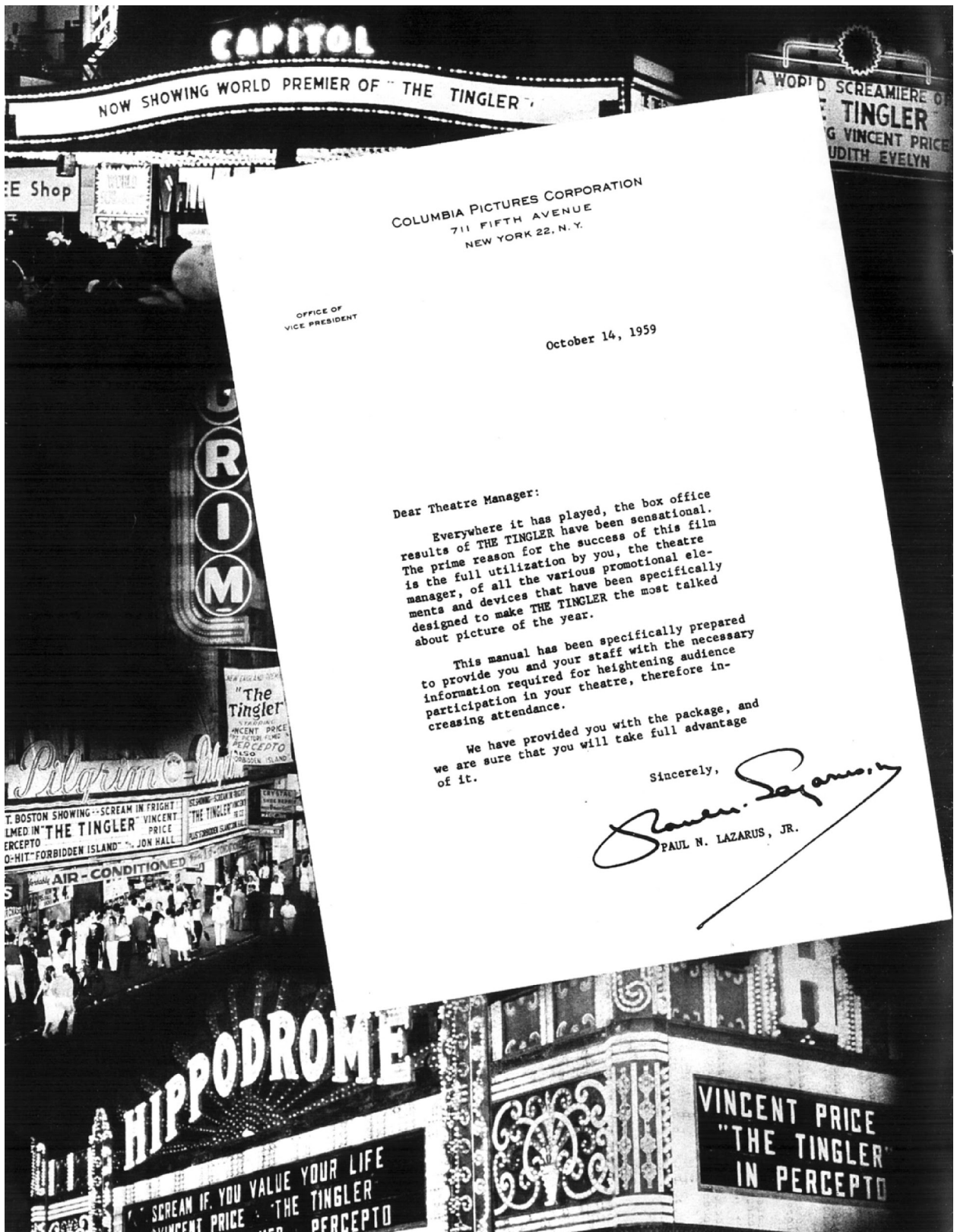
Appendix A: *Percepto!* Manual

**THE
PERCEPTO
MANUAL
FOR**



WHAT TO DO AND HOW TO DO IT

COPYRIGHT COLUMBIA PICTURES CORP. 1959



COLUMBIA PICTURES CORPORATION
711 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

OFFICE OF
VICE PRESIDENT

October 14, 1959

Dear Theatre Manager:

Everywhere it has played, the box office results of THE TINGLER have been sensational. The prime reason for the success of this film is the full utilization by you, the theatre manager, of all the various promotional elements and devices that have been specifically designed to make THE TINGLER the most talked about picture of the year.

This manual has been specifically prepared to provide you and your staff with the necessary information required for heightening audience participation in your theatre, therefore increasing attendance.

We have provided you with the package, and we are sure that you will take full advantage of it.

Sincerely,

Paul N. Lazarus, Jr.
PAUL N. LAZARUS, JR.

INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR “THE TINGLER” PERCEPTO KIT

This Percepto kit has been developed to heighten audience participation, when viewing THE TINGLER. A percentage of the seats are rigged with tiny electric motors which, when activated, result in a harmless vibration being felt by the person sitting in the seat.

No direct contact between the motor and the patron is made. The motors have been checked by underwriters laboratories and are not subject to codes.

A TINGLER Percepto “Kit” consists of 100 vibrator motors, a timing device and installation materials, packed in two (2) cases. Each kit is a unit and therefore cannot be broken up.

The seats to which the motors are to be attached should be those in rows most frequently occupied. The theatre manager is best qualified to make the selection.



WHAT IS THE PERCEPTO KIT?

A Percepto kit consists of two (2) shipping cases marked A and B, containing the Percepto equipment.



ILLUSTRATION 1



ILLUSTRATION 1

1. IN CASE A, which is a $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood shipping box (Illustration 1) with screw-down top and inserts to cushion motors, you will find:
50 pair of vibrator motors (100 motors), which are paired together (Illustration 2A), with terminal snaps.

The motors are either:
(Illus. 2B) { 12 volts, the case of which is dark grey OR
 { 27½ volts, the case of which is black.

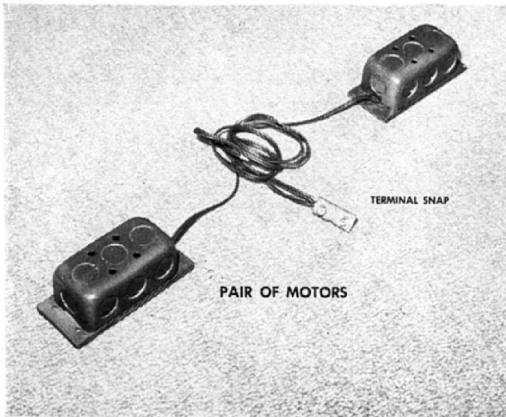


ILLUSTRATION 2A

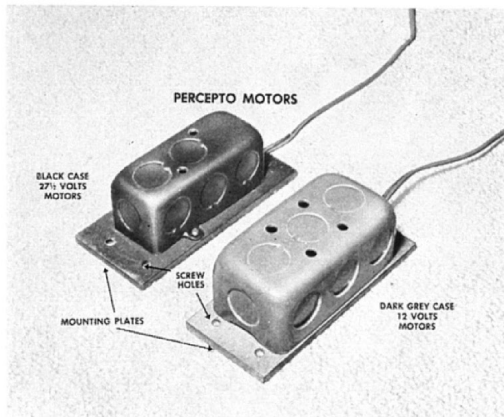


ILLUSTRATION 2B

2. IN CASE B, which is a $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood shipping box (Illus. 3) with screw-down top and inserts, you will find:

1 Timer (recycling timer) (Illustration 4A, 4B & 4C, Page 5). This device is used to activate the 100 motors in series of 20 motors rather than all at once.

Packed in the timer case you will find the wire and plug for the 110 volts AC outlet to power the timer **ONLY** and two (2) min. twist lock connections, battery leads to be used to supply the power to operate the motors (see

illustration 4B and 4C).

10 Cross lines with terminal snaps attached (Illus. 5). These cross lines are connected to the vibrator motors (10 motors to a cross line).

2 Burgess "B" batteries either [#10338 (22½-45-49½ volt) OR #21308 and #10308 (22½-45 Volt)], one of which is a spare (Illust. 6, Page 6).

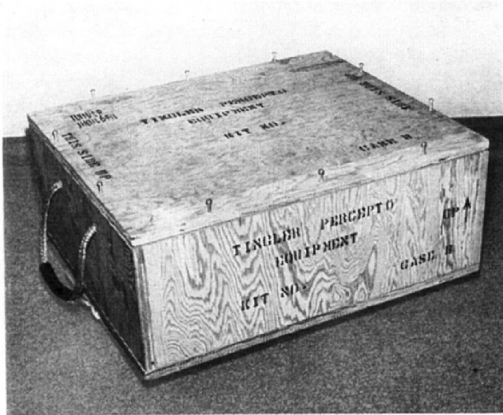


ILLUSTRATION 3



ILLUSTRATION 3

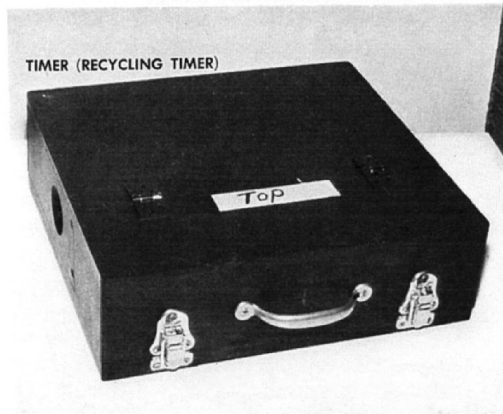


ILLUSTRATION 4A

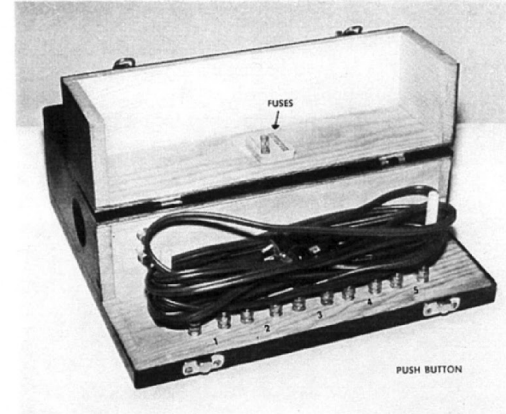


ILLUSTRATION 4B

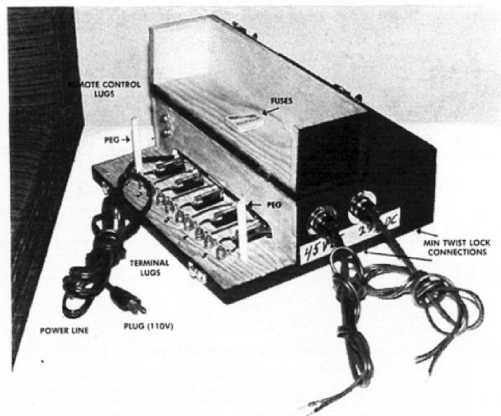


ILLUSTRATION 4C

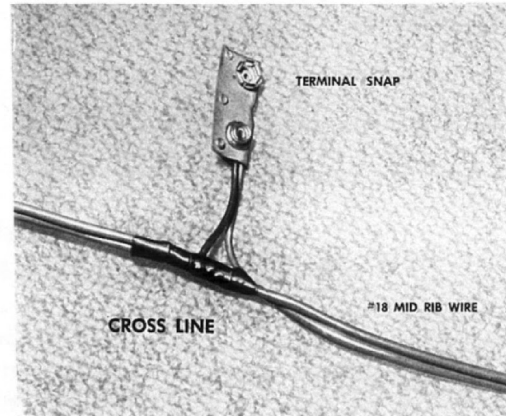


ILLUSTRATION 5

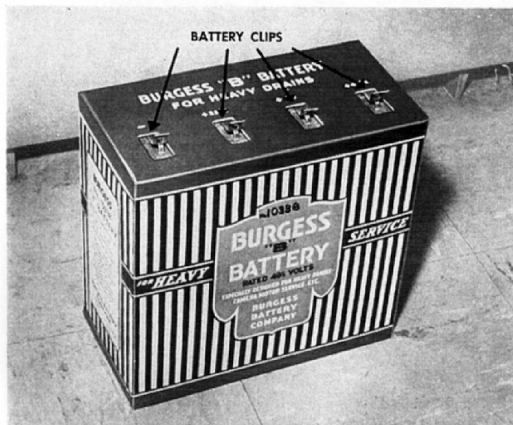


ILLUSTRATION 6

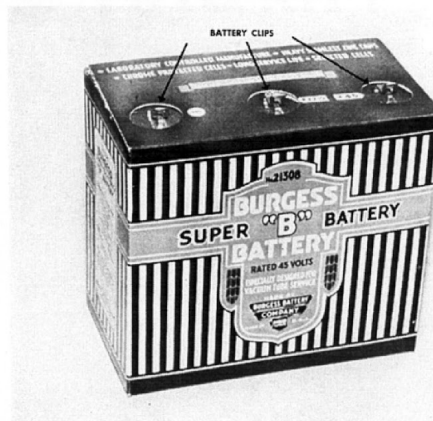


ILLUSTRATION 6

1 Battery Test wire (Illust. 7) 34" long with a terminal snap attached. This is used for testing the pairs of motors.

6 spools (1500 feet) NBR #18 wire (250 feet to a spool). This wire is used in making aisle lines, remote control lines and extension cords.

2 each male and female plugs, used for making extension cords (Illust. 8).

1 roll 4" redface-greenback mystic tape.

2 rolls 2" redface-greenback mystic tape.

1 roll 1" white masking tape.

2 rolls 1" black masking tape.

200-300 approx. Kaylon type A 12 x 3/4" sheet metal screws. These screws are used to attach the motors to the theater seats.

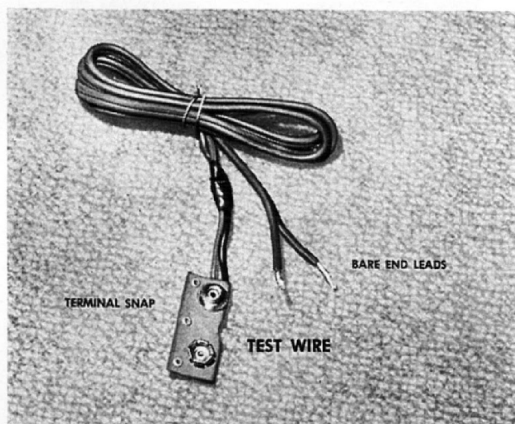


ILLUSTRATION 7

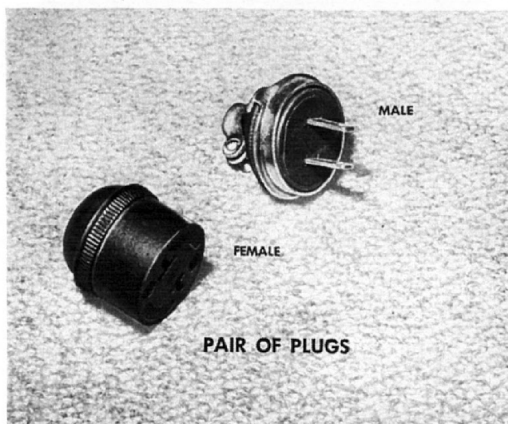


ILLUSTRATION 8

INSPECTION AND UNPACKING OF TINGLER PERCEPTO KIT

It is of great importance that a check be made of "The Tingler" Percepto Kit to determine the condition of the equipment and that the proper amount of supplies have been provided in the kit. This check should be made upon receipt of the kit(s).

1. Case A (Illus. 1, Page 4) should be opened and a superficial check made to determine that there is no damage to the motors. Replacements for motors which *cannot* be repaired or are missing can be obtained through the local Columbia Exchange.

2. Case B (Illus. 3, Page 5) should be opened and the batteries should first be checked to determine whether they are operating. This can be accomplished by testing with a voltage meter (which the electricians on the installation should have).

A physical check should be made to determine that

Case B contains all the materials necessary for the installation. A complete list of materials is provided in the instructions (Page 4 & 6). Replacements should be secured by the installation crew or directly from the local Columbia Exchange, whichever is more feasible.



TESTING MOTORS

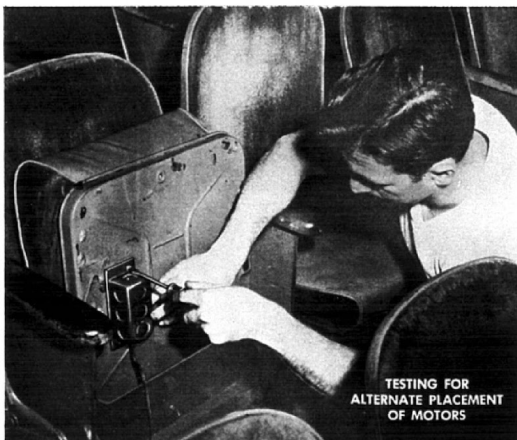
General:

A battery test wire 34" long with a terminal snap at one end (Illust. 7, Page 6), has been provided to test motors.

For either the black case (27½ volts) motors or dark grey case (12 volt) motors, place one bare end lead of the test wire in the 22½ volt battery clip and the other bare end lead in the minus battery clip. Having done this, you will now be able to use the battery for testing the Percepto motors.

Location of Motors on Theatre Seats:

Well in advance of the installation, take a pair of motors from Case A (Illus. 2A, Page 4) and install one of the pair as directed in the detailed instructions. (Page 8 and Illust. 10.) Having done this, you will connect the terminal snap of the motor to the terminal snap of the battery test wire (Illust. 7, Page 6). The pair of motors will be energized and by sitting in the seat you will feel a "Tingling" sensation. Having completed this test, be sure to disconnect the terminal snaps.



TESTING FOR
ALTERNATE PLACEMENT
OF MOTORS

ILLUSTRATION 9

You will now proceed to test loose motor of the pair to determine where it will give the best "Tingling" sensation on your particular seats (i.e. Illust. 9). Connect the terminal snaps of the battery test wire and the pair of motors again. Sit in the seat adjoining the one on which the other motor is mounted. Have someone else test the loose motor at various spots under the seat to determine whether there is another spot from which a greater vibration can be felt.

If it is found that greater vibrations can be felt in a location other than that which has been suggested in the instructions, the motors should be installed on this location. The *only* change that need be made is the location of the motors on the seats. The procedure for installing the motors will remain the same.

Before Each Installation:

It is essential that before each installation, a test be made to determine that all the Percepto motors are operative.

As the motors are being unpacked for installation on the theatre seats, each pair is to be tested to determine that it is operative. This can be done by connecting the terminal snap of the pair of motors to that of the battery test wire. If at first the motors do not vibrate, remove the bare lead from the 22½ volt terminal and connect it to the next higher (45 volt or 49½ volt) terminal, now test the motors again.

Any pair of motors which are found inoperative, should be returned and replacements of these defective motors may be obtained through the local Columbia Exchange.

If any pair of motors are removed leaving empty terminal snaps on cross line, these terminal snaps should be insulated with tape (to eliminate short circuiting) and fastened with mystic tape to the leg of the seat.

INSTALLATION DETAILS

One Motor Is Installed On Only One Seat and Vibrates Only That Seat!!

1. The first step will be to select the area in which the motors are to be installed (Diag. 1). Having determined this, you will proceed to install the motors in each row selected, working from the front of the theatre to the rear.

When installing the motors, be sure that they are installed in groups of 10 to a row. They may be installed in adjoining rows (one behind the other), which is preferred, or several rows apart. **BE SURE THAT NO MORE THAN TWO OF THE CROSS LINES (20 MOTORS) ARE SPLICED TO AN AISLE LINE.**

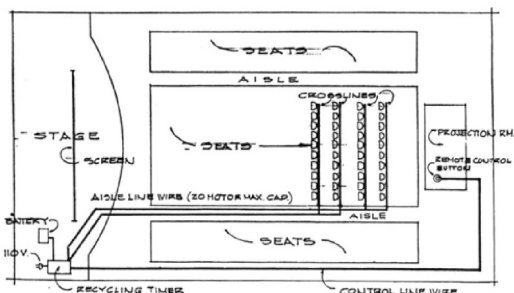


DIAGRAM 1

2. We have gotten best results by attaching motors to the underside of the seat in just about the center rear (Illust. 10). This may vary following testing described on Page 7.

With seat up, drill pilot holes with $\frac{1}{4}$ " drill motor with a #16 drill bit using the holes in each of the motor mounting plates as a guide (Illust. 2B, Page 4). These drill motors and drill bits are *not* provided in the kit and must be secured locally. Two (2) drill motors will speed up the installation. If extension cords are necessary for these drill motors they can be made by using the #18 midrib wire and plugs provided in Case B of your kit.

Attach pairs of Percepto motors to adjoining seats fastening them with sheet metal screws. Make sure that the pairs of motors are mounted so that their lead wires face one another (Illust. 10).

Tape the wires of both motors snugly with 2" redface mystic tape in the direction of the seat hinge point, being sure to leave enough slack (Illust. 10) to allow for the seat to be moved up and down.

Tape wires of both motors to their common seat leg with 1" black masking tape and run down the rear leg of the seat (Illust. 10).

3. Having completed the installation of motors, select the common aisle down which the aisle line(s) will be run. Each aisle line will carry *only* 2 cross lines (20 motors) (Diag. 1).

Working from front of theatre to rear, run cross lines from aisle(s), behind the rows of seats having motors.

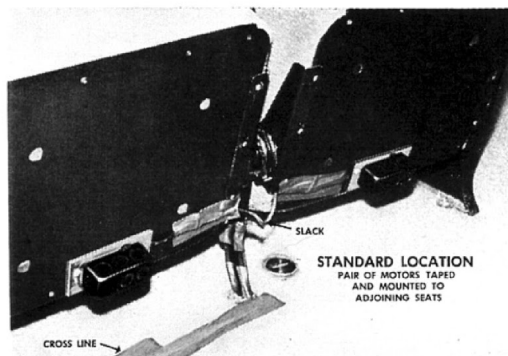


ILLUSTRATION 10

These cross lines are equipped with terminal snaps placed at intervals of every other seat. Place the cross lines so these connections coincide with motor leads.

Secure one end of cross line to aisle seat until you are ready to splice to aisle line. Having fastened the aisle line and matched the terminal snap connections, stretch the cross line tightly and secure the other end of the cross line to the leg of the last seat to which a pair of motors has been attached (by winding the excess wire around the leg and taping it securely). Match and attach motor wire terminal snaps to cross line terminal snaps.

Tape terminal snaps to leg of theatre seat, *not* to floor, with 1" black masking tape so that they cannot be stepped on (Illust. 10).

BEFORE MASKING CROSS LINES AND AISLE LINES TO THE FLOOR, BE SURE TO CHECK THAT THE TAPE WILL HOLD TO THE FLOOR!!

Mask cross line to floor with 2" redface green back mystic tape (Illust. 10).

4. Having connected all the motors to their cross lines and masked them to the floor, proceed to connect the cross lines (no more than two cross lines of 10 motors each for each aisle line) to the aisle line by splicing them hard to the aisle lines (Illust. 11, Diag. 1), being sure to insulate each connection, so that it does not short out.

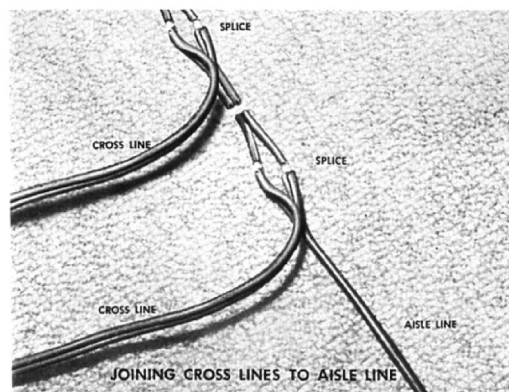


ILLUSTRATION 11

Now check that all the cross lines have been connected to their aisle line(s) and that you have run all the aisle line(s) backstage to the timer (Illust. 12) (Diag. 1), being sure that the aisle lines are as close to the rows of seats as possible.

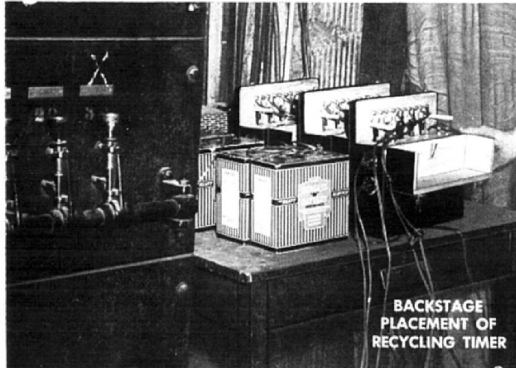
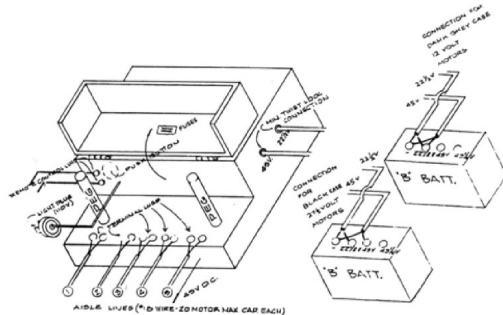


ILLUSTRATION 12

Begin from the rear of the theatre and work toward the front, making the trunk lines to the floor using 2" tape until you pick up the third aisle line. Then mask the remainder with 4" tape.

In some cases, the cross and aisle lines can be placed under carpet runner and secured with tape. In all cases, wires must be completely covered so that there is no possibility of anyone tripping over them or pulling at them.

5. Connect the five aisle lines to the five terminals of the timer as illustrated (Diag. 2) also (Illust. 4C, Page 5).



RECYCLING TIMER

DIAGRAM 2

6. The timer may be operated on cue either:

- a) Backstage by a stagehand, who presses the push button on the timer, or
- b) By the projectionist by connecting a remote control line to the timer and running it to the projection booth.

If the timer is to be operated from the projection booth, connect #18 wire to the remote control lugs of the timer. Run this wire up to the projection booth being sure that the wire is kept well hidden; the shortest and simplest route to the projection booth should be selected. Tape with 1" tape. Connect the remote control switch (a door

DIAGRAM OF REMOTE CONTROL

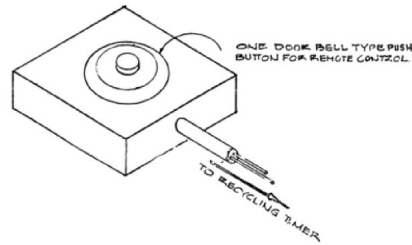


DIAGRAM 3

bell type button not supplied in the kit) (Diag. 3) to the #18 wire.

7. The 45-volt battery is used to energize the Percepto motors (Illust. 6, Page 6). The 2 miniature twist lock connection leads of the timer will be connected to the battery with 3 feet of attached wire (Diag. 2).

Depending on the type of motor in the unit sent you (black or dark grey), the difference being voltage, the following are the connections to be made from the timer terminals (each of which has two leads) to the battery (Diagram 2).

a) *Black motors*—From the terminal marked 22½ volts, place one of the leads in the minus lead of the battery and the other lead in the 22½ volt lead of the battery.

From the terminals marked 45 volts, place one of the leads in the minus lead of the battery and the other lead in the 45 volt lead of the battery.

b) *Dark grey motors*—From the terminal marked 22½ volts, place one of the leads in the minus lead of the battery and the other in the 22½ volt lead of the battery.

From the terminal marked 45 volts, place one of the leads in the minus lead of the battery and the other lead in the 22½ volt lead of the battery.

8. The timer *only* is powered by 110 volts AC. Plug into outlet.

9. Go through the following check list to test:

- a) Check that all motors have been installed and that leads have been taped as instructed.
- b) Check that crosslines have been properly taped and are *not visible*.
- c) Check trunk lines for tape and see that they are *not visible*.
- d) Check that all connections have been made to timer.
 - e) Check remote lead.
 - f) Check power leads.
 - (1) Battery lead for motors properly connected.
 - (2) Timer plugged in.
 - g) You are now ready to test. Push remote control switch or push button on timer (Illust. 4C, Page 5 & Diag. 2).

DAILY INSPECTION OF TINGLER PERCEPTO EQUIPMENT

Experience has found that a daily inspection should be made of your installation to maintain it at peak operating efficiency and to eliminate any possible accidents due to faulty connections.

The inspection of all the rows containing the Percepto motors as well as the aisles in which you have run wires should be made once a day, either after the last performance at night or before the first performance of the day.

The check should be made to determine if:

1. Any motors have been removed or disconnected.

2. There have been any breaks in the wires or whether they have been pulled up.

Having completed the check, remedial action should be taken to correct any discrepancies found.

1. Where motors have been removed, their terminal snaps should be taped to insulate them from short circuiting. They should be taped to the leg of the seat out of sight.

2. Any loose connections should be re-wired and/or taped.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR DISASSEMBLING AND REPACKING PERCEPTO KITS

1. If a remote control line has been run from the recycling timer, you will disconnect this line and wind it up.

2. Disconnect the plug from the 110 volt AC outlet and wind it around the pegs provided in the timer. Next detach the wire from the batteries by removing the 2 miniature twist lock connections (Illus. 4C, Page 5). Remove these plugs from the timer and wind these two wires around the pegs (Illus. 4B, Page 5).

3. Rip up all the masking tape and dispose of it.

4. Detach the cross lines from the aisle line at the splice. Roll up the aisle lines so that they can be used in THE NEXT ENGAGEMENT.

5. Work down each aisle and carefully disconnect the terminal snaps of the cross line(s) from the pairs of motors.

6. Pick up the cross lines individually and fold them up.

7. Checking against the list of equipment provided on

Pages 4 and 5 of these instructions, repack all of the materials in Case B. (The only thing which you will not pack in Case B will be the pairs of Percepto motors.)

8. You will now proceed to unscrew the Percepto motors from the theatre seats. BE SURE THAT THE SCREWS WHICH YOU REMOVE FROM THE SEATS ARE COLLECTED IN THE ORIGINAL BOX IN WHICH YOU RECEIVED THEM. The screws will be packed with the other materials in Case B (Illus. 3, Page 5).

9. Collect the Percepto motors and check to see that you have 50 pairs (100 motors). Place the Percepto motors uniformly in rows in Case A. Stretch the motor wires smooth and lay them flat between the motors, utilizing the dead space. If necessary, use newspaper to give additional packing (Illus. 1, Page 4).

10. Replace the covers of Case A and B and screw them down.

DISPOSITION OF PACKED KITS

When packing the kits, prepare a list of materials and supplies expended in your engagement which must be replaced. Send this list to the local Columbia Pictures Exchange with your notification of shipment.

CUES for the Operation of Lights, Sound and Percepto Motors

All the reels of this picture, with the exception of reel 5A, have optical track only. Reel 5A has optical as well as magnetic and is released on Research Council Mag-Optical Standard, but still uses the 1.85 lens as in previous reels.

Note: It is imperative that a rehearsal of reel 5A be had the night *before* the picture opens. This rehearsal should be for the projectionist, stagehands, theatre manager, ushers and girls (see Page 12, Auditorium stunt).

A. Cues For House Lights

1. Projectionist Cues

To provide the projectionist with cues for turning the house lights "on" and "off," additional visual cues have been printed on the film, on the opposite side from which the reel change-over cues are normally printed. These cues contain first, a warning, or "alert" cue, followed by the "execution" cue, at which time the theatre lights are turned "on" or "off."

2. Backstage (or Visual) Cue

In theatres where the house lights are worked from the stage, instead of the projection booth, the visual cues for turning the house lights "on" or "off" are that of the action on the screen.

B. Cues For Sound

1. Theatres equipped with Magnetic Stereophonic Sound and Surround Speakers

Thread reel 5A through magnetic "button-on" attachment. Observe proper start mark for magnetic tracks.

Switch to magnetic sound when change-over to reel 5A is made.

As the sound will automatically switch from the stage to the surround speakers, the only cues to be watched are:

- (a) for bringing the house lights up and shutting them off, and
- (b) the cues for operating the Percepto motors under the seats.

2. Theatres equipped with Optical Sound

When switching to reel 5A, the fader should be raised 3 steps to make up for the loss of sound resulting from the super-position of the magnetic track over half of the optical track.

Where a theatre with optical sound has special surround speakers, observe the cues "SOUND." See special note re acquisition of surround speakers locally.

The same projection lens is used for reel 5A as is used for previous reels.

C. Cues For Percepto Motors Under Seats

These cues for activating the TINGLER motors by pushing the control button will be found in the "CUES" under "MOTORS."

The timer (recycling timer) can either be operated from backstage or wired to the projection booth.

CUE I—Alert Cue—295 plus ½ feet

Execution Cue—306 plus ½ feet

The visual picture on the screen is Vincent Price at the light switch. As he pushes the light switch.

ACTION—Lights: On "execution" cue, turn all house lights "ON" quickly. GIRL IN AUDIENCE SCREAMS.

Sound: Optical theatres that have installed surround speakers SWITCH TO SURROUND SPEAKERS.

At this point, there will be no image on the screen for approximately 15 seconds. The house lights will remain on (see Auditorium Stunt, Page 12).

CUE II—Alert Cue—328 plus ½ feet

Execution Cue—339 plus ½ feet

The visual picture on the screen is Vincent Price pulling the light switch down.

ACTION—Lights: On the "execution" cue, turn all main house lights "OFF" quickly.

Sound: Optical theatres that have installed surround speakers SWITCH BACK TO STAGE SPEAKERS.

CUE III—Alert Cue—466 plus ½ feet

Execution Cue—477 plus ½ feet

A. The visual picture on the screen at this point is a large image of the "Tingler" crawling across the white screen.

Sound: Optical theatres that have installed surround speakers SWITCH TO SURROUND SPEAKERS.

B. *Motors:* When the "Tingler" leaves the white screen, the screen goes black and there is about 20 seconds of black leader. A voice from the speakers says "The Tingler is loose! Scream for your life!" At THIS POINT, PUSH THE TIMER BUTTON (RECYCLING CONTROL BOX) TWICE, WAITING NINE SECONDS BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND PUSH.

CUE IV—Alert Cue—528 feet

Execution Cue—539 feet

ACTION—Sound: Optical theatres that have installed surround speakers, SWITCH TO STAGE SPEAKERS.

CUE V—Alert Cue—When Vincent Price leaves the bedroom.

Execution Cue—When the wife raises up from under the bed sheet.

ACTION—Motors: KEEP PUSHING THE TIMER CONTROL BUTTON CONSTANTLY UNTIL THE END OF THE PICTURE, WAITING NINE SECONDS BETWEEN EACH PUSH.

ACQUISITION AND INSTALLATION OF SURROUND SPEAKERS

When a theatre is equipped for optical sound only with a speaker behind the screen in order to get the full effect of the picture, depending on the size of the theatre, it will be necessary to install a small number of surround speakers to cover the orchestra and balcony.

To keep the installation costs for these speakers at an absolute minimum and still get the necessary dramatic effect, three surround speakers can be installed to cover:

- (1) *Center and front of orchestra*—this speaker can be hung from the balcony overhang.
- (2) *Rear of orchestra*—this speaker can be hung on the back wall of the orchestra, center.

- (3) *Balcony*—this speaker can be hung on the back wall of the balcony, center.

These speakers should be obtained locally from any theatre sound supplier such as Altec, RCA, or any other theatre equipment company in your area. Where a supplier is not available locally, contact Mr. William Brennen at Columbia Pictures Corp., 711 Fifth Ave., N.Y.C.

When these speakers are installed, it will be necessary to run a line to the projection booth to pick up the optical sound, cutting into this line with a switch to be operated by the projectionist on cue, as indicated in the "Cues to the Projectionist."

"THE TINGLER" AUDITORIUM STUNT

An essential element of THE TINGLER package is the staging of a special stunt in which a young girl viewing the film screams, faints and is carried out of the theatre by two ushers on a stretcher at a specific point during the showing of the film.

While the actual coordination of the film and the live action is relatively simple, it takes careful planning and rehearsal. The manager of the theatre, in order to reach the full potential of the picture, must call his entire staff together at one time. This includes projectionists, house electricians, ushers, and fainting girls. They must be rehearsed before the start of the engagement until the stunt runs smoothly. The stunt only concerns the last reel—reel 5A.

Two girls should be chosen who can scream and faint; each one relieves the other for matinee and evening performances. The girl sits on the aisle about the third or fourth row. When the character of Vincent Price puts his hand on the

light switch there is a cue mark on the film. The lights must go up at this point. Immediately on the turning up of the house lights, when the picture leaves the screen, the girl in the audience must scream and simulate a faint. She must scream loud twice. The two ushers carrying a stretcher—Army type preferred—come down the aisle, lift her out of the seat and carry her into the manager's office, where she waits. This should be played legitimately; there should be no giggling and smiling and should look real. The house lights stay up for an interval of about 15 seconds; the picture then resumes on the screen. It does not make any difference if the girl is carried up the aisle after the picture has resumed. This stunt should be rehearsed the evening before the picture opens. It is part of the show and is imperative. The stretcher should be kept in the manager's office and at the start of reel 5A, the last reel in the picture, the ushers bring the stretcher back into the theatre and wait for their cue.

Appendix B. *The Tingler* Press Kit

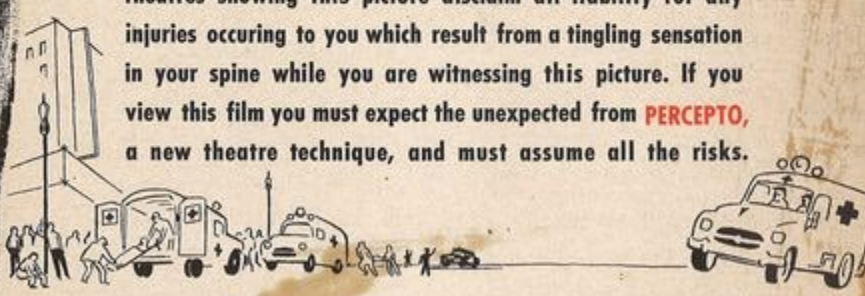
To: All Members of the Press

WARNING

Disclaimer of Liability

You are urged not to see the William Castle production, "*The Tingler*," at the Academy Award Theatre, Tuesday, July 21, if you are excitable or have any physical or nervous condition requiring you to remain calm or if sudden fright might cause you to injure yourself or others.

The producer, Columbia Pictures Corporation and the theatres showing this picture disclaim all liability for any injuries occurring to you which result from a tingling sensation in your spine while you are witnessing this picture. If you view this film you must expect the unexpected from **PERCEPTO**, a new theatre technique, and must assume all the risks.



COLUMBIA PICTURES presents

THE TINGLER

starring VINCENT PRICE
with JUDITH EVELYN • DARRYL HICKMAN • PATRICIA CUTTS

Written by ROBB WHITE • produced and directed by WILLIAM CASTLE. A WILLIAM CASTLE PRODUCTION

COLUMBIA'S

The Tingler

You—and your audience—play important roles in Percepto



CAN YOU TAKE IT WHEN THE TINGLER BREAKS LOOSE?

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FILM HISTORY the audience actually plays a part through the startling use of a new terror technique... **PERCEPTO!** In this astounding shock-story, you will feel physical reactions and real live sensations projected by the actors on the screen!

A report on "The Tingler," which brings the audience and the exhibitor into the screen drama. When a hand reaches up from a bathtub of blood, below right, the theatre seat shakes with fear and the patron screams for her life.



A NEW high in audience and exhibitor participation in a motion picture drama is being reached these days with the release of Columbia's latest William Castle production, "The Tingler." This is a spook story based on the eerie assumption that fear is not just a vague if sometimes paralyzing emotion, but rather a living, parasitic organism which, if allowed to go unchecked (by SCREAMING) within the body, will eventually grow to such size as to snuff out the life of its host.

To dramatize this bold new concept (which actually has its roots in ancient Greek and Roman attempts to find the exact location of the soul), Columbia and Mr. Castle have produced an elaborate, multi-faceted show, of which the motion picture is the integral part. Theatre seats literally vibrate with fear. The film breaks in the projector, a silhouette of a "tingler" (loose in the projection booth) stalks across a white screen, the house lights are turned on, a patron in the audience faints and is carried out on a stretcher. What is it?

PERCEPTO, of course, modestly described by "its creators as "a new dimension in tension and terror."

On this and the following pages, The Herald presents a close-up, in words and pictures of the entire "Tingler" phenomenon: the film itself and the Percepto package, the advertising and exploitation campaign which is selling the show, and, perhaps most importantly, reports on the three test engagements and on the record-breaking business it is doing.

The man behind "The Tingler," producer-director-showman and self-styled "living trailer," William Castle, is firmly convinced that in today's motion picture market, if you don't

(Continued on page 26)



MOTION PICTURE HERALD, SEPTEMBER 19, 1959

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59-252

How the Exhibitor

INSTALLATION . . .



The electrician above, is shown installing one of the Percepto units underneath the theatre seat.



The single control panel, above, operates all the Percepto units. Just one button to push.



Boston theatre manager Abner Pinanski instructs his projectionist on the use of "Tingler" cue sheet.

THE complete cooperation of the exhibitor and his staff is essential to realize the maximum potential of "The Tingler." While the actual coordination of the film and live action is relatively simple, it requires careful planning and rehearsal. The girl or girls must know when and how to faint; ushers must play their roles in a serious manner, and with precise timing. The projectionist must know his cues for turning on the house lights and for pressing the button to start the Percepto motors.

These small motors, formerly used as part of radar cooling units, run on battery power and are operated from a single control in the projection booth. Columbia advises wiring about every 10th seat, with installation in the average theatre taking approximately four hours.

To facilitate the work of the projectionist, Columbia has made available a two-page cue sheet which instructs the booth man on which to operate the Percepto buzzer units as well as when to turn on the house lights in the course of the picture. It also points out that because one of the reels has a color sequence, it's important for the projectionist to switch focus at that point due to the difference between the thickness of black-and-white and color film.

To provide switching signals for turning the house lights off and on, visual cues have been printed on the film on the opposite side of where reel cues are normally printed. Typical of the cues given the projectionist for operation of the Percepto units is the following: "When the TINGLER creature starts across the white screen and the voice from the speaker says 'The Tingler is loose,' give two pushes in rapid sequence." Or, "When the wife raises up from under the bedsheet, keep pushing the control until the end of the picture."

Mr. Castle, questioned on whether projectionists might object to the extra work which "The Tingler" involves, answered that he didn't think they would. "They don't mind," he said, and added, "One of the leading characters in the film is a projectionist. I think they like the publicity."

Mr. Pinanski, below, and projectionist discuss proper time for switching surround speakers.



MOTION PICTURE HERALD, SEPTEMBER 19, 1959

Plays his Part

... AND REHEARSAL



Producer William Castle, above, instructs girl how she will faint in course of film. This action in the real theatre corresponds to that on screen when girl, right, is seized by "tingler" formerly harbored by Judith Evelyn, above right.



MOTION PICTURE HERALD, SEPTEMBER 19, 1959

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The Selling Campaign

The ads prepared for "The Tingler" run from the straightforward to the tongue-in-cheek. A key to the campaign is the admonition that the patron must scream to survive the horror. He is dared (to enter) and wheedled (to keep him from revealing the beginning, end or terrifying middle). He is also tickled (see teasers below).

PERCEPTO!

Newest and most startling gimmick on the screen!

The Tingler

with **VINCENT PRICE**

JUDITH EVELYN - GARRY MOORMAN - PATRICIA COTTS

A WILLIAM CASTLE PRODUCTION



WHEN THE SCREEN SCREAMS

YOU'LL SCREAM TOO...
if you value your life!

PERCEPTO — an astounding new dimension in feeling and fright makes you a living participant in the action. Actual shock-sensations and physical reactions experienced by the actors will be felt by you—in all their terrifying impact!

COLUMBIA PICTURES presents

The Tingler

with **VINCENT PRICE**

JUDITH EVELYN - GARRY MOORMAN - PATRICIA COTTS

Writer by WILF BRANT - Producer and Director by WILLIAM CASTLE
A WILLIAM CASTLE PRODUCTION

GUARANTEED
The Tingler will break down in the theatre while you watch in the audience. As you realize the danger you face, it grows progressively more terrifying. Guaranteed attack by **THE TINGLER!**

Please don't reveal the beginning, the end, or the terrifying middle of **THE TINGLER!**

IT TAKES TWO TO TINGLE AT
"The Tingler"

So see it with someone from whom you have no secrets! (You won't dare look at it alone!)

THE ULTIMATE IN EXCITEMENT IS COMING!

SEE IT WITH SOMEONE YOU WOULDN'T MIND BEING SEEN DEAD WITH!

"The Tingler"

THE ULTIMATE IN EXCITEMENT IS COMING!

2

MOTION PICTURE HERALD, SEPTEMBER 19, 1959

The Producer on the Road

Producer William Castle has a great deal of fun indulging his fondness for the horror film genre. He also takes to the road to sell his productions and inevitably he communicates his enthusiasm. The only ivory tower he could live in would have to have bats and be completely portable.



Living trailer, producer Castle, above, talks to theatre audience. At left he discusses exploitation campaign with American Theatres Corp. officials in Boston. With him are, standing, Sam Pinanski, Edward Center, Abner Pinanski, and Thomas O'Brien, Columbia branch manager; seated, Henri Schwartzburg.



Mr. Castle, above, takes milk in hand and goes into the audience. At left, in Boston, he selects 100 names from the phone book to tell the public about his forthcoming film.



Interviews also are part of his campaign. Above, Mr. Castle is interviewed by Cyrus Durgin, film editor of "Boston Globe," and, at left, he talks about his film to WNACTV's Louise Morgan.

Testing the Tingle

To gauge the potential of "The Tingler" and the Percepto package, Columbia set up test engagements beginning with the "world screamere" at the Broadway Capitol, Detroit, and followed by openings at the Hippodrome, Baltimore, and the Pilgrim, Boston. All three were screaming successes. The first day's business at each theatre set a new opening day record. The first week's take: Detroit, \$29,000; Baltimore, \$23,000; Boston, \$22,000. On these pages may be seen the evidence of the excitement which was created at the most important local level. In Detroit, for example, there was dancing in the streets, literally.

BALTIMORE



Crowds line up for the opening of the run at the Hippodrome theatre in Baltimore, Md.

BOSTON



The street in front of the Pilgrim theatre in Boston was flagging with excitement just before the premiere.



At the Pilgrim patrons on entering were headed an amulet guaranteed to keep them safe from the "Tingler."

DETROIT



The Broadway Capitol in Detroit featured the "screamere" of the picture and of Percepto.



Participants in "The Dance of the Tingler" which preceded the Detroit "Screamere" line up for their tickets.



An animated lobby display which was used with excellent effect in the lobby of the Broadway Capitol in Detroit.



An insurance policy dispenser which issues cards to patrons insuring them against death or injury from "The Tingler." A copy of the policy is shown on the next page.

A block party featuring "The Dance of the Tingler" in the street outside the Broadway Capitol preceded the "Screamers."

MOTION PICTURE HERALD, SEPTEMBER 19, 1959

THE AUDIENCE REACTS



The infra-red photos above and below show the audience reaction to the shock scenes culminating in the fainting gag described on a preceding page. In Baltimore the faint scene worked so well that a girl in the audience actually fainted, leaving the rehearsed ushers in a quandary.



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The Tingler

(Continued from page 19)

have an all-star cast you've got to have a gimmick, "a real gimmick," backed by a sound story and a razzle-dazzle promotion campaign. He has already proven his point twice, first with "Macabre" which, costing about \$80,000, was promoted by the Lloyds of London insurance policy to a gross of about \$1,200,000, and second by "House on Haunted Hill," which backed by the old Emergo skeleton stands to bring in over \$3,000,000.

Something truly new has been added for "The Tingler": the screenplay has been constructed in such a fashion as to bring the actual theatre audience into the events on the screen. The story, briefly, concerns a doctor, Vincent Price, whose research has convinced him that fear is an actual organism that can only be paralyzed by a scream. In his work, he comes in contact with Phil Coolidge, an unpleasant gent who runs a silent movie theatre in partnership with his wife, Judith Evelyn, a deaf mute.

In the course of inhuman events, Miss Evelyn is scared to death (she cannot scream, remember) and Price removes her "tingler" in an autopsy. Shortly thereafter, the "tingler" gets loose in Coolidge's movie theatre, and the pandemonium which breaks out within the movie theatre on-screen is, by means of Percepto, transferred to the actual audience in the real theatre.

The Percepto package contains a number of features, chief of which is a small motor, originally a part of a radar cooling unit, which is attached to the underside of the theatre seat and working on battery power, is controlled by the projectionist to vibrate at various speeds during certain key scenes of the picture. It is given particular play in the sequence in which Miss Evelyn is scared to death (the film is shot in black-and-white but by a neat bit of lab work the blood running from the bathtub faucet in this sequence is seen in true, living color, red); also in the sequence in which the "tingler" gets loose in the theatre, and in the final sequence of climactic irony.

As much as the audience, the exhibitor is part of "The Tingler" show. The theatre manager, in addition to seeing that the projectionist is cued properly to running the "tingler" motors, must also rehearse and set up the gag which has a girl in his audience (the girl behind the concessions counter will do nicely) fainting and being carried out on a stretcher by the ushers, to correspond to the chaos which erupts when the "tingler" gets loose in the movie theatre on-screen.

This is all part of the Percepto package, which also includes the use of stereophonic "surround" speakers to carry the voice of Vincent Price (on the film's sound track) when he urges the

THE MERCHANDISING KIT

The major promotion and merchandising ideas for "The Tingler" have been put into Columbia's special 20-page "The Tingler" merchandising kit, the table of contents of which is almost as much fun as the picture: Panic Publicity, Scrambled Phobias, Shivery Stunts, Theatre Tremblers, Television Terrors, Radio Scare-Waves, and Showman's Shock Calendar. Included in the kit are special news stories and contests for grammarians which has to do with the various kinds of phobias which lurk within us all. Even more horrible than triskaidekaphobia, it seems, is tinglerphobia, which is, literally, "a fear of the presence of 'The Tingler'."

TINGLER INSURANCE POLICY

Protect Yourself!
FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY!

When THE TINGLER'S Victims Scream
In Fright On The Screen,
YOU SCREAM IN THE THEATRE!
It's The Only Way To Break The Terror Of

THE TINGLER

real theatre audience not to panic because of the roaming "tingler" and urges them to protect themselves in the only way possible, by SCREAMING!

Other features of the Percepto package are "Tingler" resistance kits (amulets which glow in the dark and which are distributed to every patron when he enters the theatre) and gag insurance policies which are offered by automatic machines in the theatre lobby.

To sell this all-inclusive show, Columbia has devised a wide-ranging advertising-promotion campaign that operates on several levels simultaneously. A particular point of this campaign is the fact that the "tingler" is never actually shown in any of the advertising-publicity material.

The ad campaign runs the gamut, from the comparatively straightforward approach ("First picture in Percepto—an astounding new dimension in sight and fright" and "when the screen screams, you'll scream too") to ("Please don't reveal the beginning, the end or the terrifying middle" and "Do you have the guts to see 'The Tingler'") and that special brand of Castle tongue-in-cheek horror ("For particular people who like their Bloody Marys made with real blood").

In addition to the regular theatrical trailer, attention-getting teaser and TV trailers, spotlighting William Castle and Vincent Price, will be available through the Columbia exchanges. Also available are radio spots and lobby recordings featuring eerie sound and music effects.

The film, of course, lends itself to all sorts of exploitation and promotion stunts, contests and merchandising tie-ups, all practicable on the local level. "Tingler" street dances, cooperative promotions with department stores and disc jockey promotions were proved very successful in the first three engagements.

Mr. Castle, himself, in his role as "living trailer," is playing an important part in these initial engagements. The producer, who also is featured in the film's prologue which prepares the audiences for what is to come, visited Detroit, Baltimore and Boston, prior to the opening of those engagements, and he has just visited San Francisco where the film opens Wednesday (23) at the Golden Gate and Pittsburgh, where the film opens at the J. P. Harris Thursday (24). Current plans also call for him to visit Chicago, New Orleans and the Texas territory.

That Columbia and Mr. Castle have devised a show of huge box office proportions is to be seen from the results of the first three engagements. New opening day box office records were set in all three engagements, at the Broadway Capitol, Detroit (where it had its world "screamiere"), at the Hippodrome, Baltimore, and at the Pilgrim, Boston. The first week's take was \$29,000 in Detroit, \$23,000 in Baltimore, and \$22,000 in Boston.

In this case, all that glitters may well be ghoul.



Judith Evelyn
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COLUMBIA PICTURES presents
THE TINGLER
starring VINCENT PRICE
A WILLIAM CASTLE PRODUCTION

"Property of National Screen Service Corp. Used for display only in connection with the exhibition of this picture at your theatre. Must be returned immediately thereafter."

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'THE TINGLER'—AD SUPPLEMENT

NEWEST AND MOST STARTLING GIMMICK
ON THE SCREEN.... **PERCEPTO**



A NEW
THRILL...
BUT COMPLETELY
HARMLESS!

Amazing new terror technique
makes you a living participant
in the flesh-crawling action.
(That is, you will remain among
the living if you follow instruc-
tions carefully!)

GUARANTEED
The Tingler will break
lose in the theatre while
you are in the audience. As
you enter the theatre you
will receive instructions...
how to guard yourself
against attack by **THE**
TINGLER!

COLUMBIA PICTURES
presents

The Tingler

starring

VINCENT PRICE

with JUDITH EVELYN • GARRY HICKMAN • PATRICIA CUTTS

Written by ROSS WHITE • Produced and Directed by WILLIAM CASTLE
A WILLIAM CASTLE PRODUCTION

From the producer
who gave you "House
On Haunted Hill".

If you live through
the beginning
PLEASE DON'T
reveal the middle
or the end!

Reproduced here are a number of the pressbook ads for THE TINGLER, with the arrows pointing to copy which might be inserted locally, if the situation requires it. The line used here reads: "A New Thrill... But Completely Harmless!" Another line that might be fitted into the ads is: "Guaranteed Thrilling! Guaranteed Safe!"

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with JUDITH E
Produced by

WHEN



A NEW
THRILL...
BUT
COMPLETELY
HARMLESS!

with JUDITH E