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TV Thursday

60-second shorts to scare your pants off



The really, really scary "Halloween" set off a chain reaction.

LINDA STASI
TV Critic



"Short Screammers With John Carpenter"

Tonight at midnight on AMC

★★★

If you've been watching AMC's MonsterFest this week, you may have seen these crazy, one-minute scary shorts (that doesn't mean a fat guy in his tidy whities).

Tonight (appropriately at midnight), horror honcho John Carpenter hosts a half-hour show of 15 of the best, oddest and scari-

est of these 50 really odd screamers.

Carpenter, who is most famous for "Halloween" — a really, really scary movie that set off a chain reaction of "Halloweens" with yet another one due this year — says they're looking for the next "him."

Horror, he explains, changes with the times. But the formula for a good, scary movie remains the same: "no money, and no big name actors."

So with that in mind, he and AMC went searching where no mogul has gone before — to amateurs who don't even know how to take meetings.

The result are these 60-second screamers.

They range from silly to scary to odd to I-really-



Fright master Carpenter

want-to-see-more-of-that.

What's amazing is that these shorts are for the most part incredibly well done. In fact, there's only one with a Plastic Man from Outer Space, but it's supposed to be funny.

My personal favorite is called "Hunger" by Jay Holben. To tell a story in

less than a minute is tough enough, but making it scary to boot is a real accomplishment. And Holben manages to do both.

Other notables in the fun fest include "Spooky," by Shipherd Reed, about a woman who wakes up in a forest and is beckoned by a little girl; "Alarm" by Maureen Timpa Hendricks, about a woman who finds a door in her bed and everytime she opens it she ends up waking up in someone else's bed; and "Urban Legend" by Aaron Hendricks, about a dog who's having trouble breathing.

Good for AMC for trying something completely different — and for Carpenter for looking for new talent. Even though he's still very much in the game.