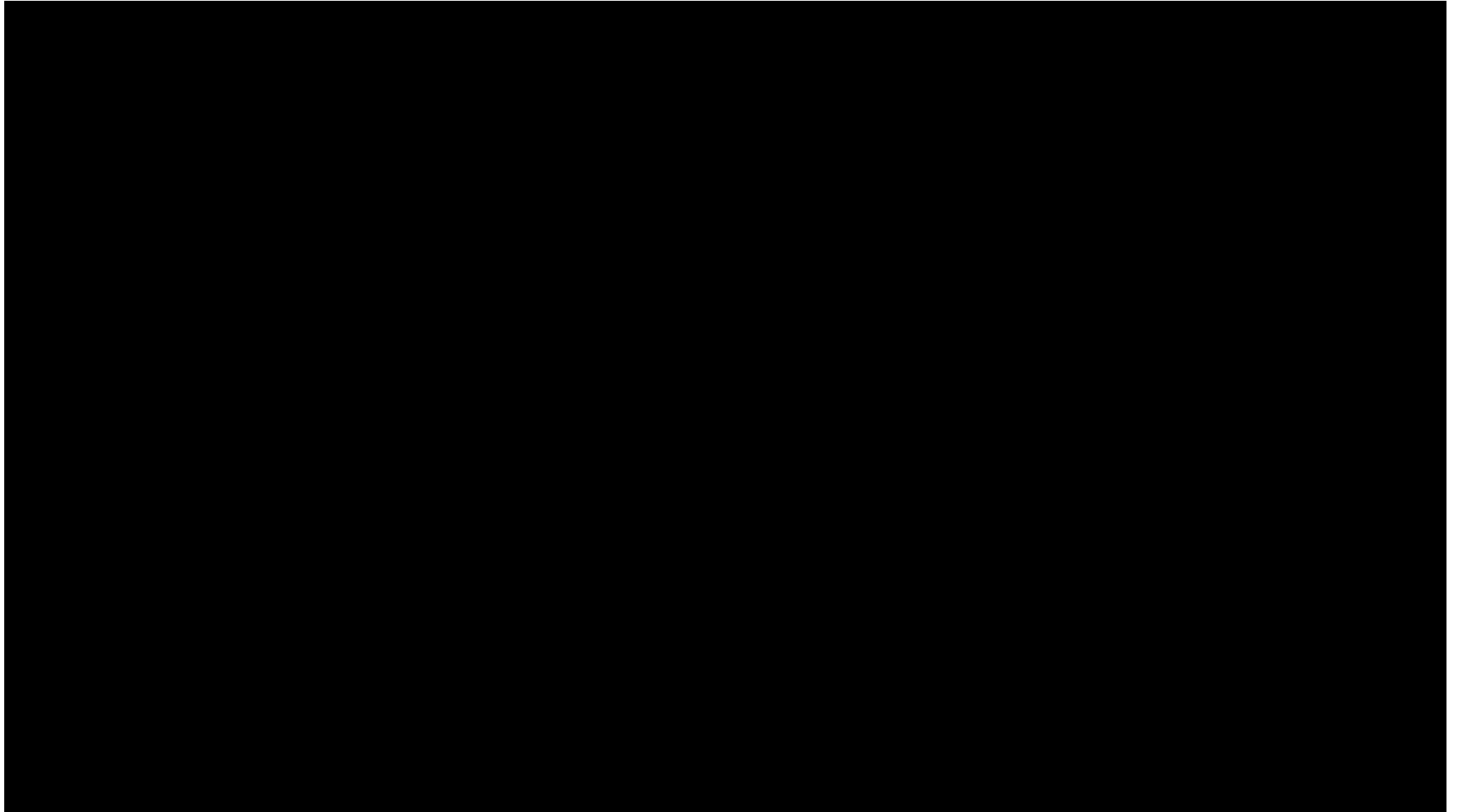


# Freight Flight

The Social Effects of Fear on Individuals in a Group  
A Psychological Study by Nick Halleran

# Fright Night Promo Video



# Abstract

- This experiment was designed to explore the field of social psychology. More specifically, the experiment tested how an individual's relationship to a group of other people would be affected by the outside stimulus of fear. The main research question was, "When faced with frightening situations, will an individual react by relying on others in his or her group or by separating from the group to fend for him or herself?" Data for this study was retrieved from qualitative observations of participants that were made throughout the event. The participants were customers of "The Fright Night" and were therefore random in that they were not selected just for the purposes of the experiment. Ages ranged from five years old to approximately sixty years old. Participants of both genders and of many ethnicities were included. The results supported the hypothesis that most people reacted to fear by relying on the rest of their group for support. Analysis of the data showed that gender and age had some effects on the outcome. Regardless of these effects, fear seems to have a positive effect on the unity of a group. These results also resonate with literature on other studies in similar topics.

# Purpose

- Interest piqued by studies in TMT
- Expand studies in field of fear in relation to social psychology
- “How does fear affect an individual’s relationship with other people?”
  - Hypothesis: People will unite to support each other

# Participants

- Fright Night customers- >5,000
- ~46% Male, ~54% Female
- Ages 5-60, Mean age ~23
- Caucasian(~42%), African-American(~26%), Hispanic(~19%), Other(~13%)

# Research Design

- Qualitative observations made while participants walked the trail
- Independent Variables
  - Gender, Age, Ethnicity
- Dependent Variables
  - Individual Reaction
    - “Reaching out” vs. “Keeping-to-self”
  - Group Reaction
    - “Unity” vs. “Separation”

# Measures

- Gender and Ethnicity- observed
- Age- observed/questioning
- Individual response to fear
  - “Reaching out” vs. “Keeping-to-self”
    - Communication- positive vs. negative or none
    - Physical Contact- supportive vs. none or violent
    - Staying with the group- together vs. separate

# Measures cont.

- Group response to fear
  - “Unity” vs. “Separation”
    - Majority of group members Reaching out vs. Keeping-to-self



Reaching out Examples





# Procedures

- Participants recruited as Fright Night customers- advertized through radio, internet, signs, and word of mouth
- Participants put into groups of ~20 based on time of arrival
- Observations made as participants walk through trail- info also gathered from actors
- Further details available in paper
- Following pictures are of trail scenes

# Procedures cont.



"Cave Scene"-(*"The Descent"*  
Re-enactment)

"Insane Asylum/Checkerboard  
Room"



# Procedures cont.



"Don John's"



"Hay Wall"



# Procedures cont.



"Clown Room"

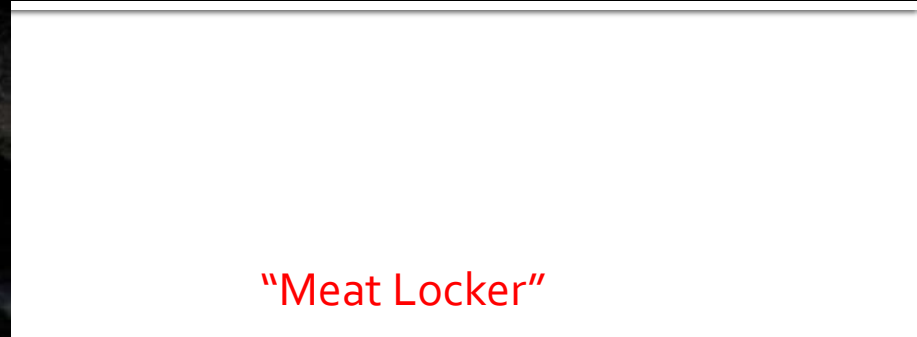
Mausoleum



# Procedures cont.



"Junk Yard"



"Meat Locker"



# Results

- Group Unity- ~67%
- Individual Reaching out- ~58%
  - Gender: Female- ~70%, Male- ~46%
  - Age: Under middle~85%, Middle~55%, High~54%,  
College~49%, 25+ ~48%
  - Ethnicity: Inconclusive

# Discussion/Review of Literature

- General hypothesis confirmed- most groups came together
  - Supported by Manassis, Mendlowitz, Scapillato, Avery, Fiksenbaum, Freire, Monga & Owens, 2002
- Difference in group unity and individual reaching out implies reaching out participants were concentrated in groups
  - Supportive behavior spread
    - Supported by Holbrook, Sousa, and Hahn-Holbrook 2011 and Lester, Field, and Muris 2011

# Discussion/Review of Literature cont.

- Very young kids recognized scenes as threatening more often than expected
  - Ohman (2009) explains that stimuli such as threatening faces are programmed into mind to produce fear as result of evolution
- More middle and high school students reached out than expected
  - Supported by Bischof (1975)



# References

- A complete list of references is available on the final page of the accompanying paper