

“Ethical” horror houses

ANNA COX
COPY EDITOR



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As October opens, the desire for horror and excitement begins to build. Haunted Houses come back into the spotlight as people seek a safe thrill.

One that has recently come into the spotlight is The 17th Door. The 17th Door is a new “immersive” experience for the thrill seekers who want a little more than the jump scares most houses offer. To do this house a person must sign a two page waiver, releasing the 17th Door from any liability from the

following: physical or mental injury, death and the reassurance of safety. The releasing party will be signing to subject themselves to mental and physical dangers and The 17th Door can not be held for any damage.

Now the waiver does have some protection clauses for the releasing party to feel comfort in. The 17th Door respects the safe word “MERCY” in which a participant would be immediately taken out of the room and moved to the next one, or if they would like to leave the experience entirely.

They also sell Mercy Pendants that will allow a participant to go past the worst rooms. Although there are three rooms you cannot “mercy out” once you enter, which is not listed in the waiver but rather on their website. This seems almost like a breach of contract on The 17th Door’s part but they claim

you are warned before you enter.

Another “attraction” that gains attention in October is the McKamey Manor. For this “experience” a participant must sign a page contract, objectively letting the Manor do anything they see fit to you. They claim it

is not torture; however, some of the participants have objected this claim. This contract also includes a safe word, but it also states that they can ignore it if they see fit. The manor is one of the most highly criticized “attractions” that are like it. People ask the question of why someone would do this, how is it legal and who would possibly sign up for it.

My first problem lies with the workers. At the 17th Door they seem to be more restrained and the experience is less likely to feel like torture. They have a good reputation for respecting the safe word

and objectively their contract does seem to offer a guaranteed protection if the experience becomes overwhelming. I have found little criticism and I can see that the only risk of serious bodily harm seems to be electrical shock (tasers).

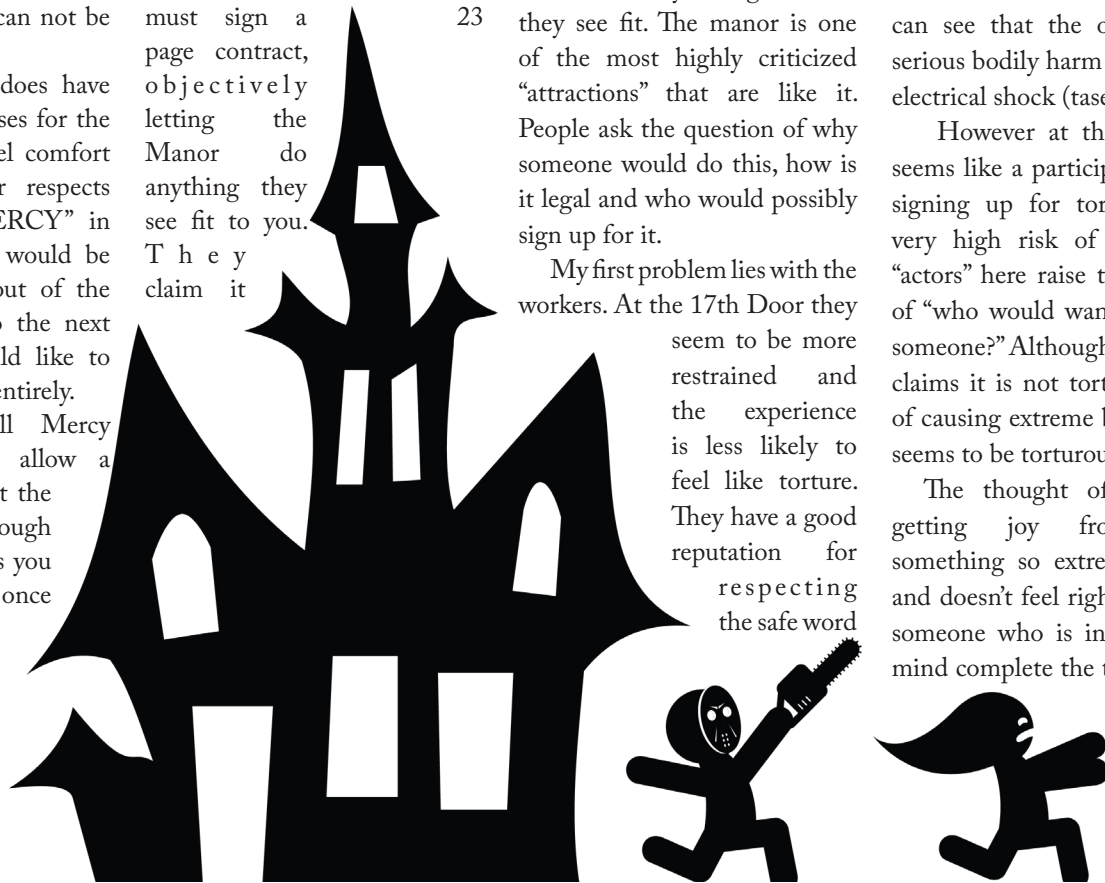
However at the Manor it seems like a participant is truly signing up for torture and a very high risk of death. The “actors” here raise the question of “who would want to torture someone?” Although the Manor claims it is not torture, the act of causing extreme bodily harm seems to be torturous at its core.

The thought of a human getting joy from doing something so extreme is eerie and doesn’t feel right. How can someone who is in their right mind complete the things listed in the waiver?

My second

problem is that of the waiver itself. Can a person truly consent to what the McKamey Manor includes? With the 17th Door it seems less extreme, with less chance of bodily harm. At the Manor, you must fully consent to things that could be life long. Can that truly be consent? Is there not a need for a psychological exam beforehand and an extensive exam so that the owner can determine if the participant is in the right state of mind?

The answer is unclear. As it is perfectly legal to do something with a written consent but, is it morally right? To me, it is not acceptable to hurt someone in the ways listed in the McKamey Manor Waiver. The 17th Door is so much less extreme and has more safeguards that it certainly seems safer than the activities occurring at the McKamey Manor. Simply put, a place of extreme pain and suffering is undeserving of the attention it gets and although it is perfectly legal does not make it right.



GRAPHIC BY SYDNEY GREEN

HBO Max’s “Velma” makes unwanted change to the franchise

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On Oct. 6, HBO Max revealed the first official teaser trailer for their new Scooby-Doo spinoff “Velma” at New York Comic Con. The show

will follow the titular character’s origin story and highlight how she came to be the nerdy know-it-all we all know and love today. Unlike many other Scooby-Doo media, this show will be oriented towards adults. Mandy Kaling will be the voice of Velma, with Glenn Howerton as Fred, Constance Wu as Daphne and Sam Richardson as Shaggy.

The show garnered a lot of controversy for changing the race of a couple of characters: Velma from White to South Asian Indian, Shaggy to Black and Daphne to Asian. The internet was quickly flooded with people bashing the show for these changes.

The trailer makes a meta joke about the controversy with Velma’s not so subtle angry message to HBO Max about changing the personality of Judy Jetson, stating that “If there is one thing the internet agrees on, it’s that you should never change anything ever. I hope you die. Sincerely, Velma.” She then sends the message and says to herself “Well, at least Judy’s still white.”

Most people hate change – the internet most of all. On the point of changing a character’s race, however, I don’t see why it’s so controversial. Being upset about changing a character’s race has always seemed so pointless. Race does not define personality. If a change like this has no bearing on the personality of the character, then why is it a bad thing?

Representation of people of color in entertainment is important because it promotes less bigotry. Traditionally, depictions of non-white people in entertainment were riddled with racist

stereotypes. To combat this, modern entertainment should depict them with the full depth of character that real people have, which is what the show aims to do.

Diversity is also important because there needs to be more examples of positive representation. Currently, the media is oversaturated with white characters, which means that there are significantly less non-stereotypical depictions of people of color than there are white people. It creates a bias towards white people having more depth to their character than non-white people, which is blatantly untrue.

While I do support HBO Max’s decision to have more diversity, I fully oppose the fact that one key aspect of Scooby-Doo will be missing from the show: the dog himself. This wouldn’t be a problem if the show focused purely on Velma and none of the other characters of Scooby-Doo, but that is not the case. While all the other characters will be making an appearance, the dog who started it all is given the boot.

Imagine if they made a Luigi movie with all the characters of the mushroom kingdom except Mario. Part of what makes Luigi’s character is his dynamic with Mario. He’s always living in Mario’s shadow. Similarly, part of what makes Mystery Inc. itself is the dynamic between all the characters – Scooby included.

The show’s creators have stated that the reason for doing so is because Scooby is too childish for an adult audience. Warner Bros told them that they couldn’t use the dog, but that just coincided with their original plan anyways.

Saying that a talking dog is too childish for an adult audience is an insult to the maturity of said audience. Plenty of media have talking animals that deal with mature topics (Take “Animal Farm” or “Maus” for example).

Having a talking animal requires a suspension of disbelief. This wouldn’t be a problem since Scooby is so well known at this point that many people wouldn’t second guess why there is a talking dog in a Scooby-Doo

show. This works especially well for comedies, which the show claims to be. Trying to get rid of an absurd element in a story that totes itself as a comedy is counterproductive.

“It felt like what made (the original) a kids show was Scooby-Doo. That coincided with Warner Bros. Animation saying ‘Hey, you can’t use the dog.’ So we’re like ‘Great! This Works out well!’
-Charlie Grandy, producer

Frank Welker, the voice of Scooby, will still have an undisclosed role in the show. Hopefully he will at least reference the popular dog. The show would be grossly unjust if it didn’t at least acknowledge Scooby’s existence in some way. Until it comes out in 2023, we’ll just have to wait for more developments and hope that the show turns out good despite the lack of Mystery Inc.’s beloved mascot.



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