

The Crawling Hand

When we were living in Farmbrook in Levittown, the kids were still very young. It became tradition to watch a scary movie on a Saturday afternoon. They were lined up on the couch which back was away from the wall. I always enjoyed scaring them and maybe down deep, they actually enjoyed it too.

On this one occasion, we were watching a movie called The Crawling Hand, whose plot is a distant memory, but I do remember that its star was a crawling hand. It was indestructible and it would kill people by crawling up their legs and torso and go for the jugular. Those few “lucky” ones who managed to get away from it suffered from a life-long case of permanent black rims around their eyes. After the movie started and the plot was developing, I sneaked into the bathroom and used Mary’s makeup to paint dark circles around my eyes. I went back to the living room and hid behind the couch. I waited for the right opportunity and sprang up from behind the couch and let out a blood-curling scream. The three children jumped in horror, turned to look at me and for an instant the movie continued. After that, Catherine turned and ran into her room and locked the door. By then, the boys recovered and the three of us were standing in front of the locked door scratching with our fingernails, while out-of-this-worldly sound emanated from our vocal boxes. Catherine was heard whimpering inside, making us do it even more.