Which Horror Movies Returned Multiples—and Which Burned Cash? — Artometrics

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Horror is the genre studios love to describe as cheap and scalable — until the ledger says otherwise. Budget and domestic-gross figures for thousands of titles show which films returned capital and which simply burned it.

The working file holds **3,401** records spanning **1936–2019**. Median domestic gross sits at **25,533,818**; the highest observed domestic gross is **474,544,677**. Drama is the most common genre label in the merge — a reminder that genre tags in box-office tables are rarely as clean as marketing copy.

Fast facts

The numbers that set the scale for this report:

3,401	Records in the working dataset
25,533,818	Median Domestic gross
474,544,677	Highest observed Domestic gross
Star Wars Ep. I: The Phantom	Top Movie by Domestic gross
1936–2019	Year span covered in the file
Drama	Most common Genre

Data and method

The source is the TidyTuesday release from 2018-10-23 (R for Data Science community). The working file contains 3,401 rows and 9 columns after merging all available CSV/XLSX tables in the week folder.

Charts are exported as Plotly JSON with PNG fallbacks. Medians are preferred where distributions skew. Index-style fields are excluded from metric selection. The table mixes genre labels and franchise outliers — read peaks as structural signals in the file, not as a pure horror-only ledger.

How the pattern changed over time

Median Domestic gross Over Time

Median domestic gross falls from 163,245 in the opening period to 0.00 at the close — a path shaped as much by missing values and sparse later rows as by any single box-office collapse.

Trend lines in merged profit tables often encode coverage as much as commerce. Treat the decline as a prompt to inspect year density, not as a finished verdict on the genre's economics.

Who sits at the top

Star Wars Ep

Star Wars Ep. I: The Phantom Menace leads at 474,544,677 — and 419,277,314 marks the median among the top dozen.

When a non-horror franchise tops a profit extract labeled for horror analysis, the chart is doing double duty: it shows concentration at the head, and it shows how genre filters leak in community-cleaned tables. The ceiling of the file is not the ceiling of the scare aisle alone.

How the field is spread

Domestic gross by Genre

Genre boxes show how domestic gross spreads once labels are treated as categories rather than marketing slogans.

Some genres share a tight middle; others stretch into long upper whiskers. That shape is the difference between a consensus mid-budget outcome and a handful of titles that define the category's mythology.

Who beats the median — and who trails

Domestic gross vs median by Genre

Adventure sits 34,936,402 above the median; Drama trails by 12,994,440.

The gap chart is the practical reading of the distribution: which genre labels systematically clear the file's middle, and which sit below it even when volume is high.

What moves together

Domestic gross vs Worldwide gross

Domestic and worldwide gross move together for most titles, but the scatter still leaves clusters that a single average would erase — films that travel abroad, films that stay domestic, and sparse points where one market dominates the total.

Profit stories live in those clusters. A multiple earned at home is not the same business as a multiple earned on the global ledger.

What this file cannot tell you

Community-cleaned TidyTuesday snapshots are not live APIs. Missing values, spelling variants, and week-of-export coverage limits apply. Merged tables may fan out or duplicate rows when join keys are imperfect.

Findings describe the file on hand — structural signals about movie profit rows in this extract, not exhaustive truth about every horror release ever made.

What to take away

Domestic gross alone is never enough: leaders, genre gaps, time coverage, and the domestic–worldwide scatter each answer a different question about who returned capital.

Use the charts to sharpen the question, then check the source and limits before turning any peak into a studio strategy claim.

Sources

Data Science Learning Community. (2018). *TidyTuesday: Horror Movie Profit*. https://raw.githubusercontent.com/rfordatascience/tidytuesday/main/data/2018/2018-10-23/movie_profit.csv