

# Mickey Mouse horror film unveiled as copyright issue resolved

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**Online Desk:** On January 1st, a trailer for a slasher film was unveiled, showcasing a masked killer adorned as Mickey Mouse. This coincided with the expiration of Disney's copyright on the earliest versions of the cartoon character in the US.

"We aimed for the complete opposite of the existing narrative," stated the movie's producer.

On that same day, a fresh Mickey-inspired horror game emerged, depicting the iconic rodent adorned with bloodstains.

On New Year's Day, "Steamboat Willie", a 1928 short film showcasing early non-speaking iterations of Mickey and Minnie, entered the public domain in the US. This opens the door for cartoonists, novelists, and filmmakers to freely rework and utilise the earliest versions of Mickey and Minnie. They can use it freely without spending any money.

Creative minds have promptly seized the opportunity, with the release of a trailer (containing violent scenes) for a Mickey horror film on the same day.

In the horror comedy thriller titled "Mickey's Mouse Trap", a young woman's surprise birthday party in an amusement arcade takes a sinister turn when she and her friends confront a knife-wielding murderer dressed in a Mickey costume.

"A realm of joy, a realm of camaraderie, a realm of pursuit. The mouse is unleashed," declares the trailer in bold red text.

"People should approach it with a light heart; we crafted an outrageously entertaining film," remarked Simon Phillips, the writer, producer, and actor portraying the character beneath the Mickey mask.

While the film doesn't have a confirmed release date, it is anticipated to hit screens in March.

In a bid to match the excitement, a fresh video game has been revealed, spotlighting the 1928 rendition of Mickey.

Game studio Nightmare Forge Games introduced the game, titled "Infestation 88", as a survival horror experience where a vermin outbreak takes a darker turn.

As the trailer kicks off, a nervous voice is heard saying, "I thought it was just rodents, but there's something else in here." Subsequently, a large, blood-splattered Mickey emerges on the screen, surrounded by scurrying mice.

Mickey isn't the first childhood character to undergo the horror movie transformation.

Upon Winnie the Pooh entering the public domain, the beloved bear found himself in the R-rated horror film "Blood and Honey", which garnered one of the lowest ratings of last year.

As per US copyright law, character rights can be retained for 95 years, marking the entry of the characters in Steamboat Willie into the public domain on January 1, 2024.

Disney has grappled with the potential loss of copyright for its original cartoons on multiple occasions.

Initially slated to enter the public domain in 1984, the characters faced an extension of 20 years courtesy of Congressional action.

As the next expiry date loomed in 2004, another 20-year extension was enacted.

Dubbed “the Mickey Mouse Protection Act” due to Disney’s efforts to safeguard its characters, the eventual moment was deemed “deeply symbolic” by experts.

The company retains a distinct trademark for Mickey as both a brand identifier and a corporate mascot, implying certain restrictions on public usage of these images.

Disney has emphasised that copyright protection persists for more contemporary iterations of Mickey.

“We will, of course, continue to safeguard our rights in the more modern versions of Mickey Mouse and other works that remain under copyright,” affirmed the company.