In The Films in My Life, François Truffaut describes how “cinematic success” results from a fragile, temporary confluence of elements: the director, the film itself, and its audience, but also critical reception, marketing, competition, and the zeitgeist in which the film is released. “When a film achieves a certain amount of success,” Truffaut observes, “it becomes a sociological event.” Accounting for such a sociological event seemingly warrants a sociological approach. Material-semiotic methods have been used in sociology to map relations between people, materials and concepts, and given the similar confluence of elements involved in filmmaking, such methods seem ideal for critical interventions in cinema studies. This thesis offers an example of such a material-semiotic approach to film history and theorization, illustrated through close readings of three films: George Romero’s Night of the Living Dead (1968), Wes Craven’s Last House on the Left (1972), and Tobe Hooper’s The Texas Chain Saw Massacre (1974).