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The German actor, Max Schreck, played "Count Orlok" in F.W. Murnau's film *Nosferatu*. This image depicts Schreck, in the role of Orlok.

Max Schreck brilliantly played the horrible title character in F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu*. (In the movie his name was "Count Orlok," also sometimes spelled "Orlock.") His performance still stands as one of the most compelling in film history.

Schreck (meaning "fright" in German) was his actual name. Rarely did a name fit the film *persona* so well. To look at Schreck's rat-shaped head, or his terrifying shadow, is to see one's worst nightmare. Never was cinematic makeup put to better use.

Yet, little is known about his private life. Married to actress Fanny Normann, Schreck was born in Berlin in 1879. He acted in 40 films before he died of a heart attack in Munich in 1936. He was 43 years old when he played "Count Orlock" in *Nosferatu*.

Trained in his craft by the brilliant Max Reinhart, Schreck performed frequently on stage. In 1922 he was employed by Prana Film for its first (and only) production. After the company produced *Nosferatu*, Prana went bankrupt. There was a "small issue" about copyright infringement.

Neither Murnau nor his company had secured the rights to adapt Bram Stoker's *Dracula* to the screen. *Nosferatu*, the masterpiece, was in violation of copyright laws.

And Florence, Bram's widow, wasn't negotiating.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/MAX-SCHRECK-Shadow-of-the-Vampire-The-Real-Dracula)

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## Media Stream



### Nosferatu - Count Orlock

Still-shot online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Nosferatu-Count-Orlock>



### Nosferatu - Lead Character

Image from film online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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### Nosferatu - Compelling Performance by Schreck

Still-shot image, described above, online via Wikimedia Commons.

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### Nosferatu - Terrifying Shadow of Count Orlock

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### Nosferatu - Nightmare-Causing Scene

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### Nosferatu - Cinematic Masterpiece

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## MAX SCHRECK

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