

KILL BILL : VOLUME 2

The 2nd Inter-Review

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PROLOGUE: *After several weeks of defending KILL BILL VOLUME 2 from its many detractors, we have decided to address some of this criticism and possibly prove that we are not, in fact, part of some conspiracy to help Quentin Tarantino take over the world. As a result of our lofty goal, this interreview got a little out of hand. We went way over time, budget, and word count so we decided to break this into two parts, Volume 1 and Volume 2.*

VOLUME 1

FIRST CHAPTER : FACE TO FACE

Sarah Duda: Okay, *Kill Bill. Kill Bill.* I like the rhyming title. You?

Jonathan Doyle: It's better than *Tuer Bill*, that's for sure.

Let me just say that I think the movie, both volumes, totally and completely kicked some major ass. I had an amazingly fun time watching them. Not many movies inspire me to do kung fu as I leave the theatre.

Yeah, you almost poked my eye out. I had to remind you, "I am not Elle Driver. You are not Pai Mei." But you just didn't want to hear it.

I'm surprised that so many Tarantino fans disliked it.

I honestly believe that *Kill Bill* is more subtle than his other films—certainly in its characterizations—so some people are wondering where all the obvious Tarantino stuff is (i.e., the flamboyant dialogue). They don't want action, but they don't want subtlety either. They want that something-in-between that was the focus of Tarantino's previous films. But *Kill Bill* is less controlled. It's a film of extremes.

A lot of people really hate it.

The problem with most of *Kill Bill*'s detractors is that they're

not fans of genre filmmaking. There's nothing wrong with that, but just as a jazz hater would never review a Duke Ellington album, a genre film hater shouldn't review *Kill Bill*. It doesn't make sense. They're criticizing the film because it's a genre film, not because it's a *bad genre* film.

I'm so sick of *Kill Bill* haters complaining that it has no depth. They are totally missing the point. If they want depth, they should go see something else.

It's a visual and emotional film, not an intellectual one. Personally, I think it's far more challenging to effectively communicate feelings and sensations in a film than it is to communicate ideas. But critics and academics tend to have more respect for idea-driven films because they translate better to the written word.

But why do they hate it so much?

More than Tarantino's previous films, *Kill Bill* is a movie-movie. The extremes of content, style, and tone are a little more extreme than usual. There's something about the tone that bothers people who aren't familiar with horror films, martial arts films, spaghetti westerns, etc. I'm not sure what it is exactly. But it's not quite realistic.

In his previous films there's this emphasis on human relationships. I'm not saying that there is no emphasis on human relationships in *Kill Bill*, but I think it's more prominent in his previous films. *Kill Bill* is something that viewers have to give themselves up to and just go with. Emotionally, it's simple: love, vengeance, hate, retribution.

There's evidence of all that in *Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction*, and *Jackie Brown* but, you're right, it's less prominent. To me, the key is that *Kill Bill* is done in movie language, not real-life language (and I'm not just talking about dialogue). People are constantly applying the realism test to movies: "is it realistic enough?" If you apply that to *Kill Bill*, you're lost because it's not realistic. It's not trying to be. It's deliberately theatrical and it's far too weird for a viewer to have a passive reaction. I'm sure passive audiences hate *Kill Bill*. It messes with their complacency.

You have to be imaginative enough to draw your own meaning from it. And I'm not saying that to imply that I am somehow above or beyond the average spectator. I just think that, rather than sit with your face all screwed up and "not get it," you should try to figure it out. If you want a message fed to you, go see something else. *Kill Bill* is basically just fun, fun, fun for the whole family.

CHAPTER TWO : THE BLOOD-SPLATTERED BRIDE

How do you feel about the criticism that the films are too violent?

Not this question again. I think that particular criticism is really weak.

But we have to defend the film, and "too violent" is a criticism that keeps coming up. If you were selected to defend the film in front of the Supreme Court, what would you say? Why isn't it a problem?

That's such a huge question. I don't know. I guess because the violence is so stylized, I don't feel like some weird freak who is getting off on real suffering.

Yeah, it's fake violence. Tarantino says violent scenes in his movies are like dance sequences in musicals.

Absolutely. The whole violence thing sends us into all sorts of complicated issues like censorship and whether violence causes violence and I just don't have an answer to that. It's a violent film. Therefore, there is lots of violence. If you don't like violence, go check out *The Horse Whisperer*.

Believe it or not, they were both photographed by the same guy, Robert Richardson. You could tell he was lighting Pai Mei like a horse. I could, anyway.

That's a really crazy coincidence. I just chose that film off the top of my head.

Was there any violence that you thought was particularly effective in the film?

I really liked all the fake blood squirting around in *Volume One*. Like when Sophie Fatale gets her arm chopped off. That's entertainment. I thought that was (for lack of better word) cool. And funny. Even though it pulls you out of the movie and makes you think about special effects, I liked it. But, again, that's a personal thing. It reminds me of old horror movies. What did you think of the fight sequences?

I wasn't crazy about the House of Blue Leaves sequence in *Volume One* because the action seemed too choreographed. I thought the fight between Uma and Daryl Hannah was more spontaneous and enjoyable because they were forced to use interesting props, the kind of stuff you'd find in a trailer. I also liked some of the Vernita Green fight but, again, it was a little too choreographed for my taste. To be honest, I'm not crazy about fight scenes in any movie.

I really liked the fight scene between Uma and O-Ren at the end of VOLUME ONE. The fake snow, the garden, it was very nicely shot. It had a totally different feel from the House of Blue Leaves sequence.

CHAPTER THREE : BEST CHAPTER

Sarah and Jon agree: "Chapter Eight: The Cruel Tutelage of Pai Mei"

CHAPTER FOUR : THE ORIGIN OF KILL BILL

I really love the buried alive sequence. I like when Tarantino nods to horror conventions. I would love to see him do an out-and-out horror movie. Actually, maybe not. He's too selfreferential and pop cultural. I don't like horror films like that.

But he's not that way in the buried-alive scene. It's pure horror. The audience is in complete, terrifying darkness for a minute or more, as we hear Budd and his sidekick dump soil on the Bride's grave.

If he could make a whole movie like that, I would be first in line to see it.

Me, too. Or...I guess I'd be second. Do you want to talk about the criticism Tarantino keeps getting for referencing other movies? That seems to be the source of some serious animosity.

Okay, sure. You know, my personal feeling is that everybody borrows from everybody. A popular theory, nothing new. But I really don't see anything wrong with QT being inspired by movies. We're all inspired by movies.

I don't see how the movie references detract from the film in any way. Critics of this practice claim that Tarantino is just patting us on the back for "getting" the references, but I enjoyed the scenes where I didn't get the references as much as the scenes where I did get the references.

Besides, I've watched many of the scenes that he supposedly copied and they are all different in a number of ways. And speaking of inspiration, I am going to put forward the argument that we are all inspired by Tarantino. Our whole generation. We've all seen *Pulp Fiction* and, whether we liked it or not, whether we wish to emulate it or forget it, it has affected us. And I think that people should give QT his props for being a cool sucker.

I think they're just voicing their frustration for not being more widely versed in Tarantino's film culture. They feel like the film is communicating to some genre film elite, rather than the broader film-going public that they are a part of.

You can feel cool if you recognize where a particular scene comes from but, at the same time, if you don't know, you can appreciate Tarantino for bringing it to your attention.

Yeah, I think that's really important. I've seen many movies solely on Quentin Tarantino's recommendation and I've enjoyed almost all of them. If he's referencing the films effectively, viewers should be curious and excited to see those films. What more could you ask from a filmmaker? He's making people more enthusiastic about movies. That's a great thing.

Precisely. Tarantino loves films, therefore he references them in his work. Just like a dude who loves horses will reference horses in his work (i.e., *The Horse Whisperer*). Good example. And just because one work refers to another doesn't mean that the ideas are being used in the same way. You could adapt a film's ideas to a piece of writing, for example.

CHAPTER FIVE : BILLY BUDD

The criticism that some people had of *Volume One*—that it was shallow and insubstantial—doesn't really apply to *Volume Two*. Most of the characters are complex and surprisingly ambiguous.

Absolutely. I agree. I really love Michael Madsen's character, Budd. I think there's a great deal of complexity in a loser lifestyle coupled with a sense of honor.

The relationship between brothers Bill and Budd—I wonder if they were named after Billy Budd?—is one of my favorite aspects of *Volume Two*. The only reason Budd wants to hurt The Bride is because she betrayed Bill. But he won't reveal to Bill how much he loves him.

Budd even says that he's only killing Uma because she "broke Bill's heart." Very romantic.

I think Tarantino went out of his way to make Budd sympathetic. In fact, he's the only character on the Bride's "death list" that she doesn't kill, either directly or indirectly.

On the other hand, you have to pause and think about the sadism and cold-bloodedness that is necessary to do what he does to The Bride.

Yeah, it's complicated.

I thought it was weird that Budd captured Uma so easily. She is usually so cautious but, for some reason, she basically walks right into his (not very devious) trap. Big mistake, Uma. That's an issue I can't figure out. What was she thinking? She knew he was there. She heard him come to the window.

I can't figure that scene out. It makes no sense. I guess I'll just let it go because it does lead to the burial stuff, which I love. But I think QT could've had her captured in a more interesting and intelligent way.

Part of me thinks that Budd is supposed to be the dumb member of the gang. After all, he fell for Elle's snake trick and he buried The Bride shallow enough that she was able to escape.

He is really stupid for trusting Elle. I guess we could assume that Budd is not careful with Elle because he doesn't particularly value his life. He seems to feel that whatever will be, will be. Still, he should have taken more precautions. Just like Uma should have taken more precautions when she snuck up on him.

Budd seems to be on bad terms with Bill so the Bride probably didn't think they'd be communicating. She didn't know Budd was expecting her.

I'd do things my way?' But little they know that it's so hard to find One rich man in ten with a satisfied mind.'

-“Satisfied Mind,” the song Budd plays right before The Bride attacks

What about the scenes of Budd in the strip club?

A few people have complained to me that those scenes are unnecessary, but they're really not. Budd claims that he pawned off the priceless Hanzo sword that Bill gave him for only a few hundred dollars when, in fact, he has kept the sword because of its tremendous sentimental value and because of his unspoken love for Bill. The strip club scenes illustrate that Budd is willing to degrade himself for a minimum wage job, rather than sell the sword that could make him a millionaire.

Those scenes are totally necessary in terms of building up the multiple layers that make him who he is.

I also think the sympathy that Tarantino creates for Budd fuels our hatred for Elle Driver, after she kills him. Along with the discovery that she killed Pai Mei, this makes us even more anxious to see The Bride kill her. It makes that scene more exciting. I feel kind of sick saying all this. “I want to see the Bride kill!” But that's what the movie's all about. I'm not ashamed to admit that I liked it when the Bride stepped on Elle's eyeball.

I loved the eyeball stuff. There's something totally cool about the ability to snatch someone's eyeball out of its socket. What a charming move. Did you think Daryl Hannah was good as Elle?

I thought Elle was one of the most unlikable characters in recent memory. They usually don't allow women to be that cold-blooded in movies. I liked that.

I really love the scene of her in the nurse's uniform in *Volume One* when she is walking down the hall, whistling. The music picks up and takes over the whistling, while the split screen is going on. Really cool. Tarantino said he took that whole idea—including the music, I think—from the trailer for John Frankenheimer's *Black Sunday*. Unfortunately, the trailer's not on the DVD so I haven't been able to see it. But speaking of feuds between Uma Thurman and Daryl Hannah, have you heard about their ongoing war in real-life?

END OF VOLUME 1 – TO BE CONTINUED

“How many times have you heard someone say ‘If I had his money,