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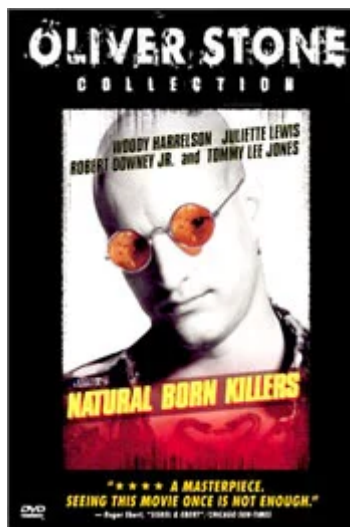
THE BEDLAM FILES

With Adam Groves

"I discovered that if one looks a little closer at this beautiful world, there are always red ants underneath."

—David Lynch

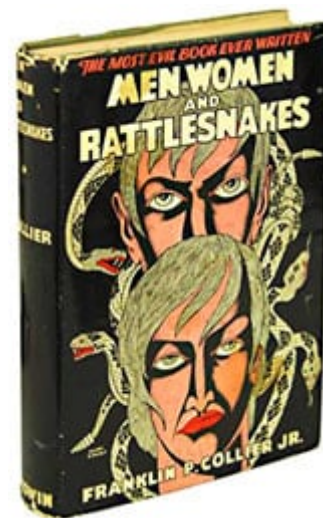
Streaming Now



1. **NATURAL BORN KILLERS**

Many people I know don't like this movie. I say, what's not to like? Directed by Oliver Stone from a (heavily rewritten) screenplay by Quentin Tarantino, it's a definite instance of Two Great Tastes that Taste Great Together, and one of the most profoundly subversive big studio movies of all time. A British critic called Tarantino's *RESERVOIR DOGS* "An amazing, awesome, pumping powerhouse of a movie," but I feel that quote applies much better to *NATURAL BORN KILLERS* (*caveat*: the version currently playing

Adam's Picks



1. **MEN, WOMEN AND RATTLESNAKES** by **FRANKLIN J. COLLIER, JR.**

Here's a surprise: a newly minted printing (the first, if I'm not mistaken, in 89 years) of a little-known classic of abuse, gender confusion, promiscuity and homicidal snake handling from the 1930s. It may not be "The Most Evil Novel Ever Written" (as was claimed on the initial edition's front cover), but it is required reading for all connoisseurs of truly warped fiction.

BOOK

on Netflix is the R-rated studio cut, with many of the more outrageous scenes, such as an angle through a gunshot in a hand and Tommy Lee Jones' head being paraded around on a stick, excised, which has the paradoxical effect of rendering the violence *more* realistic and disturbing).

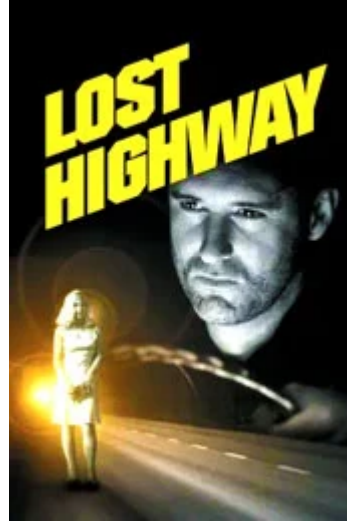
NETFLIX



2. RRR

A throwback to the good old days of Bollywood moviemaking (and I do mean *movie* and not *film*), a heavily fictionalized three hour plus historical epic that mixes action, politics, romance and (of course) music numbers into an irresistible whole. Objectively speaking there are plenty of things wrong with RRR (uneven performances, an overreliance on CGI, a fast and *very* loose attitude toward plausibility), things that would sink a Hollywood production, but the infectious energy and exuberance are what resonate.

NETFLIX



2. LOST HIGHWAY

Following the controversial early '22 restoration of David Lynch's **INLAND EMPIRE**, here's another digitally swabbed Lynch film. I admittedly have yet to experience this new and supposedly improved LOST HIGHWAY, but if it's anything like the initial 1997 version it must be pretty damned impressive, a gorgeously lensed puzzlement whose aftereffects on the viewer are long lasting, and very likely permanent.

FILM



3. WILD AT HEART

While on the subject of David Lynch films from the nineties, here's yet another. No restoration, to my knowledge, is in the works for this film, possibly the most widely hated Lynch freak-out of them all (it's no coincidence that following its release Lynch suffered a public backlash that took nearly a decade to subside). Predating the cinema of Quentin

3. IRMA VEP

A TV miniseries extrapolation of Olivier Assayas' highly overrated 1996 arthouse hit IRMA VEP. That film, I'd argue, was arty and self-important, with all the virtues critics attributed to it contained in this small screen version. It's headlined by Alicia Vikander as an actress playing the title character in a remake of the 1915 Louis Feuillade serial **LES VAMPIRES**, with the circumstances of the filming, which encompass jealousy, thwarted love, boredom and desperation, obliquely mirroring the events of Feuillade's classic. Enjoyable, especially for those who (like me) have experience in the actual making of movies. HBO



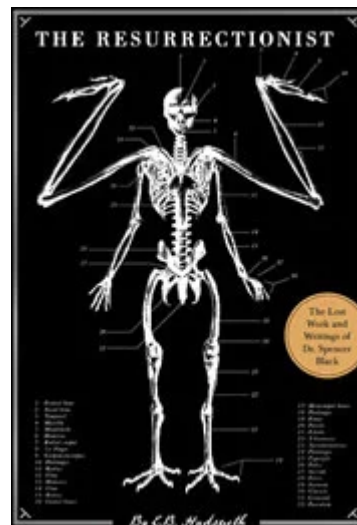
4. THE GOLDEN PITH

An example of spoken word horror from Dominic Francisco, a.k.a. "Bound unto Root" (whose earlier audio-only release BLUDGEON was covered in a previous update). Incorporating music and highly portentous vocals, it's comprised of three separate portions--the second of which is an anthology (with BLUDGEON being the first)--that explore madness, disorientation, isolation and paranoia. It's a skilled piece of work, marked by a canny usage of pauses and repetition, and packed with Clark Ashton Smith-worthy verbiage like "ruminations swelled, slowly filling the pulsating tub of Jaimie's mind."

YOUTUBE

Tarantino and the serial killer craze that would overtake the decade, WILD AT HEART was easily the most violent and disturbing mainstream movie of 1990 (this from one who was working as movie theater usher at the time of its release, regarding which I can honestly say I've never seen as many walk-outs before or since). Nowadays most of the shock value has worn off, thus allowing for a greater appreciation of the film's artistic merits, which are considerable.

FILM



4. THE RESURRECTIONIST by E.B. HUDSPETH

A wonderfully evocative bit of elegant grotesquerie that's unique in every aspect. Purporting to profile a deranged 19th Century physician obsessed with creating monstrous creatures, it's both an eccentric character study and an art book depicting the protagonist's anatomical studies, with author-illustrator E.B. Hudspeth accomplishing both disciplines with great assurance.

BOOK



5. **HOW TO BUILD A SEX ROOM**

A Netflix reality series that offers a nostalgic throwback to those “educational” cable TV sex programs that proliferated in the nineties (EROTIC CONFESSIONS, REAL SEX, etc.). In HOW TO BUILD A SEX A ROOM a sweet old British woman creates elaborately outfitted sex rooms for various American couples both gay and straight. That, of course, is just a ruse, with the series’ true concern being a lot frank talk about sex, something that never seems to get old. NETFLIX



5. **UNDO**

For those desiring Something Different, compulsive knot tying (an actual psychological condition) is this bleak and claustrophobic film’s driving force. It was the debut of Japan’s talented Shunji Iwai, and isn’t as strong as his later output (which includes SWALLOWTAIL BUTTERFLY and ALL ABOUT LILY CHOU-CHOU), suffering as it does from a distracting music score and a 47 minute runtime that’s far too scant. Overall, however, it works.

FILM

Also NEW on the Site!

- **The Loved One** (Film)
- **Stage Fright** (Film)
- **On Les Vampires** (Commentary)
- **Shogun Assassin** (Film)
- **On Wisconsin Death Trip** (Commentary)
- **Aleister Crowley: Wandering the Waste** (Graphic Novel)
- **Beyond the Threshold** (Fiction)
- **Archived eblasts for easy reference**
- **And Much More!**



Insider Info

Thus far the 2022 literary scene hasn't been too invigorating. **The Cannon Film Guide, Volume II** and **Blood, Sweat, and Chrome** were great, but most of the year's other print releases (which include the outer space horror-fest DEAD SILENCE, the feminist-minded horror movie overview NIGHTMARE FUEL and the scary story anthology SCREAMS FROM THE DARK) have left me cold. We shouldn't fret too much, though, as '22 is only half over and many interesting books are coming up. Here, based on the NetGalley widgets I've been sent (Tor releases, you'll find, are especially prevalent), are some noteworthy examples.



POWERLESS by JEFF O'HANDLEY

A no-frills examination of an extended power outage hitting a Midwestern suburb, and how its formerly contented upper-middle class inhabitants cope (or don't). Reading this book I was reminded of the flicks **The Trigger Effect** and **Right at Your Door**, and that's a good thing.

August 24

LUDA by GRANT MORRISON

The first novel by comic book legend Grant Morrison relates the phantasmagoric tale of a drag artist who's unhealthily obsessed with the *femme fatale* title character. Present are the intellectual heft and fevered invention that have become Morrison trademarks; so too the show-offy literary references and unwieldy structural issues that Morrison readers have also come to expect. My advice? Concentrate on the good stuff and you won't be disappointed.

September 6

LUCKY GIRL by M. RICKERT

Holiday horror: a novella about the telling of stories on Christmas, horrific memories, loneliness...and **Krampus!** Not great, but a fast and satisfying read nonetheless.

September 13

LEECH by HIRON ENNES

An old dark castle, a deadly parasite and a bleak post-apocalyptic setting: this is truly a novel with something for everyone, held together by fluid and erudite prose. I say that, given the subject matter, LEECH might have benefitted from a pulpier treatment, but fans of extreme horror have to take what they can get these

days.

September 27

LUTE by JENNIFER THORNE

“**Wicker Man** meets FINAL DESTINATION” in a novel about a young Floridian moving to an idyllic island where every seven years people are sacrificed. I’m only a few chapters into this one, but so far so good.

October 4

LITTLE EVE by CATRIONA WARD

Another exercise in neo-gothic excess with an apocalyptic edge. Sibling rivalry, a secluded Scottish island, supernatural shenanigans and a murder investigation are among the ingredients of this feast from the author of THE LAST HOUSE ON NEEDLESS STREET.

October 22

THE TWO DOCTORS GORSKI by ISAAC FELLMAN

Upscale scares involving abuse, mind reading, magic and a homunculus. There’s simply no way this novel can’t be entirely uninteresting.

Adam's recommendations organized by year/month in the **NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE**.



I'm done reading. To the website!

The Bedlam Files, 07-2022

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