

MARCH 2025 | Just take me to the website, please.

THE BEDLAM FILES

With Adam Groves

“My perception is that I've never done anything but work really hard.”

— Val Kilmer

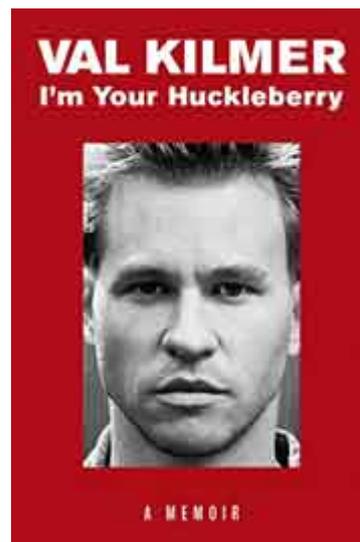
Streaming Now



1. **TOMBSTONE**

I'm not as taken with this 1993 take on Wyatt Earp and co. as I know many of you are, but it has some standout elements. Foremost among them: the late Val Kilmer, reinforcing the truism that in Earp movies it's the actor playing Doc Holliday who always makes the greatest impression. Further proof was offered by Lawrence Kasdan's WYATT EARP, released a few months after TOMBSTONE, which boasted a Dennis Quaid played Holliday that rivalled, but didn't best, Kilmer's ultra-showy take on the character. Also featured

Adam's Picks



1. **I'M YOUR HUCKLEBERRY**

More Val Kilmer goodness. In the pages of this 2020 memoir Kilmer proved himself an intelligent, if extremely pretentious, writer. Beginning with the words “Dear Reader, I have a crush on you,” I'M YOUR HUCKLEBERRY weaves in snatches of Kilmer's poetry (with titles like “Progress Proves the Infinite” and “Big Deal Haiku”), magical realism (in one passage Kilmer describes a meeting with the “Angel of Life”) and a great deal of proselytizing about the glories of Christian Science. He also recounts

is Kurt Russell as Wyatt E. and an impressively varied cast that includes Sam Elliott, **Bill Paxton**, Michael Biehn and Charlton Heston. HULU



2. WILLOW

Another film in which Val Kilmer was arguably the best thing about it. He played the Han Solo stand-in a George Lucas shepherded fantasy epic that rehashed the narrative of STAR WARS. The attempt didn't quite work, not least because director Ron Howard wasn't nearly as adept as Lucas was in integrating breakneck action, special effects and mythology-informed storytelling, resulting in an entertaining enough but not very resonant film. But again: Kilmer went above and beyond, creating a character who's dangerous, charismatic and quite possibly psychotic. AMAZON



3. CASUALTIES OF WAR

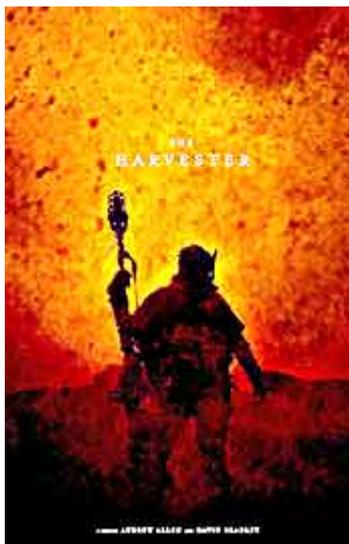
his experiences in Hollywood both good and bad, and his love life, with Cher, Ellen Barkin, Cindy Crawford and Daryl Hannah numbering among his romantic partners. He concludes the book with the quintessentially Kilmer-esque observation that "I believe I am on a flight that, day by day, is generated by the poetry of my heart." Unquestionably, the man was what you'd call a character. BOOK



2. UNPLEASANT TALES

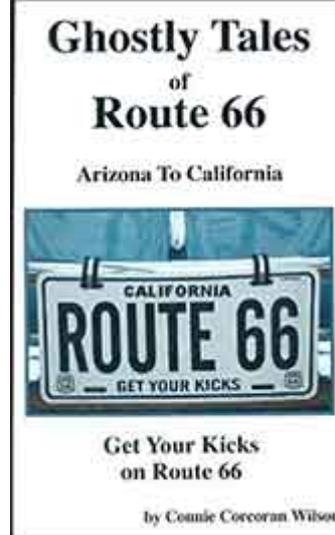
A 2010 collection by Brendan Connell, an unusually erudite talent who luxuriates in elegant depravity and baroque extravagance. Wild Raymond Rousellian invention, elegant grotesquerie and sheer weirdness highlight these 22 stories, which include standouts like "Wiggles," a tiny tale of madness and mutilation related in fractured, sensory-inflected prose, and "Mesh of Veins," an account of body modification that concludes with the protagonist looking at his insanely modified self in a mirror, and learning "the meaning of true fear." BOOK

A really, really good film that falls just sort of being great. CASUALTIES OF WAR (1989) was Brian De Palma's fact based depiction of the 1969 rape and murder of a Vietnamese girl by American soldiers. With its unabashed melodrama, the film plays like a Samuel Fuller production, and like Fuller, DePalma wasn't hesitant about really laying the sap on thick. The approach works, with the Vietnamese girl's "Death Walk" and subsequent murder being a profoundly shattering, impossible-to-forget sequence. Sadly, DePalma wimps out in the final scenes, having his protagonist (Michael J. Fox) absolved of all guilt by the sight of a young Vietnamese American woman who resembles the other (and was in fact played by the same actress). CRITERION CHANNEL



4. THE HARVESTER

A standout release from the short film coalition Dust, whose recent offerings haven't resonated with me. In the case of the 20 minute HARVESTER, I not only liked the film but watched it multiple times. Repeat viewings are essential for a complete, or even partial, understanding of this deeply odd and atmospheric depiction of a prospector in an unidentified apocalyptic landscape attempting to mine a precious substance as a tiny extraterrestrial critter and violent marauders compete for his attention. Easily



3. GHOSTLY TALES OF ROUTE 66: ARKANSAS TO ARIZONA

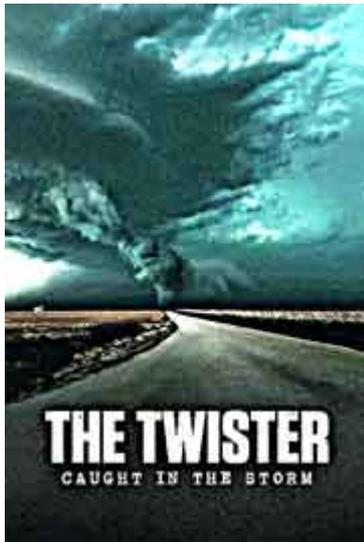
Here's a 2009 collection that not too many people seem to know about. GHOSTLY TALES OF ROUTE 66 consists of fact-based ghost stories from various parts of the legendary Route 66. The approach taken by author Connie Wilson is unique, combining a personal travelogue (complete with photos of the author at many of the locations cited) with a historical and folkloric compendium. Whether you buy into the author's claims of ghostly presences or not, GHOSTLY TALES OF ROUTE 66 is an enjoyable trip down one of America's most iconic roads. Plus, at 142 profusely illustrated pages, it shouldn't take more than an hour to read. BOOK



4. THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU

A Val Kilmer credit that unfortunately isn't all that good. Matter of fact, this version of H.G. Wells' immortal

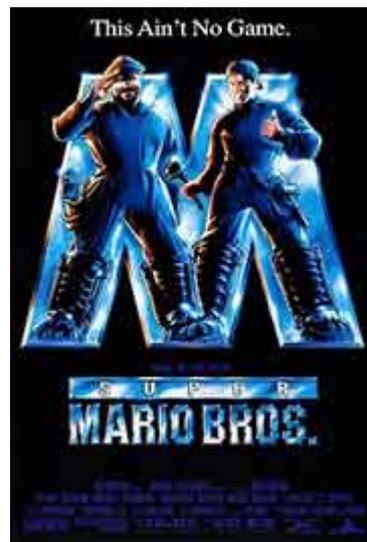
digestible this film isn't, but skilled and otherworldly it definitely is. YOUTUBE



5. THE TWISTER: CAUGHT IN THE STORM

A no-nonsense documentary depiction of the massive tornado that hit Joplin, Missouri in May 2011. The film is quite simple, consisting of a handful of survivors telling their stories. Director Alexandra Lacey's visualizations of those recollections leave something to be desired, with indistinct camera phone footage mixed with repetitive shots of roiling storm clouds and attempts at impressionistic correlation (such as a description of the eye of the twister accompanied by a close-up of somebody's eye), but the horror and upset on the interviewees' faces are compensation enough. NETFLIX

ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU is a legendary train wreck. Kilmer was blamed for an infamously chaotic production that saw its initial director Richard Stanley fired (only to get rehired as a costumed extra) and his replacement **John Frankenheimer** driven to near-insanity by the unruly antics of Kilmer and co-star Marlon Brando. The film's primary worth is as a companion-piece to the behind-the-scenes expose LOST SOUL (2014), in which all the sordid details of this Hindenburg-worthy disaster were laid bare. FILM



5. SUPER MARIO BROS.

While on the subject of 1990s movie disasters, here's one of the most notorious examples. SUPER MARIO BROS. (1993) is a four alarm stink bomb upon which quite a few talented people, including directors Rocky Morton and Annabelle Jankel, producer Roland Joffe and actors Bob Hoskins, John Leguizamo and Dennis Hopper, labored. Another noteworthy element is the fact that it was an early iteration of a type of movie that in recent weeks has become extremely profitable: the video game adaptation. SUPER MARIO BROS. may not have achieved much success, but it got there first. FILM

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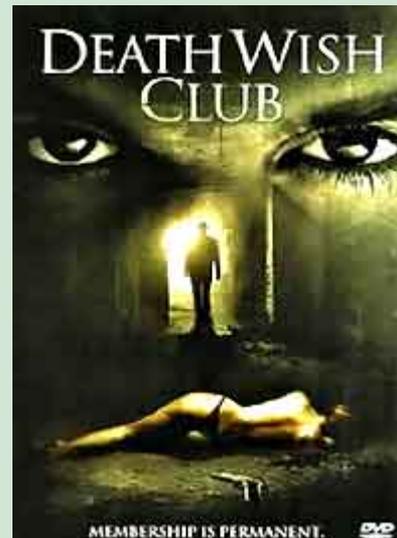


Original pen-and-ink art depicts a slew of classic monsters, all wrapped around a sleek white mug. Two sizes: 11 oz and 15 oz. "Monster Mash" is the first of three lines we're creating.

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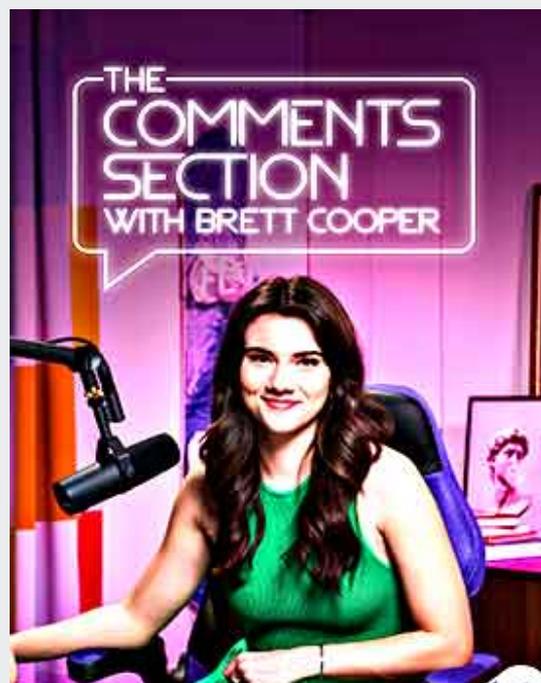
- **IMAGES** (Nonfiction)
- **DEATH WISH CLUB** (Film)
- **SKIN** (Fiction)
- **THE AWAKENING** (Fiction)
- **LOUIS THE 19TH, KING OF THE AIRWAVES** (Film)
- **Archived newsletters for easy reference**
- ***And Much More!***



Insider Info

America's competency crisis continues to expand. Here I'm going to take a look at the right-wing vlogosphere, specifically the conservative outfit **The Daily Wire**, whose political leanings mean its failings can't be blamed on wokeness or DEI. So what, then, *can* they be blamed on?

At present The Daily Wire, founded by Ben Shapiro and Jeremy Boreing, is going through a rough patch. Due, apparently, to "business needs and



operational efficiencies,” TDW has been hit by **mass layoffs** and **Boreing’s defection in late March**, which followed another high-profile TDW decamping: its star vlogger **Brett Cooper**.

The 23 year old Brett Cooper headlined the Daily Wire YouTube channel **THE COMMENTS SECTION** from 2022-24. A former child actress, Ms. Cooper is a bubbly and captivating orator capable of speaking for lengthy periods without ever using an “um,” “like” or “you know,” and utilizing Gen-Z slang in a confident, pandering-free manner. During her three years on THE COMMENTS SECTION, she amassed an unheard-of 4 million-plus subscribers and became TDW’s main draw. Why, then, did they let her go?

That I can’t answer (it’s been alleged Cooper wanted more money), but the drama surrounding her firing was a juicy one. Cooper’s producer and former best friend **Reagan Conrad** took over THE COMMENTS SECTION and, if the rumors are to be believed, was given lessons on how to act like Cooper —and indeed, Conrad has her ex-friend’s speech patterns and mannerisms down pat. Reagan, however, is simply not Brett, and the COMMENTS SECTION’s **declining viewership** reflects that. Compounding the stupidity is the fact that in January Cooper started her own YouTube channel imaginatively titled BRETT COOPER SHOW, eliminating the need for a wannabe Brett Cooper.

Such arrogance/stupidity on the part of media executives, who believed they could get rid of their golden goose and replace her with a clone, isn’t at all unusual. In fact, it’s pretty common nowadays, and that, you might say, is the whole problem.



Check out Adam's recommendations in the ***NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE***.

I'm done reading. To the website!

The Bedlam Files, March 2025, Issue 25-03

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