

# **Kill Bill v2 Film Summary**

## **Kill Bill v2 by Quentin Tarantino**

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## Context

*Kill Bill v2* (2004) was the sequel to the enormously successful *Kill Bill v1* (2003) movie which also starred Uma Thurman as The Bride; David Carradine as Bill, Daryl Hannah as Elle Driver, Lucy Liu as O'Ren-Ishii, Vivica Fox as Copperhead and Michael Madsen as Budd.

Though *Kill Bill v1* seemed much more of a traditional swordplay, kung fu action film, *Kill Bill v2* seems to combine the traditional swordplay movie with a spaghetti western film, and even a love story. The relationships between the central characters are more evident in this film than in its prequel.

Much like its predecessor, *Kill Bill v2* plays homage to the martial arts genre that Tarantino grew up with and adored. He consulted two martial arts Masters for these films - Master Yuen Woo-ping and Master Gordon Liu who plays Pai Mei in the movie. Woo-ping is schooled in the northern style of kung fu while Liu is schooled in the southern style. Woo-ping's style is creative and fantastical, akin to scenes in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2003) and *Matrix* (1999). Liu's style is more true to actual kung fu fighting which was the mantra of his teacher and director.

Tarantino masterfully combined these two styles to create eye-popping, realistic fight sequences in *Kill Bill v1* and *Kill Bill v2*. It was not by accident that David Carradine of television series *Kung Fu* fame was the title character in the movies.

The martial arts training of all the lead characters was intense and not particularly easy for Daryl Hannah and Uma Thurman as they are both much taller than the typical martial arts experts in movies (e.g. Bruce Lee). Their higher center of gravity made the training more difficult, however, their hard work paid off in the fight sequences.

Uma Thurman is a veteran of Tarantino films, having starred in *Pulp Fiction* (1994) for which she received an Academy Award nomination. Michael Madsen is also a veteran of Tarantino films and one of Quentin's favorite actors. Madsen was featured in *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) Quentin's breakthrough film. David Carradine is a kung fu icon in the United States and Tarantino jumped at the opportunity to cast him in the title role. Daryl Hannah was hand selected by Tarantino for her role of Elle Driver. He approached her backstage of a play she was starring in to ask her to do the role, Hannah was delighted to have the opportunity to play an evil character.

The film, like the first in the series, was shot on location in China, Mexico and also in the United States. The training montage in *Kill Bill v2* of Beatrix with Pai Mei was shot in a temple in China as were many of the fighting scenes in the first movie. Though the film had a big budget, Tarantino wanted to keep some of the scenes true to the roots of low budget kung fu movies - such as using a condom filled with blood for scenes requiring blood rather than the more complex special effects used in modern films.



Screenwriter/Director Quentin Tarantino broke onto the scene when *Reservoir Dogs* became a huge hit first at Sundance Film Festival and then in the mainstream. He quickly sold two other scripts he had been working on, *True Romance* (1993) and *Natural Born Killers*. (1994)

*Kill Bill v1* and *Kill Bill v2* were a labor of love for Tarantino, owing to his passion for kung fu movies. He wrote and directed both of the films and worked with producer Lawrence Bender. Bender has produced all of Tarantino's feature films starting with *Reservoir Dogs*. The films in the *Kill Bill* series grossed over \$400M combined, worldwide in the box office and were distributed by Miramax.

# Summary and Analysis

*Kill Bill v2* opens with Chapter 6 in which The Bride (a.k.a Black Mamba, a.k.a Mommy, a.k.a Beatrix Kiddo) lying on the floor. Covered in blood, she tells Bill that the baby she was carrying was his just as he attempted to kill her by shooting her in the head.

The scene then cuts to The Bride driving on her way to see and kill Bill. We are reminded that she was in a coma for five years and has vowed to kill all members of her former death squad and then Bill. After successfully killing two former colleagues of the "Deadly Viper Assassination Squad" (a.k.a DiVAS) namely, Vernita Green (played by Vivica Fox) and O-Ren Ishii (played by Lucy Liu) in *Kill Bill v1*, The Bride has two more obstacles on her way to killing Bill - Budd (Bill's brother) and Elle Driver (The Bride's arch rival in the Deadly Viper Assassination Squad).

The opening scene tells the viewer exactly happened in the wedding chapel on the fateful day when DiVAS attempted to kill The Bride. We learn that the events did not take place on the day of The Bride's wedding to Tommy Plympton, but rather the day of their wedding rehearsal.

The black and white scene of the wedding rehearsal begins with Reverend Harmony and Mrs. Harmony instructing Tommy and The Bride on what they are supposed to do at the wedding ceremony, including the proper way to kiss. In the chapel with the Harmonys, Tommy and The Bride are: Jolene, Erica and Janeen, friends of the soon to be betrothed and Rufus the piano player. *Love Me Tender* is the wedding song selected by the couple, after being prompted by Rufus. The song is an ironic twist of fate with the carnage about to take place in the chapel.

After the Harmonys upset The Bride when they question her on the fact that there will be no family or friends on the "bride's side" of the chapel, The Bride decides she needs some fresh air and walks alone towards the back of the chapel. We see The Bride several months pregnant. Her pregnancy is also addressed by her friends when they make an excuse for The Bride to step outside.

The Bride is walking outside when she begins to hear the familiar sound of a wood flute being played. Some concern can be seen in her eyes as she walks outside and sees Bill sitting outside the door to the chapel playing the flute.

The Bride asks Bill how he found her and what he was doing there. Bill explains that he was looking for her killers (Bill believed she had been murdered which is why he had not seen her in several months) when he found her instead. Bill then proceeds to question her on her plans to marry Tommy.

The Bride explains that she is marrying Tommy and plans to work at his used record store to have a "normal" life for her daughter. The Bride asks Bill to be "nice," however, Bill explains that he is never nice, but he will try to be "sweet." As the two are confronted



by Tommy to see what the delay in The Bride's return is, The Bride introduces Bill as her father, back from a trip to Australia as a surprise.

As the wedding rehearsal begins, Bill is seated on the bride's side of the chapel after explaining to Tommy that it is a "bit much" to ask him to give The Bride away. Viewers of the first movie in the series understand that Bill and The Bride were lovers and therefore, Bill would never be able to give her away. The camera pans out from the bridal party to another party entering the chapel - the DiVAS. Shots are fired.

The next scene is Bill and Budd, his brother, discussing The Bride on a hunt to kill Bill, and presumably Budd. Budd seems shocked to learn that she was able to kill and escape from Crazy 88, a group of bodyguards and killers. Though there were not 88 of them, as presumed by Budd, Bill does explain how she was able to kill them and escape. His mention of her name is bleeped out of the movie. We only later learn that it is Beatrix Kiddo.

Budd explains that he thinks The Bride deserves her revenge which would include killing Bill and Budd. He further explains that The Bride deserves to die as well, based on the fact that she, like them, was a hired killer. The two then discuss a Hattori Hanzo samurai sword - considered the epitome of swords. Budd explains that he pawned his sword for \$250.00 when he was down on cash. Bill was shocked and disappointed to hear that this "priceless sword" had been pawned. He explains that he learned that Hattori Hanzo broke a solemn oath never to make another sword when he made one for The Bride.

Chapter 7 entitled "Lonely Grave of Paula Schultz" begins with Budd going to work as a bouncer at a local strip club. He is severely reprimanded by his boss and humiliated in front of a lady friend of his boss for being late to work. His boss punishes Budd by removing Budd from the schedule and then sending him out to see Rocket before leaving. Rocket then asks him to clean the overflowing toilet in the ladies' room.

Budd returns to his trailer and looks around the vacant, desert area surrounding it. It is clear from his expression that something is awry. He goes into the trailer and we see The Bride come from under the trailer with her sword. She opens the door of the trailer to rush in and kill Budd when he shoots her with a twin-barrel rifle with such force that she lands twenty feet outside the trailer, blood on her chest.

Bud shot her with rock salt, and then uses a syringe filled with a sedative to render her unconscious. He removes all noticeable weapons from her, ties her hands and feet and calls Elle Driver (a.k.a California Mountain Snake) to let her know that he has captured The Bride (a.k.a Black Mamba) and has the coveted sword. Elle Driver agrees to pay \$1 million for the sword as long as Budd promises to make The Bride suffer until she dies.

Budd and his cohort Ernie are then digging a deep hole in a graveyard, in front of the grave of Paula Schultz. The Bride is bound at the hands and feet. When Ernie and Budd attempt to lift her to bring her to her final resting place she resists and then is forced to make a choice - she either acquiesces and will be buried with a flashlight or she fights



them and is buried after she receives a can full of mace in both eyes. She acquiesces. The Bride is placed in a simple pine box coffin and is buried alive.

Chapter 8, entitled "Cruel Tutelage of Pai Mei" begins with the memory of Bill explaining to The Bride the story of Pai Mei. Pai Mei was the most powerful man in China, a master of martial arts. He relays the story of how Pai Mei was walking and crossed paths with a monk. Pai Mei nodded to the monk; however, the monk did not return the gesture, either deliberately or out of not seeing Pai Mei. Pai Mei then demands that the abbey of the monastery give his neck to Pai Mei for the monk's transgression. What ensues is a massacre in which Pai Mei killed all the monks.

Bill also mentions the infamous Five-Point Palm Exploding Heart maneuver of Pai Mei. The maneuver is done in such a way that Pai Mei touches five pressure points on the chest of the victim and then walks away. After the victim walks five steps, his or her heart explodes and they die. Bill explains to The Bride that Pai Mei does not teach that move to anyone. Bill takes The Bride to Pai Mei to be his disciple, Pai Mei was to be her new master and she was to learn all of his techniques. She is warned to never show a defiant eye to Pai Mei or he will pluck it out, and he would sooner kill her than accept her attitude or defiance.

The scene continues with the training of The Bride by Pai Mei. He humiliates her and breaks her down from the very beginning when he asks her to show him her skills. She is clearly no match for his skills and is easily overcome by him. After forcing her to her face with her arm twisted behind her, he threatens to snap it off. She begs him not to and he tells her that the arm now belongs to him and her training was to begin the next day.

Much of the training scenes are an attempt of The Bride to break a wood log with her fist from only three inches away from the log. Pai Mei explains that sometimes the enemy is only a few inches away and the technique was important. The training scenes include images of The Bride walking up the extremely steep steps to the temple with two buckets of water hanging from either end of a long wood log, invoking images of Jesus Christ and the cross.

The movie cuts back to The Bride in the pine box. She manages to wriggle out of her boots and pull them up to her torso with her feet. She is able to pull out a small pocket-knife with her tied hands from the boot and cut through the ropes that tie her. She then uses the techniques of Pai Mei to break through the coffin and the dirt and pull herself out of the grave. She then walks into a café full of dirt and dust. The imagery of the dust coming off of her as she walked made her look like a specter to the employee at the café, a typical comic moment in many of Tarantino's films.

Chapter 9 entitled "Elle & I" begins with the image of Elle driving on her way to see Budd and collect her sword. She meets Budd and the two begin to talk. Budd has the sword and Elle has a red suitcase full of money. Budd inquires if Elle feels more remorse or relief over the fact that The Bride, her arch nemesis is dead. Elle's initial response is that she feels a little of both. As Budd opens the suitcase and starts pulling



the money out, a black mamba snake, placed in the suitcase by Elle, attacks him three times. We learn that the black mamba (the nickname of The Bride) is the most feared killer in the African bush because death is certain. The venom paralyzes and kills the victim in as little as twenty minutes. Just before Budd takes his last breath, Elle tells him that she feels more remorse than anything else because the best warrior she ever knew, The Bride, was killed by someone as pathetic as Budd.

As Elle prepares to leave the trailer she is confronted by The Bride, with a kick to the chest. The two begin a battle in the trailer, crashing through walls and attacking each other with great ferocity. As Elle grabs The Bride's sword, The Bride notices that Budd's sword was not sold and is actually sitting in a golf bag. She grabs the sword and the two prepare to square off.

Just before squaring off, Elle informs The Bride that the reason she had an eye plucked out (she wears a patch) by Pai Mei was because she called him an old fool. Elle further explains that she then killed Pai Mei by poisoning his fish heads. The Bride is extremely upset and Elle mocks her by saying that she killed her Master and now she plans to kill The Bride with her very own sword. The Bride then informs Elle that she has no future. The two attack and collide, swords crossed. In a quick move, The Bride then plucks the other eye from Elle leaving her blinded, screaming and writhing on the floor in the trailer, the black mamba snake not far from her.

The next chapter is simply entitled "Last Chapter - Face to Face" and it begins like the movie began with The Bride driving in her car on her way to find and kill Bill. She explains that Bill had no father figure, so he "collected them" along the way. The Bride leaves to see one of these figures, Esteban Vihaio who ran a brothel in Mexico to find Bill.

The dialogue between Esteban and The Bride is enlightening. We learn that Bill has always had a penchant for blondes and Esteban is not surprised that Bill's passion for The Bride was so great that would lead him to shoot her in the head in an attempt to kill her. Esteban muses that it would have been better to simply cut The Bride's face, to which he calls over one of his prostitutes who has a disfigured face. Esteban tells The Bride how to find Bill and explains that he is doing so in order to help Bill see The Bride again.

The Bride arrives at the location of Bill, gun in hand and sword strapped to her back. She breaks into the home and starts to search for Bill, gun in front of her, ready to fire. She turns the corner, gun drawn to the patio and is confronted by Bill and her daughter, BB with play guns. "Bang, Bang, you're dead," her daughter and Bill muse, them both falling to the ground in mock death. Then The Bride follows suit to play along with her daughter that she had never seen before that day.

The Bride is visibly shaken and expresses hatred that Bill would use their daughter in such a way, but is not shocked. The interaction between Bill and The Bride is clearly awkward in front of BB, as both Bill and The Bride are trying to act casual in front of





their daughter, even though The Bride wants nothing more than to kill him and Bill is aware of this.

Bill recounts how BB wondered how her mother would recognize her since she had never laid eyes on her for five years and how Bill explained that The Bride would recognize BB because she has been dreaming of BB for five years. He then relays a story of how BB learned about life and death through her killing of a goldfish of hers. He explains how their daughter told him honestly that she pulled the fish from the tank and dropped it on the floor and watched it stomp around. She then stepped on it and immediately knew that she killed it.

The Bride and BB watched a video until BB fell asleep. The video was the story of a young girl whose father was a killer and was able to kill many, but as soon as he had gone home to his wife he forgot all that he had done and he was a loving husband and father.

The Bride and Bill began to speak in the living room when The Bride lunged for a sword and Bill shot the television the sword was on top of, and then threatened to shoot The Bride in the knee if she attempted to reach it again. He explained to her that the two of them would battle on the beach with their respective swords until death at sunrise.

Before the battle to the death, however, he wanted to get the truth from The Bride about some things he has been wondering. He then shot her with a dart full of truth serum. As it was taking effect he talked to her about superheroes and how they all wore costumes, and that the superhero is not who they really were. They were Peter Parker, not Spiderman, they were Bruce Wayne not Batman. He then explained that only Superman was the real superhero and his costume was Clark Kent. He then explained that living the life of the dutiful wife of Tommy and a mother was not who The Bride really was, but rather she was a killer.

The dialogue that ensues was of Bill and The Bride telling the truth to each other. The Bride explained that though she is not shocked that Bill was capable of massacring her fiancé, their friends and all the people in the chapel that day, she was shocked that he would do it to her. He explained that he did it as an overreaction to his love for her and his deep hurt that she abandoned him.

The Bride explains that she abandoned him and hid out because she learned that she was pregnant. She explained that up until the point when the pregnancy strip turned blue (meaning she was pregnant) that she belonged to Bill and would do anything he said, even kill for him. But once it turned blue, then she chose her baby over Bill and wanted to give her baby a clean slate and not have to live by the sins of her mother.

The Bride recounts the story of how it was before her last assignment that she learned she was pregnant. Just then, an assassin of her soon to be victim shot a large hole through her hotel room door in an attempt to kill The Bride before The Bride could carry out her assassination. The Bride pleaded with the would-be assassin, Karen, for her life based on the fact that she just learned that she was pregnant. In an odd sequence of

Karen reading the pregnancy test and the humorous wishing of luck to The Bride by Karen, The Bride's life was saved and she vowed to leave the business and raise her daughter in a safe environment.

After Bill and The Bride confessed to each other it was time to fight, and a short fight sequence takes place while the two are still seated at an outside table. The fight ends when The Bride uses the five-point palm exploding heart move on Bill. Bill is shocked that she knew it and asked if Pai Mei taught her the move. She says, "of course he did."

Bill then tells The Bride that she was a good person, though at times she was a "c\*nt." He then asks how he looks and The Bride tells him that he looks "ready." With that he takes five steps and falls to the ground, dead. The Bride then holds BB in her arms as she leaves the home, her sword strapped to her back.

The next scene is entitled "Next Morning" and it starts with BB sitting on a bed watching cartoons as The Bride lays on the bathroom floor both sobbing and laughing. Her emotions overwhelm her. She then goes out and lays next to her daughter as the movie ends with the statement that the "lioness has rejoined her cub."



# Characters

## **The Bride (a.k.a Black Mamba, a.k.a Beatrix Kiddo, a.k.a Mommy), played by Uma Thurman.**

### **Description**

A trained killer, The Bride is the central figure in the *Kill Bill* movies. A slender blonde, she is an unlikely martial arts expert, yet her training under Bill and later Pai Mei made her a killing machine.

The Bride's focus is revenge. She attempts to avenge the murder of her fiancé, Tommy Plympton, their friends Jolene, Erica and Janeen as well as the preacher who was to perform their wedding, his wife and the piano player. The Bride also thought her daughter had died when she was shot and sought to avenge her daughter's death as well.

The Bride is driven by her passion for revenge. She left the life of a killer behind to try to create a clean slate and a safe home for her daughter, who she thought died when The Bride was shot at her wedding rehearsal.

The Bride is a formidable opponent and is considered the best in the DiVA group. Her nickname Black Mamba means death incarnate. She is able to call upon her training from Pai Mei at three critical junctures in the film. Her ability to break from the pine box she was buried alive in; her plucking the eye from Elle and using the Five Point Palm Exploding Heart maneuver to kill Bill were all traits learned under the tough, but powerful tutelage of Pai Mei.

### **Analysis**

As with most of Tarantino's characters, The Bride is a "bad guy," but a complex character, as are most characters in this film and other Tarantino films. Tarantino generally does not have "good guys" in his films, although The Bride seems to be the closest, but the fact remains she is a trained killer for hire.

The Bride's quest for revenge is a central focus of the movie. It also is her drive and determination. At a point in the film when Budd is speaking to Elle he states a belief that people stick around longer when they have a job to do. For The Bride her job is to avenge the murders of those closest to her and kill Bill.

The Bride's character at times appears Christ-like. Her return from the dead not once, but twice in the series (once when she was shot in the head and lay in a coma for 5 years, and a second time in *Kill Bill v2* when she breaks from the coffin). This is coupled with imagery in the film that also draws some strong resemblances to a Christ figure.



The imagery of her carrying the buckets of water, tied either end to a long wooden pole that she carried across her shoulders is powerful symbolism for this character.

The Bride's complexity is in both her nature to be a cold blooded killer, including admitting at the end of the film that she enjoyed killing all the members of DiVA, as well as her loving nature towards her daughter. It was her strong desire to give her daughter a clean slate that leads her to leave DiVA. She wanted her daughter to have a normal life, a clean slate, born without original sin is not too far of a stretch in the analysis of The Bride's motivations.

The Bride's complexity is further evidenced at the end of the film when she is both hysterically laughing and crying after succeeding in killing all the members of DiVA, including Bill.

## **Bill (a.k.a Snake Charmer), played by David Carradine**

### **Description**

Bill is an extremely complex character, much like The Bride. Bill ordered the murder of The Bride's fiancé and every one in the chapel during the wedding rehearsal. He is the leader of DiVA who hand selected his assassins, trained them and turned them all into highly trained killers.

Bill's love for Beatrix (The Bride) led him to ordering the murders. He later describes his actions as an "overreaction" to learning that the love of his life had left him and was marrying another man. Bill further thought that the baby Beatrix was carrying was the child of Tommy. Just before shooting Beatrix he learned that he was the father. Bill is a typical Tarantino character in the sense that he is a "bad guy" but also quite complex. He is set up as the arch villain in the movie, yet his motivation for his actions were passion and love for Beatrix.

Bill is an outstanding, highly trained warrior himself. He was trained by Pai Mei and had a sword from Hattori Hanzo. He had Hattori Hanzo swear a blood oath to never make another sword, an oath that was broken when he made one for Beatrix. Bill is also the driving force of the hatred between Elle Driver and Beatrix. Elle's jealousy over the relationship between Bill and Beatrix lead her to despise Beatrix and to relish the thought of Beatrix suffering and being killed.

The character of Bill appears to be a good, loving, nurturing father. BB, the daughter of Beatrix and Bill has presumably been living with Bill for the five years of her life. They appear to have a strong relationship, he seems caring and loving, much like the character in the video BB watches with Beatrix - a warrior who decapitates hundreds of men, yet comes home to forget all of that and be a good husband and father.



## Analysis

Bill possesses qualities that viewers of the movies will both love and hate. The lines become blurred and though most believe he deserves to die as a consequence of his actions, many may still view him as a sympathetic character that was led to kill based on his passion for the woman he loved.

The lines are further blurred as a result of him showing love and compassion for his daughter, yet being a trained killer. His story about Superman is as much about Beatrix as it is himself. The act of a loving man and father is a charade though, because deep down he is a killer first and foremost.

Bill is considered the Snake Charmer because of his ability to charm women into becoming trained assassins. DiVA was created under his leadership and was comprised of all women (other than his brother) that he charmed into being trained killers. He is a highly intelligent, cunning, killing machine.

Bill's love and passion for The Bride is evident, especially in the closing scenes of the movie. We learn about him being driven to kill Tommy and the other people at the chapel because he could not fathom losing Beatrix to another man, or her having another man's child. His quest for truth from Beatrix leads him to have truth serum injected in her so he can finally know the truth as to why she left him.

His parting words to Beatrix are that she is a good person as he begins his five-step walk to his death.

## Elle Driver, played by Daryl Hannah

### Description

Elle Driver, much like Beatrix is an unlikely assassin. A tall, leggy, thin blonde who looks like she should be a runway rather than carrying a gun and a sword, Elle wears an eye patch over the eye socket that once had the eye that Pai Mei plucked from her. Elle is driven by a deep hatred of Beatrix. This hatred is a result of Elle's jealousy of the relationship between Beatrix and Bill. Other than Beatrix, Elle is the best warrior in DiVA, she too was trained by Pai Mei.

Elle is the least likeable of the "bad guys" in the film, as she seems to have no redeeming qualities. She kills Budd by placing a black mamba snake in a suitcase of money that she gave him in exchange for The Bride's sword. She further laments that she wished it was she that killed Beatrix, rather than Budd.

The villainous side of Elle also led her to kill Pai Mei after he plucked her eye out for calling him an old fool. She poisoned his fish heads to murder him and took great joy in telling Beatrix that she killed Beatrix' Master. We do not see Elle die in the film, her



death is merely assumed. Beatrix plucks Elle's remaining eye out during a battle and leaves her blinded in the trailer with the black mamba snake.

## Analysis

Though most characters in Tarantino films are "bad characters" they are generally complex and have some redeeming qualities, Elle Driver may be one exception to that rule. She is driven by hatred and enjoys killing. If not for the superior fighting skills of Beatrix, Elle would be the top warrior in DiVA, a fact that does not escape Elle. One of the two main reasons she hates Beatrix is the knowledge that Beatrix is a better warrior; however, the main reason for her hatred is her jealousy of Beatrix winning Bill's affection.

The character is clearly blinded by her hatred and jealousy. She is then physically blinded when Beatrix plucks out her eye. Her meticulous nature seen by her copious, perfectly written notes make her a clean, concise killing machine. Elle seems the least human of the characters. She does not seem overly complex, but rather she seems like a woman who takes great delight in using her skills to kill others. Even her affection for Bill is likely more about "winning" than it is about genuine affection.

It is interesting that this character is the only member of DiVA to not meet her demise on camera. Though she is left blinded, she is left very much alive. This could be an opening for a third movie in the sequence.

## Pai Mei, played by Gordon Liu

### Description

Pai Mei is a martial arts Master who possesses great power. His talents are awesome and are respected by all the central characters in the movie. He is an older man, with full, long white hair and a long white beard that he enjoys stroking while making points in his training of his pupils. His character is strikingly "white" in dress and appearance (his hair and beard) and is a member of the White Lotus Clan.

Pai Mei trained Bill, Beatrix and Elle Driver, among others. Only Beatrix learned the famed Five-Point Palm Exploding Heart maneuver (which she uses to kill Bill at the end of the movie). He also is directly responsible for Elle having only one eye (he plucked out one of her eyes for showing him disrespect). Pai Mei is a very tough trainer, barbaric at times, but his techniques are effective in producing strong, nearly invincible warriors.



## Analysis

### **Budd (a.k.a Sidewinder), played by Michael Madsen**

#### **Description**

Budd is the washed-up, alcoholic former killer in DiVA and the brother of Bill. He is both pathetic and sympathetic at times in the film. His relationship with his brother Bill is intriguing. There is an underlying hatred between the brothers, though there is no mention in this movie as to the reason for the hatred. Budd actually lies to his brother and tells him that he pawned his Hattori Hanzo sword, when in fact it was in his trailer the entire time (and is later used in a battle scene between Elle Driver and Beatrix).

Budd was a talented killer who is now a bouncer at an always empty strip club in the middle of the desert. He is ridiculed and humiliated by his boss and has been reduced to cleaning overflowing toilets. Budd lives in a shambles of a trailer in the middle of the desert. Inexplicably he uses rock salt bullets to thwart the advances of Beatrix rather than killing her when she attempts to kill him. Later it is suggested by him that he wanted to make her suffer as his revenge of Beatrix breaking his brother's heart.

A deal between Budd and Elle for the sale of Beatrix' sword leads to Budd being killed. Elle outsmarted Budd and killed him with a black mamba snake (the nickname of Beatrix).

#### **Analysis**

Budd, though seemingly not too bright, actually makes some important revelations in the film starting with his conversation with his brother early in the film. Budd comments to Bill that Beatrix has earned the right for revenge and that both he and his brother Bill should die.

In the end, Beatrix does get her revenge and both Bill and Budd are killed. Budd further states, however, that Beatrix also deserves to die, presumably based on the fact that she, like them, was a hired killer.

Budd's character is the typical, defeated, alcoholic type. He had it all and drank it away, wallowing in his own self-pity and hate. On some level one is left to wonder if he regretted his life choices and that has lead him on the path of self-destruction. The dichotomy of this character is also evident in the fact that he hates his brother and can not forgive Bill for past transgressions, yet he wants Beatrix to suffer for breaking Bill's heart.

Budd makes two fatal mistakes - underestimating Beatrix and underestimating Elle. His underestimating Beatrix lead to her breaking free of the pine box and ultimately killing Bill. His underestimating Elle lead to his own death when he was bitten by the black mamba snake hidden in the suitcase of money Elle gave him.



The mistakes by Budd in underestimating these women are tied to chauvinism, a chauvinism his brother apparently shared. Bill's underestimation of Beatrix led her to easily kill him with the Five Point Palm Exploding Heart maneuver.

## **Esteban Vihaio, played by Michael Parks**

### **Description**

Esteban Vihaio is an eighty year old pimp at a brothel in Mexico. He also leads a small army of men who are the illegitimate children of the whores in his brothel. Esteban is a father-figure to Bill. We learn that from the tender age of five, Bill was deeply influenced by Esteban who filled the role of father, since Bill did not have a father in his life.

Esteban is clearly a man passionate about women. He flirts with Beatrix when she appears in his brothel requesting information on where she can find Bill. He is also somewhat amused by the fact that Bill was clearly enraptured by the beautiful blonde that sat before him, recalling a story of when Bill saw Lana Turner in *The Postman Always Rings Twice* that even at age five Esteban saw that Bill would be forever enraptured by blonde women. Esteban agrees to assist Beatrix in finding Bill so that Bill can see her again.

### **Analysis**

Esteban is a caricature type of character who is the epitome of a dirty-old man. He runs a brothel, is clearly enthralled with and flirting with Beatrix, yet at the same time he is a hardnosed pimp who views his whores as property that needs to be punished at times as well, as evidenced by his cutting the face of one of the prostitutes, the results of which are displayed to Beatrix.

Esteban is somewhat elegant at the same time, seemingly out of place in his seedy brothel. Smoking a cigarette through a cigarette holder he enjoys his banter with Beatrix and he is amused by the passion of Bill and Beatrix' relationship which lead them to the point where Bill tried to kill Beatrix and Beatrix is now on her way to kill Bill.

## **BB, played by Perla Haney Jardine**

### **Description**

BB is the daughter of Beatrix and Bill. She is a cute five year old who had never met her mother until the point where Beatrix arrives to kill Bill. BB is able to bond with her mother rather quickly and has a good relationship with her father, Bill. She does not appear to know much about the relationship between Beatrix and Bill or their profession.





## Analysis

Though BB has only a few minutes of camera time in the film, she is an important character in the plot development.

Beatrix was pregnant with BB when Bill shot Beatrix, and had her fiancé and everyone present in the chapel killed as well. One of the things that drove Bill to that point was the mistaken believe that BB was the child of Tommy, Beatrix' fiancé. It is not until he is just about to kill Beatrix when he learned that he was in fact BB's father.

BB is also the reason that Beatrix ran from Bill and tried to begin a new life, with a clean slate. Beatrix wanted to give her daughter every opportunity to have a normal life, rather than grow up under the roof of Bill and perhaps one day become a killer as well. This ultimately led to the action in the film as Bill was driven to murder and Beatrix was driven to revenge. At the end of the film the lioness and the cub are reunited and you see Beatrix lay in bed next to BB as they watch a cartoon.



# Themes

## Passion and Murder

Passion and murder are central themes throughout the movie and drive many of the characters, if not all of the characters. It is Bill's passion for Beatrix that leads him to arranging the murders of Tommy and everyone at the wedding rehearsal, as well as the shooting of Beatrix. It is Beatrix's passion for revenge that leads to her killing all the members of DiVA and then Bill, himself.

Passion and murder also drive Elle Driver. She has passion for killing, but it is also her passion for winning Bill's favor and seeing Beatrix suffer that result in her killing of Budd and her fight with Beatrix.

Murder is obviously the business of DiVA. They are cold blooded, highly trained assassins. In the end they are victim to their very practice. The movie combines passion with murder to make the inextricably combined. The two central characters: Beatrix and Bill are driven by passion to commit murder.

## Revenge

Revenge is a common theme in many movies, *Kill Bill v2* is no exception. The interesting aspect of this film is that the revenge motif surrounds a group of killers, none of the characters truly being a "good guy."

Typically many revenge themed movies involve the "good guy" versus the "bad guy," while in this movie it is "bad guy" versus "bad guy." Beatrix, a for-hire killer seeks revenge for the murder of her fiancé and all the participants in their wedding rehearsal. She is clearly driven by revenge.

Budd, Bill's brother makes a key observation in a conversation with his brother when he tells Bill that Beatrix deserves her revenge. There is recognition in this film and it's prequel that Beatrix deserves to revenge these acts because of their particular heinousness even among a group of killers.

Other elements of revenge in the film include Beatrix's revenging Elle's murder of Pai Mei by plucking out Elle's remaining eye, leaving her blinded. There is Budd's revenge of his brother Bill by his lying to Bill about selling his Hattori Hanzo sword, which is later found and used by Beatrix in a battle with Elle.

## Teacher/Student, Master/Student

Many martial arts film involve a teacher and student or Master and student. *Kill Bill v2* includes a number of these types of relationships. In each of these relationships,



however, the teacher is killed at the hands of one of his students. Pai Mei is the teacher and Master for Bill, Beatrix and Elle. Pai Mei dies at the hands of Elle. Bill, the Master and teacher of all the members of DiVA, including Beatrix, dies at the hands of Beatrix.

The theme of student against teacher is common in films, when the student learns as much or more than the teacher, or at least they presume to. Beatrix's respect for the teachings of Pai Mei lead to her complete training, including learning the fabled Five Point Palm Exploding Heart technique. It was Elle's disrespect for Pai Mei that led to her having an eye plucked out (though that act ultimately led to Elle murdering Pai Mei by poisoning his fish heads).

The last battle of the film was between the teacher (Bill) and student (Beatrix). Beatrix, however, had gained greater knowledge than her original teacher, Bill which led to Bill's death at the end of the film.

## Hunter & Prey

The three central characters in *Kill Bill v2* are all both the hunted and the hunter in the film. Bill hunts for Beatrix when he learns that she is still alive and then he becomes hunted by Beatrix for the murder of her fiancé and other members of the wedding rehearsal.

Elle is the hunter of Beatrix attempting to kill her before she is killed by Beatrix who is at the same time hunting Elle. Beatrix is initially hunted by Bill when he learned of her being alive, when he thought she was dead. She is also being hunted by Elle. At the same time she is the hunted, she is the ultimate hunter seeking Budd, Elle and Bill.

The relationship between the hunter and the prey is complex. Under the surface there are many emotions - love, passion, hatred, revenge among them. The peculiar relationship between the hunter and the prey is discussed in a conversation between Budd and Elle when the question of whether the hunter feels remorse or relief when their prey has been killed. The remorse would be over the loss of a central motivator in their lives (killing the prey) while the relief would be in the killing of the prey - the success of the goal.

Elle feels more remorse than relief in her presumed killing of Beatrix (though Beatrix was not actually dead). Bill expresses the feelings of loss and remorse that he had when he had shot and presumably killed Beatrix in the wedding chapel. Beatrix, however, seems both relieved and remorseful when she kills Bill, which is evident by her being hysterical crying and laughing in the next to final scene of the film.

## Style and Cinematography

*Kill Bill v2* was the continuation of Tarantino's homage to the kung fu genre which he had grown up with. The fight sequences were well choreographed by two kung fu Masters with different styles in order to have creative, fantasy fight sequences such as those in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and more realistic fight sequences for which Gordon Liu was known in his countless movie credits.

The movie had elaborate fight sequences which included both hand-to-hand combat as well as swordsmanship. The soundtrack for the fight sequences was reminiscent of the soundtrack of many kung fu movies of the 1960's and 70's.

Like many of Tarantino's films, *Kill Bill v2* uses both black and white and color photography. The black and white scenes in the movie are dramatic contrasts to the color scenes in the film which helps enhance the dialogue of those scenes. Tarantino adeptly switches between black and white and color scenes in a seamless manner. The sets for much of the film are secondary to the dialogue and the action, as would be expected in a Tarantino movie.

# Motifs

## Training for Revenge

Training for revenge is a popular motif in many movies, including kung fu movies and mainstream movies such as the *Rocky* (1976) series of movies, *Karate Kid* (1984) and many others. In this film the training for revenge motif was a flashback to Beatrix's training under Pai Mei. The skills she learned from Pai Mei served her well and enabled her to exact her revenge on the murderers of her fiancé and the members of the wedding rehearsal.

The training for revenge montage had typical background music for this type of scene and played on this popular motif well with the aloof, tough but somewhat comedic trainer and the struggling, dedicated trainee.

## Blindness & Sight

A running motif in the movie is blindness and sight. Characters are blinded by hatred, revenge and love while characters are also enlightened by knowledge and truth, receiving sight. Elle is made physically blind her physical blindness is a result of her inability to see beyond her own hatred and murderous ways. Bill is blinded by his love for Beatrix which leads him to "overreact" and murder Tommy and all the other wedding rehearsal attendees.

Beatrix is faced with a choice of blindness or sight when she is being buried alive. Instead of being physically blinded by the mace, she chooses to see and receives the flashlight when she acquiesces. This is a strong metaphor for her "seeing the light" and leaving the DiVA when she learns that she is pregnant. She was no longer blinded by Bill and under his ownership, as she believed she was. But with her pregnancy she had her eyes opened and left the organization.

Throughout the film there are physical and mental images of blindness and vision. The end of the film the ultimate eye-opener was the conversation between Bill and Beatrix before their battle to the death, which opened his eyes for perhaps the first time, while Beatrix learned that it was his love for her that blinded him and resulted in his "overreaction."

## Snakes

Snakes are a strong motif in the film, each DiVA member having a nickname based on a lethal snake, the black mamba (death incarnate) being the most lethal and the nickname of Beatrix. A black mamba snake is used by Elle to kill Budd, the only member of DiVA not killed by the hands of Beatrix. Though Elle's choice of snake makes it literally true that all members of DiVA died by the hands of Black Mamba. The

characters in the film embodied many snake-like characteristics. All of them were very lethal and stealthy when they needed to be. Bill, the ultimate snake, used his charms to recruit these ladies as members of his killing team.

## **Jealousy**

Jealousy is tied to hatred and revenge in the movie with the two worst of the "bad guys" in the film. Elle's jealousy of Beatrix and Bill leads her to hate Beatrix and want nothing more than for Beatrix to suffer greatly before she is killed. Bill's jealousy of Beatrix's marriage to another man leads him to order the murders of Beatrix's fiancé and all the people in the chapel during the wedding rehearsal.



# Symbols

## Hattori Hanzo Sword

The Hanzo swords in the film represent the epitome of killing tools, coveted by the killing machines--the members of DiVA. They represent their passions, their hatred, their jealousy, their lust for murder.

The swords play an integral part in a number of scenes including the final two killings of Beatrix's revenge - Elle and Bill, though neither character dies by the use of a sword. In fact, in both final battle scenes the swords become encumbrances more than assets. This symbol is based on the fact that those feelings that the sword represents blinds the characters, it is only Beatrix who saw beyond these feelings and was able to kill Elle and Bill during sword battles (though she did not kill them with the sword).

## Christ

There are various scenes within the film that liken Beatrix to a Christ-like figure. In the movie she ostensibly returns from the dead when she is able to break from her coffin and dig her way back above ground. The imagery of her carrying the pales of water, each pale tied to the end of a long wooden pole; while she suffered to carry it invoked the image of Christ carrying his cross. After breaking from the coffin, there is the image of Beatrix struggling through the desert, also reminiscent of Christ's journey through the desert. Christ endured great pain to save God's children. Beatrix endured great pain to protect her daughter.

## Black Mamba

The black mamba snake is one of the deadliest in Africa, the name means Death Incarnate. The black mamba can strike quickly and will deliver a deadly blow. Black Mamba a.k.a Beatrix also strikes quickly and delivers a deadly blow as seen in her plucking the eye from Elle and using the Five Point Palm Exploding Heart technique on Bill.

## BB

BB is a powerful symbol in the movie, she represents hope. It is the hopes for a better life for BB that Beatrix leaves DiVA and attempt to hide from Bill. She wants her daughter to start life with a clean slate. It is BB that stops Beatrix in her tracks when she goes to kill Bill. Bill understands that the love between mother and daughter is very powerful. The lioness rejoins her cub at the end of the film after not seeing her daughter for the five years of her daughter's life. BB embodies hope in a movie that is otherwise filled with angst, despair, anger, hatred and jealousy.



## Essay Questions

Are there any truly good or bad characters in this film and explain why or why not.

Discuss the roles of student and teacher in the film and point out all of the student/teacher relationships in it.

How are images of Christ invoked in the film and why do you think Tarantino uses such images?

Blindness and vision are central themes in the film; discuss how they are used throughout the movie.

Explain the complex relationship between the hunter and the prey in the film.

How do the soundtrack and background sounds/dialogue impact the film and give at least two specific examples of a background song or background dialogue which have a direct influence on the film.

Discuss the complex relationship between Bill and the members of DiVA, specifically his relationship with Beatrix Kiddo.

Discuss the question posed in the film as to whether a warrior feels more remorse or regret when his or her prey dies.

What was the central theme in this film and discuss it.

Discuss the symbolism of the Hattori Hanzo sword, the snake and Elle's eye patch.