

TITLE	NATURAL BORN KILLERS	ANALYST	JOHN AUGUST
AUTHOR	Quentin Tarantino	DATE	10/13/92

SYNOPSIS

When REDNECKS start harassing MALLORY KNOX in a New Mexico coffee shop, husband MICKEY opens fire. Together the happy couple kill everyone in the diner except for a PINBALL COWBOY left to tell the people that Mickey and Mallory Knox did this.

At the station, police detective JACK SCAGNETTI is given orders to escort two prisoners to the Nystrom Insane Asylum. DEWIGHT McCLUSKY of the California Prison Board explains Mickey and Mallory are going to the asylum because no prison will take them. If some "accident" were to befall them along the way, so much the better. PHIL WURLIZTER, superintendent of the jail, makes arrangements for the transfer.

WAYNE GAYLE, host of "American Maniacs," meets with Mickey in the visiting area. Mickey is pleased to learn his ratings beat Ted Bundy's. Mickey agrees to a televised interview. At the TV station, Wayne's crew celebrates: SCOTT, the cameraman; ROGER, the soundman; and UNRULY JULIE, Wayne's assistant. They work furiously to get their footage in shape for a special one-hour episode. (What follows is footage documenting the criminal career of Mickey and Mallory, interspersed with stand-ups by Wayne.)

Mickey and Mallory are apprehended at a Circle-K in St. Paul. Interview with BISHOP, a 7-Eleven survivor. Surveillance camera footage illustrates his tale. JUDGE STEINSMA explains that Mickey defended himself at the trial. Interviews with three LONG-HAIRED GUYS: "They're way cooler than Manson." An INTENSE COP swears a lot. A LAW STUDENT explains his admiration. Musclemen NORMAN and SIMON had their legs sawed off by Mickey and Mallory, but have no hard feelings. Survival of the fittest, they say.

A movie called "Thrill Killers" is based on their life. The ACTORS talk about how they prepared for their roles. Clips of the movie are interspersed. Interview with NEIL POPE, the writer and director, who calls it a Wagnerian love story. The ultimate anti-heroes are now international icons. In London, Japan and France, young fans dress like their heroes. The REDD KROSS video "Natural Born Killers" tops the charts.

GRACE MULBERRY, late teens, testifies against Mickey and Mallory. In his cross-examination, shot entirely in closeups, Mickey asks how he could possibly have defeated her brother TIM, a martial arts expert. Grace says Mickey's the devil incarnate. Mickey agrees, and kills her with a pencil through the heart. JUDGE STEINSMA sentences Mickey and Mallory to double life sentences, never to see each other again. The death penalty wasn't available. Even in their incarceration, they continue to kill guards and psychologists. New doctors find the couple insane, and order them sent to the asylum--"Lobotomy Bay."

(MORE)

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End of the TV footage, into the interview. Scene cuts back and forth between "reality" and the black and white film from Scott's camera. Prison boss Wurlitzer wants eight deputies in the room for the interview. Wayne talks him down to four. Scagnetti assaults Mallory in her cell. She breaks his nose. He sprays her with mace. Mickey evades Wayne's questions. Wurlitzer is called away by an emergency--a riot in the prison. Unruly Julie is sent out for food. Mickey tells a joke. At the punchline, he grabs a deputy's shotgun and kills Scott and a deputy. A standoff between Mickey and Scagnetti. Scagnetti flinches. Mickey breaks Scagnetti's fingers.

Wurlitzer tries to control the riots. Mickey and Wayne go on the air live. They find Mallory singing Girl Scout songs. Wurlitzer learns Mickey is loose. Mallory kills Scagnetti. With Wayne as a shield, they make it out of the prison, into the news van. In the woods, Mickey is filming with Roger's camera, black and white. The sound is out of sync. Wayne finishes his interview. Mickey and Mallory plan to use an "underground railroad" of their fans to move across the country. The interview finished, they kill Wayne.

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COMMENTS

There are some obvious concerns about this script.

The protagonists are mass murderers who kill defenseless citizens in particularly gruesome ways. The antagonist (or is he a protagonist?) is a thinly veiled Geraldo Rivera, host of "American Maniacs." The structure is wholly unconventional, skittering back and forth in time, alternating between a subjective and a God's eye point of view. The script obsessively directs from the page, and characters show zero development.

These would all be valid concerns if the script didn't work so well. Somehow, it manages to play this BONNIE AND CLYDE story for laughs, doing for the outlaw genre what HEATHERS did for the John Hughes generation.

NATURAL BORN KILLERS is hard to analyze, but easy to love. In its structure, characters and story line it seems to break so many of the rules, one wonders if it's even playing the same game. Beyond the snappy dialogue and flashy setups, it's hard to say what exactly its charm is. Perhaps the only reassuring bit here is that one would have the same difficulty explaining the charms of BOB ROBERTS or THIS IS SPINAL TAP, two films with a kindred spirit.

Marketed correctly, KILLERS could be a big hit with the MTV generation. Like HEATHERS, it also score as a cult video rental. But the potential for disaster is relatively high, and the film could miss its mark much as BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER. The script also works in the same terrain as KALIFORNIA, the upcoming Brad Pitt/Juliette Lewis release. With these considerations in mind, this excellent script receives a

MAYBE (qualified)