

# KILLER

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## PREMISE

1974 - The small county of Kaneville, OK has been ravaged by the oil crisis. The central steel mill has shuttered, leaving many out of work.

Tension rises between the poor and the poorer — Resources dwindle and class war looms. The unreliable police force struggles to maintain status quo. Summer boils over. The mutilated corpse of a teenage boy is found in the woods. There are no suspects. There are no leads.

Kaneville descends into panic.

### TONE AND STYLE

Killer is a graphic, dramatic horror series. Meant to be considered more of a long movie than a series. It tells a single story with a beginning, middle and end. Tonally it will be similar to genre-bending shows like Happy, Atlanta, Patriot, and The Wire.

Killer will be cinematic, a love letter to westerns and horror, with huge, wide open landscapes and tense standoffs in cramped bars.



Source: Own Work

## HISTORY

Kaneville county was established as a farming town in Southwestern Oklahoma in 1858. Initially just a small township of farmers, the area quickly grew into a proper town — two sides split by a river: Kaneville Proper and Fortune Valley - effectively a chattel village where slaves, indigenous people, farmhands and vagrants were sequestered. The small shacks that served as homes were provided “free of charge” to those forced to live in Fortune Valley. The county claimed this to be an act of kindness, but it was nothing more than a means to keep the less fortunate corralled and “under control”.

In the 1920s, a steel mill was established on the south end of the county. A large influx of workers came in, many of them immigrants, to take up work in the mill. Many of the prosperous farmers and freight workers took jobs as foreman and engineers - folks in Fortune Valley could find work on the floors; furnaces, presses, smelting — the hard and dangerous labor. Despite the swelling class divide, both sides of town began to prosper.

In 1972, the oil crisis finds its way to Kaneville. Without access to vital resources, the mill is shuttered within three months. For the foremen and engineers, this simply meant early retirement. For the laborers, this meant uncertainty and hardship. Some left town, heading east or west or north. Some stayed in Fortune Valley, unable to uproot their families, they are pressed harder and harder by the burden of simply trying to survive. Circumstances grow desperate, and tension mounts between classes.

Our story begins right as the town is inching towards collapse. The summer is settling in. The temperature is climbing to brutal highs. Things are beginning to boil.

## MAIN CHARACTERS

**Lake Dugan** - 34, mixed heritage (Osage, Puerto Rican), handsome but doesn't know it, a bit of a Springsteen type. Lake grew up in Fortune Valley and sees himself as its protector. Most of the people are happy to have him in that position, and he is well liked around the village. He is well tempered, if not a bit stoic, though he does have a sharp sense of humor. He strives to be compassionate, and hopes to be patient — a value his abuelita Rosa instilled in him.

Lake is also a proud husband and father. He met his wife 9 years ago on a night out with his friends up in Oklahoma City. She was out dancing with her friends, they traded glances ordering drinks, he asked if she wanted to dance, she said yes. Eight months later they were married and seven months after that, they had Gabriel.

Lake is a kind and passionate man, who will fight for what he believes in, sometimes to a fault. Lake has a tendency to give all of his morals, virtues and needs equal attention. This creates tension when the urge to protect his family clashes with the urge to protect his home town. Lake desperately wants to do both, but knows he should prioritize his family, and could move them out of Fortune Valley with relative ease.

His temperament is generally even keeled, with moments of extremes. Lake has a sense of humor that he uses as armor. He also has a tendency to be dismissive, though it's usually unintentional. He has a bit of an attitude issue with authority figures, and struggles to understand his own personal value beyond the role of a protector. He's harshly critical of himself, but generally internalizes those feelings. Lake prefers to be seen as calm, sort of goofy and easy to approach. He has an outward demeanor that could be described as "hip and nonchalant", which may come off as simply lazy. Despite his casual demeanor, he is still a very hard worker, and very observant/inquisitive.

**Billy Dwyer** - 36, white, relatively fit, all-American-1970s-divorced-guy, well-kempt but slowly falling apart. Billy grew up in Kaneville, under a long line of sheriffs. The men in the Dwyer family have been Kaneville sheriffs since the 1860s. This familial legacy of duty and authority has shaped Billy's entire existence. Despite this, Billy is still a deeply conflicted person. His desire to carry on the family line, to validate himself as a man, to be right and "normal" - those feelings conflict with a deep resentment towards his family and himself. Billy wants to be a "real cop". He wants to have real authority and control. He wants to create a sense of order. He wants to use his gun. Billy believe that, at least part of the reason Kaneville is coming apart is because of his Father's style of policing. He thins Art is too nice, to forgiving and too friendly. He does understand that, until recently, there's rarely any serious crime (Save for domestic disputes, which, considering the era and location of our story, don't usually get as much attention as they deserve.) and simply not much reason to be *that* kind of cop. Still, Billy feels that a stricter system of enforcement and a more authoritative presence would have stopped the issues before they began.

Billy is divorced and estranged from his 10 year old daughter. He resents fathers, and families. The loss of his mother when he was just in High School triggered a 20+ year struggle with alcoholism that he still privately succumbs to, though publicly he quit about a year ago.

Billy is neurotic, patient and smart. He isn't a complete wreck, but he is often on the edge. He can be terse, but does try to catch himself before he goes overboard.

**The Killer** - White, age indeterminate - roughly late 30s early 40s. Very physically fit, roughly 6'4", broad shoulders, fast, exceptionally quiet, possible asthma or other COPD determined by inconsistent wheeze. Wears a black, canvas "Detroit" jacket, zipped over a black G.I. sweater, black cargo pants, black work boots, black leather gloves and a tight, burlap mask that clings to his face, showing the faint outline of his nose and jaw. The mask only has two small holes for the eyes, and is filthy with dried blood, dirt, and various other debris.

Little is known or revealed about the killer's motives or true identity. His victim selection is seemingly random and indiscriminate. He generally uses a large hunting knife, twine and improvised/situational weapons for his kills.

The killer clearly has some kind of military training, is a survivalist type, an expert hunter and tracker, and (should all else fail), incredibly strong. Though his face is never shown, his physique is obviously well maintained - he is muscular and broad - a formidable and imposing form.

He also has a high tolerance for pain, and generally ignores most minor impacts, cuts, scratches and other attacks. Guns seem to slow him down, or deter him from pursuit, though he rarely puts himself at risk of being shot. He is not supernatural, but does use drugs to raise his pain threshold and increase his adrenaline.

He does not lure or bring his victims anywhere - mostly attacks when they are alone/isolated. His attacks are exceptionally brutal, he clearly toys with and tortures his victims, and generally leaves them in some sort of posed/ritual position after killing.

## SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

**Arthur Dwyer** - 57, white, average build, mild-mannered-midwesterner, kindly. Arthur is happy to be a public servant. He gets along well with the people in Kaneville, and is even generally liked by the folks on the Fortune Valley side. Most of his career as sheriff has been calm, void of major crimes - he was deputy for his father, and even then there was little to do on a day to day basis. This has lulled Art into a sense of ease, which leaves him unprepared to respond to both the killer and the mounting tension over financial strife.

Art is generally pleasant and calm and is a pretty reasonable and simple man. He likes routine, and tends to be very set in his ways. He's not a complete pushover, though, and has earned a certain degree of respect from people, simply by being steadfast and calm.

**Cemita Dugan** - 32, Mexican, hippy-with-an-edge, earthy but also down to earth, a daydreaming realist, practical and sensitive. Cemita is confident with herself and her beliefs. She has a lively sense of humor and an enormous laugh. She's a protective mother, and a playful and joyful wife. She's originally from Norman, OK. - just outside of OKC. She was raised by her single mother, who was a teacher and painter. Cemita admires her mother deeply, and carries not only a photo of her mother, but her mother's lessons and values. Cemita believes in brevity, tenderness, kindness and grit. She believes in self-preservation, and that to truly care for others, you have to ensure your own well being first.

Cemita understands Lake's motivation to protect his hometown, and even actively supports him in this - for some time.

Generally, folks around town either actively like or are neutral toward Cemita. She has a few gal-pals that she likes to get a drink with, from time to time.

**Luke Olenick** - 26, white, somber and bright-eyed farm boy type. Luke is the only standard law officer under Billy and Art. He is mistreated by Billy and pandered to by Art. He is a decent cop who does his job well, but is also too nervous of Billy and Art that he has a difficult time asserting himself. He is, similar to Billy and Art, unprepared for the situation in Kaneville.

Luke quietly keeps a secret side concealed. He rides his bike out of town late at night in several occasions. He's never married, has no girlfriend and lives alone on the edge of county and generally keeps to himself when not on duty. This secrecy and seclusion leads to some folks suspecting Luke for the killer. The truth? Luke is a gay man, and prefers to keep his life private from the less-than-friendly folks in Kaneville county. His home was a small inheritance from his father, who passed when Luke was 18.

Before the killer, most folks don't mind Luke and are at least cordial towards him. That said, Luke doesn't have an especially active social life, or much of a public routine. Because of this, most people just don't quite know how to approach him.

Kaneville does have a very small, and mostly very private LGBTQ+ community, which Luke does find some friends through, and struggles to embed the intricacies of his friendships private from most people.

## LOCATIONS

**The Killer's Hideout** - A half collapsed farmhouse at the edge of a massive dirt field on the outskirts of the county. The farmhouse was abandoned some 40 years ago due to crop fungus and bad soil. Since then it's been mostly ignored - too remote and difficult to get to for anyone to take serious interest beyond the very occasional salvager.

The killer keeps a cot, a hotplate, candles, and his gear and tools there, in a small nook in the upper loft. His kit includes: bow and arrows, two small hatchets, various knives and straight blades, several hundred feet of spooled twine, several notebooks and journals full of scribbled rants, strange drawings and diagrams. A small duffel bag full of random, smaller objects - all souvenirs from his victims - there are roughly 60-90 objects. Some items include: a baseball, a gold watch, a baseball hat, a tube of lipstick, panties, a tie, and a pair of smashed glasses.

The farm house is dusty and totally trashed, even on the non-collapsed side. It's mostly full of old, rusted-out farming equipment. A large old tractor, countless blades, rakes and tools, rusted beyond use. Car parts and larger junk items, ropes and chains hang from the ceilings.

**Carla's Diner** - Classic American diner-style restaurant. Worn vinyl seats, bright paints weather over decades of tobacco smoke, fryer grease and spilled coffee.

Carla's is where most folks in town go to have dinner on Fridays, and lunch on Sundays. Carla's is sort of the defacto town hall, in Kaneville. It's where a lot of comments turn into arguments. It's where proposals happen, where the old men argue at the corner of the counter seats. The coffee is burnt, but still manages to be good. The burgers are perfect, the omelettes are perfect. Everything is perfect. Everyone forgives the ornery cooks and terse servers, and most people prefer it that way.

Carla's is one of the only things in Kaneville that doesn't seem to have been affected by the financial crisis. They begin offering free coffee and Sunday meals for the unemployed folks in town. This fosters an air of resentment from those who still have their jobs but are also struggling, and Carla's slowly becomes a sort of forum for people to air their grievances.

**Lake and Cemita's home** - The Dugan family home has stood since 1890, a year after when Lake's great-grandfather claimed the plot in a land run. The house is not quite in disrepair, but is in a state of constant repair.

Lake grew up in this home. A home that, when he was a child, he believed was haunted, simply because it looked like it could be. A two story farmhouse, white with a bright red door. Lake's 10th birthday was the last time the house was repainted, and since then it has become weathered and begin to peel, contributing to the eerie feeling that most people get when they walk past, despite knowing Lake and Cemita.

Cemita keeps a small vegetable garden in the back yard. The back of the house also features a small deck that Lake and Cemita like to sit on and share a cigarette while watching Gabriel play in the back yard.

Beyond the back yard lies a long strip of sun-bleached prairie called Shepherd's Field - beyond the field lies Archoja woods. Archoja woods and Snake Split creek create the border between Fortune Valley and Kaneville proper.

### ADDITIONAL INFO

Kaneville is grounded in reality. While it is not a real place, it is based on real places. Specifically the towns of Mount Carroll, IL and Quapaw, OK. There aren't any real supernatural forces at work.

Kaneville county is split into two areas - Kaneville Proper and Fortune Valley. They are literally the two sides of town, with Kaneville proper being more small business and nicer homes, and Fortune Valley being, essentially, a large subdivision of mostly simple, shabby homes with very few local businesses to generate income into the immediate area. A single block of "downtown" exists, and is mostly shuttered stores - a small general store still functions, and the gas station in Kaneville is technically in Fortune Valley - though the oil crisis has rendered the gas station purposeless.

Culturally, Kaneville is largely homogenized, with pockets of well preserved indigenous heritage. Fortune Valley is more culturally diverse, with some public events held in celebration for various cultural holidays.

The common languages are English, Spanish and Osage/Siouan.

## SYNOPSIS

Our story finds the people of Kaneville struggling to maintain normalcy after the steel mill closes, putting many out of work. The mood in town shifts from bad to worse, as the upper class folks become less and welcoming to the working class. An argument between an older man from Fortune Valley and a teenager from Kaneville Proper turns violent, as the two men exchange blows. Lake Dugan tries to step in, but the teenage boy strikes Lake in the face and the fight boils over. Billy and Art arrive on the scene. They arrest Lake, and bring him to a holding cell. Billy releases him an hour later and reminds Lake that he has the authority.

In the morning, the badly mutilated body of a teenage boy is found in the woods. This immediately sends both sides of town into a panic - the victim is the young man involved in the fight, so Billy decides it must have been Lake after they released him. Billy begins to harass Lake. As Billy becomes obsessed with the case, the people in town become increasingly paranoid and desperate. A town hall meeting turns into a small protest. A man is shot at the protest and the scene descends into chaos.

Billy goes to confront Lake at his home. As the two argue, another killing happens in town. Billy shoots Lake and flees, unaware of what has occurred in town. Billy makes it back to town to discover the killing, and spots someone jogging across the field towards the old farmhouse. Billy pursues, and corners the figure. He shoots the figure and pulls the mask off, revealing Art. Billy panics, and notices Art's hands have been bound - this was a trick to toy with Billy. Billy rushes outside and sees a silhouetted figure ducking into the treeline. Billy shoots at it to no avail.

Cemita loads Gabriel and the wounded but still breathing Lake into their truck. As she preps the vehicle, the killer emerges from the treeline. He comes for Cemita but she manages to start the truck just in time and escape. Lake comes to and asks where they are going. Cemita simply responds "Away." - Lake falls back to sleep.

## SAMPLE SCENE

INT. PRINZE HOUSE, KITCHEN

The house is silent, and still.

Faint moonlight pours into the windows and across the floor.

Allen's body is splayed out on the kitchen floor. His chest is opened, exposing cracked ribs and shredded sinew.

A thick puddle of blood pools around Allen's rigid body.

Small streams of blood seep in between the tiles and spread into the cracks.

Allen's face is torn from countless gashes. He is nearly unrecognizable.

Billy steps through the open front door and scans the room. His gaze stops in the direction of Allen's mutilated corpse. Billy stumbles for his flashlight, and shines it onto the brutal scene. He freezes in place.

Billy stares, mouth hanging open. His eyes widen as he approaches the body.

Billy crouches to investigate the brutalized corpse.

BILLY  
God damn.

Billy scans the room, his eyes darting left to right. He rises back to his feet and puts his hands out, feeling at the air.

He steps towards the back hallway of the house.

INT. JEN AND ALLEN'S BEDROOM

Billy steps down the hall, scanning his flashlight along the floor and walls.

Inside the room is calm and still.

The covers are thrown off of the bed.

A small splotch of blood is streaked on the sheets.

Billy crosses over to the night stand and stares at Jen and Allen's wedding photo.

Gripping the photo in its frame, Billy's eyes begin to water. The photo bounces onto the bed. Billy rushes out of the room.

INT. PRINZE KITCHEN

Billy steps past Allen's body and catches himself on the counter.

Resting his elbows on the counter, Billy's breath heaves. The front door frames the street outside of the Prinze house.

Billy stumbles for the threshold, and stops to look out into the night.

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