

The Kill-Crazy Gang

by

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THE KILL-CRAZY GANG

FADE IN:

PROLOGUE

EXT. JUNCTION CITY, KANSAS GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

SUPER: 1906

Junction City sits at the confluence of the Republican and Smoky Hill Rivers; a trading center and thriving community south of Fort Riley.

Uniformed POLICEMAN and half-Cherokee ELLSWORTH LEWIS makes his rounds accompanied by his fourteen-year-old son FRANK. Even though he's big for his age, Frank is quiet and obedient around Ellsworth, with good reason.

Ellsworth checks the establishment's door, shines his flashlight inside and illuminates the transom. It's open.

Frank steps back in dread.

ELLSWORTH

Frank!

Frank's hesitation draws a swat from his father's night stick. He grimaces in pain, then steps into position.

ELLSWORTH (CONT'D)

You're like your Goddamned mother.  
Too much like her.

Lifting a leg, Frank is boosted up to the transom by Ellsworth. It's a struggle but Frank's able to get inside.

INT. GROCERY STORE

After an ungainly drop to the floor, Frank gets to his feet.

ELLSWORTH (O.S.)

What the fuck are you doing in there?  
Open the Goddamned door.

Frank unlocks the door and gets out of Ellsworth's way as he storms towards the cash register. It's empty but there's a zippered pouch on a shelf below - just where he knew it would be. It's filled with cash and a completed deposit slip, which he throws aside. He gives Frank a forceful shove.

ELLSWORTH (CONT'D)

Haven't you learned anything? Find  
the fucking safe.

INT. PALMER LAKE, COLORADO JAIL - DAY

SUPER: Twelve years later.

Now 26, Frank Lewis attempts to sit upright but slips off of his jail cell bed onto the floor. He's sweating and about to die from a bullet lodged next to his heart. But he doesn't know that. His breathing labored, he struggles to cry out.

FRANK (V.O.)

To my father goes the blame for me  
being here today. He taught me to be  
a criminal and if I ever saw him  
again, I'd kill him.

SCREEN FADES TO BLACK AS TITLE CARDS APPEAR

*The Lewis-Jones gang was one of the first to use the  
automobile and was the forerunner of the 1930s bandit gangs.*

These words fade. Replaced by:

*Fearless, they were experts with the rifle and the revolver.  
They had no more regard for human life than for a street  
dog.*

These words fade. Replaced by:

*Their exploits made those of John Dillinger and Clyde Barrow  
little more than Sunday school picnics.*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE - KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI - NIGHT

SUPER: 1912

Three unmarked trucks, headlights off, pull alongside.

Twenty-year-old Frank gets out first, obviously in charge. He looks older than he is and commands whatever space he occupies. His left forearm bears a tattoo of a nude woman and crossed cannons.

Frank's brothers ORA, 25, and ROY, 22, join him. Ora is shorter than Frank but more feral. He pulls on a glove to hide a raised scar on the back of his left hand. Another scar over his eye is more obvious. Roy is full of bravado.

They all check their weapons.

FRANK

No witnesses. No mercy.

They jimmy open the warehouse door.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Cases of booze are loaded on to their trucks.

FRANK (V.O.)

My brother Roy liked to say I was bad but Ora was hell. Ma thought Ora was of unsound mind ever since he disappeared for eleven days when he was four.

Frank is shot by a GUARD.

Frank's case of booze crashes to the ground shattering its contents. His body jerks one way then the other as he's struck by multiple bullets. He tries in vain to shoot back.

Roy rushes to his brother's side. Ora tackles the guard and pummels him to death, leaving his face a bloody, pulpy mess. Roy finally pulls Ora away. They carry off a bleeding Frank.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

Spent bullets clink as the Doctor drops them into a metal dish. Frank's sedated; his chest is a mess.

ROY

Whataya think, Doc?

DOCTOR

I think he should be dead. But somehow, he's still breathing.

Ora checks the metal dish.

ORA

There were eight shots. Maybe more.

DOCTOR

I got everything I could see. The nearest X-ray machine is in St. Louis.

ROY

That's over 200 miles.

DOCTOR

Doesn't matter. He won't survive the trip. Even with the new paved roads. Take him somewhere he can rest. And hope one of those other bullets isn't near anything vital.

INT. LEWIS HOME - TULSA, OKLAHOMA - A FEW WEEKS LATER

Frank's in bed. A NURSE checks his wounds.

FRANK (V.O.)

That doctor was smart. He knew exactly what would kill me; he just couldn't do anything about it.

Frank grabs his nurse's hand and holds it on his chest.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Now that's my kind of medicine.

The nurse extracts her hand.

NURSE

Mr. Lewis, I think you've had a miraculous recovery.

FRANK (V.O.)

My right arm never was the same but my brothers and me went back to what we knew best. That one year we all got arrested but the cops never could hold us for long.

MONTAGE

Ora steals one car after another after another.

FRANK (V.O.)

Ora finally got caught in Webb City, Missouri when a Packard Runabout he'd stolen broke down on the way to Tulsa. I guess seventeen was his unlucky number.

INT. WEBB CITY JAIL - DAY

The COP slams the jail cell door with great gusto.

COP

Enjoy your stay, Injun.

JAIL CELL - THAT NIGHT

Ora feigns sleep until the bed check is over. Then he chips away at the brick and mortar wall with his pocket knife.

JAIL CELL - MORNING

The cop drops the breakfast tray upon seeing a gaping hole in the cell's wall. Ora's gone.

EXT. LEWIS HOME - TULSA, OKLAHOMA - DAY

Two COPS talk to Roy Lewis.

ROY

I keep telling you. Ora's not here.  
We haven't seen him in days. But  
I'll be sure to let him know you  
came by. Have you talked to his wife?

COP

She hasn't seen him either. Says  
she's getting a divorce.

ROY

Women.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SHOE STORE - WICHITA - NIGHT

COP #1, making his rounds, notices shadowy figures inside.  
He quietly tries the front door. It's locked. Behind the  
store, he spots the open rear door.

POLICE CALL BOX

Cop #1 is joined by CAPTAIN FRANK GRISWOLD and COP #2.

INT. SHOE STORE

Roy "cracks" the safe while Frank and Ora wait impatiently.  
Staying low and using one flashlight, the three cops enter.

GRISWOLD

Come on out of there and have your  
hands up when you come.

Silence.

COP #1

Come out of there or we'll shoot.

With the flashlight's illumination guiding them, the Lewis  
boys come out firing, hitting Griswold first, dropping him  
where he stands. Cop #1's arm shatters. He's rescued by Cop  
#2 as the gunshots cease.

EXT. SHOE STORE - LATER

POLICEMEN arrive and PEOPLE gather.

COP #3 (O.S.)

The Captain's still in there.

Several COPS take his lead and enter the still-darkened store.

INT. SHOE STORE

Weapons drawn, the cops are on edge - until one of them flips the lights on. The Captain's body lies nearby, mortally wounded. As cops carry out their dead senior officer, we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WICHITA CEMETERY - MORNING

The PRIEST concludes his funeral mass.

PRIEST

Captain Griswold and all of our policemen are as heroic as any soldier who ever set foot on a battlefield. They will be in our hearts forever.

MOURNERS

Amen.

Among the MOURNERS watching Griswold's coffin being lowered into the ground are Kansas City CHIEF OF DETECTIVES HARRY STOLK and PINKERTON DETECTIVE JOSEPH DUNBAR. Stolk is accompanied by his wife CLARA and young son BENJAMIN.

BENJAMIN

Poppa, don't cry. Someday you'll see him again in Heaven.

Wiping tears from his reddened eyes, Stolk pulls Benjamin close.

CLARA

Benjamin, that's a beautiful thing to say.

Dunbar approaches, offering a consoling handshake. Dunbar's brilliantly shiny Pinkerton badge does not go unnoticed.

DUNBAR

Joseph Dunbar. I understand you were in the academy with him.

STOLK

I stayed in Kansas City. He moved west. He was our best man and godfather to our son.

(lowering his voice)

Those bastards took a fine man. What brings a Pink to a local cop's funeral?

Dunbar bristles at that abbreviation.

DUNBAR  
Pinkerton. An attack on one of us is  
an attack on all of us.

The men shake hands.

STOLK  
We appreciate your condolences.

As the Stolks walk away:

BENJAMIN  
Poppa, how come his badge is shinier  
than yours?

CLARA  
Benjamin, you mind your manners.

INT. NAPOLI'S JEWELRY STORE - TOPEKA, KANSAS - NIGHT

All's quiet and then BOOM. The safe door blows open destroying  
much of the store. As the Lewises grab every item within  
reach, Frank pockets a diamond-encrusted woman's watch.

EXT. NAPOLI'S - MINUTES LATER

Police arrive, only to find what's left of the smoky store.

EXT. LEWIS HOME - ST. LOUIS, MO. - EARLY EVENING

July's heat and humidity are in full force as Frank shows  
his full Cherokee mother MARTHA and step-father JOHN BUBB  
around. They're dressed for a night out.

MARTHA  
I still don't understand where you  
got the money for this.

FRANK  
Ma, the trucking business has been  
very good to us.

JOHN BUBB  
Is it true the Mayor lives next door?

FRANK  
(smiling)  
So you heard about that.

Martha takes in one bedroom in particular.

MARTHA  
This room would be perfect for my  
first grandchild, Frank.



FRANK

Maybe you'll be more persuasive with Jennie than I was. Ever since her miscarriage...

INT. FRANK'S CAR - LATER

Frank drives his mom and step-dad.

FRANK

Ora, Roy and me got you something, Ma.

She's taken aback when he hands her a jewelry box. She opens it excitedly. It's the watch Frank stole from Napoli's.

MARTHA

It's so elegant, Frank.

FRANK

You raised six kids with no help from dad. Enjoy it.

Martha takes in her new watch. John puts it on her wrist.

MARTHA

I've never had a watch before. Now I'll know what time it is all day. We're not going to be late, are we? I don't want to miss any of your sister's show.

(glancing at new watch)

Silly me. Now I can see we'll be on time.

(beaming)

Did I tell you she's been reading me all her reviews?

FRANK

Ma, you're never too old to learn reading and writing.

MARTHA

I know, Frank. I know. Maybe someday.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - LATER

EVA LEWIS is petite and beautiful with bobbed brown hair.

She sings "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny" to a rapturous response. A WAITER interrupts.

WAITER

Sorry, Mr. Lewis. Roy's calling.

At the phone:

FRANK  
 What's the good word, Roy?  
 (beat)  
 How much are we talking about?  
 (beat)  
 I'm on my way.

He hangs up.

FRANK (CONT'D)  
 Ma, a business opportunity just came  
 up. I'll have someone take you home.

Martha's clearly disappointed.

MARTHA  
 At this hour?

FRANK  
 We'll do this again. I promise you.

EXT. TROLLEY MAINTENANCE YARD - LATER

Darkened trolley cars sit as the Lewises park their truck. They cut the padlock on a security fence and move quickly to a huge wooden wheel of trolley wire.

Attempting to position this ungainly mass of wire, it falls across a live rail. The resulting explosion knocks all three of them on their asses, chars their clothing and blackens their faces.

FRANK  
 Holy shit!

Frank helps Ora and Roy to their feet and into their truck. They race off, as a monstrous blue flare shoots into the night sky, visible for miles around.

INT. SUTTON'S GROCERY - WICHITA, KANSAS - ANOTHER NIGHT

A BUTCHER hands a package to a CUSTOMER.

BUTCHER  
 You let me know if that isn't the  
 leanest roast you've ever had.

CUSTOMER  
 I haven't been disa --

Frank and Roy enter, caps pulled low, handkerchiefs masking their faces.

FRANK

Stick 'em up and get down outta sight.

The customer and butcher comply right away but SUTTON, the owner, is slow to respond.

ROY

He said to get down!

Sutton reaches into his pants pocket when both brothers point their weapons at him.

BUTCHER

Don't shoot! He's hard of hearing.

But the Lewises fire, killing Sutton instantly. The butcher goes to Sutton's aid. He, in turn, is shot multiple times and collapses next to his boss's body.

Frank grabs fifty dollars from the cash register as Roy swipes the dead man's wallet. Frank's already at the door.

FRANK

Come on.

ROY

Is there anyone coming?

FRANK

Aw, come on.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS - DAY

Pinkerton Detective Dunbar answers REPORTERS' questions.

DUNBAR

You heard right. Three hundred dollar reward for the murderers' capture.

Multiple flashbulbs explode.

REPORTER

Any leads, Detective?

DUNBAR

Nothing to sink our teeth into. Yet.

FRANK (V.O.)

They were as far from finding us as Carrie Nation was from knocking back a whiskey with a beer chaser. But that Pinkerton Detective? He was nobody's fool. And he was relentless. Just not enough to stop the family business.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - KANSAS CITY - DAY

Harry Stolk marks another red "X" on a mid-west wall map.  
The switchboard OPERATOR sticks her head in the doorway.

SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR  
Detective Stolk. St. Louis police  
calling. I'll connect you.

He picks up the phone.

STOLK  
This is Stolk.