

APPALACHIA

By Bruce Marshall Romans

Charlie Badescu and Elias Gutierrez

Overview

Logline: In 1929, two agents are sent to a secluded town in Kentucky to investigate the murder of two colleagues only to find a religiously driven town full of eerie citizens keeping information a secret.

Summary:

1929 during the Prohibition era, two agents get stuck in a secluded town in Kentucky while investigating the sudden disappearance of their colleagues as they were searching for a possible source of moonshine. Their investigation leads them nowhere and instead of getting answers they only find obstacles. The sheriff of the town is not helpful nor are any of the villagers. There are more mysteries as the villagers not only refuse to help them but treat them with hostility. Things turn from bad to worse quickly when instead of a killer they find a new victim. Three victims dead in the eerie mountains of Appalachia.

Studio/Network:

Netflix

Audience:

The elements of both crime and mystery along with slight horror and suspense that we find within the script will attract fans of not only Netflix's Original show *Hemlock Grove* but also viewers of shows like *Stranger Things*, *Black Mirror*, *Hotel Beau Sejour* and *The Killing*.

Attachments

Production Company:

Gaumont International Television

Showrunners:

Hemlock Grove - Brian McGreevy and Lee Shipman

Cast:

PATRICK SLOAN - Joel Kinnaman

XANDER MURVIHILL - Jensen Ackles

ADDIE NEWTON - Lily Collins

ANSE NEWTON - John Goodman

SHERIFF BROWNLOW - Idriss Elba

RUTH BUTLER - Emily Browning

Pitch

What if two federal agents got stuck in a dangerous and secluded town while investigating a murder?

Detective stories have been around for a very long time since the early days of Sherlock Holmes. There have been numerous upon numerous crime television stories that have evolved over the years such as *Colombo*, *The Wire*, *Boardwalk Empire*, and *True Detective*. Yet, what do they all have in common? Obviously, it is the crime aspects of it, but what else? It is the eerie moral dilemmas that the criminals would commit, and lastly it is the architecture of the criminal world. It feels real depending on the time period when it came out, and it also feels surreal because of this criminal world we as an audience are delving into.

This script has these elements of the surrealism of the world, the eerie aspects of the moral dilemmas, and your typical aspects of the criminals. Yet, what sets this apart from the rest is that it contains horror elements which read like a Stephen King novel. Horror elements such as the agent Xander throwing up in the script. Why does he throw up? Was it because of the dead bodies he smelled? Was it a new environment that he is not used to? But what if it is because this new town he has never been to, or even heard of, is making him sick? Sick because of the town's hidden agenda, the town's immorality, and the town's eerie environment. The town's hidden themes is what is making him sick. In this sense then, Xander's illness is a reflection of the toxic and hostile environment in which he now finds himself to be a part of.

1929. In a good old town in Kentucky named Cadiz, two agents are murdered after discovering a plentiful source of moonshine. Their mysterious murder sends XANDER MURVIHILL and PATRICK SLOAN on a witch hunt to the secluded town to figure out what happened to the two agents. Little did they know however that finding them wasn't going to be the hardest part of the job.

Cadiz, Kentucky. A bizarre town shrouded in mystery and religious fanaticism proves to be an unwelcoming environment for our heroes who find themselves in a town full of hostile and peculiar inhabitants. Everybody has a secret, and nobody wants to talk. The center of the world, their world, the church. Either you are a part of the church or you are not welcome. You become the enemy. As Xander and Sloan arrive in town and enter the church, they are greeted by a congregation that is not quite forgiving of their intrusion. It is here when we realize that the rules of the world have changed and that we are now in a realm of mystery and conspiracy.

Two agents working for the government might seem like they are not people with ordinary jobs: they track down criminals with illegal alcoholic beverages during the Prohibition Era. XANDER and SLOAN are these agents, but they get sent to a new location to find their missing coworkers. Yet, this new location in the heart of Kentucky make their non-ordinary job seem like second nature as the more they continue their footsteps in their investigation, the more it seems like they are the ones who are more ordinary.

As they start their investigation, our heroes meet ADDIE NEWTON a pregnant young teenager and her father ANSE who just as everybody else in the church, proves to be hostile and unwilling to talk to our agents and comes off as aggressive. It throws you off a little, but it is none of your business as your real mission is to find out where your missing co workers are. Externally, everything seems okay, but internally is where everything is a little different. We quickly realize that Anse has a very questionable relationship with his daughter, and we begin to have a very good idea of who exactly the father of Addie's unborn child is. Poor Addie is trapped in a town as well as in a relationship she does not want to be a part of.

We leave the Newtons only to encounter an even more peculiar pair of individuals, LITTLE LECHER MOORE and his beautiful young mother RUTH. You might ask "What is so strange about this?". Well, it is that Lecher is a 13-year old boy who is the ultimate form of authority of the church and a beacon of light for his worshipers. The boys' peculiarity is evident from the beginning due to the unusual way in which he presents himself, but it is enhanced by his mother who speaks for the boy because he does not speak unless he is preaching. Unlike everybody else in town however, Lecher and his mother prove to be of more assistance to our heroes than anybody else by giving them directions to their cabin.

At the cabin, our heroes find a safe haven, a safe zone from the hostile and eerie world in which they now find themselves trapped. The cabin as well as the hostess of said cabin MRS. FLENER, prove to be the only middle ground and safety that the agents find in the entire town. Though Mrs. Flener too proves to be an odd lady, due to her bluntness and the fact that she does not care about anybody's business but her own. She is the mediator in all of this and the one that seems to be keeping Xander and Sloan alive. But it begs the question: is she friend or foe?

The people in this town might seem normal at first especially with them being quiet to any newcomers. Who wouldn't be awkward to someone you have never met. Yet, they are like this throughout the script. They just look at these two main characters wherever they go: when they are driving, or when they found their deceased co workers' bodies. Everything is off about these Kentuckian townsfolk.

Resuming their search for the missing agents, Xander and Sloan now find themselves before SHERIFF BROWNLOW who, surprise! Is just as unhelpful as everybody else in this cursed town. As agents working for the government, you would hope that cooperation with the authorities of the town would be helpful. Yet, it turns out that this particular sheriff is not only uncooperative, but elusive. They tell him that they are there to find their two missing co-workers and that they are agents, yet he asks for their badges only to tell them that he has not found any bodies. Rather than a sheriff, Brownlow seems more like a gate keeper, a man who guards and protects the secrets of the religiously-driven villagers. Brownlow does however lead Xander and Sloan to the woods, where we discover early on, is where our missing agents were murdered. Was this a real lead or a distraction? After our heroes find nothing but trouble in the dangerous forest, they are called back by Brownlow

who has conveniently found the bodies and now demands they leave, but having found no murderer, our heroes refuse.

Brownlow comes off as someone that is indifferent towards both agents and does not want to answer any questions, but at the same time he is willing to help by providing some information at certain locations. Yet, is he doing this to kill them, or does he truly want to help?

In their search for answers, Xander and Sloan end up at Addie's house. Inside her house is where they meet her mother SOPHIE, an old woman with a physical malady which renders her unable to move or speak. The only movement she could do is knit, and the only sound coming from Sophie are moans which add to the chilliness of the town and the Newton household. Our agents leave with no answers, and a very sick Xander who passes out as they are driving back to their cabin.

Xander regains consciousness only to find himself back in the cabin with a missing partner and two unusual visitors: Little Lecher and Ruth who come with an odd invitation to a religious gathering in the middle of the night. In the hopes of finding his missing partner, Xander attends the event only to find a crazed up congregation passing around a poisonous snake to prove their faith. Things turn sour very quickly however when Anse is bitten by the snake and Xander is attacked by the angry worshipers. BOOM! There is a shotgun blast in the air. To his relief he is rescued by Mrs. Flener who comes in with a shotgun and scares everyone away with the blast. This begs the question again: What are her true intentions? Why is she the middle ground? And why does she have a shotgun to begin with? After the commotion is where Brownlow emerges into the scene and asks Xander to go with him. Our missing hero is finally found by Xander and Brownlow, but not the way we expected....Sloan has been murdered. There are now three murders in Cadiz and no killer.

The night ends with a lonely Xander who is now determined to solve the murders as Addie lies down next to her wounded father to tend to his wounds, she does so submissively in the hopes he does not beat her as he places his hand in her pregnant belly, while her mother Sophie watches and moans into the night. We then see Little Lecher lying in bed next to his mother speaking to himself..

With all of this said and done, you are Xander and your partner is Sloan. Sloan has a smart attitude, has a great deductive thinking, and is much more emotionally stronger than yourself. As for you, you are an agent with some emotional issues in the past where your wife has died, and your deductive skills are not that great. In the end, your partner Sloan dies, and you are left to solve the eerie and mysterious town which is Cadiz by yourself.

This is what separates the script from the other television shows. The horror aspects is what makes it really good to read as well as exciting to see on your television screen because you want to know what is going to happen next, and the secrets behind the town. Why is it that this young child who is a preacher to the town, does not speak at all outside the congregation especially to the two agents sent to find their disappeared coworkers? Why is it that the 18 year old pregnant girl has a mother that has a physical malady that

seems to have paralyzed at least half, if not most, of her body, and cannot talk except to make haunting moaning sounds? Why is it that every other villager does nothing but stare at the agents from a distance without saying a word? It's like if this town should not exist in the first place, and if it did, then it is something straight out of a Stephen King novel, or even from The Twilight Zone. It is a thrilling narrative which will haunt you at night and leave you wanting more every week. With each progression of the episodes there is always a new mystery until the end of the season as we get closer and closer to finding the killer.