

# ACROSS THE STREET

## DEFINITIVE EDITION

**TREVOR BRAUNER**

**AN EXTENDED REMAKE**

**“I hear screams coming from the house across the street. The house across from me is abandoned.”**

In the town of Oaknox, somewhat deep in the forests of Oregon. Beyond a chain linked-fence stood an abandoned section of a neighborhood. A neighborhood that was once filled with residents. But after multiple murder sprees across the past couple of years, it drove a lot of the population out. Anybody who was no longer living in Oaknox either left in fear. Or isn't living anymore at all.

Due to the major and quick population decrease, the higher ups in charge of the town just split it in half in January of 2006. One side of the fence was filled with whoever was left, and the other side was left to rot. And even with every remaining person in this town pushed to one side

together, there were still empty houses. And some people live just across the street from them.

Most people stayed clear of the ghostly neighborhood. It was cut off for a reason. But some kids enjoyed the idea of excitement, adventure and history that came with creepy, empty houses. And one summer, a group of kids spent just about every waking moment beyond that chain-linked fence.

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“Yo, guys! Come check this out!” Devin Wilson’s yell echoed through the hall of the empty house to his friends Randy Mikes, who was checking out old family photos the family living at the house left on the wall, and Bailey Turner, who was looking at all the left food in the kitchen.

“What is it, dude?” Randy yelled back, having his voice echo into the hallway.

“I don’t get why the reverb here is so strong. Pretty much everything here is left behind. Definitely not an empty house.” Bailey added.

Randy came from Asian descent, with brown eyes that required glasses to see, and black hair that reflected light very noticeably. Bailey also had brown eyes, but bright orange curly hair.

“Just come check for yourself!” Devin called back.

The two ran to Devin’s position to see what he was talking about.

“What is it? What’d you find?” Asked Bailey, walking through the door.

“Yeah , did you find a dead body?” Randy added, running in behind Bailey.

Bailey elbowed him in the stomach.

“Really Randy? First question?” Asked Bailey.

“What? That's a genuine and reasonable question for someone to ask in this town.” Randy wheezed.

“No, look. It’s like a whole game room. You got a computer over there, pinball on that wall. Even got an old Playstation.” Devin said, pointing out everything in the room. “I kind of want it. I might take this.”

Devin was the tallest of the group. He had brown hair, light blue eyes and a tiny mustache that wasn't visible due to the air filtration mask covering it.

“Devin.” Bailey mumbled.

“What? Nobody is using it. It's been collecting dust for at least 7 months now.”

“We’ve told you this already, many times. We don’t come here to take, we come to explore. It’s illegal anyway.” Bailey said.

“I mean what we’re doing is already illegal.” Randy added. “Besides, how are you going to explain to your mom how you got an original Playstation when there's no jobs available in this town for you to get the money for it?”

“Agh, fine. But if I ever come back and it's still here. I’m taking it.”

The sky was dark orange and purple as the sun was almost set under the horizon. The kids stepped out of the house to see that it was close to night, but decided that it was just enough time to peek into one more house. They walked down the empty street, looking at all of the houses they passed by.

“Hey, how many houses have we explored so far?” Devin asked.

“Not all of them. That’s for sure.” Randy responded.

They continued walking, listening to faint chirping of the last few birds that were still awake. An owl call could be heard in the distant woods that surrounded this town as the sound of crickets started to be heard. For some reason, there was always an expectation in the kids for the street and porch lights in this part of town to turn on around this time, but they never did. When it got this dark out, they relied on following Randy's headlight.

Randy stopped and looked up to a house that caught his eye. The three stood there, looking at it.

“Why’d you stop?” Bailey asked.

Randy stood there for a bit longer puzzled in silence.

“This place seems familiar. I feel like I’ve seen this before on something. Has anyone seen this house on the news or something before?” Randy asked.

Devin sat there for a moment, trying to memorize where he’s seen this house too. He was quiet until his eyes widened a bit.

“Sally Kell’s house.” Devin answered.

“Yup. That’s the one.” Randy whispered.

“Should we do it?” Devin asked.

Randy stood there for a minute before making his decision.

“Screw it. Let’s go do it. Just for a minute.”

The three walked up the driveway and up the path to the front door.

“This place just makes me feel sick. I remember catching this story on the news that night.” Bailey commented.

“Yeah. 23 year old Sally Kell, murdered by the Catman on his second Halloween appearance.” Devin replied, repeating the thing he heard on the news the morning after.

One of the most famous killers in the town was The Catman. A man who wore a black cartoon cat mask with a big smile across its face. The mask was unsettling. It felt somewhat emotionless even with its smile. He appeared on Halloween the past two years. And in both years, he murdered two people each and scared kids for fun. A kid named Thomas Kelsey got the worst of it. He woke up the morning of November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004, to find his grandparents murdered in their kitchen with the Catman’s old mask left behind. Thomas was never the same since.

“Do you guys ever feel dread when we pass by Thomas Kelsey’s grandparents’ house? Or is that just me?” Bailey asked.

“I actually don’t know what that house looks like, so no. Do you feel it?” Randy responded.

“All the time. I just feel bad for him. He had to go through all of this crap with the Catman just to have to get reminded every minute he’s in this town. How do you think he feels when he sees all of those trick or treaters dressing up as his grandparents’ murderer every Halloween?” Bailey said softly.

They made it to the door and pushed it open with ease, since the door was broken because Catman kicked it open when he was at that house last Halloween. Randy's light lit up a pool of dry blood stained into the carpet, and Devin was already walking out.

"Nope! Nope! Not doing that! Hell! Nah!" He said walking back to the driveway while slightly gagging.

Randy looked at where the door was broken and then the inside of the house.

"It sucks that people like dressing up as this guy for Halloween every year. You just get too used to seeing people in cat masks and passing out candy to them, that the real dude can just walk up like a trick or treater, kill, then walk out right in the open and nobody turns their head to think." Randy said, looking down.

He looked up at Bailey squeezing her eyes shut.

"You still coming? Cause I'm going in." Asked Randy.

Bailey sighed with her eyes squinted open a bit. "Fine..."

"You really wanna see what else is in there?" Randy asked.

"No. I just don't want you to go in there alone. I don't trust it."

Bailey responded, looking down at her shoes.

"You really don't have to if you want. You can keep Devin from sitting outside alone at night." Randy explained.

"He'll be fine. He's safer out here in my mind. Besides, I decided to spend my summer like this. Might as well keep true to it." Bailey said

They stepped into the house, stepping over the blood. They didn't even get a few steps in before they were immediately greeted by a painting of blood on the wall. There was a huge red smile across the wall with the words "IM BACK" written below it. He really wanted everyone to know that he was back and more violent than the last time.

"Hey, Randy. Can we get out of here? I don't feel right being in this house." Bailey spoke in between slight heavy breaths.

"Yeah, sure. Let's just get back to Devin before he throws up on the driveway."

Randy and Bailey quickly left the house, and paced their way back to the driveway to see Devin holding his stomach, leaning up on the

garage door.

“Too late.” Bailey whispered.

Just a bit after the sun fully set, the kids were walking back to their homes. They had a certain path to maximize the time they walked together. Sometimes, there wouldn't be much talking, just enjoying their neighborhood. It was peaceful, which usually isn't said in Oaknox, especially at night. When the kids did talk, they would plan on where to go next if they had an idea.

“You know, I've been having this idea...” Bailey started, “...what if we explored Happytime? I mean, once we pass through the fence into the ghost town, we got a clear shot there.”

On August 17'th, 1954, a shooting occurred at Happytime Burger Store. A very early fast food restaurant in Oaknox. 27 out of 30 workers and customers were killed that day. The man who did it was never found after he escaped the cops before they arrived. The building was later completely abandoned after a few attempts to re-open. This event became the biggest Oaknox crime story until Catman dethroned it to second in 2004.

“I can't believe I never thought about that. How have we not done that yet? That's like the biggest abandoned place in this town we can go to.” Randy responded excitedly.

“Man, first you go into Sally Kell's house, now you want to explore Happytime. You're braver than I'll ever be, Bailey.” Devin complemented.

“You really think so. Because if I wasn't doing it with you two, I wouldn't be doing it at all.” Bailey replied.

“Hey, I said you could stay with Devin for a minute while I went in. But you were more worried about me going in alone than you going in.” Randy said.

Bailey looked away smiling.

“Would you go to Happytime with us?” Bailey asked Devin.

“Well, sure- maybe. That depends. But I'm worried about the fact that the place has been sitting there for over 50 years. It looks like it's

about to collapse in on itself.” Devin said, looking back in Happytime’s direction.

“I mean we do this kind of stuff for fun. For entertainment, but if we just keep doing what we do now, we’ll get bored. We have to do something more ambitious and dangerous, right?” Bailey counterclaimed.

“Well, we’ll see what happens tomorrow. But we gotta do that at some point for sure.” Randy concluded.

Devin and Bailey eventually split off as their houses were just about across from each other, then Randy finished the trip solo. It was a cool summer night with the brightest moon he’s ever seen. A couple street lights flickered as he could hear crickets in peoples yards and owls in the forest around the town.

He walked by the house of Thomas Kelsey, a well known name in the town due to his grandparents’ murders from the Catman on Halloween two years before. He saw newspapers taped up on his illuminated window. But Thomas himself was out grabbing some mail he forgot to grab earlier. Now Randy (or any of the trio) had never fully met Thomas, or any of his friends. All three kids kind of stayed in their own little bubble with each other. But he knew of all of the bad things that happened to him in his life recently. But even with all that, he still decided to talk to him real quick.

“Hey Thomas.” Randy said, as Thomas was walking back up to his house.

Thomas spun around and his eyes darted until he saw Randy.

“Uh, hello. Wait. You were... in my... third period, right?” Thomas asked, walking back down his driveway a little bit.

“Yeah. I’m Randy Mikes, if you don’t remember.” Randy introduced himself.

“Aren’t you part of that group that likes exploring abandoned buildings? It’s you and...” Thomas tried to remember the other names in the group.

“Bailey Turner and Devin Wilson. Yeah, we like exploring past the fence. In fact we just got back from doing it.” Randy explained.

“Sounds fun. What house did you come back from?” Thomas asked.

“Well, we peeked into Sally Kell’s house. Nothing in there seemed to change.” Randy replied.

Thomas shook his head a bit with his eyes closed.

“But other than that, it's really fun. Hey, if you have nothing to do this summer, you can always tag along. I know you usually do things with people that keep your mind off... everything. But it’s a fun pastime if you want.” Randy explained.

“I mean. I only see you with two other people. Are your friends ok with other people joining or is it a special thing that just you guys do?” Thomas questioned.

“I’m sure they would be fine with it. They’d have no issue. Especially Bailey. She is always excited to talk to new people.” Randy responded, smiling a bit.

“Bailey? The red haired girl? Am I thinking of the right person?” Thomas asked, thinking about if he was right or not.

“Yeah, that’s her.” Randy answered.

Thomas nodded while smirking. “I’ll think about it. You know where to find me.”

Thomas started walking back up to his house as Randy continued his walk, but quickly stopped for one more minute.

“You know. Bailey talked about you earlier.” Randy said.

“Really?” Thomas responded, turning around. “What’d she say?”

“While getting ready to explore Sally’s house, she made a comment about feeling bad for you every time she sees your grandparents house. She said she feels bad about all the reminders of what you went through. It’s very much like her.” Randy responded.

“In that case, I wish more people in this town were like you guys.”

Thomas ran back into his house to finally deliver the mail to his kitchen table as Randy continued walking down the road, until he made it back to his place just a bit down. Across from Randy’s place was an abandoned house that has been left empty since Christmas of 2004. Randy was about to make it to his driveway when a loud screech came

from the house **across the street**, echoing through the night sky. A human scream. Randy turned and froze for a minute.

“The hell was that?” Randy whispered.

He waited for it to happen again. Another scream occurred, causing Randy to run into his house. He ran all the way into his room and looked through the window. He heard the scream again after cracking his window open. Randy grabbed his camera and sat there at his window until a silhouette passed through one of the shattered windows over at the house. He snapped the photo and closed his blinds quickly. Once the picture was processed, he got to see the silhouette in full. Randy immediately ran to the phone in his kitchen and called Devin.

“Hey, Devin I was just wondering if you and Bailey wanted to do a sleepover at my house tomorrow night.” Randy spoke over the phone

“Uh, yeah sure.” Devin said before Randy hung up to call Bailey.

“Bailey, hi. Look, I just called Devin telling him about a sleepover opportunity tomorrow. Devin said he’s down. What about you?”

“You know I don't turn down stuff like that. I’m in.” Bailey replied.

“Alright, head over to my place tomorrow night. I also have something to show you two as well.”

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The sun was down, everything outside was silent. Randy, Devin and Bailey were all in Randy’s bedroom just hanging out together. Randy constantly kept looking at the window.

“Why do you keep glancing out the window like you’re expecting something?” Devin asked.

“Well. Remember that thing I said last night, Bailey? You know when I said I wanted to show you guys something tonight.” Randy replied.

“Uh, yeah. What is it? What are you talking about?” Bailey questioned him.

Randy went to the window and opened it slightly enough to hear what was going on outside. He then pulled out the picture he took last night of the window and showed it to the others.

“What is that? Did you take a photo of a window for no reason?” Devin said, looking down at the picture.

“Last night when I got back, I was walking up the driveway when I heard a scream coming from that house.” Randy explained.

“Was it loud?” Asked Bailey.

“It was like a screech. Scared the hell outta me. I ran inside after I heard it a second time. I rushed in here, opened the window and sat like this with my camera.” Randy said, recreating what he did last night.

“And I sat there until I saw something move in the window. I snapped the photo then called you guys after I saw what the image captured.”

Randy pointed out the faint outline of a figure moving through the broken window.

“And your first decision was to invite us over at night?” Devin muttered. “Have you heard the scream before?”

“No. That was my first time hearing anything from there. Maybe we can hear it again tonight, so I'm just gonna keep that window open” Randy told the others.

A few hours went by and the kids were in their sleeping bags, talking about some of the exploration memories they had.

“Remember that one house with an indoor pool a while back. The green one where I dared Randy to jump in?” Devin asked.

“The time where you thought I would actually do that?” Randy chimed back.

“Eh, Bailey wouldn't let you do that anyway.” Devin added.

“I'm not the boss of you guys. But you're right, I would try to shut that down right away.” Bailey said. “I swear I babysit you two sometimes.”

“Hey, that's your choice. You decided to go into Sally's house because you didn't want me to go alone. I said you didn't have to.” Randy argued. “You stick with one of us not for your safety but for ours. That's why you feel that way.”

“Yeah, I know.” Bailey mumbled rolling on her side in her bag.

There wasn’t any talking for a few minutes until Devin broke the silence with another memory.

“You remember the first house we ever explored this summer?”

“Oh yeah. The house where I brought that mask with me and scared the crap out of Bailey!” Randy responded.

“Yes!” Devin said laughing.

Bailey quickly rolled around to face Randy, propping herself up with one elbow.

“I’m gonna get you back for that. I swear I will.” She said, pointing at Randy.

Randy and Devin started laughing.

“Sure you wi-”

A loud screech from **across the street** cut Randy off. All of the kids went quiet and stared out of the window that was shining the blue moonlight they had in the room. The only light in the room.

“What was that?” Bailey mumbled with wide eyes at the window.

“That's the scream.” Randy whispered.

“Is the window still open?” Devin wondered, starting to get out of his bag.

All three kids got up and Randy opened the window again.

“Nope. It was shut for a while.”

Another scream occurred. This time they heard how loud the screech really was. The scream echoed through the night sky once it was done. Randy slammed the window shut.

“How has nobody else nearby said anything? The next door neighbors should be hearing that very well.” Devin commented.

“The neighbors? Nah. The whole town should be hearing that very well.” Randy corrected.

They kept their eyes on the house for a bit longer. Nothing.

“Ok. I’m going to bed. I’m just gonna try to sleep before that happens again so I can wake up and forget about this.” Devin told the others, hopping out of his position and walking back to his sleeping bag

and extra blankets. "You two can stare at a house in silence for a few hours or something. Have fun."

"Don't worry. We will." Bailey said quietly.

After a while, Bailey and Randy set up a little camp next to the window with blankets and pillows. They sat there, watching the house.

"Watching this place after that is... kind of addicting," Bailey whispered.

Randy smiled. "What would you say if I told you that I kind of wanted to explore this place?"

Bailey turned to Randy's in surprise. "You can't be serious about that, right?"

Randy looked at her still smiling.

"Right?" Bailey tried confirming.

Randy shrugged, still smirking.

"You're insane. After all of the things you saw and heard at that house, you want to go see what's in it?" Bailey said.

"Sure. It could be fun." Randy responded.

"First you go into Sally Kell's house, now you want to go into a house with a screaming squatter in it or something." Bailey muttered, shaking her head.

"I'd figured we could explore it maybe tomorrow, I just don't know if Devin will be down to do it." Randy explained.

"We? I'm not going in there." Bailey told him.

"What? Why not? You went into Sally Kell's house." Randy said.

"Yeah, but nobody was in there. This is completely different."

Bailey claimed.

"Ok. Ok. If you two don't want to go in, I'll go in with my camera and show you wh--"

"You're trying to go in on your own?" Bailey cut him off.

"Yeah. I'll be fine." Randy responded.

"No. Please don't do that." Bailey said, pushing and pulling his shoulder, shaking him.

"What? You scared I'm gonna get killed?"

Randy asked.

“Yes!” Bailey replied quickly.

They sat there for a minute.

“Fine. I’ll go in with you, even if Devin says no. If something happens to someone, the others can respond.” Bailey sighed.

Randy looked at her. “You sure. You seem like you really don’t want to do this.”

“Well, then you should be glad you two are my best friends. I say that like you two aren’t the only people I really talk to.” Bailey responded, staring out the window at the house.

Randy sat there for a second. “Alright, I guess it's set between us at least. The only thing we have to do is ask Devin, or I guess probably convince him to join us. Once we do that, tomorrow morning we’re heading...”

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“**ACROSS THE STREET!**” Devin yelled in shock. “You two stayed up late last night, plotting to go to the house with a crazy guy hiding in there after he screamed so loud, it echoed through the town?”

“Yes. It could work. I think if we can just get in and get out, we’ll know what's in there and we never have to associate with it again.” Randy responded.

“C’mon Devin, you never thought about what could be left in there to explore?” Bailey asked, shaking his arm.

“I know what's in there already. A crazy dude who seems to only scream at night.” Devin responded.

“Ok, how about this? You two go home, get ready for an exploring day and head back here. I’ll watch the house until you get back and I’ll give the clear if we’re going in or not.” Randy proposed.

“And if it's not ok to go in?” Devin questioned.

“Then we go somewhere else. We can go explore Happytime.” Randy answered.

Devin stood there for a minute.

“Ok, deal. Maybe.”

Bailey and Devin walked their bikes back together as Randy waited on his front porch. The streets of their neighborhood were empty. Not a single car drove by on their way back. Bailey glanced at Devin, who had a blank face and wasn't saying anything. Usually he talked.

"Hey." Bailey greeted Devin, but Devin just kept walking.

"Hey. Hello? D.W?"

Bailey snapped her fingers in Devin's ear until he snapped out of whatever trance he was going through.

"What? What?" Devin asked, darting his head around.

"Are you Ok? Your face is completely blank and you weren't responding to me." Bailey responded.

"Yeah, I'm good. I was just regretting decisions I'd made just a minute ago." Devin said.

The two later split off to their houses to get ready for the exploration to come. Later that morning on a foggy wet day, Randy sat on his porch wearing a grey shirt, an unzipped grey jacket, brown pants and black hiking boots.

Bailey and Devin arrived, dropping their bikes in the wet front yard. Devin was wearing a grey hat backwards, a dirty beat up black zipped up jacket, dirty black pants with a stitching patch on one of his knees and his exploring boots. Randy and Devin made sure they had the proper outfits and equipment for exploring dilapidated houses. Bailey was the complete opposite.

She sacrificed safety for more style. Unlike the boys, she wore a more colorful outfit like blue shorts, white shirt with a pink jacket, black headband and her purple sneakers that have seen better days. (Those days being before the urban exploration) She treated it like it was a normal summer day rather than like she was exploring dark buildings that were falling apart and filled with weird chemicals or mold.

"So, you're sure about doing this place?" Bailey said, pointing at the house.

"Yeah, you're definitely not dressed for this occasion." Devin commented to Bailey, finally realizing what she was wearing.

"What? It's my summer style." Bailey defended.

“That style is gonna get your lungs coated with mold. That's why you invest in these things.” Devin said, pulling out his mask.

“Are you even surprised? Do you notice her on any other exploration day?” Asked Randy.

“Yeah, but those houses aren't even close to as bad as this place.” Devin replied.

“Whatever guys, just come in.” Randy said, walking through the front door.

He led Bailey and Devin into his room and discussed the plan. Devin definitely had some questions.

“I still don't get why you want to do this. Why?” Devin asked.

“Why not?” Randy replied.

“There's gotta be a million different reasons. Number one, some homeless guy that loses it when there's a full moon out is in there.”

“We'll be fine. Maybe the person ran off. I haven't seen or heard nothing all morning. Besides, Bailey said that we should start doing more older and dangerous places, or else we would get bored of houses that were just empty and nothing else.” Randy added.

Bailey sat there for a second.

“Crap, I really did say that, didn't I? I guess it's ok as long as we make sure not to run into anybody.”

“Well, that settles it. We're heading in.” Randy said, grabbing his headlight.

“Woah! Hold on! That settles it? Think about this for a second.” Devin said.

“I have been thinking about this. C'mon, you don't want to know what real urban exploring is like? Do you wanna spend all of your time going into basically a vacant house with just some stuff left inside or do you want to experience a real abandoned house?” Asked Randy. “Didn't you already agree to this?”

“I mean kind of. I would love to do something like this. But not at a house that you confirmed had a crazy guy squatting in it. We don't know what that guy could do to us.” Devin reasoned his concerns.

“Alright, look. Let's just go check it out real quick. If some guy pops out of the shadows and attacks us, we run back here and call the cops.” Randy planned.

“And if the police ask us why we’re in this situation, we’ll just say that we checked the place because we thought we saw someone hiding over there through the window. We technically won't be wrong.” Bailey added.

“Well then, let's go. We’re heading in.” Randy concluded, grabbing his headlight and walking out of his door.

The kids made their way outside, **across the street** and to the end of the house's driveway. The front lawn was filled with both patches of dead and overgrown grass. Weeds formed in the cracks of the dirty concrete driveway. The front windows were smashed from some kids that most likely vandalized it for fun. The garage door was now yellow and brown. There was a tree sitting in front of the house that had vine-like leaves drooping down the branches. Some Christmas decorations were left to the Oregon weather. The biggest thing noticed about that house was the section of room that caved in just a while before the kids showed up.

“Uh, has anyone else noticed the big ass hole in the roof?” Devin asked.

“No, never crossed my mind D.W.” Bailey said sarcastically

“Yeah, looks like it fell into the living room or attic.” Randy responded.

Bailey glanced around the house for a moment. “Christmas decorations are still up. What happened here?” Bailey asked.

“The family rushed out of here on Christmas day a couple years ago. It was just after the news got out of Andy Doxon’s kidnapping the night before.” Randy responded.

Andy Doxon was a young kid who was kidnapped in his home by a guy in a Santa costume on Christmas Eve, 2004. Andy was home alone late at night when the guy broke in, attacked and stuffed him in a sack. Andy was found a year later in the same man's basement and the guy was arrested.

“Did you know the family that lived here?” Devin asked.

“I knew the kid a bit. I think his name’s Ozzie. Ozzie Sandals or something.” Randy spoke.

“Wait. Ozzie Sandly?” Devin blurted out.

“Yeah. Wait, why would that be important- why do you know that? You knew him?” Randy asked, confused at Devin's instant recognition of the name.

“Ozzie Sandly? One of the first kids that came into contact with Catman? Him and his two friends, Austin and Jacob? You don’t know?” Devin explained. “C’mon, the story of Catman staring at them tapping on the glass door. That was his first sighting.”

“I mean a little bit after they left, two kids came asking if I saw their friend go anywhere. Must have been those guys then.” Randy added.

“I don’t get you, Devin. You know all about these crime stories and are fascinated by them, but are terrified of the places associated with them.” Bailey said.

“Yeah. Who wouldn’t be?” Devin replied.

The kids slowly began walking up to the front door.

“That story must feel like a little event after comparing it to what Austin and Jacob went through last year with some or those other kids last Halloween.” Bailey said.

“Let’s just hope we don’t get tied up with them this year. Especially if Thomas Kelsey’s there. That's just guaranteed Catman interaction with the way that kid hunts that guy down.” Devin added.

“I still feel bad for him. I’m surprised he still lives in this town after; p what has happened to him.” Said Bailey.

“I actually talked to him the night we came back from the fence. He was out getting mail when I walked past his house.” Randy told the others. “I told him about what you said, Bailey.”

Bailey’s head popped up in surprise.

“What’d he say?” She asked instantly.

“I think he just said something about this town needing more people like you.” Randy responded.

“You know, like the kids who don't wear costumes trying to look like a serial killer.” Devin responded.

A loud creaking came from the rusted door when it got pushed open. Randy flicked on his light as Devin put his mask on. The hallway went on a sideways T shape to connect all of the rooms. Once stepping in, the kids could instantly smell rust, mold and anything decomposing in the hot interior. The wallpaper was slowly peeling off, revealing the molded wood and drywall behind it.

“This place seems really fallen apart for only being abandoned for two years.” Bailey said.

“Even when the family lived here, there were constant repairs going on. It seemed like every day, someone was out here fixing a window, the roof, the doors or the garage.” Randy responded.

“But why are the windows shattered?” Devin asked.

“I guess some kids got bored.” Randy replied.

“Or whoever was in here last night got bored.” Bailey added.

They walked into the living room to find a huge hole in the ceiling from the roof caving in from water damage.

“I guess we know where all of the mold is coming from.” Devin said, looking at the black and green ceiling surrounding the hole. All of the Christmas decorations were still there, including the tree. Randy noticed the tree and went to go look at it, stepping over all of the brown puddles on the dirty black and brown carpet.

“I actually remember seeing the lights on this thing still illuminating through the window at night well after they left. One night without me realizing, the lights just cut off.” Randy commented.

They moved on to the kitchen that was filled with old food, a bad smell, and rats. Too many rats. The kids were pretty much surrounded by them. One of them jumped on Bailey's leg attempting to bite her. Bailey screamed, then punted the rat out of the kitchen window football style. Randy was completely shocked as Devin fell on the floor wheezing.

“Stop rolling on the floor, it's unsanitary. Of all people, you should know that.” Randy said.

They quickly ran out to the dining room next to the kitchen to see a big sliding glass door into the overgrown backyard. Randy slid open the door, walked out to the back porch and tapped on the glass from outside.

“Look at me, I’m the Catman.” Randy said laughing

Bailey pounded the glass where Randy’s face was.

The trio moved to the parents room. Instead of finding a bunch of rats, they found documents and papers all over the floor. It seemed like the parents were in a hurry to gather their important documents and get out as fast as possible.

“Man, how do you find out a kid was kidnapped that had nothing to do with your family and panic this bad?” Devin asked.

“Maybe Andy lived a few houses down?” Bailey suggested.

“No, his house is on the other side of the fence.” Randy replied.

Randy, Devin and Bailey moved onto the next room over, which was Ozzie's room. The door to Ozzie’s old room was pushed open at a harder force, since the hinges were stuck closed. It seemed like Ozzie just took personal belongings like drawings on the wall and a game console that was unhooked from a left behind T.V. There were a few Christmas decorations collecting dust too. A few photos were left on the ground, one including a photo of Ozzie, Jacob and Austin standing together wearing their costumes on Halloween 2004, the same day they would meet the Catman staring at them through a sliding glass door.

They left after a few minutes, closing Ozzie’s door for the first and last time. Before they were fully ready to leave, Bailey cracked the bathroom door open and glanced in to find a colony of rats staring at her. Without a word, she slowly creaked the door shut.

“Huh, this was surprisingly easy for us to do considering we’re amateur explorers in a house this close to collapsing in on itself.” Said Bailey.

“And look, you didn’t get a disease! That we know of right now.” Devin added.

Randy stopped and looked at the door into the garage.

“Hold on, there's still one place I want to explore.” He said.

“You sure it’s even worth it? There's probably nothing in there.”  
Said Devin.

“And besides, we haven’t run into a homeless guy yet. I’d rather not have that change.” Bailey added.

“Ok. How bout this? If the door is locked, we leave. If it’s not, then we peek our heads in real quick.”

“Sure, let's do it I guess.” Devin sighed.

They all lined up at the door as Randy turned the handle and pushed it open. On a dirty mattress laid the man that Randy heard screaming last night. Everyone jumped back in fear as the guy started charging at them. The man jumped through the doorway and tackled Randy down, punching his face, which broke his glasses.

Devin and Bailey panicked, grabbing the guy and throwing him off Randy. Bailey grabbed Randy and dragged him out the door since Randy couldn’t see without his glasses, which were now in pieces. Bailey directed Randy out of the house. Bailey noticed storm clouds in the distance behind the house.

“Randy, are you ok?” Bailey yelled in panic. “Can you see anything?”

“No.” Randy groaned, leaning over onto Bailey as some blood came out of his mouth and nose. “Where are we going? Where's Devin?”

Devin stuck behind as the man ran at him. Devin shoved the guy into the dining room table, rolling on top of it before falling off on the other side. Devin tried to run , but the man was fast, getting up and grabbing Devin's sweater and pulling him back. They got into another tackle. Devin pulled the man (who was trying to bite his arm) closer to the backdoor and pushed him into it. The man went right through the glass that shattered all over his body as Devin caught up with the others running into Randy’s house as they could hear the man's screaming echo from the house **across the street**. Devin quickly slammed the door behind them and ran to the phone to call the police.

“Hello. Yes. Ok, so we just went to investigate an abandoned house across from my friend's house. We heard screaming coming from it last

night. Yes, we checked it out just now and one of my friends and I just got attacked by them.” Devin explained frantically over the phone.

Bailey sat Randy down at his kitchen table and started looking for any first aid kit. She found one in the bathroom next to the kitchen, opened it and started putting gauze pads on his face.

“Do you have any spare glasses?” Bailey asked.

“In my room somewhere I think.” Randy mumbled.

“Devin! Can you find Randy’s extra glasses, please? He said they’re in his room somewhere!” Bailey yelled out to the living room.

From outside they could hear rain starting to fall as the light from the windows got darker and darker.

“Hey. Sorry about bringing you two into this.” Randy mumbled.

“Hey, no. We decided to go with you. It's a good thing we decided to go with you. What just happened is why I was going with or without Devin.” Bailey said.

Devin ran into the kitchen with Randy’s glasses and gave it to him. He then sat down to see Bailey zipping up the first aid kit.

“The police said they’d send someone over to check on the house.” Devin informed the others.

“What do you think’s gonna happen?” Bailey asked.

“I don’t know. They’le probably question us and the guy if he doesn't attack them first.” Devin responded. “All I know is that I’m never going **across the street** ever again.”

End of  
Across The Street

## **SUMMARY**

In the town of Oaknox Oregon in 2006, a trio of kids spent their summer exploring abandoned houses past an off-limits area in the town. Even with a whole abandoned neighborhood to run around in, Randy Mikes had his sights set on a house just across from his after noticing strange events coming from there. After convincing his friends Devin Wilson and Bailey Turner to go with him, they set off to explore the rotting house **across the street.**