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Dustin M. Hoffman

ORVILLE KILLEN: LIFETIME STATS

Orville Solomon Killen

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 170

Card number 247

Bats: Left Throws: Right

Born: 9/7/1934

Home: Paynesville, West Virginia

Bouncing back from a stint in the pokey after a car chase with Johnny Law last winter, Orville shot up from the minors to the bigs on June 25th. After only two seasons shortstopping for the Single-A Lancaster Roses, Orville was ready to roar as a Detroit Tiger. His quick hands at the bat and at scooping grounders assure him a place. If his lead foot with the boys in blue forecasts anything, you can expect to see him heap up the stolen bases.

Fun Fact: Orville collects costume jewelry. He stashes chunky ruby rings and emerald brooches and amethyst pins in a cleat shoebox under his bed. He secrets the box under every hotel bed in every city his team travels to. His favorite: the silkiness of the pearl bracelet. Orville rubs the pearls against his front teeth. They grit and grind and make him wince, and that's how he knows they're real. The only real thing he owns. He rubs and imagines a Bermuda beach while his teammate and roommate Bobby Haney

snores and flatulates.

| Year | Team | Lea. | G | AB | R | H | 2B | 3B | HR | RBI | AVG. |
|------|---------|------|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|------|
| 1959 | Detroit | A.L. | 38 | 142 | 16 | 36 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 12 | .254 |

Orville Solomon Killen Card number: N/A
Position: Off-Season Laggard
Height: 6'2" Weight: 165 Bats: Skunk Skulls Throws: Rifle Casings
Born: September 4, 1934 Home: Paynesville, West Virginia

One week after the season ends, Orville meets his cousins on his family's property, a hunting cabin off Panther Creek. They meet at 5:30 p.m. every day for two weeks to shoot deer. His cousins work the coal mines by day, hunt until nightfall. By day, in his hotel an hour away, Orville browses department store circulars, fingers glossy pages, fantasizes stealing the whole glittery city and stowing it in his pocket. He doesn't think about his mother, won't let himself imagine her happy and wearing that burgundy Chanel dress on page 117 or that felt toque on 66. She'd hate their extravagance anyway. He naps, does push-ups, masturbates, does pull-ups, naps, then returns to the cabin. Later, while sighting a twelve-point buck, his cousin Ethan says, "You should go see your mama. She's not for much longer," and Ethan's brother Don says, "Give him a break. He's a baseball star." Ethan says, "That ain't an excuse. Ain't like it's work." They all miss the buck. They don't kill any bucks all season, but they shoot all the small game that crosses them. Orville leaves Ethan and Don the work of stretching pelts across the cabin their grandfather built.

| Shots fired | Kills | Squirrels | Skunks | Possums | Deer | Avg. |
|-------------|-------|-----------|--------|---------|------|------|
| 107 | 71 | 43 | 22 | 6 | 0 | .664 |

Orville Solomon Killen Card number: 129
Team: Detroit Tigers Position: Infield
Height: 6'2" Weight: 170 Bats: Left Throws: Right
Born: September 4, 1934 Home: Paynesville, West Virginia

Orville blazed the base paths, stealing 41 bags and gambling for two or

three every knock of the bat. He ranked third in the league for triples, fourth for steals. Too bad his loafers couldn't speed like his cleats, though. Macy's security busted Orville stealing two pairs of women's silk underpants over winter break. Says his third base coach, Billy Hitchcock, "I guess I know what to buy that sly fox's girlfriend for Christmas."

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-------|--------|------|------|----|----|----|-----|------|
| Year | Games | At Bat | Runs | Hits | 2B | 3B | HR | RBI | Avg |
| 1960 | 121 | 476 | 72 | 133 | 28 | 8 | 0 | 37 | .279 |

Orville Solomon Killen

Card number: N/A

Position: Fire Tender

Height: 6'2" Weight: 180

Bats: Not now Throws: Rocks mostly

Born: September 4, 1934

Home: Paynesville, West Virginia

The stretched pelts from last year's hunting still cover the cabin that leaks rain and bleeds cold all winter. He chooses to stay here over another hotel. This is closer to his mother, even if he doesn't go to her. Instead, he runs trails, splits wood, watches his skin goosebump. His cousins are too busy in the mines to hunt this year. Real jobs don't gift big fat cushy chunks of nothing time, they inform him. Orville keeps the fireplace burning all hours. He dreams about razing the mountains. He dreams about his mother's house burning up fast instead of this forever-long death that she's doing. Orville tells himself he won't let the fire die until someone from his family finds him, forces him to face her. No one comes. They're all busy working. When he leaves for spring training, he tears every pelt from the wall, stuffs them under the car seats until they're spilling tails and hollow eye sockets. He stacks extra wood on the fire and drives away. He chucks a pelt out the car window every few dozen miles.

| | | |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Days of Fire | Lbs. Wood Burned | Imagined Touching Skeleton Mom |
| 68 | 4791 | 4799 |

Orville Solomon Killen

Card number: 71

Det. Tigers, 2nd base

Height: 6'2" Weight: 169

Bats: Left Throws: Right

Born: September 4, 1934

Home: Paynesville, West Virginia

Anyone following this rising star knows Orville loves to steal. However, turnabout isn't fair play with Orville. At second base, Orville won't tolerate stealing and has tagged out over 50 would-be base thieves. When a White Sox sprinter aimed his cleats at Orville in a dirty slide, Orville still nailed him – despite the cleats stabbing. With blood welling through his sock, he led the Tigers to their tenth straight win. Postgame, his teammates stripped the browning blood-soaked sock off Orville. They celebrated their win streak by swinging it over their heads and draping it around their necks. Orville smiled, curling the toes of his one bare foot, thinking how fine it was to share blood.

Tip for boys: Love is a many-splendored thing, but no fleeting romance can match the comradery of brothers-in-bats. Team morale is the secret ingredient in any winning lineup. Don't be afraid to hug your teammate, to slap his buttocks, to smooch his cheek and then slug his bicep. Don't worry about what your dad would've thought before he coughed himself to death, or about that time your uncle guzzled half a fifth of bourbon and then talked about stomping queers. No one will question your love for another man if it occurs atop the diamond's red dirt.

| Year | Games | AB | R | H | 2B | 3B | HR | RBI | Avg |
|------|-------|-----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|------|
| 1961 | 135 | 492 | 85 | 140 | 32 | 7 | 2 | 68 | .285 |

Orville Solomon Killen

Jacket Size: 46R

Pall bearer

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 159

Casket Position: Left-center

Born: September 4, 1934

Home: Paynesville, West Virginia

His mother looks shriveled and waxen in the casket, a golden raisin, worse than Orville imagined. Her boney hands clutch a foptail. That orange-brown tail had draped her neck every special occasion he could remember. Everyone knows the story: She claimed she shot the fox with a Colt revolver when it was trying to sneak into her kitchen one night. Orville slips the tail from her hands and into his pocket just before they close the box. Mother weighs 93 pounds at death. Due to his dedication to the bench press and deadlift this off-season, Orville could nearly heft his mother's casket by himself. But Uncle Rory is there, sucking a tobacco wad, spitting brown into a dirty handkerchief he keeps in his breast pocket. Rory's sons Ethan and Don are there. Ethan's missing an eye, some accident at

Orville Solomon Killen License Plate: S86 6591
 Driver
 HT: 6'2" Weight: 165 Hits: Lampposts Throws: Bottles
 Born: Sept. 4, 1934 Home (almost): North Corktown neighborhood

Orville's last winter in Detroit is a rip-roaring riot. He paints the town, spending every night drinking with GM workers or with the stadium groundskeepers who live in Black Bottom. They trade stories about lost fathers, lost mothers, growing up poorer than mud, but then they talk about "real work" and Orville quiets. After the bar, he drives them over icy roads in his giant baby-blue '59 Cadillac on whiskey runs down Woodward. One morning he wakes with his head lolling out the driver's side window. He's in the Detroit Institute of Art parking lot with two flat tires. He buys admittance so he can take a piss and call a tow, but then he stumbles into the Diego Rivera mural room. He gazes up, dizzies at the chrome maze of pistons and cranks and wheels and men working. Above that, so high his sore neck burns, Diego's bare bodies bruise him – those soft skins floating over brown knots of fists. Heaven is naked and soft. Orville vomits splendidly on the marble floor.

| Oz. Alcohol | Detroit Miles | Collisions | Passengers | Percent Remembered |
|-------------|---------------|------------|------------|--------------------|
| 961 | 3129 | 17 | 32 | .245 |

Orville Solomon Killen Card number: 330
 Shortstop Chi. White Sox
 HT: 6'2" Weight: 170 Bats: Left Throws: Right
 Born: September 4, 1934 Home: Paynesville, West Virginia

A professional ballplayer knows how to bury the hatchet, or bury the cleat spike in Orville's case. The young gun assisted 21 double-play rockets over to Herman Fingers's mitt at first. Two years ago, Herman spiked Orville in a dirty slide, but Orville shows there's no place for grudges in the Elysian business world. Orville throws so hard nosebleed spectators hear Herman's leather pop. No baserunner stands a chance, and Herman's palm throbs bright as blood after every game.

Interesting Fact: Cincinnati Red Stockings Second Basemen Bid McPhee

was the last player to *start* wearing a baseball glove in 1896. He'd brine his bare hands in salt water before games to leather-toughen his skin. On wearing gloves, he claimed simply not to see the need.

| Year | Team | LEA. | G | AB | R | H | 2B | 3B | HR | RBI | AVG. |
|------|---------|-------|-----|-----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|------|
| 1963 | Chicago | A. L. | 135 | 460 | 57 | 112 | 21 | 4 | 2 | 45 | .243 |

Allen James Johnson

Real Estate Agent

HT: 6'2" Weight: 165

Born: October 30, 1931

Fake ID Number: M187155822310

Illinois Association of Realtors

Steals: Left Stashes: Down Crotch of Underwear

Home: Mooseheart, Illinois

Tip to young athletes: If your skin is as white as Orville's, the chances of getting arrested for shoplifting decrease exponentially every year, quickly becoming lower than Bill Bergen's record for worst batting average at .170. In one off-season, Orville successfully snatched from Chicago stores: 3 silk ties, 6 pairs of women's underpants (2 lace, 4 satin), 1 lilac cashmere sweater, 1 thread-thin gold chain soft as water, 1 knobby purple brooch, 37 Italian silk neckties. If you maintain your wits – as Orville has learned by saving his drinking until after the rush of petty theft has stung his chest and then left his ribs feeling hollow – great gains are well within reach. Anyone can do this with practice and strategy, that is, any white man who has the money to look like he doesn't need to steal, yet who carries an aching desire to own enough soft and shiny things to make up for a childhood of bark and rust and mold and soot and threat.

| Steals | Caught | Fake ID Uses | Theft Heartbeats |
|--------|--------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| 49 | 0 | 0 | 11,847 but fewer each time. |

Orville Solomon Killen

Chicago White Sox, 2b

HT: 6'2" Weight: 170

Born: September 4, 1934

Card number: 384

Bats: Left Throws: Right

Home: Paynesville, W.V.

Rising star Orville was ready to leap into the retiring Nellie Fox's long

shadow with his quick step, rocket right arm, and a .984 fielding percentage. First baseman Herman hated to exchange his hall-bound partner for a country bumpkin, white-trash hick, inbred backwoods imbecile – but here comes Orville! He split the season starting second, matching his predecessor’s precision. During the postseason run, an ecstatic Orville broke into every teammates’ locker and hung a \$12.59 silk necktie on a tiny gold-painted hanger as a gift. When he got to Herman’s locker, he adorned a golden hanger with the socks he’d been wearing for a five-game winning streak. He then peeled off his underwear and jock strap and hung those as well.

- What is Orville’s favorite way to imagine Herman’s death?
- Rub edge of nickel or dime over blank box for magic answer : *Pickaxe through the eye.*

| Year | Team | LEA. | G | AB | R | H | 2B | 3B | HR | RBI | AVG. |
|------|---------|-------|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|------|
| 1964 | Chicago | A. L. | 81 | 276 | 47 | 74 | 14 | 2 | 2 | 24 | .268 |

Orville Solomon Killen

Card Number: N/A

Killer

HT: 6’2” Weight: 170

Drives: Left Smokes: Right

Born: September 4, 1934

Home: Paynesville, W.V.

Driving outside Dekalb, Illinois, Orville is lulled into memory by the endless winter wheat whipping past his windshield. Uncle Rory was slapping his scalp because Orville was nine and couldn’t pull the hook from a trout. He was afraid of the suffocating body, the death flops, the gnashing, crunching sound the pliers made as he yanked the swallowed hook through viscera. “Pull harder,” Rory said. “Worthless soft hands.” His mom appeared from nowhere sprinting and punched the back of Rory’s head. They fell on each other, wrestled into the creek. Orville stood on the shore alone, a gasping fish at his feet. The Buick thumps twice. Orville slams the brakes, swerves, finally halts with the hood buried in wheat. He hopes the thumps weren’t human. He finds the corpse up the road, a large yellow dog, steaming red entrails spilling from its anus. Until noon, Orville knocks on farmhouse doors. Until dusk, Orville digs a grave under a birch tree. He slides his favorite string of pearls over the dog’s neck. He lifts his mom’s foptail necklace from under his shirt and considers giving this to the dog too, but he can’t seem to unlock his fin-

gers. He lowers the dog into a hole in the earth. He weeps and throws dirt. Weeps and throws. Dirt and dirt and dirt.

| | | | | |
|-------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|
| Kills | Door Knocks | Grave Depth | Earth Moved | Memories Worth Keeping |
| 1 | 27 | 4'7" | 2138.8 lbs | 0 |

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Orville Solomon Killen | Card number: 146 |
| HT: 6'2" Weight: 175 | Bats: Left Throws: Right |
| Born: September 4, 1934 | Home: Paynesville, W.V. |

Orville spent the season stopping stealers, stomping his cleats onto sliding thighs, shoulders, guts, faces, then getting beamed by retaliating pitchers 37 times to lead the league in taking lumps. On a fateful September afternoon, he rubbed elbows with greatness when he decked Mickey Mantle. Mantle was limp-sprinting for a rare double despite his failing knees. Orville expected a slide, but Mantle didn't drop, and Orville rammed his elbow into the Mick's eye. Mantle dropped, clutching his weeping socket. After being attended by a small swarm of medics, Mantle stood, hobbled off the diamond, arms slung over his teammates. The crowd cheered. As soon as the Mick ducked into the dugout, the crowd hissed. They chucked a hotdog and beer cup maelstrom, and three shoes and a toilet plunger. Accidents happen on the field, but Orville sucker-punched baseball's sacred son. Herman strutted to Orville, patted his back, hoisted Orville's elbow to the crowd. He then proceeded to pretend Orville's elbow hit him in the eye too and rolled in the red dirt. The crowd broke into laughs, ate their hotdogs again, decided against throwing shoes. Later, to the press, Herman dubbed him Orville "McKiller."

| Year | Team | LEA. | G | AB | R | H | 2B | 3B | HR | RBI | AVG. |
|------|---------|-------|-----|-----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|------|
| 1965 | Chicago | A. L. | 121 | 418 | 53 | 117 | 27 | 5 | 10 | 51 | .280 |

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Orville Solomon Killen | Phone Number: 309- 319- 6659 |
| HT: 6'2" Weight: 170 | Holds Phone: Left Throws Phone into Wall: Right |
| Born: September 4, 1934 | Home: N/A |

December 27th, Uncle Rory's voice crackles through hundreds of miles of

phone line, all the way from West Virginia. He and Orville's yuletide salutation exchange is as subdued as reading tax forms. "Don has cancer," Rory says, "of the lungs. Stage three, they say." Orville says nothing. "Don's the one with both eyes, the one of my sons is what I'm saying." Orville knows which one Don is. He waits, phone pinched between ear and shoulder. He laces a silk necktie through his fingers, knots, pulls tight. The receiver hisses. Orville waits for Rory to ask for money. He's been waiting for this, for the family to realize his resources, the star of the Killens, his name, his plays, his stats broadcast over thousands of radios from mountains to farmhouses to city apartments. Orville the star. Orville the one who escaped the mines and the poverty and the family fists. "Thought you'd want to know," Rory says and hangs up.

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Calls Received | Calls Made | Intact Killen Lungs | Dial-Tone Beeps |
| 1 | 0 | 7 | 39 |

Orville Killen

CHI. WHITE SOX

HT: 6'2" Weight: 180

Born: September 4, 1934

Card number: 261

2B

Bats: Left

Throws: Right

Home: Paynesville, W.V.

Orville cranked out an average year. In 162 games per year, there's always a new thrill, a record broken, an unfathomable feat defeated. But in this year, for this man, he did his job without event. Workmanlike batting and fielding marked him steady as a coal miner. A lack of record, however, might also be considered a personal record for Orville.

| Year | Team | LEA. G | AB | R | H | 2B | 3B | HR | RBI | AVG. |
|------|---------|-----------|-----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|------|
| 1966 | Chicago | A. L. 162 | 590 | 60 | 148 | 28 | 3 | 4 | 63 | .250 |

Solly Killen

CHI.

HT: 6'2" Weight: 170

Born: September 4, 1934

Card number: N/A

Thief / Almost Lover

Holds First-date Lilies: Left Shakes: Right

Home: He tells them Orlando, San Francisco, Bermuda, Oklahoma, New York

“What you need,” Herman says after their last game of the season, “is a good woman. Like mine. Fix you right up so you’re not such an asshole.” Orville gives him the finger, tells him good luck not getting traded in the off-season. As Chicago cools into its bitter freeze, Orville feels his cracks ache, the fissures in his skin, his tissue, deeper, in his skull, his kidneys, his pancreas maybe. His body stings every time the wind belts between skyscrapers, and maybe another body’s flesh could heat a healing. He makes love to 22 women that winter and 1 man. None of them repair anything. After the damp sheets and during the bathroom wipe-ups, Orville steals their underthings, balls them between the mattress and then pretends to help them search the floor until they give up and leave. He wonders if the fixing might be done in marrying. His parents’ marriage lasted only three years before his dad died. At work, the docs prescribe rehab for most aches and pains. Out here, the cracks refuse to cure, so he sticks with what works. He steals.

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|---------|-------------|--------------|--------|
| Steal Success | Lover’s Underwear | Orgasms | Snow Globes | Gas Lighters | Buicks |
| 1.000 | 27 | 12 | 66 | 21 | 2 |

Orville Killen

2nd BASE

HT: 6’2” Weight: 175

Born: September 4, 1934

Card number: 556

CHICAGO WHITE SOX

Bats: Left Throws: Right

Home: Paynesville, W.V.

Detroit burned while Orville swung the bat like murder. In Detroit, they killed 43 humans near 12th Street, and Orville struck out 137 times. 33 black men dead, mostly bullets, one downed power line. Orville wanted to split seams with every swing, knock it over the nosebleeds. He succeeded 27 times, a career high and good for 20th in all of baseball this year. But only hitting 27 homeruns dug into his ribs like failure. Herman would wrestle Orville to the clubhouse carpet after homerun games, strip a sock, and nail it to the clubhouse wall. Smoke choked the Detroit skyline like storms by day, like blood-sun apocalypse by night. Orville swung like he hoped to shatter Chicago’s summer-blue sky. Detroit is no longer his, never was. Neither is Chicago. Neither is anywhere.

| Year | Team | LEA. | G | AB | R | H | 2B | 3B | HR | RBI | AVG. |
|------|---------|-------|-----|-----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|------|
| 1967 | Chicago | A. L. | 159 | 574 | 57 | 108 | 20 | 4 | 27 | 62 | .188 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Orville Killen | Stetson Size: 24.5 inches |
| AVERAGE WHITE MAN | EMPLOYED, OBVIOUSLY |
| HT: 6'2" Weight: 175 | Looks: Left Looks: Right |
| Born: September 4, 1934 | Home: N/A |

Mechanics' garages are easy to slip into. Under cover of hydraulic drill zips and the lifts whining and the grunts of coveralled men, Orville slides into the office door, finds the key begging to ignite the black Ford Falcon parked out back. It's easy to be invisible. An expensive overcoat, a Stetson hat, starched collar and necktie peeking, a pair of sunglasses wide enough to hide his eyes but not too much of his white skin. He's in camouflage better than wearing woodland pattern in the forest near Panther Creek. He looks like someone's customer. And what will he do with this Ford Falcon? Drive it all the way down US 33 and crash it into a West Virginia quarry? Or farther south to his grandparents' land that he now co-owns with Uncle Rory and set the rest of the forest on fire? He cruises Wacker Drive until dusk, stalking the Chicago River's turquoise water chipped by white shocks of ice. At dusk, he speeds the Falcon toward the docks. He jumps just before the car crashes into Lake Michigan. The car submerges and disappears in silence. No one notices. The only evidence is a palm-sized kneecap contusion that lingers for weeks.

| | | | | |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------|---------------------------|
| Stolen Miles | Raised Suspicion | Lake Michigan | Gals. | Gals. of Water in Orville |
| 206 | 0 | 1,299,318,233,875,360 | 13.4 | |

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Orville Killen | Card number: 70 |
| HT: 6'2" Weight: 180 | Bats: L Throws: R |
| Born: 9/4/34 | Home: Paynesville, W.V. |

On July 4th, while green and red stardust burst over your head, Orville was jetting off to Cincinnati, where he'd been traded and would land with a splash. In his first game for the Reds, he nearly hit for the cycle, getting a double, triple, and homerun, but no single. Most players who near this feat miss the ever-elusive triple. Orville hit two of them, the last one in the ninth. He could have just stopped at first, but his horse legs and stubborn heart spoiled it all. Why wouldn't he stop? Who doesn't want the cycle? What player ignores history? The record books hold a grudge, spin a curse; Orville wouldn't triple again all season, or ever again.

- What was Orville's last meal in Chicago?
- Rub edge of nickel or dime over blank box for magic answer : *Herman's wedding band.*

| Year | Team | LEA. | G | AB | R | H | 2B | 3B | HR | RBI | AVG. |
|------|------------|-------|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|------|
| 1968 | Chicago | A. L. | 55 | 217 | 39 | 68 | 14 | 2 | 8 | 30 | .313 |
| 1968 | Cincinnati | N. L. | 71 | 250 | 22 | 43 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 17 | .172 |

Mr. Killen

HT: 6'2"

Born: 9/4/34

Weight: 185

Address: Fox Run Lane, 1B

Shoots: L Loads: L

Home: Anywhere but Paynesville, W.V.

Orville is too close to home. He feels the coal soot and the hop clover pollen gritting into his sinuses. He has still not shat Herman's wedding band, which he stole and swallowed in July, but that must be coming, or else something is very wrong. Three days before Christmas, a plain brown box arrives at the door of the duplex he's renting. "Mr. Killen" is scratched in heavy pencil across the brown paper. Inside the paper, Orville uncovers a steel-toed-boots box. Inside this, he finds himself. Baseball cards. Dozens of 2.5 by 3.5- inch Orville Killens, the same few images repeated over and over. Some are creased, pin- holed from hanging, sun-faded, dog-eared, sooty finger prints stamping his shoulder. Near the bottom of the box, a note:

We've been collecting you. Good to have you back near home. Come visit.

Always rooting for you,

Uncle Rory

Many dozens of Orvilles squint and stare up at him. He drives into the country and sets up a sawhorse on a dirt two-track. He points the car's high beams. After loading the pistol he stole from Woolworth's, he aims between cardboard eyes and fires. Christmas Eve, Orville sucks from a bottle of bourbon until the newspaper rental listings blur into inky waves.

Shots Fired Forehead Hits AVG. Cards Showing Eye Color Same as Mother
37 15 .405 9

Orville Solomon Killen

Card number: 159

HT: 6'2" Weight: 185 Bats: L Throws: R
Born: 9/4/34 Home: Paynesville, W.V.

Despite a decline in his bat speed at the plate, Orville's eyeing the ball like a hawk. He finished 31st in his division for bases on balls. While old injuries hamper base stealing, he still knows how to turn two and assisted in three double plays in one game on July 30th against the Pirates . . . But, look, every player is not a legend. If they're lucky, they'll hit a decent peak, and then begins the inevitable decline of age. They get slower, weaker, meeker, sensing that ninth-inning grim reaper barreling down the third-base line. Despite what we want to tell every child eagerly fingering this card and flipping to the back for more than the front-side thrill of a uniform-clad visage, there are times when unswerving optimism runs out of steam. Better to say nothing than to elaborate on spent, aging bodies. So we won't recall Orville's demotion to triple-A, his refusal of reassignment, his swollen left leg, the wince he tries to hide with every stride. We won't reveal that he quit instead of admitting he could no longer steal bases and stop stealers. We will simply say, zowie! What a sight to see those halide lights transforming nights to days, men to giants, summer evenings to everlasting.

| Year | Team | LEA. | G | AB | R | H | 2B | 3B | HR | RBI | AVG. |
|------------|---------|---------|------|------|-----|------|-----|----|----|-----|------|
| 1969 | Chicago | A. L. | 81 | 259 | 19 | 53 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 22 | .205 |
| MLB Totals | | 12 Yrs. | 1226 | 3999 | 577 | 1073 | 213 | 41 | 59 | 449 | .268 |

Orville Solomon Killen Card number: All of Them
HT: 6'2" Weight: 180 Knocks: L Signs: R
Born: Here, Long Ago Home: Here, Finally

For four hours driving on the freeway, Orville strokes the foxtail he stole from his mother's casket years ago. It is not as soft as stolen undergarments or silk ties, not as beautiful, not as rare. This same foxtail brushed his shoulder when he was six and his mother first positioned his body into a proper batter's stance. He remembers the exact words she'd whispered into his ear as she choked his hand up on the bat: "Folks has got it wrong about the fox. He don't steal. What he does is take everything he's good enough to take. So you be the fox, and you'll never have to cough up a lung in those mines like your daddy."

Orville drives his Buick all the way to the address from the boots box full of his cards. It is an address he knows, a house number he's been trying to forget for a decade. He parks in front of the ranch-style clapboard house. Someone has recently painted it blue. It was a yellowing white before. When he knocks, a boy answers the door, around ten years old, and his eyes widen. "Holy shit," he says, and Uncle Rory is immediately behind him, swatting his head for swearing at the guest. As soon as he recognizes Orville, he repeats, "Holy goddamn shit."

Orville imagined this differently. He wanted throats sore from yelling. He planned on fists splitting red and raw against cheekbone and jaw, his and theirs. The shame he's avoided for so long should be dripping down his spine. *You should've seen your mother die, you selfish prick*, Uncle Rory should be saying. But he does not. Instead, they drink cans of beer and sit on the boy's bed while Dead Don's son shows off his baseball card collection. In polyurethane pages, rows of pristine Orville Killen cards flash by. Orville's already seen the images, but never cards this bright and new and perfectly kept. Don's boy picks one of each year to have Orville sign with a black marker. Dead Don's boy looks so happy. He blows on the marker ink to dry it, then slips each card back into a transparent pocket. Before he goes outside to play, the boy displays the binder of cards on the coffee table for all to see, for anyone to take, unconcerned that someone might steal his treasure.

Foxtail hairs AVG against Mother Killen Survivors Complete Orville Collections
577,158,063 .435 4 1