

*A story of a young lady, near naked, who asked for a cab to take her from Denver to Dallas and the crazy cabbie who agreed to the wildest ride of his career. A drive dodging bullets from killers while trying not to lose his heart or his life.*

## **Passenger to Dallas**

By J.T. Dameron

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# PASSENGER TO DALLAS

*She got in, put her seat belt on, and said,  
"Please lock the doors and drive somewhere quickly!"*

## J.T. DAMERON



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## The Girl

The light tapping on my window woke me. At first, I thought she was just a child; she was less than five feet tall. She was standing in line with one of the bright lights, and her wet, light blue hospital gown was most transparent. As I sat up, she turned and I thought she was going to run. Her gown was open in the back, not even tied. In the big windows her reflection showed she was barefoot. Through the thin, wet clothing I could see she was older, very nice chest, firm C cup size with no bra, no panties, slim waist and hips, maybe a bit of Thai in her face. Just under twenty-one, I wrongly guessed.

As the window came down, she turned back and spoke. “May I please come in and warm up?”

“Of course,” I replied, pointing to the front passenger door. “The front seat will warm up faster.” At that point I was only thinking of her being cold and needing help. I could see she didn’t have a purse or anything else on her so she couldn’t pay a fare. No matter. I had driven a lot of young, and not so young, ladies’ home for free. It was what you did as a cab driver. I reached over and unlocked the door. I didn’t want to use the electric as it would unlock all the doors, just in case.

When I was a teenager, my great-aunt would often call from a bar for a ride home when she was too drunk to drive. Her husband had died young in a plane crash and she was a very rich widow who enjoyed going out. I had a deal with her: I would get her home safely, and she bought me tires and gas. I didn’t tell the family and she didn’t tell when she saw me out with my girlfriends. Yeah, we bumped into each other a lot at the dance clubs—maybe that was why I enjoyed the cab driving now.

There was one lady, maybe in her forties, whom two guys were trying to force into a pickup truck. I pulled up and she jumped in so I took off. They followed for a while and I lost them. Dropped her off at home and never got a penny for it—didn’t even ask. Picked her up months later at another bar and again drove her home for free. Gave her my card and she often called, couple times a month, never paid. She was rich, saw her a lot on television, advertising cars. Maybe she just needed someone to be there, someone not after her money.

## *Passenger to Dallas*

During a snowstorm one young lady jumped out of a pickup truck that was stuck and ran to my cab. They were in hot pursuit as I took off with her. She had come to Denver for New Year's Eve and got separated from her friends and held by the assholes in the truck for three days. They were taking her to sell to someone else when she jumped out and ran. Not having enough weight in the back of their truck, they couldn't keep up with the Prius on the icy streets and I drove her to the Denver Police Department. They said she was too drunk to make a good witness and wouldn't even take a report. The hospital did the rape kit, without the cops. They said they would send it to the lab, but without a police report it wouldn't do any good.

Going North on I-25 in the blizzard was a drive to remember! On the way to her home in Wyoming we stopped for breakfast in Casper and several truckers asked me what was going on. She looked like death warmed over and kept crying; they were making sure she was safe. A hat was passed when they found out I was driving her home for free, then as the story went around the café, a man in a suit came over with an FBI badge. She told him what had happened and when she came to the point that she had been held for over three days. He said the FBI could take authority in kidnappings once the amount of time passed that it would take to drive to the nearest state line. He could and would take the case.

My dash cams had caught the faces of the two guys and the guns they waved at us, and my rear camera caught their truck license plate as they tried to chase us. There was also the rape kit at the hospital with DNA to be tested.

When he saw the video from my cameras he said, "Fuck the Denver police. I can arrest and convict them with just this."

They were arrested, as felons with bad records. They plead guilty to sexual assault, kidnapping, and felons with firearms charges. Should be out of prison in twenty to forty years. A trial might have netted them more than one life sentence so they didn't chance it.

She was short with a very slim build, well curved in the right places, effectively naked, and walked around the car with the grace of a ballet dancer; she had style. When I turned the heat up, I noticed the outside temperature was down to twenty-seven degrees, and it was snowing heavy, wet flakes. Maybe that was why my motion detectors hadn't triggered, or she was way too cold to trigger the infrared detectors. There were red marks around her wrists and ankles, so she was in trouble

or was escaping trouble of some sort. Didn't matter; she needed to warm up and maybe needed a safe ride to somewhere.

Typical March snow, heavy enough to break the budding tree branches and bring power lines down. Driving would soon be difficult. I still had my all-season tires on even though it cost me about two miles to the gallon. With highway tires I averaged over fifty-nine miles to the gallon. I set the cab heat to eighty degrees to help dry her out. She got in, put her seat belt on, and said, "Please lock the doors and drive somewhere quickly!"

The Prius was in drive, quietly moving on the electric motor before she finished the sentence. I didn't see any motion nearby but waited until I was in the lighted area in front of the store before turning on my lights. A State Patrol car was parked in front of the entrance to the Safeway Grocery store; the officer gave me the thumbs-up as I drove by. He must have dropped her off or was watching her. "Are you in trouble?" I asked.

She turned her face toward me and I could see the fear and hurt clearly in the bright lights. "Please drive away fast" was all she needed to say. I floored it.

Few cars can keep up with a Prius in the city. Sharp turning radius, low center of gravity, and fast acceleration with both the electric motor and gas engine running. Filming a movie downtown, I got to drive at over ninety-seven miles per hour on the streets around the 16th Street mall and took corners faster and faster until I was on two wheels, so I knew what the car would really do. A lot of Prius drivers drive slow and never take advantage of what the electric motors will do. Most never even use the battery to its full potential or get the full mileage out of it. Me, I knew exactly what the car would do, and more importantly, what it wouldn't do. I doubted even the design engineers even knew what I knew it could do. When you spend ten hours a night in a car, you learn everything about it.

I was hitting forty-five by the time the light in front of me turned green so I shot nonstop out of the parking lot onto Federal, cutting the corner, taking the turn at full speed, and heading north. There were at least two cars coming out of the parking lot at a high speed behind us. We were going over eighty as we topped the hill and momentarily lost sight of them. I flicked the lever into braking mode and let the car slow down without the brake lights showing before pulling an illegal U-turn on two wheels. Cruising southbound at a moderate forty-five, the two cars went by heading north at high speed. As soon as they passed us, I floored it again. I didn't think they could get a good look over the raised median strip, what with all the plantings and the blizzard.

## *Passenger to Dallas*

She hadn't said a word in all of this but had levered her seat back a bit so her head was hidden from casual view. She was a beauty, such a beauty that trouble would follow where ever she went. Ex-boyfriend? Maybe, but this seemed more serious with two cars chasing. Boyfriends and exes were usually alone or had their buddies in the same car egging them on. I hadn't seen one with two cars before, and I had taken a lot of gals to the shelters the last few years. I would take her somewhere safe and never see her again—not that I would mind seeing her again.

What was I getting into? I had rescued many young girls from gangs and pimps before on the job. One Puerto Rican gal was just twelve, so I had no love for the gangs, pimps, or the rich asshole customers. In this girl's case, the pimp and customer were in the back seat arguing over the price of a full night with her. She quietly told me she had been promised a job as a nanny so she came to the States willingly only to become a sex slave. When I asked her if she wanted to be free, she said, "Yes!" So, I hit the taser switch on both rear seats; the three million volts rocked their lives. I dumped the customer and the pimp out in the middle of I-25 and took her to a shelter. Picked up a nice chrome-plated .45 caliber 1911 Colt from the pimp's shoulder holster; seemed like payment enough knowing she was safe and he unarmed.

My folks had been closet anti-war, closet pacifists, and very openly mentally abusive mild alcoholics. I could do no right; my older brothers could do no wrong. I secretly took self-defense classes and my instructor also taught me to shoot. I was in a lot of fights at school, always angry and a bit wild.

An officer introduced me to boxing to keep me off the streets and helped me enlist, so I left home at seventeen and joined the Marines. Becoming a "Baby Killer" caused some family discord, and they didn't speak to me for years. I learned to march, to shoot, and to break up bar fights. Didn't get to Vietnam; it was already over. Didn't kill any babies; did cuff and drag off a lot of big babies to the brig. Didn't have to draw my gun once. It was all nightstick work and ducking the punches. So, when trouble showed up, I always ducked the punches, but never the trouble, and I hated bullies with a passion.

I was hitting ninety-five miles per hour when I saw the lights a good mile behind me coming fast. Taking the left onto the Highway 36 eastbound ramp almost on two wheels, I then flat out floored it going southeast. The Prius was topping 121 as I passed a few late-night stragglers and took the ramp to I-25 southbound at full speed. The wet snow was making the road a bit hazardous so I decided to head east on I-70 to clear the storm. I knew of a Christian-run shelter out that way too, one that wasn't in the government system.

I was ready in case I got stopped. Because I was a driver certified to take women to the shelters, most police officers looked the other way if we had to lose a tailing ex, boyfriend, husband, or stalker. On average, I ran one or two a night to the shelters, the locations of which we all kept secret and were not even supposed to be given to the passengers, just in case they went back to the jerk and had to be rescued again. Yeah, I didn't get paid most of the time, but I never asked for the payment if they didn't have a social services voucher.

A few cops would give you a ticket even with someone chasing, mostly female cops who would never ticket someone of the same race. I hadn't gotten a ticket yet, but had a few close calls. Most of the cops knew me and just waved me through the DUI checkpoints too. They also knew they could call me to give a free ride home to someone in need. Once, at their call, I drove a family of nine home when no other cab would respond to that neighborhood, the broken-down car, or the people of that race. I also paid for the tow truck and bought two new tires for them.

Only two local cops knew what I had in my wallet—my get out of trouble card, to be used only in dire straits. They only knew because they had the same in their wallets, a Federal ID as a Reserve Marshal from the agency we used to work for.

My current passenger was no longer looking over her shoulder. She relaxed and almost had a smile. The fear in her eyes was fading a bit too. The only way we could be tracked was by the cab radio GPS through the dispatcher or by the Lo-Jack. Putting a finger to my lips I motioned to her to be quiet and picked up the mic. "Dispatch, this is 7142 going dark for a shelter passenger."

"Go ahead, 7142, good luck," she responded.

Something was wrong. "Good luck" was code for trouble at the dispatch office or trouble for a driver. I pulled the fuse on the radio and then reached under the seat for the Lo-Jack cut-off switch I had installed. My cell phone didn't have a GPS but could be tracked by zones. I called a fellow driver. "Earl, the office is under siege and I am going dark with a hot passenger for a shelter. Pass the word by phone only."

"I heard the 'good luck' on the radio and heading there now. Drop the battery on your phone and good hunting," he replied with a laugh. "Will round up a posse and clear the office."

"Thanks. She said 'good luck,' but you have good hunting. We're looking for shelter. Let my brother know too."



## *Passenger to Dallas*

“Right. Now get off the air.”

Of course, most folks might not know that just taking the battery out of the phone doesn't always kill the GPS chip. I had a screen box under the seat just in case I needed to be unfindable.

Sending the cops was one thing; they might send one or two cars. Sending forty armed cabbies was better. One time when I had taken a gal to the shelter, I got cut off in traffic by a fancy Cadillac; guy came out with a baseball bat. Having hit F3 on the radio I rolled my window down three inches and asked, “Need a ride to the ballpark?”

“Where did you take her?” he shouted, angrily swinging the bat back and forth toward my window.

I hit the window down button just as he swung the bat again and brought my 10mm Colt Delta Elite up and triggered one shot. The muzzle flash should have been enough to scare anyone off, but the shockwave traveling down the aluminum bat broke a few bones in his fingers and hands as the bat splintered into pieces. The smoke had hardly cleared when a dozen cabs came screaming to a stop with their headlights, making it like daylight. It was all over but the paperwork. He stood there with his broken hands high in the air until the police arrived. Of course, in that case, the girl went back to him the next night, and a week later he beat her to death. It happens; nothing will convince them how much better they are than the guy deserves.

Tonight, I couldn't worry about the dispatch office. The other drivers would take care of it. I just had to disappear. If they were at the office, then they knew I was eastbound on I-70. The Bennet-Kiowa road was coming up so I took the exit before it. I had driven to the Scout Ranch in Elbert dozens of times and knew every backroad and shortcut in the area. It was cloudy but the road still dry; the storm had stopped just east of I-25. I filled up with gas at the King Soopers.

“I need to go to Dallas,” the soft voice came from beside me. I had gotten used to the silence so much I was startled as I got back in the Prius.

I pulled a U-turn in the King Soopers parking lot and headed south before asking, “Why Dallas?”

“I live there.”

Okay, she had no purse, no pockets full of money, wasn't even wearing a bra or underwear as I had so clearly seen, so I was sure she couldn't pay the fare on the meter, let alone the trip from Denver to Dallas. Figured it would be over \$1,870 when I plugged Dallas into my Garmin GPS and saw the mileage. Well, we were heading in the right direction, so what the hell, sometimes I get impulsive. It gets me in trouble but makes life worth living. I kept the car pointed south.

"Be about a twelve- to thirteen-hour drive and I'm going to need some sleep soon. Been driving eight hours already tonight; you kept me from my nap."

"Okay, stop when you need to. Can you make it to Raton first? Across the state line?"

"Does crossing the state line help? Are you in trouble with the law?"

"No and no, but I would feel better."

I figured she knew the routes, must have a good sense of direction, or had been paying close attention to the details.

"Sure, we can grab a cabin at the NRA Whittington Center just past Raton, before daylight, off the main road and fairly private."

"Out of sight?"

I told her I taught at the Center now and then and knew it well. None of my family understood why I went there. I enjoyed shooting the long ranges up to a mile with my Barrett .50 caliber rifle and up to a thousand yards with my 7mm Weatherby. I could hit the 9 ring pretty regular at a mile—of course I never told anyone the target for one mile was six feet across and the 9 ring almost two feet. The staff would also be well armed if needed, and besides, who would look for us there? This time of year, there were bound to be empty cabins, and she could stay out of sight in the car while I rented a cabin and some range time.

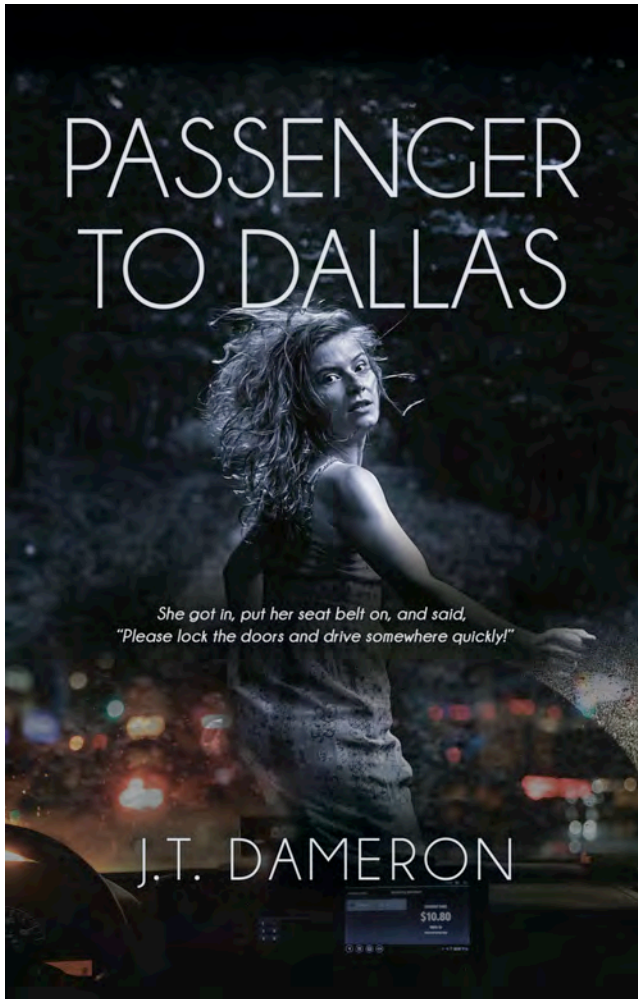
I drove the backroads to the south end of Colorado Springs and hit I-25 South. Risking the speed traps, I put the cruise control at ninety-five. I don't know why most Prius drivers go so slow; slow never got me any better mileage. With the battery depleted, ninety-seven mph was the best it would do, and keeping it just under ninety-seven allowed the battery to slowly charge in case I needed to suddenly push it hard. Not much traffic that time of morning and we made good time. "Hopefully they think I am still going east. Would they know where we are heading?"

*Passenger to Dallas*

For a moment, I thought she was asleep, then came her quiet voice. "They might; that's where they kidnapped me from."

*Shit, shit, and shit*, I thought. Here I am driving a bright yellow and green car with Yellow Cab and giant numbers all over it, not to mention the yellow roof light, and I got bad guys knowing where we are going. It was maybe worse. I didn't know who or why yet. She was good-looking, a real beauty, and was polite too.

We made good time. Going up the pass was easy but a bit slower, then down around seventy-eight for most of it. I pulled off on a side road next to some microwave towers for a call of nature. It was barely getting light as we made Raton.



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