

OUT OF BOUNDS

— A PAT CASSIDY NOVEL —



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First Edition



Chapter One

I slowed the Chevelle Super Sport 396 and pulled into a roadside park overlooking the beautiful foothills of North Central Texas, a little less than halfway between Glen Rose and Stephenville on U.S. Highway 67. A six-foot chain-link fence separated the rough terrain below from anyone stupid enough to step over the edge and fall onto the rocks, cacti, and cedars guaranteed to ruin their looks, or end their life. Lookout Point was the highest elevation in the area and the dissolving sun behind the majestic foothills would take the breath away from anyone capable of emotions. Even from the picnic table, the roadside park was so close to the highway a passing car seemed too close for comfort.

I picked up a tail just after I left for my journey from Fort Worth to Brownwood and decided to detour through Glen Rose instead of my normal route on U.S. Highway 377. Unable to lose him, I finally pulled over at the roadside park on Chalk Mountain and waited for him to make himself known. A late model silver Oldsmobile Cutlass with a burgundy vinyl top pulled up and parked behind my car. The sun was setting, and the daylight was fading. A man normally wouldn't need sunglasses in the impending darkness. *Unless he had something to hide.* The man opened the door of his car wearing round, wire rimmed sunglasses. I was wearing shades as well. *I guess*

we both have something to hide. He looked familiar in a brown leather jacket and blue baseball cap.

“I picked you up when I pulled out of the parking garage in Fort Worth,” I said, turning my back to him to watch the sunset.

“So, I’ve been following you all this time thinking I had the upper hand,” he said, walking up to me.

I turned around to face him. His hunter green t-shirt was untucked, slouching a few inches below his waist exhibiting a covered midriff in pretty good shape, flat and well exercised. In his blue jeans and sneakers, he was just any other mid-thirties guy you might want to get to know. *Or, not.*

“We could’ve done this over a cup of coffee in a public place.”

“I don’t think so, Cassidy,” he said. “You might not like what I have to say.”

He stood a few feet away propping up his left leg on the concrete bench on the other side of the picnic table.

“What do you want?” I said without reserve.

He lowered his head and stared down at his shoes for a while. The moment became a little uneasy. I only knew this man by the nickname Kansas City. A couple of months earlier he intervened at a crucial moment when I was trying to bring down the mayor of Fort Worth, a shoe in to become the next governor of Texas with aspirations of becoming a presidential candidate. K.C. had been hired by people I didn’t know but had the same ambitions. Stop the mayor

from becoming governor and end his political career. This man literally saved my life, killing two people to assure I was successful. Now, on my way to see Jeb Glasscock in Brownwood, he shows up again.

“It appears Pat Cassidy still doesn’t know when to leave well enough alone,” he said, checking the trim of his gray and white tennis shoes with a big black N on the side. It was a brand I didn’t recognize.

“What?” I said. “No how ya doin’, or glad to see you’re still alive? Nice to see you, too, Kansas City.”

“You amuse me.”

“I’m a witty guy,” I said.

“Your nickname for me doesn’t come close to identifying who I really am, or where I come from.”

“Then, why the Royals cap?”

“I look good in it,” he said, placing his foot on the ground peering at me through sunglasses.

“What do you want, K.C.?”

“Like I said earlier, you need to forget about it.”

He said “forget get about it” resembling the dialect of someone from the Northeast. It was rehearsed and not a part of his normal speech pattern.

“Meaning?” I said.

“Anthony Washington.”

“What about him?”

“My people want you to stay out of his business.”

Anthony Washington was the reason for my trip to Brownwood. Jeb Glasscock has some concerns about him. *Now I see they may be justified.*

A white on red sixties model Dodge truck labored up the hill in the northbound lane. A green tarp over its load flapped in the wind. Kansas City checked over his shoulder, sliding his right hand under the brown leather jacket revealing a holstered .38.

“Nervous?” I said.

“In my line of work, it pays to be cautious.”

“At one time you were hired to protect me.”

“The money is not on your side this time,” he said with a fake smile, removing his hand from under the jacket.

“The young man is important to the future of Jeb Glasscock’s football team.”

“I understand, but my employers still want you to forget about him.”

“What exactly is their business?”

“If I told you, Cassidy, I would have to kill you.”

“Good luck,” I said, opening my blue jean jacket just enough to show him my own gun.

“Still cocky as ever,” he said.

“Why so much interest in a second-round draft choice of the Cowboys?”

“Glasscock has no idea what he’s getting into with this kid. He should just leave it alone. Besides,” he said, “my employers dislike him almost as much as they dislike you.”

“Because we always try to do what’s right?” I said.

“You might say he sticks his nose in places it doesn’t belong. In this case, his surrogate boy is playing a dangerous game.”

“Jeb and I both have a sense of duty to keep people like you and your employer from having their way with the world.”

Kansas City laughed loudly, quickly pulling his gun out in one smooth motion. I responded by pulling out my own. We were at a standoff, pointing our weapons at each other.

“What’s this all about?” I said.

Kansas City put his gun back in its holster and took off his sunglasses. His deep-set brown eyes relayed the cold determination of his message.

“This is the last time I’ll warn you. Next time,” he said, making the shape of a gun with his right pointer and thumb, “we won’t have a choice...but to kill you.”

Kansas City slowly pulled the trigger on his imaginary gun.

“I could just shoot you and end it here and now,” I said.

“You could,” he said. “Kill me and others will come. Others who are much more cold-blooded than me.”

I holstered my gun as he turned to walk to his car.

“You know we have the law on our side,” I said.

“A lot of good that’s going to do you.” Kansas City stopped before getting into his car and said, “You’re a marked man, Cassidy.”

“Tell me something new,” I said.

“This is new,” he said. “The Dixie Mafia wants you removed from any future meddling. They know you too well...and want you out of the picture.”

“I should have known that’s who you work for,” I said.

“Knowing isn’t all it’s cracked up to be, Cassidy. Now that you do know...make the most of it.”

“Well...here I am,” I said with open arms. “What’s stopping you?”

“It’s not my line of work,” Kansas City said, opening the door of his car.

“Are these the same people who tried to kill me before?”

“Like I said, Cassidy. Knowing isn’t what it’s cracked up to be.”

“Why are you giving me the heads up?”

“Let’s just say...I might need a favor from you someday.”

“Don’t hold your breath, Kansas City.”

“You and Glasscock watch your back.”

Kansas City peered past me at the sinking sun behind Chalk Mountain.

Out of Bounds

“One hell of a sunset isn’t it? See you down the road, my friend,” he said with unveiled sarcasm.

Kansas City got in his car drenched in the long shadows of dusk, turned on his headlights, pulled across the highway, and headed back from whence he came.

About the Author

E.P. Garth is the author of *OUT OF BOUNDS* and the first three books in the Pat Cassidy series; *OFF THE AIR*, *OUT OF TOUCH*, and *ON THE RANGE*. The fifth novel in the series, *ON THE ROPES*, is targeted for release in 2019.

E.P. has continued his radio/sportscasting career alongside of teaching history in Waco, Texas. He and his wife, Sue, enjoy living in Waco near their daughters, Amanda and Kimberly, and their families.

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