

# **Destination X**

**By Nigel Raven**

## Other Books By Nigel Raven

Stark - Down But Not Out (Kindle)

## Destination X

Scott woke up in a cold sweat once again. His long scraggly black hair was stuck to his forehead, and he wiped his face in the pillow as he turned around to look at the alarm clock which now read 6.11am. Nineteen minutes to go, and then the usual blasting of radio four would rock the room which would force him to get up because the alarm clock was so placed, that from where he laid, he couldn't quite reach it, and Scott hated the music that was played on radio four that time of morning.

As he looked through the smoke stained window the sun could be seen on the horizon just as it began to rise. No doubt it was a beautiful day out there, but the dirtiness of the window made the sky look hazy, and the odd bird that flew past in the distance just looked like a blur to him.

Scott's nightmare's were getting stranger and stranger each night, and even though he knew he had an important and trusted job to do each day, he would sometimes stay up all night reading book after book and playing the old vintage arcade pinball game that he had shoved in the corner of his room.

Living in a single room on the top floor of an old apartment block suited him just fine. He was a bit of a loner, and had everything he could ever want in this one twelve by fifteen foot room. Just a stones throw away there were two chip shop's and a dominos pizza shop, which is where he would often get his dinner from which was evident if you were to look at the floor of his room, which was almost covered in chip wrappings and pizza boxes amongst other things. So much that you couldn't see much of the wall to wall brown carpet. Every now and again he would venture into the shared kitchen and bathroom, but obviously not to use the shower.

Having nineteen minutes left to sleep he turned back around and pulled the covers over his head to shield him from the light. Those nineteen minutes seemed to go by like nineteen seconds, and when the alarm clock did go off, even under the covers he could clearly hear some piano concerto being played at full volume, that signified time to wake up and ready for another challenging day at work.

It was difficult to tell where his nightmare's ended and reality began, because to him, in each nightmare it felt like someone or something was calling him and he had no control in either. But two cups of coffee and forty five minutes later as he left for work he had forgotten everything.

Like any other day Scott was dreading going to work this morning. He was a bus driver for the San Antonio school. His daily route only took him on a six kilometre round trip, but to him it felt more like six hundred kilometre's as he did the fifteen minute trip in the morning and the afternoon each day. In between he would do little else except go back to his room and read his science fiction and horror stories that made him forget about the world around him. It was his getaway which until now, kept him on the right side of sanity.

"Only another twenty five year's to go. Then I can retire." He said as he scooted around the room looking through each pizza box, looking for that one slice of pizza that he didn't finish last night.

He was due to pick his bus up from Frogmore street bus station at 7.30am. Every morning he would be late to clock in, which didn't go unnoticed, and the several final warning letters for his lateness were beginning to mount up on the apartment entrance floor, now kicked into a mounting pile destined never to be opened, by him at least.

This morning he just managed to clock in on time, and now stood on his bus, he walked up and down the aisle a couple of times to check its cleanliness. Not that he liked a clean bus, but because he had several complaints from the children who ridden his bus.

The bus station that morning was busier than ever as it was Friday morning and more bus's had been drafted in to cater for the weekend baseball game that was to be held at the Millennium stadium.

Scott turned the key and surprisingly the bus started first time, which was unusual because he drove one of the older bus's in the fleet and it usually needed a little persuasion to wake up. As he

waited in the queue to leave the station he done his small checks,adjusting mirrors,seat,ect.Sometimes the mechanics played around with his bus and he was sure they altered things just to wind him up.

He made his way to his first stop which was charlietown avenue west,san antonio,and as he pulled up to his first scheduled stop,with the doors firmly closed he looked over to see the eleven to fifteen year old children banging and kicking at the bus doors,just as they did every morning.

Every day he drove was a living nightmare,not too dissimilar to his nightmares.Perhaps that is what was causing them.If scott didn't need this job so bad he would have quit months ago.

Sometimes the noise that they made was almost unbearable as they shouted and argued,having little respect for him or anyone else.He had just about had enough and was close to breaking point.Apart from the children banging at the door,it was quiet as he looked down at his watch.

It was 8.13am,another two minutes and he would have to open the doors and then all hell would break loose.Nothing could prepare him for the abuse he had to take on a daily basis.He sat staring forward and ignored them as best he could.One little rascal even had the nerve to walk around to the front of the bus and make hand gestures that he wouldn't even consider telling anyone else about.Ignoring them like that just made them bang and kick harder.Scotts calm exterior hid the real feelings he was having inside,but it really did make his blood boil not being able to react the way that he wanted to.

He looked down at his watch again,thirty seconds to go,when he heard a voice that seemed to come from out of nowhere.

"Its time," the low husky voice whispered,like it was right by his ear.

And with that,he pulled the handle and the doors opened,then the children pored onto the bus and crashing into the clear perspex bullet proof screen that scott had earlier in the week requested.He'd had one egg too many thrown in his face and it made him feel a little safer.A little bit over the top,but at least all that stopped now.

Even though within all of the chaos now on the bus,scott had quickly forgotten about the mysterious voice that came from nowhere,it was still at the very back of his mind.It was not just the voice that got him wondering,but the action of him physically pulling the handle that opened the door,because,for that split second,he didn't believe that he was in control of himself,and therefore,he didn't think it was him that actually pulled the handle.

He looked in his mirror and could see all the way down the aisle of the bus,and when everybody sat down he shut the doors and drove off.Scott had the shortest run compared to other drivers.The three stop journey wouldn't take too long.But despite it being the shortest,he had drawn the short straw with the other drivers because they all knew how much crap he had to put up with.Surely he could keep his sanity for another fifteen minutes until this afternoon when he would have to do it all over again.

"Its time." the whispering voice could be heard again.

Even over the chaotic noise in the bus,with what seemed like every child shout at the same time,scott still heard the voice as plain as day.He briefly looked in the mirror,and then back at the road whilst narrowly missing a cyclist on the side of the road who quickly gave him an unpleasant hand gesture.

He shook his head and gently rubbed his forehead as a single bead of sweat could be seen run down the side of his face.It had been a long week and this morning he was tired and in no fit state to drive.He shrugged this mysterious voice off and blamed it on a lack of sleep.

Later that day he decided that he would visit his doctor for a check up but when he got there he just prescribed some off the shelf sleeping pills.The rest of the day seemed to just be a blur to him,and when 8pm came,he took two of these sleeping pills as prescribed,and one more for luck as he would say.

That night he had the same nightmare,but they seemed more vivid than ever,as if he was actually living the nightmare's.He was driving his bus,but the bus was full of adults,and he could see their distressed faces and hands as they were pressed up against the windows,and trying desperately to get out,but they couldn't.

He wasn't sure, but the pills that the doc gave him just put him into a deeper sleep that made his nightmares more and more intense, and all so believable. The next morning he woke at 6.11 am again, just as he had been doing for the past week and a half. He sat on the edge of his bed and stretched his legs, and they were stiff, just as if he had been driving all night.

As he drove to work he heard the same voices again, which were clearer than ever this time, and again, sounded like they were almost in his ear. Scott turned on the radio in an effort to drown out the voices, and the radio turned itself off which it had never done before.

He pulled up outside the bus station, and just about to get out of his car, when what started out as a light tingling in his left foot, made its way up through his entire body, and he was briefly paralysed. As he sat there he thought he might be having a stroke.

The tingling sensation had quickly disappeared, but he still had no control over his body and struggled to even raise a single finger to call for help. The only part of his body he could move was his eyes, and as he looked down at the radio, it had turned itself on and the same voice that he had been hearing for the last couple of days came over the radio.

"Its time," the voice whispered, but could now be heard coming from every speaker in the car.

And with that, Scott had no time to think as a grey mist descended over his eyes and he felt a presence enter him. He fought all he could to keep control of his mind as he battled with this unknown entity but felt powerless in every way.

As he had felt like this on so many occasions in his nightmare's, it was now difficult to tell whether he was having another nightmare or if this was actually real. He couldn't even call for help, and could only shout with his inner voice in an effort to force this presence from within him. But all of this effort was wasted as a tear could be seen roll down his face, and Scott was Scott no more. He then looked into the mirror and his eyes glowed up so brightly that it lit up the front of the car.

He got out of the car and walked directly over to his bus, got on and drove away even without doing his daily checks to the vehicle. As he drove along Hagger's Bush Lane he could feel this disturbed presence within him. It was like an angry soul and he felt like this soul wanted to do something bad. There was a tiny part of him that still there, but he could do little about it. He was like a passenger in his own mind.

The bus quickly pulled up at the first stop, Charlietown Avenue West. As he sat there and waited he could see the children kicking and banging at the door, and when the time usually turned 8.15 am he would pull that lever to open the doors, but this time he didn't.

He sat there with his hand firmly grasped on the lever, and just as he was about to pull it, that small part of Scott said no, don't open the door. Even though these same children made Scott's life a living nightmare everyday, he still had a duty for their safety whilst they were on his bus, and at that moment Scott knew that they would not be safe on the bus that morning. The split second that Scott had that thought all existence of Scott had completely vanished.

He took one last look at the children's faces as they would kick for the last time, then he drove off leaving them all there, and he looked in his side mirror to see them chasing him down the avenue, then looked in his mirror and his eyes glowed up brightly once again.

As he drove slowly down the avenue he reached up and changed the sign on the front of the bus to 'Destination - Sigmond Square'. As he headed towards Sigmond Square he slowed down as he passed each stop. He was looking for stops that only had one person waiting.

The bell on the bus rang and he pulled up at the Renford Street stop. The doors opened and a young lady got onto the bus. She was a nurse whose pin badge read Sarah. She swiped her card and then walked to the very back of the bus to sit. The bus then continued steadily on its way, looking for more lone passengers.

She pulled a book from her bag and quietly read to herself. Although she was deeply immersed in her Sherlock Holmes novel, she did look out of her window, only to see the bus pass a bus stop that was full of waiting people. This should have been one of the scheduled stops for the bus that she was on. She then glanced down at the driver, then continued reading and totally oblivious as to what was about to happen to her.

She heard the bell ring and the bus quickly pulled up at 'The Grand', and on got a business executive gentleman who was probably in his early fifties. He sat at the very front of the bus and placed his laptop onto his lap. Sarah looked down at him and felt somewhat more at ease knowing that she wasn't the only person on the bus.

The bus continued along again but this time making a right turn into Jersey Avenue, which shouldn't have been a part of this route and Sarah quickly got up and pressed the bell for the next stop thinking that she had gotten on the wrong bus, but the bell didn't work.

As she walked towards the driver she saw the business man was talking on his phone, and just thought if he wasn't concerned about this bus taking the wrong turning, then she definitely must be on the wrong bus.

"Is this bus going to Sigmund Square," she politely asked, but the driver didn't answer.

So she knocked at the screen and sarcastically said.

"Hello," this time raising her voice, and even the other passenger heard her over the call that he was making.

She said it loud enough that the driver could easily hear her, but you could hear the slight fear in her voice as her bottom lip began to quiver.

That fear had quickly turned into anger as she finally kicked the screen and repeated herself.

"Is this bus going to Sigmund Square."

All this time, the driver continued to stare forward whilst ignoring her. Then he stepped on the gas pedal so hard that she was thrown backward and landed on the floor. The business man put his phone on the seat beside him, helped Sarah up and into a seat opposite him.

"Wait here, I'll go and talk to him," he said.

He also tried being polite but had no luck in gaining the driver's attention. In his posh voice he asked for the driver's number so he could report him once he got off. Little did he know, that they may never be getting off.

"Young man, may I have your driver number."

"Sit down sir, we'll be there soon," the driver said in a calm and polite voice and then the bell rang.

Thinking that he had gotten through to the driver he sat back down in his seat, now next to Sarah. He could feel her shaking as his leg briefly rested against his.

"My name is John," he said to Sarah as he held his phone to his ear expecting his work colleague to be at the other end of the call. They must have hung up their phone, was his first thought.

They could both see that the sign above the front window that read 'Bus Stopping' was now illuminated, and as the bus slowed to stop they both stood up and walked towards the door to get off.

With each step they took, they naturally expected to get closer to the door but they didn't. So they walked faster and faster as they looked at each other, both with shocked looks on their faces. In the end they were actually running for the door yet making no ground. It was such a strange and scary feeling for both of them. The bus stopped and Sarah shouted as loud as she could at the driver, which then turned into a high pitched scream that pierced through John's ears.

"Let us out of here," Sarah shouted.

John ran over to the side window and saw an old lady who was sat waiting on the bus stop seat. As she got up from the seat John banged on the window, but being an old lady he thought that she was probably deaf and couldn't hear him, but no, John could see other people walk right past the bus stop and they too couldn't hear John frantically banging away at the window and waving his hands in an effort to gain anybody's attention.

The doors opened and the driver got out of his seat to help the lady onto the bus. They both shouted at the top of their lungs but the lady still got on the bus, like she heard nothing. How come she could hear nothing, and how come she could walk down the aisle of the bus towards them, yet John and Sarah could not do the opposite.

At first, this little old lady who slowly hobbled down the aisle clenching her walking stick, was totally oblivious to their anguish. She even walked straight past them and nodding at them with her friendly smile. The driver got back into his seat, closed the doors and drove off, but not before

waiting for the lady to be seated.

The driver changed the new destination on the front of the bus, which now read 'Destination - New Jersey Avenue'. The bus steadily drove off, now bound for who knows where, and how many more times would the driver change his destination. Only he knew where he was going, and his distraught passengers had to wait to see their fate.

Sarah and John walked back and sat opposite the lady. They would no doubt sound crazy if they tried to explain the happenings of this bus ride from hell to the old lady. She looked ever so frail and they didn't want to worry her but they still chose to tell her.

"You tell her, it will sound better coming from you," John whispered whilst lightly nudging Sarah, and she quickly had to shift her weight to keep herself from falling off of her seat.

Sarah gave John a determined stare as she got up and sat in the seat directly in front of where the lady sat.

"Hello, my name is Sarah," and she smiled.

"I am Martha," she replied with a pleasant and polite voice.

Sarah hesitated but reluctantly said "I don't mean to scare you ma'am, but there is something that is not quite right about this bus."

The lady looked around the bus and it all looked fine to her. Then she opened her handbag and pulled out what looked like a half knitted scarf and started happily knitting away whilst smiling at Sarah.

Sarah stood up and walked to the back of the bus and John followed. There was no way that she could explain to her the situation they were in without sounding mad, which would have only frightened her. She would find out soon enough anyway, when it was her turn to get off the bus.

"Let's try to get to the front of the bus again," John said.

As they walked towards the driver, expecting the worst, they were surprised. Without any trouble whatsoever they walked right up to the driver. Whatever they said to the driver, all they said was wasted on him. They tried being polite and angry, but he ignored everything they both said.

Even though the bus was moving at a great pace, John desperately yanked on the door in an effort to open it.

"Sit down sir, we'll be there soon," the driver said once again.

"Is that the only god damn thing you can say," Sarah said as she banged on the screen.

In frustration she went ballistic and John pulled her down the aisle kicking and screaming, but she quickly calmed down when they heard the bell ring once again, ready for the next stop. They both turned around and ran again for the door.

The same thing happened again. Using all the energy they could muster up they still couldn't get anywhere near the door. The little old woman just carried on knitting as if nothing was wrong. They then looked out of the window as the bus pulled up at the stop.

Sarah banged on the window to alert them not to get on whilst John looked for something that he could use to break the window, but without any luck. All of the seats were bolted to the floor, and apart from a set of house keys in his pocket, he had nothing. The keys did little damage as he scored the glass and then hit it several times with his hand. His attempt was so feeble that the old lady could have done more damage.

They could see a woman in her thirties stood there holding her son's hand as the door opened. The boy looked at the window in horror, like he had a fear of buses, or that he saw them at the window.

"Don't get on the bus mum, I don't want to get on the bus," the young boy said.

They could hear the fear in the young boy as he cried and pulled back from his mother, and she dragged him closer and closer to the bus, and then put one foot onto the step, but the boy wriggled as much as he could. This distraught young boy had played up so much that his mother finally stopped struggling with her son and said.

"Sorry driver. I will have to leave this bus and get on the next one."

The doors quickly closed, and for a brief second it bought a smile to Sarah's face, like she thought she had maybe saved a life. As the bus drove off, the boy cuddled into his mum and stared at Sarah.

until they left her sight.

The driver must have been angry as he dropped down a gear and floored it. We were gathering speed and quickly overtook almost every car on the road whilst narrowly missing a couple of pedestrians who were half way across a zebra crossing.

Now travelling down fairfield boulevard at a speed close to 100kph, the bus passed a police car that was hidden down one of the side alley's. A small glimmer of hope could be seen in their eyes as they both knelt down on the back seat and watched the police car leave the alley and quickly approach the bus with all of it's lights flashing.

They could see that it was a lone cop which was unusual to see. The bus quickly slowed to a full stop just short of the traffic lights that were red anyway. The cop didn't seem to move with any urgency as they could see him sat in his car behind the bus. They could plainly see him pick up his radio from the dashboard and clip it into his top pocket of his bullet proof vest, then step out of the car.

He then continued to walk down the side of the bus whilst looking in through the window's. But it was evident by the look on his face that he couldn't see any of them as sarah kept up pace with him as she walked down the aisle, leaving john sat on the back seat, resigned to the fact that they weren't getting off this bus.

As she got closer to the door she had the same feeling as before. The faster she walked just didn't get her any closer, so she stopped and fixated her eyes on the cop as he stood and waited for the doors to open. The driver was in no rush to open the doors, and this only made the cop more suspicious as he firmly knocked on the door.

"Can you please step out of the vehicle sir." The cop said in a strong and slightly annoyed voice, like the driver had already angered him. The cop waited for an answer or reaction from the driver but got neither. So he said it again, but this time raising his voice.

"Can you please step out of the vehicle sir. So i could see your license."

Sarah lost control of herself again and shouted for help whilst stomping her feet, then scrambling for the door anyway she could, but without any success because the cop heard and saw nothing.

Finally, some reaction from the driver could be seen as he reached down for his drivers license and held it up to the glass screen, but still with his eyes fixed forward. From where he stood, the cop couldn't see the license, and with one hand on his gun, he slowly and cautiously stepped onto the bus to take a closer look.

He first looked down the aisle of the bus and saw nothing but empty seats, and before he had chance to inspect the license, the doors shut and the driver slammed his foot down on the gas pedal. It all happened so quick that sarah fell to the floor, but the cop stumbled slightly, steadied himself and then drew his gun, and after quickly aiming down at what he could see of the drivers legs, he pulled his trigger and you could see in the cops eyes the expectation of the sound of a fire arm dispensing of its bullets, but nothing came out.

After quickly turning the gun to its side to see if the safety catch was on, he tried again but still nothing. All of this had happened so quickly yet so quietly, and as he looked back down the aisle, this time he saw the passengers and was taken aback a little. Surprised that he hadn't seen them a few seconds ago, he called out to them.

"Are you ok back there." and despite the shocked look on their faces they all nodded, because the driver had not harmed them in any way.

Placing the gun back into his holster, he reached over to his radio and called for backup, but the radio was completely dead, not even any white noise that you would expect to hear.

Now, almost in desperation, he took his anger out on the screen in an effort to scare the driver into stopping, but the driver didn't batter an eyelid. The cop had lost all of his coolness, and the anger was shown through his actions and also by what he said, which was unrepeatable. There was no way that he was going to break the screen, and all effort, physically and verbally, was wasted.

"Sit down sir. We'll be there soon." he'd said again.

They were starting to think that was the only words that he knew.

"It's no good," john called from the back. "We've been trying to get off of this bus for thirty



minutes now. There is something weird about this bus."

The little old lady was still none the wiser as she continued knitting and briefly looked up at the cop, who was now red in the face and gasping for breath. He was completely baffled, and being in the police force for most of his life, now in his late fifties, he thought he had seen it all until now.

The bell rang just as the lights on Maryland Avenue could be seen to change red and the bus slowed down. The next bus stop was fifty yards ahead, and they could see one person waiting there getting ready to board this hell hole of a bus, for a journey that they would no doubt never forget.

The cop stood up.

"It's no good, you'll never get off this bus," John said.

"I've been travelling on this bus since 1965," Martha said.

Sarah looked over to her and shook her head whilst quietly muttering 'stupid old bat' to herself.

The lights turned green and the bus pulled away slowly up to the stop. The cop recognised this tough looking bald headed man who was about to get on the bus. He had taken great pleasure in arresting him on numerous occasions, just for petty crime though. He wasn't as hard as he looked.

"It's Jason Stone," he said as he stared at him.

They were now both waiting for the doors to open. Stone was waiting to get on, and the cop who was adamant he was getting off at this stop.

The doors opened and he was now sat on the back seat and ready to go like a sprinter out of his starting blocks. It must have been no longer than eighteen feet from where he sat to the door. The door opened, and as he ran, he got about eight feet away from the door when he ran into a wall of what he could only explain, as a wall of time, where everything moved so slowly, and the time had stretched out of proportion. This eight feet that he had to go, now turned into fifty feet or more, and each step that he took had magnified the distance, so much that Jason Stone could only be seen in the distance as a small speck that got smaller and smaller. He could hear what sounded like a strong heart beat, which was the amplified sound of the engine as even sound moved at a snail's pace.

The faster he ran, the further away it all got, and as he slowed down everything quickly came back to him. For the others, everything had looked normal, except for the cop who looked like he was running on the spot.

Stone got on the bus and paid his fare. The doors shut and he waited there for his change, but the driver ignored him. Stone was not the kind of man that liked to be pissed off. He was just about to kick off when the cop held his gun up and shouted.

"Stone, get back here you nasty little scroat."

"I'll deal with you later driver," Stone said, but little did he know how that would turn around.

"Officer Trent," he laughed. "I like your new transport," he said as he looked around.

"Sit down Stone," he said as he waved his gun towards the back seat of the bus.

Not one to take orders, Stone sat in the seat opposite Martha, and didn't want to listen to anything that Trent had to say.

"Listen Stone," Sarah said, and he glared at her. "We're all in danger here, on this bus."

"Speak for yourself lady," Stone said as he looked down at the driver.

"The only person in trouble on this bus is that driver," he said whilst clenching his fist and punching the back of his seat.

"There's something not right about this bus," she said and walked over to sit in front of him.

Sarah tried and tried to explain that they couldn't get off of the bus, but Stone wasn't having any of it. This rebel had lived on the wrong side of the law for most of his life and the word 'no' was not in his vocabulary.

"Listen up lady. If I wanna get off this bus, then I will. No one tells me what I can or cannot do."

And with that he got up and rang the bell. He'd only been on there a few minutes and had enough of the ride already, but the bell didn't work. After repeated tries, and now angry at the bell not working, he confronted the driver.

"Next stop," he said to the driver, who ignored him.

Then he knocked on the screen whilst saying "ring, ring," and still nothing. So he turned around and kicked the door twice that rattled but didn't open.

"Sit down sir,we'll be there soon," the driver said.

Then the bell rang and the 'Bus Stopping' sign illuminated once again.Now all pleased with himself he looked back and said "There you go,i told you i was getting off." and the others just sat there and waited to watch him try.

Up to now,the driver had sounded and acted like a robot,only saying that one line,'Sit down sir,we'll be there soon'.But as stone stood there right by the bus door,the driver spoke.

"Sir,will you please sit down.Its regulation,thank you." in his normal mono-tonal voice.

So stone stepped back a few paces and sat in the seat nearest the door.The bus stopped and the doors opened.Stone got up out of his seat,and just like everyone else,except for martha,he tried his hardest to leave the bus.He was also propelled half way to the back of the bus as the driver floored it away again,but this time he didn't pick up any passengers.

It looked like the driver was toying with him.The bus was now heading out of the town and towards the highway.It was getting dark now and they were heading towards colorada.'Colorado - 20kms' is what the sign said and there would be just one more step before leaving the town.

"What are we going to do," sarah said to trent but he didn't answer.He just sat there thinking.

They were all out of their depth here and it looked like there was nothing that anyone could do.The lights came on in the bus just as the destination on the front of the bus had changed once again,which now read 'Colorado',no surprise there.

Stone stood and walked back all bemused at what had just happened.All of the cockiness had been temporarily knocked out of him,although,he was still adamant that he was getting of the bus.He looked up at the ceiling and saw one skylight.Stone had been caught before for breaking and entering,and his mind worked on a different wave length to the others.He could see a possible way off.

So he stood on the seat and pushed open the skylight hatch which only opened two inches at most.Seeing that the hatch was held in with eight screws he asked around for something he could use to undo the screws.Trent had a small army survival knife which he was reluctant to turn over to stone.

"Come on trent,you want us to get out of here don't you." So he gave him the knife.

Sarah walked down and talked to the driver to try and distract him whilst stone undone the screws to make his escape.The driver looked in his mirror and saw what they were doing,but didn't react for now.

Stone undone the last screw and slid the hatch along the roof.Trent bent down with his hands cupped to give stone a lift up but stone quickly stood on the back of the seat and pull himself up onto the roof with ease.

Now sat on the roof,stone looked for someone to call,but there was no one anywhere,the streets were quiet.He could see another bus coming up and he saw that he might be able to make his escape by changing bus's,but the driver sensed what he was about to do and slammed his foot down on the gas pedal.

Just as he did this,stone fell down and slid all the way along the back of the bus and trying to grab on to what ever he could.He slid right off the back of the bus and could be seen tumbling along the road and rolling five or six times,then finally standing up.

Sarah and john watched all of this from the back window.They saw him stand up and also saw the articulated truck that was behind him.Stone stood there unaware of this truck and waved at them thinking that he was free.The driver didn't notice him until the last minute and the last thing they heard was the truck's air horns as john covered sarah's eye to stop her from seeing stone as the truck ploughed into him,sending him thirty or forty yards down the road.

As brave and as stupid as stone was,he was their only hope which was now gone.No one else on the bus dared to attempt what he had just done.So they just sat and stared at the hole in the ceiling.

The next stop was about two kilometre's away.They were all secretly hoping that this would be the end of the journey.Sarah had a six year old girl waiting at home for her and they all should have been home and eating their tea by now.No doubt the police would have been alerted by now because officer trent hadn't reported back,but that would have been no help to them not knowing

where trent was.

Very little was said to each other as the bus drove slowly along main street. Sarah sat at the front in disbelief and would go up to the driver now and again just trying to get any reaction from the driver. Martha sat still knitting her scarf. Trent was just quietly thinking away.

"I've got an idea, it's a long shot but it might work," Sarah said as she walked to Trent.

No one else had any other ideas, and right now, anything was worth trying no matter how bad the idea was. She had remembered earlier about the mother and young boy at one of the stops, and how the boy either sensed something bad about the bus or even seen us.

"Why don't we write on the window, and hope that if we stop again someone might see it and call for help."

It was a long shot, but worth a try. They were not far now from the next stop, not even knowing if the bus would stop there. Sarah reached into her bag and pulled out an eye liner pen. Just as she was about to write on the window, John shouted.

"Wait, you have to write it backwards if you want them to read it."

He had a point there. But that was easier than it sounded as they could see Sarah stand there looking confused, not being the brightest one on the bus. But Trent had done this before many years ago as part of his police training, so Sarah quickly passed the pen over. Now their only hope was that there would be a child waiting at the next bus stop.

Seeing the bus stop in the distance, Trent quickly wrote in large capital letters on the window.

'HELP.....CALL THE POLICE.'

Just as he had finished, the bell rang. They all stayed in their seats because of earlier failed attempts to leave. They could see a young lady in her mid thirties stand from the bus stop seat as the bus pulled up. They were all up at the windows and waiting eagerly until they saw who it was. Just another innocent passenger they thought.

The doors opened but the lady stood still, then took one step back. The driver waited but the lady stayed put. She looked at the driver and then at the window. She alternated her head back and forth a couple of times, then fixating her eyes on the message that they had written. Then the doors closed and the bus pulled away again.

As they looked out of the back window, they could see the lady write something down.

"Did she see us," Sarah said. "Yes, I think she saw us."

Even if she did see them there was nothing they could do now except wait. The lights dimmed as the bus drove on through and out of the town and towards Colorado. None of them knew where they were being taken as the bus drove from town to town right through the night.

Most of them slept, as it had been a long and stressful day. Martha carried on knitting whilst sipping something from a small metal flask now and again, still totally oblivious to what was going on. They didn't know where she was going, but surely she must have known by now that the bus wasn't going her way.

Trent done all he could to stay awake, but lost the battle some time early hours of now Saturday morning, and closed his eyes. It was sometime early hours of the morning, just starting to lighten when Trent felt the bus ever so slightly slow down, but no one else had noticed.

He could see that in the far distance, what looked like police lights lit up the horizon. He knew immediately what was happening. It looked like their plan with the writing on the window had worked, and one by one Trent woke them all up. Martha was the only one that stayed awake all night.

"The lady must have seen us," Sarah said. "We're saved."

Trent knew that it wouldn't be that easy. Even in a normal hostage situation it was not certain what would happen, and this was definitely an unknown situation. The bus came to a complete stop and the road block could be seen about one kilometre away. No more than five minutes later and there was also police behind them.

They sat there for another hour or more with no contact from the police. Several helicopters came over head but left as quick as they arrived.

The bus started moving again and quickly gathered speed as it headed across a long bridge that spanned over a valley way below. It looked like the driver was going to ram the road block. As they

got ever closer they could see that the feeble road block that the police had done would be no match for a twelve ton school bus.

It looked like the bus was going to ram it,so trent ordered everyone to brace themselves for impact.Then,with no more than a hundred yards away,the driver yelled out.

"Whoa....." and slammed on his brakes.

The bus skidded as the brakes locked on and started turning sideways on the bridge,and now out of control.As the bus was now travelling almost sideways,they could all see the depth of valley below that they were close to finishing up in.Trent looked forward and could see an now highly animated driver fight to gain back control of the bus.In all of the time he had been on the bus he hadn't seen that much expression in his face and even the driver now looked in horror.

Smoke bellowed from the wheels and a loud bang could be heard as one of the tyres blew out.Not from the sliding of the bus,but from the police shooting it out in an effort to slow the bus down.The bus had finally stopped just inches from ploughing into one of the police cars and resting up against the barrier.

Within seconds,the bus was swarming with police and the driver could be seen sat in his seat with two armed officers pointing rifle's at him whilst yelling orders for him to stand down,not that he even had a weapon.

John had been thrown under one of the seats.Sarah was at the back pinned up against the side window and trent had grabbed hold of martha from behind in his seat.

The driver sat back in his seat with both arms in the air and took in a deep breath.As trent quickly approached him,he had no idea how he had gotten here.He opened his door,and as he was handcuffed and led out of the bus whilst quickly looking down the aisle expecting to see a bus full of children.

The helicopter could be heard once again fly over the bus.The news helicopter had been filming them for the last hour,and as they were led off of the bus you could see the smile on their relieved faces.

From behind the barrage of police cars a young girl escaped the hold of an officer and came running through the cars to meet her mum sarah,who was delighted to see her.Officer trent was taken off to talk to the officer in charge,who wanted some explanation of what had happened on the bus,but he said nothing.Well,how could you explain what had just happened.

The little old lady was helped off of the bus by an ambulance crew who just wanted to check her out.She was fine,but they still sat her in the back of the ambulance.As she sat there she heard the whispering of a voice.

"It's time."

The End