

Vignette

Jason Warren is a 21-year-old Caucasian male. He is attending his second year of community college with an undeclared major. Jason lives at home with his mother and stepfather and is unemployed. He is an average student and spends much of his time alone in his room interacting with people online. He has never met his father and does not have a close relationship with his stepfather.

When Jason was a teenager, he became infatuated with a popular, young female celebrity named Amelia Sloan and often daydreamed about meeting her. Encouraged by media reports of stars agreeing to attend formal dances with everyday people, he decided to write to Amelia Sloan and ask her for a date. He meticulously composed a letter explaining how he had followed her career, saw most of her films, and was angered by the way the media seemed to treat her harshly. He indicated that his intentions were genuine and felt that they would make the “perfect couple” at the upcoming dance.

During high school, Jason was teased frequently. He began to believe that being taunted would increase Amelia’s desire to meet him. During his senior year, he inadvertently blurted out that he would be attending the prom with Amelia, which only increased how much he was taunted by his classmates. He was mocked even more when his lie was exposed after he did not attend his senior prom at all. He further resented his mom for trying to convince him to go to his prom.

Jason never got over how he was treated by his classmates in high school, and he began fantasizing about enacting revenge on the next year’s senior prom. In addition to continuing to write letters to Amelia, he spent a lot of time following her on Facebook and Twitter. He once received a response from Amelia Sloan of an autographed photograph signed, “Jason, LOL, Amelia.” Despite being disappointed, he felt that the LOL was a genuine expression of her feelings and that if she only met him in person she would realize how the two were meant to be together. His growing feelings made his desire for revenge even stronger. He began to consider calling in a bomb threat to disrupt the prom and then progressed to thinking about actually bombing it. He even fantasized about saving Amelia from the bomb explosion, if she were nearby. He soon convinced himself that he needed to do more than bomb the senior prom to get her attention.

However, as the date approached for the next year’s senior prom, he became more depressed and withdrawn and uncertain if the plan would succeed in winning Amelia’s affection. It was at this time that he learned of the national political conventions that were to occur in his state later that year. He imagined Amelia Sloan was a political activist, of sorts, and was supportive of the Democratic National Party. He felt that if he could disrupt the Republican convention, he would win her admiration. He thought that it was even likely that Amelia Sloan would be in town for the convention, saying to himself, “Who doesn’t like to party?”

He fantasized that perhaps the best strategy would be to kidnap a high-ranking Republican and request a helicopter and meeting with Amelia Sloan as the ransom. As soon as she arrived, the two of them would become soul mates, releasing the politician unharmed as a gesture of goodwill, and use the helicopter to escape to Cuba, where they would not be extradited back to the US. She could continue her career from Cuba and he would work as her manager.

In order to accomplish his plan, he obtained a chauffeur’s license and applied for work with one of the limousine services. He hoped to shuttle dignitaries from the airport to the hotels. He thought that chances would be good to get a high-ranking political figure and then he would be able to kidnap the individual and request his ransom. He was sure to get publicity, perhaps the kind that Amelia enjoyed, and allow the two

of them to appear to be folk heroes to all opponents of the oppressive government.

He was diligent in his work with the limo service and soon developed a reputation as a reliable and courteous driver. He also tinkered with the cars and found ways to readily disable the inside door handles and locks without a trace of tampering. As the convention approached, he suggested to his manager that he would prefer to do airport runs since they were longer and resulted in better tips. Based on his reputation as a solid driver, his manager agreed.

Two nights before the start of the convention he had his chance. He was called to pick up a party of four from the airport and to shuttle them to a luxury hotel. He assumed that if they were staying at such a hotel, they would be with the Republican Party. Most of the rooms were booked and it would be unlikely that this group was not connected to the convention. Jason's eagerness increased when his manager coincidentally indicated that this was a "special fare."

When he picked up his passengers, he requested that they place their electronic devices, including cell phones, in a basket due to security at the hotel. He stated that this would get them through processing quickly and joked that they could keep their shoes on. The passengers happily obliged and settled into the limo. Jason engaged in small talk (e.g., "Are you here for the convention? ...I don't follow politics much, where are you from?") with the group. The man who appeared to be in charge boasted that he was a senator and introduced the others as "supporters and delegates who are about to decide the fate of the nation." Jason did not recognize the man. Still, he took him at his word and mentioned that there was complimentary champagne in the limo bar. Jason had supplied complimentary champagne that he laced with benzodiazepines ("roofies"). He then shut the privacy partition and put on a pair of headphones. He bobbed his head as if he was listening to music, but he was actually eavesdropping on the conversation.

He was happy to see that three of them were drinking the champagne, but noticed that one woman appeared more focused on the trip. He continued along the interstate while going past the exit that would have taken them to the hotel. As Jason continued on the highway, the attentive woman looked alarmed and became agitated. Jason figured she probably thought she was going to be excessively billed for an unnecessarily long trip.

Immediately before Jason exited the interstate towards his house, he removed the batteries from the cell phones he collected, a skill he practiced so that he could accomplish it with one hand. His plan was to keep the hostages in the limo, securely parked in his garage. Before he left the house, he set the thermostat to 68 degrees and opened the door going into the garage. He reasoned that it would remain cool enough for them to spend a day or two in the car. He also turned up the stereo so neighbors would think he was "letting loose" while his parents were out of town. He bought a freezer full of frozen pizza that he would feed to the hostages while they waited for Amelia.

The serious passenger was now pounding on the chauffeur's window and making the others nervous. This bothered Jason. Jason just kept bobbing his head as if he was listening to music and could not hear all the expletives the serious one was calling him. The serious one then became more concerned once she realized she did not have her cell phone. Jason drove on and smirked.

He arrived at his home, with the lights on and the stereo blaring. He pulled into the garage and turned off the car. He then announced that they had been kidnapped and he needed their names to release to the press and their loved ones so they would know they were safe. He snapped a photo with a cheap digital camera he recently bought and told them that he would be back. He also stated that the doors were locked and that, if they tampered with the doors or windows, the car was rigged to incendiary devices and they

would most likely burn alive in the vehicle before they could escape. He showed them a video on the limo DVD that he found on YouTube showing a car in flames. He suggested that they simply relax and he would return to escort them one at a time to use the bathroom.

He transferred the photo to a memory stick and went to a wireless hotspot by the city zoo. From there he emailed all the major news networks regarding the hostages... photos and names, as well as his demands... a meeting with Amelia Sloan, no authorities involved and a helicopter and pilot and assurance of safe passage. Once free from the U.S. border, he would release the code for the hostages to be released unharmed. This was a ploy, but he hoped it would work, and he made it clear that his terms were all non-negotiable.

When Jason returned home, he was tackled by nearly one dozen SWAT team members. He was taken into custody without incident. The hostages were released and received medical attention for the combination of alcohol and Rohypnol. It seems that as soon as his limousine left the predetermined route, his manager was notified via the car's GPS. His manager tracked the change and tried to call Jason, but when Jason disabled the cell phones he had also inadvertently disabled his own phone. He had been expecting a call from his manager, but his plan was to stall, saying the guests had requested a brief tour of the area, particularly by the zoo, as they were animal lovers. However, as the evening's events unfolded, he didn't realize that the call from his manager never came.

Jason was charged with four counts of kidnapping, false imprisonment, poisoning, and conspiracy to commit extortion. Additional federal charges are pending.